

AFRICA : 6 JUILLET 2017 : (Koffi Olomide – GRAND MOPAO – au bonheur des Burundi pour les 55 ans d'indépendance du Burundi face à la Colonisation.)



Photo : akeza.net

A Bujumbura, EFI Nyakabiga, ce samedi 1 juillet 2017, jour de l'indépendance burundaise, le chanteur de Rumba Koffi Olomide – GRAND MOPAO –, accompagné de Cyndi le Cœur et du groupe Quartier Latin dont ses danseuses, se produisait devant un parterre de fans conquis.

BURUNDI :

Koffi Olomide – GRAND MOPAO – au bonheur des Barundi pour les 55 ans d'indépendance du Burundi face à la Colonisation.

A Bujumbura, EFI Nyakabiga, ce samedi 1 juillet 2017, jour de l'indépendance burundaise, le chanteur de Rumba Koffi Olomide – GRAND MOPAO –, accompagné de Cyndi le Cœur et du groupe Quartier Latin dont ses danseuses, se produisait devant un parterre de fans conquis.

Voici un extrait : [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eT0t3Sb9A4M>]

Le Maître Koffi a commencé avec « Ekoti te » ... Puis « Danse ya ba Boss » pour aider les Barundi a bien célébrer les 55 ans d'indépendance du pays face à la colonisation. Et il faut dire qu'avec Koffi, les choses se sont bien déroulés ...

Toutefois, un geste méchant du Maître vis à vis d'une de ses dulcinées danseuses a attiré l'attention du public à un moment... Mais heureusement sans trop de gravité. L'artiste Congolais est actuellement dans la ligne de mire de nombreuses organisations

féministes à cause de son tempérament parfois de -mauvais Garçons de rue “Bad Boys”-...

Burundi / Culture : Koffi Olomide – GRAND MOPAO – en concert à Bujumbura (Photo : AKEZA 2017)

Burundi / Culture : Koffi Olomide – GRAND MOPAO – en concert à Bujumbura (Photo : AKEZA 2017)

Ce concert restera dans les annales des beaux spectacles qu’aura offert Koffi Olomide. De nombreux fans s’étaient déplacés du Congo pour venir assister au Concert.

Au Burundi, l’actuel patron de la musique africaine congolaise séjourne à Bujumbura depuis le jeudi 29 juin 2017 pour célébrer les 10 ans du Burundi dans l’EAC – East African Community et livrer à cette occasion quelques concerts qui prendront fin mercredi 5 juillet 2017.

DAM,NY,AGNEWS, <http://burundi-agnews.org>, le mardi 4 juillet 2017

[<http://burundi-agnews.org/sports-and-games/burundi-culture-koffi-olomide-grand-mopao-en-concert-a-bujumbura/>]

RWANDA :

Des soldats centrafricains en «recyclage» au Rwanda

Par RJDH Centrafrique - 06/07/2017

La formations des membres de du corps de la Faca ont débuté depuis cinq jours une formation de remise à niveau qui devrait se terminer dans six mois environ

Des soldats centrafricains sont partis au Rwanda pour une formation militaire. L'information a été confirmée au RJDH par des sources concordantes au ministère de la défense nationale.

Selon les informations du RJDH, les soldats centrafricains sont partis depuis cinq jours. Une source proche de l'Etat-major parle de 250 soldats, «nous avons une équipe de BIT 3 qui est envoyée pour un recyclage militaire au Rwanda. Ils en ont pour les six prochains mois», a confirmé cette source qui a préféré l'anonymat.

L'information est confirmée par des sources au ministère de la défense nationale qui justifient cette mission de formation par la volonté de remettre les Faca sur pied, «c'est une initiative portée par le chef de l'Etat qui veut que l'armée soit debout dans un bref délai. Nous travaillons pour cela et c'est dans ce cadre-là qu'après le plaidoyer du chef de l'Etat auprès de ses pairs, le Rwanda a accepté d'accueillir nos soldats», explique un cadre militaire du ministère.

La formation des Forces armées centrafricaines est assurée par l'EUTM, une mission de l'Union Européenne depuis septembre 2016. Cette mission forme une compagnie (120) éléments tous les trois mois, ce qui n'est pas du gout des autorités de Bangui. Au siège des Nations-Unies en avril dernier, le président Touadéra avait qualifié de lent, le rythme de la formation des militaires centrafricains assurée par l'EUTM. Ce dernier a engagé par la suite des plaidoyers auprès de ses pairs pour que certains éléments soient admis dans leurs académies militaires.

En mai dernier, une équipe de soldats a été envoyée au Burkina Faso et une autre en Israël pour des recyclages. Le Rwanda est la troisième destination des éléments de forces de défense. Les militaires centrafricains sont envoyés dans ce pays au moment où les violences montent en puissance dans plusieurs coins du pays.

Source : <http://www.journaldebangui.com/article.php?aid=12635>

RDC CONGO :

Tête-à-tête Joseph Kabila-Mgr Marcel Utambi à Kisangani : Le président de la Cenco informé de la volonté du Raïs de voir se tenir les élections en Rdc

Kinshasa 06/07/2017 Politique - « Nous avons parlé élections. Les élections auront lieu. Ce n'est un secret pour personne. Tout le monde parle élections. Et je crois que le président de la République, à son niveau aussi, n'a cessé de dire qu'il y aura les élections », a déclaré Monseigneur Utambi après sa rencontre avec Joseph Kabila.

Le Chef de l'Etat s'est entretenu mercredi avec les forces vives de la province de la Tshopo. Il a, de ce fait, reçu mercredi 5 juillet plusieurs personnalités de la ville et de la province de la Tshopo. Il a notamment reçu Monseigneur Marcel Utambi, président de la Conférence épiscopale nationale du Congo (CENCO) et archevêque de Kisangani. Les deux personnalités ont notamment parlé des élections.

« Nous avons parlé élections. Les élections auront lieu. Ce n'est un secret pour personne. Tout le monde parle élections. Et je crois que le président de la République, à son niveau aussi, n'a cessé de dire qu'il y aura les élections », a déclaré Monseigneur Utambi après sa rencontre avec Joseph Kabila.

Sur les autres questions abordées avec le chef de l'Etat, Monseigneur Utembi a fait savoir qu'elles ne pouvaient pas "être révélées maintenant".

« Nous avons traité des questions qui ne peuvent pas être révélées maintenant parce que c'est une affaire entre deux autorités importantes : le président de la République et le président de la CENCO. Vous savez que la CENCO a dû conduire la médiation des négociations directes pendant trois mois. Et c'est tout à fait normal qu'il y ait le suivi par rapport à la mise en œuvre de ce document important », a indiqué le président de la CENCO, faisant allusion à l'accord du 31 décembre 2016 signé par le pouvoir et l'opposition.

Le chef de l'Etat congolais a également discuté avec les membres du comité provincial de sécurité et les députés provinciaux conduits par leur président, Joël Bafando. Selon ce dernier, le Président Joseph Kabila Kabange a appelé l'Assemblée provinciale de la Tshopo à travailler pour l'unité et le développement de la province.

Joël Bafandu a indiqué également qu'à propos du bras de fer entre l'Assemblée provinciale et le gouvernorat, que le chef de l'Etat les a invités à travailler dans l'harmonie, la collaboration et le calme afin de privilégier le développement de la province. « Le Président

de la République accorde une place de choix au bureau de l'Assemblée provinciale de la Tshopo dans la conduite de la chose publique », a-t-il dit.

Le Chef de l'Etat a ensuite reçu une délégation de notables et de la chambre des sages de la Tshopo, venus l'informer de la situation que traverse actuellement la province, embourbée dans une crise liée à la mauvaise gestion de la chose publique. Elle a sollicité l'intervention du Chef de l'Etat pour y mettre un terme afin de permettre à la province de décoller. La chambre des sages a présenté cette occasion au Chef de l'Etat sa vision du développement de la Tshopo. Le Président de la République a pris acte de toutes leurs préoccupations et a promis son implication pour trouver une solution.

La société civile et les forces vives de la Tshopo, dont une délégation a été également reçue par le Président Joseph Kabila Kabange, ont exposé au Chef de l'Etat plusieurs préoccupations, notamment la situation de la voirie urbaine de Kisangani et des routes de la province en mauvais état, ainsi que la question des limites avec la province du Maniema qui se pose alors que l'opération d'enrôlement des électeurs touche à sa fin. Le problème de la prise en charge de la prime des enseignants par les parents et la surfacturation de l'électricité en mode prépayé à Kisangani ont été également évoqués au cours de cette audience. Le Président de la République, qui s'est dit préoccupé par cette situation, a promis de s'y pencher personnellement pour des

solutions appropriées. Le Chef de l'Etat a, par ailleurs, présidé le même jour, à l'hôtel de ville de Kisangani, une réunion du conseil provincial de sécurité à l'issue de laquelle rien n'a filtré. Plusieurs personnalités ont pris part à cette réunion, notamment les responsables des Forces armées, de la Police Nationale Congolaise et des services spécialisés.

MMC (CL/Milor/GW/Yes)

[Source :

<http://www.digitalcongo.net/article/595e186a48d13a0004c2c40e>]

CONGO :

Législatives au Congo-Brazzaville : « J'y vais... j'y vais pas ? » 05 juillet 2017 Par Trésor Kibangula

Au Congo-Brazzaville, l'opposition politique se présente aux législatives du 16 juillet en ordre dispersé. Aucune coalition en perspective, sauf celle, autour de Claudine Munari, qui s'oppose à la tenue même de ces scrutins.

Face au Parti congolais du travail (PCT, au pouvoir) et ses alliés, l'opposition congolaise peine depuis plusieurs mois à adopter une stratégie commune de combat. Adieu le bloc formé autour de ses cinq candidats à la présidentielle de mars 2016 ! Pour le premier tour des législatives prévu le 16 juillet, c'est désormais le « chacun pour soi », chacun sa position.

Munari et ceux qui ne participent aux législatives

Dans le premier lot, l'on retrouve Claudine Munari, candidate malheureuse au dernier scrutin présidentiel. L'ancienne directrice de cabinet de l'ex-président Pascal Lissouba est aujourd'hui à la tête de la Fédération de l'opposition, coalition qui rassemble la Composante Jean-Marie Michel Mokoko et les opposants restés fidèles aux regroupements politiques Front républicain pour le respect de l'ordre constitutionnel (Frocad) et Initiative pour la démocratie au Congo (IDC).

On ne peut pas aller aux élections lorsque le Pool se trouve en état d'urgence.

Ici, il n'est même pas question d'appeler au boycott, c'est l'organisation même des élections qui pose problème. Charles

Bowao, porte-parole de la Fédération, s'explique : « On ne peut pas aller aux élections lorsqu'un département du pays se trouve en état d'urgence. Ce serait cautionner un acte de remise en cause de la cohésion nationale. »

Depuis début avril 2016, dans un black-out total, le Pool, département situé dans le sud du Congo-Brazzaville, est en effet secoué par des affrontements entre les forces de l'ordre et les miliciens de Frédéric Bitsamou, alias pasteur Ntumi. Entraînant le déplacement de plusieurs milliers de personnes.

Outre cette « question morale », la Fédération de l'opposition considère également que « le contentieux électoral de 2016 n'a toujours pas été soldé ». La plateforme continue de dénoncer le « hold-up » du président Denis Sassou Nguessou, réélu le 20 mars 2016 au terme d'un scrutin controversé. « Nous devons nous asseoir pour faire le point sur cette problématique mais aussi pour résoudre celle de la gouvernance électorale », réclame Charles Bowao, qui regrette par ailleurs la « mésintelligence historique » des opposants qui ont choisi de participer aux élections à venir. Kolélas et Tsaty Mabilia partants !

Dans le viseur de l'ancien ministre de la Défense : Guy-Brice Parfait Kolélas, député de Kinkala, dans le Pool. Arrivé deuxième lors de la présidentielle de mars 2016, le fils de l'ancien Premier ministre Bernard Kolélas et leader du mouvement Union des démocrates humanistes Yuki ne compte pas pratiquer la politique de la chaise vide.

« C'est ce que lui a conseillé le représentant du secrétaire général de l'ONU [le Guinéen François Louncény Fall] lors de sa dernière visite au pays », souffle le député Jean Bonard Moussodia, très proche de Guy-Brice Parfait Kolélas, qui va lui-même tenter de

conserver son siège dans la 1ère circonscription de Mounkala, à Brazzaville.

Participer aux élections vous donne la crédibilité de contester les résultats.

Pour Moussodia, le débat sur le « hold-up électoral » de 2016 est aujourd'hui « révolu ». « Sur le plan international, c'est Denis Sassou Nguesso qui est reconnu comme le président du Congo-Brazzaville », justifie-t-il, dénonçant l'incohérence de ceux qui estiment que le chef de l'État est « illégitime » mais qui « n'hésitent à pas demander de dialoguer avec la même personne ».

« Nous, nous avons décidé de participer aux élections parce que cela nous donnera demain la légitimité de contester les résultats, si nous nous estimons lésés », renchérit le député.

Même son de cloche ou presque du côté de l'Union panafricaine pour la démocratie sociale (UPADS). Autrefois l'une de principales forces politiques du Frocad, le parti conduit par Pascal Tsaty Mabiala bat campagne pour les législatives du 16 juillet. « Nous sommes un parti de gouvernement, nous ne sommes pas pour une opposition de rue, parce que nous avons un projet alternatif pour le Congo à défendre », explique son porte-parole, Honoré Sayi.

Mais l'UPADS n'a pu aligner que quelque 43 candidats pour les 151 sièges à pourvoir. La faute à la récente hausse de la caution qui est « passée de 100 000 franc CFA à 1 500 000 (28 000 euros) », dénonce le député sortant de Dolisie.

[Source :

<http://www.jeuneafrique.com/454332/politique/legislatives-congo-brazzaville-jy-vais-jy-vais/>]

UGANDA :

Why Uganda should continue with pension sector reform

By Admin / Added 6th July 2017 11:58 AM

In 2011, the Uganda Retirement Benefits Regulatory Authority (URBRA) Act was enacted and soon after the regulatory authority, (URBRA) was established. This was a great mile stone for Uganda.

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Miriam Ekirapa Musaali, is the COO Alexander Forbes Financial Services Uganda

By Miriam Ekirapa Musaali

The roadmap for reform of Uganda's pension sector was drawn more than a decade ago.

In 2003, the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development constituted the Stakeholders Transition Group (STG) to assist the Government with the development of a comprehensive legal, regulatory and financing framework for social security reforms. Following the STG recommendations another taskforce was established, the Pension Sector Reform Task Force, Chaired by Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MOFPED). The main role of this task force was to prepare a clear and practical policy framework to serve as a road map for the reform of the pension sector.

The taskforce created the sub-committee on liberalisation and regulation (SCLR), which was mandated to make proposals on the

liberalisation and regulation of the pension sector. In the taskforces and working groups there was consensus that the pension sector needs to be regulated and liberalised.

In 2011, the Uganda Retirement Benefits Regulatory Authority (URBRA) Act was enacted and soon after the regulatory authority, (URBRA) was established. This was a great mile stone for Uganda.

The MOFPED submitted the Retirement Benefits Sector Liberalisation Bill to Parliament for consideration in 2011. The Bill is core to the pension reform agenda for Uganda and is key to development of the pension sector.

Liberalisation is not a new phenomenon in Africa. In countries like Ghana and Nigeria pension reform ushered in healthy competition in provision of pension services and products to the populace. In Ghana, the reforms started in 2008 with the decision of the government to put an end to the monopoly of the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT).

In Uganda, only employers with 5+ employees are required to make mandatory contributions to the National Social Security Fund (NSSF). According to the Uganda Economic Update 2017 (World Bank) only 5% of Uganda's work force is covered by or participating in a pension scheme. The 2011 Liberalisation Bill seeks to increase coverage to all formal sector workers (removing the 5+ cap).

For Uganda to mobilise domestic savings, reforms geared towards mobilisation of domestic savings are necessary. The Liberalisation Bill seeks to mobilise domestic savings through voluntary savings

by both the formal and informal sector. Currently Uganda's pension sector contributes only 12% of Uganda's GDP.

To mitigate against old age poverty, portability of pensions should be encouraged among employees. With portability an employee can transfer his or her pension savings from one employer to the other. The current practice among working class Ugandans is to leave an employer and utilise the accrued retirement benefit for immediate needs. This behaviour makes one prone to old age poverty as the retirement income has not been preserved. The 2011 Liberalisation Bill seeks to preserve the retirement income of an individual who moves from one employer to another within East Africa. This is a positive step towards alleviation of old age poverty among Ugandans.

Encouragement of savings goes hand in hand with incentives such as tax credits. The Liberalisation Bill seeks to provide a better taxation framework that will encourage savings and curb consumption. The tax model proposed in the Liberalisation Bill will enable mandatory tax free contributions to a pension scheme as well as up to 30% of voluntary contributions in occupational schemes. Only the investment income will be subjected to tax and the final benefit at payout will remain untaxed.

The Bill seeks to achieve the third objective of Uganda's pension reform agenda which is to reduce the fiscal deficit to government. This will be achieved by converting the public service pension scheme from a defined benefit scheme (where no contributions are made by the civil servant) to a defined contribution scheme (where both the government and the civil servants make contributions to the scheme). This transition will in the long run assist in reducing the fiscal deficit to government.

The passing of the Liberalisation Bill by the Parliament is essential for healthy competition within the pension sector, better returns on contributions to pension schemes and growth of Uganda's economy.

The writer is the COO Alexander Forbes Financial Services Uganda

Why Uganda should continue with pension sector reform By Admin Added 6th July 2017 11:58 AM In 2011, the Uganda Retirement Benefits Regulatory Authority (URBRA) Act was enacted and soon after the regulatory authority, (URBRA) was established. This was a great mile stone for Uganda.

Miriamekirapamusaali 703x422 Miriam Ekirapa Musaali, is the COO Alexander Forbes Financial Services Uganda By Miriam Ekirapa Musaali The roadmap for reform of Uganda's pension sector was drawn more than a decade ago. In 2003, the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development constituted the Stakeholders Transition Group (STG) to assist the Government with the development of a comprehensive legal, regulatory and financing framework for social security reforms. Following the STG recommendations another taskforce was established, the Pension Sector Reform Task Force, Chaired by Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MOFPED). The main role of this task force was to prepare a clear and practical policy framework to serve as a road map for the reform of the pension sector. The taskforce created the sub-committee on liberalisation and regulation (SCLR), which was mandated to make proposals on the liberalisation and regulation of the pension sector. In the taskforces and working groups there was consensus that the pension sector needs to be regulated and liberalised. In 2011, the Uganda Retirement Benefits Regulatory Authority (URBRA) Act was enacted and soon after the regulatory authority, (URBRA) was established. This was a great mile stone for

Uganda. The MOFPED submitted the Retirement Benefits Sector Liberalisation Bill to Parliament for consideration in 2011. The Bill is core to the pension reform agenda for Uganda and is key to development of the pension sector. Liberalisation is not a new phenomenon in Africa. In countries like Ghana and Nigeria pension reform ushered in healthy competition in provision of pension services and products to the populace. In Ghana, the reforms started in 2008 with the decision of the government to put an end to the monopoly of the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT). In Uganda, only employers with 5+ employees are required to make mandatory contributions to the National Social Security Fund (NSSF). According to the Uganda Economic Update 2017 (World Bank) only 5% of Uganda's work force is covered by or participating in a pension scheme. The 2011 Liberalisation Bill seeks to increase coverage to all formal sector workers (removing the 5+ cap). For Uganda to mobilise domestic savings, reforms geared towards mobilisation of domestic savings are necessary. The Liberalisation Bill seeks to mobilise domestic savings through voluntary savings by both the formal and informal sector. Currently Uganda's pension sector contributes only 12% of Uganda's GDP. To mitigate against old age poverty, portability of pensions should be encouraged among employees. With portability an employee can transfer his or her pension savings from one employer to the other. The current practice among working class Ugandans is to leave an employer and utilise the accrued retirement benefit for immediate needs. This behaviour makes one prone to old age poverty as the retirement income has not been preserved. The 2011 Liberalisation Bill seeks to preserve the retirement income of an individual who moves from one employer to another within East Africa. This is a positive step towards alleviation of old age poverty among Ugandans. Encouragement of savings goes hand in hand with incentives such as tax credits. The Liberalisation Bill seeks to provide a better

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[Source :

http://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1457104/uganda-continue-pension-sector-reform]

TANZANIA :

Tanzania: Peacekeepers Deny Sex Abuse Claims

By Deogratius Kamagi 6 July 2017

The Citizen (Dar es Salaam)

Dar es Salaam — There have been allegations that United Nations (UN) peacekeepers from Tanzania were among those engaged in sexual abuse in countries, where they were deployed. "It is not true," said Lieutenant Colonel Shija Lupi in an exclusive interview with The Citizen recently.

Lt Col Lupi is among the Tanzanian soldiers in the UN Peace-Keeping force. He is a TPDF member of the directorate of peace support operation.

He said he had a passionate interest in protecting people from all walks of life and he enjoyed doing so. It is for this reason that he is ready to protect the lives of women, girls and vulnerable groups in areas that he is deployed. He can say the same for most Tanzanian soldiers.

"Being on a peacekeeping mission means a lot to us. There is no way we can let down our country," Lt Col Lupi noted. His colleagues expressed similar views.

Lt Col Lupi has been to Lebanon in 2008/09 and in 2010/11, he was assigned to South Sudan as a discipline and conduct officer. Then, he went back to Lebanon from February 2016 to March 2017.

Sharing his own experience, he said his participation in peace keeping missions had enabled him to meet with other people from across the world and learn from them, including the importance of peace keeping. He added that, their key role was to disarm rebel groups and protect civilians.

Being far from home

It is not easy for anyone to quickly cope with an environment one is not familiar with, but as TPDF members they can be deployed anywhere they are needed and coping is one the skilled they have internalised during military training.

Lt Col Juma Mrai, 47, said the biggest challenge was the fact of being far from their families for a long time, risking life in a foreign land, climate and infrastructural challenges because they used to serve in areas with bad roads and other supportive infrastructure had been destroyed.

Lt Col Mrai, a TPDF member working with the National Service, vocational training department. He was responsible for building good relationship between the authorities and the people of South Sudan.

Social interaction is important, including sharing good and sad moments with family members. However, things are quite different for solders. Being away for a long time on a UN mission, the soldiers forgo all social life with their families.

"While I was out on a mission I missed the wedding of my sister, who is the last born in the family. My second born child fell down from a chair and sustained some injuries on his hand and was

stitched. That moment wished I could be at home," said Lt Col Mrai, who has been a TPDF member for 22 years.

His experience in South Sudan

He has been to South Sudan from early 2016 to February this year as a public relations officer. He recalls on and off attacks by rebels near their camp.

"Initially, the rebels considered us to be their enemies. They thought we were there in favour of the government of south Sudan, which was not true. We faced difficult moments, when we were supposed to meet them (rebels) for reconciliation meetings or distribution of humanitarian aid from the UN," he explained.

He noted that he faced some challenges, while on a UN mission, including language barrier with natives, infrastructural problems, as according to him, major road networks were severely damaged because of the civil war and poor communication network.

Lt Col Mrai recalled three villages, which were burnt to ashes in Rumbek, South Sudan. He he said no one survived in the incident.

"I can't recall names, but the situation was terrible. Whoever tried to escape was shot dead by the labels, who stationed outside houses ready to shot anyone, who would survive the fire," he explained.

"That is when I learnt that we truly need to respect each other and protect the peace, unity and solidarity we have as a nation," he said.

Why are Tanzanians in the UN peace keeping forces?

Tanzania has been contributing to the UN peacekeepers' crew deployed in various countries since 1995.

Over the time, peacekeeping has grown and transformed from simply monitoring ceasefires to protecting civilians, disarming ex-combatants, protecting human rights, promoting the rule of law and supporting free and fair elections.

Participation is due to willingness in terms of security and military cooperation within and outside regions that it falls.

Tanzania's participation in UN peacekeeping operations has been largely driven by political instability in other counties at regional and global levels.

The contribution of TPDF members in the UN peacekeeping crew has raised the country's profile as a regional icon for maintaining peace and security.

The most recent operations that Tanzanian troops participated in include those in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lebanon and South Sudan and the Republic of Central Africa.

As an officer in the directorate of defence and foreign relations, Lt Col Sangano Wibonela is of the view that it's crucial for Tanzanians to protect unity and solidarity.

He said he had learnt this from their engagement in peace keeping forces. He has been to South Sudan from early 2008 to 2010 and the Republic of Central Africa in 2015/16.

"UN peacekeeping crew has proven itself to be a reliable and effective means of protecting civilians and facilitating the transition from conflict to peace. I feel proud to be part of the team," said Lt Col Wibonela.

Their message to Tanzanians

The three TPDF members appeal to Tanzanians to maintain peace and unity reiterating that, it is of considerable importance to put forward national interest in every decision we take.

According to Lt Col Mrai, there is a need to restore national peace after war and he insists that negotiations should be part of solving whatever crisis.

"We, who happened to serve in various UN missions know the consequences of war. Women and children suffer most, when a war starts," he said.

His view was supported by Lt Col Lupi, who pointed out that war could bring peace at all, but it rather fuelled enormity from one generation to the next.

"Conflict has taken a huge toll in terms of human lives. The suffering of refugees and internally displaced people and the destruction of social fabric, physical infrastructure and natural resources is enormous. We need to collaborate to maintain peace," he explained.

He also encouraged Tanzanians to be proud of the prevailing peace, saying the country was considered as a role model as far as democracy, good governance, peace, unity and solidarity were concerned in sub-Saharan Africa. "While we take things for

granted we should know that some people toiled before bringing this nation to where it is today. Let us maintain the spirit left by the founding fathers - Mwalimu Julius Nyerere and Sheikh Abeid Karume," he said.

@Deogratiuskamagi

[Source : <http://allafrica.com/stories/201707060073.html>]

KENYA :

Kenya's Uhuru Kenyatta pulls out of election debates

Main presidential candidates back out of two debates in lead up to the August vote, citing format issues.

Kenyatta has been in power since 2013 [Baz Ratner/Reuters]Kenyatta has been in power since 2013 [Baz Ratner/Reuters]

Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta and his main rival Raila Odinga have pulled out of two televised presidential debates ahead of the August 8 elections, their parties said.

Initially, the two frontrunners were to go head to head, while six smaller candidates would hold a separate match on Monday, with a second debate on July 24.

However, officials in both parties said Kenyatta and Odinga decided to pull out after they got wind of plans to change the format, pitting all eight candidates against each other.

"President Uhuru Kenyatta will not participate in the presidential debates," David Murathe, vice chairman of the ruling Jubilee Party, said on Wednesday, citing insufficient consultation and format issues.

READ MORE: Kenya's Ogiek win land case against government

A party official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Jubilee had a problem with the president debating alongside "small" candidates.

"We cannot subject the president to such kind of debate, but if it is him and Raila it is fine. But for now it is a no from us," the official said.

Kenya launches multibillion-dollar railway amid concerns over costs

Odinga's team also said he would not take part because of the new format.

"How do you really get into the meat of things in just two minutes each," said Odinga's top adviser Salim Lone. "It would be impossible to have a substantive debate."

Kenya held its first ever televised presidential debate in 2013, including both Kenyatta and Odinga. Afterwards, Kenyatta complained that he had been unfairly targeted by moderators.

Kenyans go to the polls next month in national elections choosing from 14,500 candidates contesting in a series of races for president, governor, parliament and county assembly seats.

The vote comes a decade after the worst electoral clashes in Kenyan history when more than 1,100 people were killed in politically motivated ethnic violence.

The presidential race is predicted to be close, with Odinga heading an unprecedented opposition alliance in the hope of winning in his fourth run for the top job.

The election could swing either way, with five million new voters among the 19 million registered compared with the 2013 presidential polls.

On Monday, the European Union warned against possible violence in the forthcoming elections, while advocacy group Human Rights Watch said it had documented cases of intimidation and threats.

Source: AFP news agency

[<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/07/kenya-uhuru-kenyatta-pulls-election-debates-170706064308184.html>]

SOUTH SUDAN :

S. Sudan to adopt Swahili as official language, seeks Tanzania's help

Ismail Akwei 14 hours ago South Sudan

The South Sudanese government has called on Tanzania to send Swahili teachers to the country as it introduces the language in school curriculum ahead of its adoption as an official language.

The request was made by South Sudanese Vice President Taban Deng Gai on the sidelines of the just ended African Union Summit on Tuesday, Tanzania's Vice President Samia Hassan said in a statement cited by local media The Citizen.

South Sudan also requested for assistance in other sectors of its economy including health, agriculture and security, the statement added.

Swahili has been adopted as the official language for the East African Community (EAC), of which South Sudan is its latest member after it deposited the instruments of ratification on the Accession to the EAC Treaty last year.

The language is part of the commitments entered in 2007 by the EAC, whose three founders – Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania – use Swahili as their official language alongside English.

Rwanda is yet to make it its fourth official language after national language Kinyarwanda, French and English.

[Source : <http://www.africanews.com/2017/07/06/s-sudan-to-adopt-swahili-as-official-language-seeks-tanzania-s-help/>]

SOUDAN :

Gbudue state governor inaugurates new sports complex

<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article62917>

July 5, 2017 (YAMBIO) - The governor of South Sudan's Gbudue state, Daniel Badagbu on Wednesday officially inaugurated a new sports complex constructed by the United Nations in South Sudan (UNMISS).

JPEG - 52.1 kb

Yambio local football association office constructed by UNMISS
July 5, 2017 (ST)

“The office that we have just inaugurated and opened must be seen by all as a center for peace building. It is a center of social cohesion, it is a center for reconciliation, it is a center for behavior change and that will be called peace building Office.”

Through UNMISS Rehabilitation and Reintegration Program (RRP), money was channeled by the world body to construct the office with the aim to promote sports activities which brings together larger audience and the office shall be used to plan sports activities that can unite the people of Yambio County despite their ethnicities.

UNMISS head of office in charge in Western Equatoria state, Caroline Waudu said UNMISS decided this year to support the development of thought, and football in Gbudue state as to promote the talent of young ones in sports as it brings together people across boundaries, cultures and religion and by doing so peace building will realized in the community and the citizens will live in harmony.

“There is believe that the local football Association and the government of the state will use the facility to enhance the peace process, promote social cohesion, unity and diversity," she stressed.

The Minister of youth, culture youth and sports, Gibson Wande lauded the support from UNMISS saying, the nation has been undergoing insecurity which could not allow the government to embark on development with its partners to support local communities.

“That building should not be used for politics; that building should not be used now for tribalism. Sports does not have boundary. Whoever will be using tribalism in the building, I will send you away. Take good care of the building and produce more talented prayers in Gbudue state," he said.

UNMISS contracted Rural Development Action Aid (RDAA) and the construction cost 27,000 USD. The organisation, with support the current President of South Sudan Football Association Francis Amin helped construct a toilet. (ST)

ETHIOPIE :

Ethiopia Hosts First China Trade Week

July 5, 2017 - The first China Trade week, where more than 38 Chinese exhibitors take part, opened in Addis Ababa yesterday, according to Xinhua. The China Trade Week in Ethiopia is supported by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and China Council for the Promotion of International Trade.

The 38 Chinese companies are comprised of various sectors: including lighting and energy, home electronics, construction materials and machinery, clothing and textiles, health and beauty.

According to Michelle Meyrick with MIE Events, the event organizer, the first China Trade Week in the East African country has attracted 38 Chinese exhibitors that are showcasing their products and services to get a taste of the Ethiopian market.

"The trade show provides an opportunity for the local business community to develop direct trading links with high-end Chinese product manufacturers," said Meyrick.

More than 40 of Ethiopia's total 121 foreign investment projects that were set operational over the past six months came from

China with a capital worth more than 3 billion birr (close to \$130 billion).

Referring to the ever increasing Chinese investment in Ethiopia, Meyrick expressed the vision to make the Chinese Trade Week an annual event in Ethiopia.

Organizers expect over 3,000 Ethiopians to visit the three-day event

Source:- Xinhua

[Source :

<https://www.ezega.com/News/NewsDetails/4329/Ethiopia-Hosts-First-China-Trade-Week>]

EGYPTE :

TripAdvisor for the ancient world: Archaeologists studying 2,000-year-old graffiti discover reviews from tourists carved into the stone of the tomb of king Ramesses VI

Experts have been studying inscriptions left in tombs in the Valley of the Kings

The 300 foot (100 metre) long memorial to Ramesses VI was studied in detail

Archaeologists studied over 1,000 inscriptions throughout the tomb

Among the carvings were the phrases 'I visited and I did not like anything except the sarcophagus!', 'I admired!', and 'I can not read the hieroglyphs!'

By Tim Collins For Mailonline

Published: 12:25 BST, 4 July 2017 | Updated: 18:35 BST, 4 July 2017

Tourists left reviews carved into stone in Egypt that have been compared by experts to an ancient version of Trip Advisor.

The marks have been studied by archaeologists working in the Valley of the Kings, where visitors etched their thoughts into artworks and on walls millennia ago.

Among the carvings were the phrases 'I visited and I did not like anything except the sarcophagus!', 'I admired!', and 'I can not read the hieroglyphs!'

The findings could reveal more about what travellers to one of the world's oldest attractions thought of the memorials to long-dead rulers.

Researchers from Institute of Archaeology at the University of Warsaw have been examining the scrawlings in closer detail.

They are viewed by some as vandalism of priceless historical sites, but the Polish team believe that they are scientifically valuable in opening a window into the past.

The tomb of Ramesses VI, who reigned from 1145 to 1137 BC, was chosen due to the rich variety and high number of the messages in contained.

Experts found over 1,000 inscriptions throughout the 300 foot (100 metre) long tomb cut into the rock bed.

Some were found to be the equivalent of 'John Smith was here', with the names of people who visited the tomb written in Greek or, less frequently, in Latin.

But others read like reviews found on popular travel forums and social media sites, according to the team.

Phrases included 'I visited and I did not like anything except the sarcophagus!', 'I admired!', and 'I can not read the hieroglyphs!'

In a written statement Professor Adam Lukaszewicz, an archaeologist from the university who led the research, said: 'The Valley of the Kings was a tourist destination already in antiquity.'

'Like today, tourists often signed their names in the places they visited.

'Among the more than sixty tombs in this area, in at least ten there are inscriptions made by ancient travellers.

'The greatest number of inscriptions come from the Greek-Roman period, that is, from the time of the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great to the division of the Roman Empire in the fourth century.'

As well as their names, visitors also often added their place of origin and occupation.

Travellers came to the site over two thousand years ago from Egypt and its neighbouring countries, as well as further afield in Athens and Syria.

Some were physicians and philosophers, including cynics and Platonists.

Among the visiting dignitaries to the tomb were prefects from the Roman empire who administered the region, as well as an Armenian prince named Chosroes in the fourth century AD.

One of the most famous visitors was Amr ibn al-As, the Arab conqueror of Egypt following the collapse of the Roman empire, who marked his presence in 10 inch (25 cm) tall letters in the seventh century AD.

The first European visitors to the site, which followed the crusades, were offered sharp objects to make their own marks by Arab tour guides, according to memoirs from the time.

The team surmise that there may have been a similar practice for thousands of years.

The researchers also noted that much of the graffiti had been written in a well thought out manner, including one creative inscription at the centre of a solar disc which represented one of the gods.

Conversations between some of the visitors have also been uncovered.

In one location they read that a person had admired the tomb and read the hieroglyphics.

Another visitor wrote below: 'I can not read this writing!'

Below this, a third traveller had commented: 'Why do you care that you can not read the hieroglyphs, I do not understand your concern!'

SOURCE : <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-4664012/Archaeologists-study-2-000-year-old-graffiti-Egypt.html#ixzz4m3d88C4q>

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SOUTH AFRICA :

ANC decides South Africa should downgrade ties with Israel

Ali Abunimah Power Suits 5 July 2017

South Africa's ruling party wants to sharply downgrade ties with Israel.

At its national policy conference on Tuesday, the African National Congress adopted a recommendation "to downgrade the South African embassy in Israel to a liaison office in a bid to reduce diplomatic ties," the Mail & Guardian newspaper reported.

The policy will go to the ANC's national conference for ratification in December.

"Our embassy has failed to achieve its necessary political objective over the past 22 years in moving Israel closer to a resolution on the Palestinian question," Faiez Jacobs, an officer in the Western Cape provincial branch of the ANC which proposed the recommendation, told the newspaper.

The move is intended to send a "strong message" in protest of Israel's continued military occupation and human rights abuses against Palestinians.

The policy does not call on the government to downgrade Israel's embassy in Pretoria, but Jacobs anticipates that if South Africa reduces its representation in Tel Aviv, Israel might respond by doing the same.

In 2012, the year of its previous national policy conference, the ANC endorsed the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement for Palestinian rights.

Ties with apartheid

Israel maintained extremely close ties with apartheid South Africa. Tel Aviv was the white supremacist regime's main weapons supplier when Pretoria was under a tightening international embargo.

Relations cooled significantly after the ANC took power in democratic elections in 1994. Many grassroots activists and iconic leaders in South Africa's liberation struggle, including the late Ahmed Kathrada, have been staunch supporters of the Palestinian struggle.

Recently, a number of government ministers, including South Africa's Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, fasted in solidarity with Palestinian prisoners on hunger strike.

In 2015, Israel prevented the entry of South Africa's higher education minister, who had planned to travel to the occupied West Bank to discuss cooperation with Palestinians.

The minister, Blade Nzimande, had observed – as many leading South Africans have – that “Israeli apartheid is worse than South African apartheid.”

Israel's destructive record in Africa

While the South African government has offered consistent support for Palestinians – albeit within the framework of backing the so-called two-state solution – it has not spearheaded

international efforts to isolate Israel despite a growing consensus that Israel is guilty of apartheid against Palestinians.

Such leadership could be particularly important as Israel launches a renewed diplomatic offensive to win over support from African governments.

Israel markets itself to African countries as a purveyor of development technologies such as drip-irrigation – assistance it withdrew from Senegal in revenge for that country's December vote for a UN Security Council resolution condemning Israel's illegal settlements on occupied Palestinian land.

But despite the end of its cozy relationship with South Africa, Israel has continued to fuel conflict and atrocities on the continent by supplying arms used in conflicts in South Sudan and Burundi and sending weapons to Rwanda before the 1994 genocide – a role Israel has sought to cover up.

South Africa has gone further than many countries by explicitly discouraging its citizens from traveling to present-day Israel because of the mistreatment of Palestinians.

The ANC policy conference decision indicates that the ruling party's grassroots feel that the government could be doing much more to translate the strong sentiments of solidarity into effective action.

SOURCE : <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/anc-decides-south-africa-should-downgrade-ties-israel>

ANGOLA :

Drought affects more than 1 million people in Angola

6 July 2017 | Angola

More than 1 million people have been affected by the drought in Angola over the last five years, with higher incidence in the provinces of Huíla, Cunene and Namibe, Agriculture Minister Marcos Alexandre Nhunga said in Rome on Wednesday.

Speaking at the 40th conference of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), which runs from 3 to 8 July in the Italian capital, he stressed that the government, with the support of national and international partners had organised a major operation to support the affected population.

Angola estimates that US\$464.5 million are needed to recover from the effects and impacts of the prolonged drought that has affected over one million people over the past five years, according to a report on Drought in Angola between 2012- 2016 and the Post Disaster Needs Assessment.

This recently released report was drafted by the National Civil Protection Commission, with support from the United Nations Development Programme, the European Union and the World Bank.

At the Rome meeting, Minister Marcos Alexandre Nhunga announced that Angola is preparing, with FAO technical support, to carry out the first general agricultural and livestock census after independence (1975) and to create a permanent system of

agricultural statistics, according to Angolan news agency Angop.
(macauhub)

SOURCE : <https://macauhub.com.mo/2017/07/06/pt-seca-afecta-mais-de-1-milhao-de-pessoas-em-angola/>

MAROC :

Plus de 420.000 MRE au Maroc depuis le début de l'opération Marhaba

6 juillet 2017 - 11h30 - Marocains du monde

Un mois après le début de l'opération Marhaba 2017 pour l'accueil des Marocains du monde, plus de 425.000 MRE ont déjà regagné le royaume via les différents postes-frontières.

C'est ce qu'a déclaré le ministre délégué chargé des Marocains résidant à l'étranger et des Affaires de la migration, Abdelkrim Benatiq, lors d'une intervention à la Chambre des conseillers. Ce dernier a également rappelé le dispositif mis en place par les autorités pour mener à bien cette opération. En tout, 27 navires d'une capacité totale de 40.000 passagers et 15.000 voitures sont mobilisés.

Outre les moyens humains mobilisés par les services des douanes, de police et de gendarmerie, la Fondation Mohammed V pour la solidarité a réquisitionné 122 médecins, 140 cadres paramédicaux et 47 ambulances. Les services de la fondation sont disponibles dans la plupart des lieux de passage des Marocains du Monde.

A noter que cette opération prend fin le 15 septembre prochain et englobe les arrivées des MRE au pays mais aussi leur départ vers leur pays de résidence en Europe.

[Source : <https://www.bladi.net/marocains-monde-operation-marhaba,48817.html>]

AFRICA UNION :

African Union: First Face Off between Morocco and Algeria-Backed Polisario

Saad Eddine Lamzouwaq By Saad Eddine Lamzouwaq - July 3, 2017 , 7:05 am

Rabat – As was predicted, the African Union (AU) has turned into a battlefield between Morocco and the Polisario Front's self-proclaimed Sahrawi Democratic Republic (SDR), which is backed by Algeria.

On Saturday, a first confrontation took place inside AU headquarters in Addis Ababa over the wording in a human rights report by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) that referred to Western Sahara as "occupied territories".

A paragraph in the report called for a mission to be sent to the area to evaluate the situation of human rights there. The text was adopted a week before by the AU's Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC).

The Moroccan delegation objected the paragraph and demanded it be removed or modified, and this led to the Moroccan delegation becoming involved in heated verbal exchanges with the Sahrawi and Algerian delegations.

Mediation by Nigeria helped reach a consensus after SDR, backed by six AU member states, and Morocco, supported by 16 others, both stuck to their positions.

The News Agency of Nigeria cited Nigerian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Geoffrey Onyeama, who said that Morocco had threatened to block the work of the Executive Council meeting. The council regrouped the minister of foreign affairs of the member states.

Prior to its meeting on Sunday evening, the council adopted a new version that stated that while some delegations had suggested sending a human rights evaluation mission to the territories referred to by the United Nations as Western Sahara and the AU as SDR, the proposal was rejected by other delegations.

Moroccan-French language news outlet TelQuel quoted Moroccan Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Nasser Bourita, saying that the adopted text by the Executive Council takes the kingdom's position into consideration.

“This no longer seems a decision by the PRC. The Executive Council clearly notes that there was a debate over the issue, and that some countries were for and other against [the proposal]”, he said.

Bourita also noted that ACHPR's president, South African Faith Pansy Tlakula, wrote in her summary of the report that the commission should engage in “constructive dialogue” with Morocco to come up with a simple wording that would remove the term “occupied territories” while still expressing the position of the other party and that of the PRC.

The confrontation between Moroccan and SDR and Algeria will surely not be the last. The kingdom's reintegration to the AU in late January was meant to be the beginning of a tireless crusade against Polisario Front and its sponsor, Algeria, inside the

continental bloc, which Morocco left in 1984 as result of the recognition of SDR.

The reintegration was the result of years of quiet and active diplomatic efforts that saw the kingdom grow into a key political and economic partner for several countries in western and eastern Africa.

[SOURCE :

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2017/07/221893/african-union-first-face-off-between-morocco-and-algeria-backed-polisario/>]

African Union Pushes for Financial Independence, Elects Rwanda to Lead in 2018

[<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Rwanda-Elected-to-Lead-African-Union-in-2018-20170706-0003.html>]

Published 6 July 2017 (4 hours 58 minutes ago)

The pan-African organization is currently pushing to become independent of external financial partners and interests.

Amid ongoing efforts to make the African Union a financially independent organization as well as calls for greater continental cooperation, Rwanda has been elected as the next leader of the Union for 2018.

The decision was announced following the conclusion of the 29th ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The announcement initially came in the form of a tweet by Rwanda's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Louise Mushikiwabo.

“African Union Summit now in closing; among many decisions, Rwanda elected to lead the Union in 2018. We are honored and express appreciation,” she said.

Rwanda will assume leadership on January 30, 2018, replacing Guinea. It will be the first time that Rwanda will lead the Union since it was founded in 2001, as a replacement to the Organization of African Unity.

A major theme for the session that just concluded was collaboration and unity among African countries, with the current chairperson urging the continent to have a unified voice in the world.

Rwanda was one of the countries spearheading a financing reform proposal for the African Union at the session, looking to transform the pan-African organization into a financially independent organization, reducing dependency on external partners and financial interests.

In a presentation on Monday to the Union, Rwandan President Paul Kagame stressed the need for the organization to become more independent but also anticipated that doing so could potentially cause some “discomfort” for external interests.

Kagame is also pushing for greater investment and reform in education across Africa.

Speaking at a conference on Wednesday titled “Mobilizing African Intellectuals towards Quality Tertiary Education,” he pushed African leaders to take concrete actions toward improving education investment, as well as opening up its gender inclusivity.

“Our responsibility is to create the right conditions for delivering the 21st-century education that African youth deserve. More efforts are needed to give technical education its right value so that it contributes to Africa's transformation,” the president said.

The African Union is a continent-wide organization including all 55 African countries. It was founded in 2001 to replace the Organization of African Unity and looks to foster political and economic unity among African nations.

USA – AFRICA :

US Airstrike Hits al-Shabab Militants in Somalia, 2nd Attack in 3 Days

Marine Gen. Thomas D. Waldhauser, U.S. Africa Command commander. DoD Photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class

Dominique A. Pineiro

Stars and Stripes | 6 Jul 2017 | by John Vandiver

STUTTGART, Germany -- U.S. forces targeted a mass of Islamic militants in Somalia on Tuesday in a self-defense airstrike that marks the second American attack in less than a week in the war-torn country.

U.S. Africa Command offered few details about the latest strike in the country where the military has stepped up operations, but did say the attack was about 300 miles southwest of the Somali capital of Mogadishu.

"This strike was conducted within the parameters of our authority to engage in collective self-defense of our Somali partners," AFRICOM said Wednesday in a prepared statement.

AFRICOM said it was still assessing the results of the attack and did not provide an estimate of how many militants were killed.

During the past year, AFRICOM has intensified operations against al-Shabab, a group that has resisted defeat despite the efforts of a wide-ranging international coalition of forces.

In March, President Donald Trump granted Marine Gen. Thomas Waldhauser, who leads AFRICOM, expanded authorities to launch offensive airstrikes against the terrorist group.

While those authorities haven't altered what military officials deem actionable intelligence on the battlefield, the expanded powers enable commanders to make decisions faster, AFRICOM officials have said.

On Sunday, U.S. forces also hit al-Shabab targets in a strike that was the second such attack under authorities granted by Trump. On June 11, AFRICOM also killed eight militants when it attacked a command outpost in Somalia's south, the military said.

"We continue to work in coordination with our Somali partners and allies to systematically dismantle al-Shabab, and help achieve stability and security throughout the region," AFRICOM said after Tuesday's strike.

Al-Shabab, which has operated for more than a decade in Somalia, has proven to be resilient in the face of international efforts to topple it.

Several years ago, the group was on the brink of overrunning Mogadishu, but efforts by a union of African militaries helped push the group out of its strongholds.

During the past year, al-Shabab has regrouped and picked up the pace of its operations.

For the United States, military efforts are expanding in Somalia, with trainers operating in the background and on the front lines

with Somalia forces in hopes of building up the country's military institutions.

The effort to build a creditable Somali military could be a challenge in the clan-based country that has no history of possessing a strong central government.

Related Topics Headlines Somalia Global Hot Spots

Source : <http://www.military.com/daily-news/2017/07/06/us-airstrike-hits-al-shabab-militants-somalia-2nd-attack-3-days.html>

CHINA – AFRICA :

South Africa's Eskom Signs \$1.5 Billion Loan Agreement With China

By REUTERSJULY 6, 2017, 7:57 A.M. E.D.T.

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa's state power utility Eskom signed a \$1.5 billion (19.6 billion rand) loan agreement with China Development Bank on Thursday to partly finance its Medupi coal power plant, its acting chief executive said on Thursday.

The loan is the second tranche of a \$5 billion funding facility Eskom is seeking, after signing a \$500 million credit facility with China Development Bank in 2016.

"This loan will also aid us in ensuring that we complete the Medupi project and ensure security of energy supply," Eskom's acting CEO Johnny Dladla told reporters.

The power utility, which has in the past been forced to impose power cuts due to insufficient supply, is scrambling to revamp its ageing power plants. Once completed, Medupi is expected to be the largest dry-cooled coal-fired power station in the world and will add 4,800 megawatts to the grid. But the facility is over budget and years behind schedule.

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Eskom Chief Financial Officer Anoj Singh said the Chinese loan would be paid back over 15 years.

He expected Eskom's debt to peak at 500 billion rand, up from 350 billion rand currently.

To date Eskom has secured 77 percent of this fiscal year's funding requirement, Dladla said, and expected that it would meet the required funding for the year.

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Singh also said Eskom sees significant appetite from international investors for the firm's bonds and the utility could tap the market for between \$1 billion and \$1.5 billion in sales in the next six months.

However, he said governance issues at the utility had impacted the firm's plans to secure funding.

"We'll probably look for about \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion in the next six months depending on the appetite," he told Reuters.

Eskom has been in a leadership crisis after several board members, including the chairman and chief executive, resigned in recent months amid growing concerns about governance at the country's sole electricity provider.

(Reporting by TJ Strydom; Writing by Nqobile Dladla; Editing by James Macharia and Susan Thomas)

SOURCE :

<https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2017/07/06/business/06reuters-safrica-eskom.html>

China would help Africa with capacity building – Ambassador

Category: General News July 5, 2017

China seeks to continue to help African countries with capacity building, especially for the youth, since the energies and capabilities of a nation's youth largely determines its strength.

Madam Sun Baohong, the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, at the opening of a two-day conference on China-Africa Relations on Tuesday in Accra, said China would assist African countries to educate and train about 200 million adolescents.

The conference, which was opened by Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, was on the theme; "Building Resilient Industries and Infrastructure for Economic Transformation in Africa: The Role of China."

It seeks to come up with recommendations towards the improvement of China-Africa relations.

Madam Sun said China-Africa co-operation had intensified since the establishment of the Forum on China Africa Co-operation (FOCAC) in 2000, adding that the 2006 Beijing Summit of FOCAC witnessed the establishment of a new type of China-Africa strategic partnership.

The Chinese Ambassador said the new partnership featured political equality and mutual trust, economic win-win cooperation and cultural exchange.

Madam Sun said the Chinese Government also had 10 major areas outlined for China-Africa cooperation namely industrialisation,

agricultural modernisation, infrastructure, finance, green development, trade and investment and poverty reduction.

She also mentioned public health, cultural and people to people exchanges, and peace and security with a total of \$60 billion funding from China.

Source: GNA

[<https://www.ghanabusinessnews.com/2017/07/05/china-would-help-africa-with-capacity-building-ambassador/>]

INDIA – AFRICA :

A new phase in India-Africa ties

Tuesday, 04 July 2017 | Mark Suzman |

The support India is offering to African countries to achieve self-sufficiency is commendable. But India itself needs to do more to ensure that such advances benefit all

This writer participated in the first ever African Development Bank meeting that was held in India in May this year. The vibrant State of Gujarat, known for its spirit of enterprise, was a fitting location for this important event. The discussions about the synergies between India and Africa (the two regions where the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works extensively) were exciting.

For this writer, it was both a learning experience and a privilege to join in the exchange of ideas about key areas of African development, in particular, the potential of agriculture to create economic opportunity across the continent.

The African Development Bank is committed to bring economic transformation in Africa and also to ensure that all African countries and citizens are a part of the growth story. Its role is especially important at a time when an uncertain global aid environment has put developmental progress in several countries at a risk of backsliding.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has been working with the African Development Bank to encourage countries to optimise social sector spending that benefits the poorest. Agriculture is one of the top priorities because with the right tools, smallholder

farmers can improve their livelihoods and lift their families out of poverty.

This writer was delighted to see the partnership and support that India is offering to African countries in their quest to achieve self-sufficiency. India and Africa have much in common, including big agricultural sectors and a large population of young people. Africa has tremendous potential to become a global agriculture powerhouse, and there is much it can draw on from India's Green Revolution to achieve its goals of poverty alleviation, self-sufficiency and economic growth.

India's growth experience is an exciting story. The country is making significant advances in areas such as healthcare, sanitation, and financial inclusion. A great example is the reduction in infant and child mortality. The latest edition of India's National Family Health Survey shows that in the last decade, infant mortality rate has declined by 28 per cent, and the under-five mortality rate has declined by 32 per cent.

Improvement in child nutrition too is encouraging. Since the last survey, in 2005-06, there has been a decrease of almost 10 per cent in the number of stunted children under the age of five, and a seven per cent decline in the percentage of underweight children. The Government's Mission Indradhanush immunisation initiative has in just two years expanded access to life-saving vaccines for more than 22 million children and six million pregnant mothers.

The Government's emphasis on building a digital economy is also showing great results. The country's poor, who have been historically cut off from the formal financial sector, now have access to digital banking tools that enable them to safely save, send and borrow money.

In less than three years, the number of new accounts opened is 286 million, as part of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana scheme, and most of those have RuPay debit cards.

This is amazing progress and we are working with the African Development Bank to see if some of these models can be adapted and scaled in African countries.

However, there is still much work to do in India to ensure that these advances benefit everyone, especially in health and nutrition. Public health is arguably the most important long-term investment for the economic future of the country but making a case for its prioritisation continues to be a challenge.

India's complex and diverse socio-economic makeup means that there are no ready made solutions. But India has shown that it is capable of developing innovative strategies to address big challenges. Some of these can benefit Africa, too. Nigeria is drawing on lessons learned from the pulse polio programme in India to eliminate endemic polio. The partnership of the foundation developed with the Government of India on Human Immunodeficiency virus prevention is being adopted by other countries.

Sanitation is another area where India is beginning to make progress that also could benefit countries in the African continent. Under a new Government policy, India is developing decentralised solutions for the safe treatment, disposal, and reuse of fecal sludge, which would be a great benefit to African countries with limited water resources.

It is exciting to see the culture of innovation developing across sectors of India's economy. Even more exciting is the prospect of these advances being harnessed to reduce poverty for everyone in India and for millions of others in Africa and around the world.

(The writer is Chief Strategy Officer and President Global Policy & Advocacy at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation)

SOURCE : <https://www.dailypioneer.com/columnists/oped/a-new-phase-in-india-africa-ties.html>

EUROPE – AFRICA :

South Africa-European Union strategic partnership

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South Africa is one of the European Union's 10 Strategic Partners. The SA-EU Strategic Partnership was established in 2006 and followed by a Joint Action Plan in 2007 as a forward-looking platform that facilitates the wide-ranging co-operation between the two parties. The year 2017 marks the 10th anniversary of the Joint Action Plan and the roundtable focused on the current status of SA-EU Strategic Partnership and its future developments.

The European House – Ambrosetti organized, in partnership with multinational South African pharmaceutical company Aspen Pharmacare, the Roundtable “South Africa-European Union Strategic Partnership – Strengthening economic relations and cooperation and fostering social innovation”, a gathering for high-level debate on strategies and priorities to advance SA-EU collaboration.

This event is part of the program of activities of the Observatory on Europe, The European House – Ambrosetti 12 years-old European think tank on competitiveness and integration of the EU, which provides strategic analysis and recommendations to improve the EU's integration process and bolster European competitiveness.

As Marcus Cornaro, European Union Ambassador to the Republic of South Africa, mentioned in his opening speech, it is about “Ten years of strategic partnership, but decades of close cooperation and friendship starting in 1986 with the Special Programme for the Victims of Apartheid”. “Today – continued Ambassador Cornaro –

the EU is South Africa's biggest export market and its biggest source of FDI. EU investment in South Africa creates close to 350,000 jobs. In addition, through the EU-funded Risk Capital Facility, as well as through a number of Local Economic development programmes, the EU has been able to support over 150 SMEs providing jobs to some 12,000 individuals. And today we can rightfully commend ourselves and each other for the entry into force of the SADC Economic Partnership Agreement that promotes sustainable development and unlocks the potential for more and better trade investment.”

In his speech DG DEVCO Director General Stefano Manservigi pictured how the global challenges faced by the world today have been captured in the new agendas the World and the EU have set to themselves. These challenges have an impact on the EU Partnership with South Africa. He thereafter illustrated how development cooperation – in particular Science & Technology and innovation – has been instrumental in shaping EU-SA Partnership.

Paolo Borzatta, senior partner of The European House – Ambrosetti, remarked the importance of developing deeper relations between Southern African and the European manufacturing systems. Indeed, current trade and investment relations are heavily influenced by commodities whereas, he argued, the greatest strategic opportunities lie in the manufacturing sector. Particular attention should be dedicated to Small and Mid-sized enterprises, creating platforms to facilitate their growth on both markets. On the other hand, lack of mutual knowledge is an obstacle for developing deeper relations among big and structured companies. In particular, Mr. Borzatta pointed out the necessity to develop Africa-specific strategies, as often conventional business models do not allow companies to thrive in

SADC. If these obstacles are overcome, both regions could greatly benefit in terms of societal and economic development. Borzatta also commented on the Brexit topic: “South Africa-EU relations are facing a significant turning point, as Brexit will influence the geopolitical context and both trade and investment patterns between South Africa and Europe. Although Brexit outcome is still uncertain, it will likely push the UK towards a tighter “special relationship” with the United States, the UK could increase tensions with geopolitical entities strategic for South Africa, especially other BRICs Countries. Also, Brexit is pushing EU-27 towards a more integrated union, providing further interesting opportunities of cooperation with South Africa (defense, migration, investment, education, ...). An integrated EU-27 will have a transparent agenda of joint economic development with South Africa and SADC Countries – he said, whereas BRICs Countries might have less transparent agendas”.

A round table discussion among panelists coming both from Europe and South Africa followed. Boris Zala, MEP and Vice-Chair of the Delegation for Relations with South Africa, recalled some questions about Strategic Partnership: “What it means “strategic partnership”? What is the difference to the “simple” partnership? Why is the EU strategic partner for SA and vice versa?” Those are the questions we must search adequate answers to, if we want the notion of “strategic” to be fulfilled, rather than its being only an empty phrase.” Hence, in Mr. Zala opinion, it is of the utmost importance “trying to search for answers to these questions from the perspective of global politics, EU-Africa relations and regional institutions” and “clearly identify the obstacles that limit the EU-SA relations to become really “strategic”, at the economic level, particularly at the level of investments.”

Alec Erwin, the chairman of UBU Investment Holdings and former Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister of Public Enterprises in South Africa offered his view about the benefits of the trade agreement between the EU and South Africa: “Looking back at the experience of the FTA between South Africa and the EU I believe it has been a good example of the long term advantages of such agreements”.

Diana Acconcia, head of unit in DG TRADE responsible for the Economic Partnership Agreements with the ACP countries, provided an overview of the EU trade relations with South Africa in the framework provided first by the Trade and Development Co-operation Agreement signed in 1999 and entered into force in 2004, and replaced in 2016 by the EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement. She explained the key features of these agreements and how implementation of the latest one is moving forward against the key challenges in the current political and economic context of South Africa.

Finally, the round table concentrated on strategies to promote investments and share experiences in areas of common interest and where the two parties face common challenges, such as environment and climate change, life science technologies and access to healthcare, which represent issues affecting people’s well-being, where innovation can have a social benefit.

From the South Africa side, Aspen Pharmacare Senior Executive Stavros Nicolau brings the experience of a leading SA multinational company in Europe: “Aspen is now one of South Africa’s largest investors in Europe – he said – with significant manufacturing presence in countries such as France, Germany and the Netherlands. Aspen continues to invest in both production capacity and innovative product pipeline in Europe, with its recent

acquisition of a portfolio of key anesthetic products, set to continue innovative supply of affordable quality medicines to European patients. Anesthesia, compliments other high tech, specialty products, such as anti-thrombosis solutions that Aspen presently makes available to patients in the EU.”

SOURCE :

<https://www.eureporter.co/frontpage/2017/07/05/south-africa-european-union-strategic-partnership/>

EU will restrict visas for states not taking back migrants

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The European Union states decided on Friday to restrict visas for foreign countries that refuse to take back their nationals who have no right of asylum in Europe.

The EU is cracking down on immigration following a spike in arrivals across the Mediterranean since 2014.

Italy is now the main gateway to the bloc and most of those reaching European shores after boarding smugglers' boats in Africa are considered illegal labor migrants.

Some countries, including Bangladesh and Nigeria, are often reluctant to readmit their citizens and the EU has recently doubled down on efforts to expedite such returns.

During a two-day meeting in Brussels, the bloc's 28 leaders agreed to use "all possible levers, including... reassessing visa policy toward third countries".

"We can use visas to convince them to take returns," said a senior EU diplomat, adding the move would, among other things, target the ruling elites of these countries as they can afford trips to Europe.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said the EU's trade agreements with African countries should also be part of the effort.

EU states remain at loggerheads over how to handle refugees who make it into the bloc, yet they have decided to gloss over the issue after two years of divisive feuds.

(Reporting by Gabriela Baczynska and Alastair Macdonald;
Editing by Toby Davis)

SOURCE : <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-eu-visas-idUSKBN19E1Y0>