



(La commission de l'Union Africaine (UA) a nommé l'ex Premier togolais Edem Kodjo en République Démocratique du Congo (RDC) comme facilitateur en vue de mener les consultations pour le dialogue politique.)

BURUNDI :

RWANDA :

RDC CONGO :

RD Congo: Edem Kodjo nommé pour relever le défi du dialogue
koaci.com/Lundi 18 Janvier 2016

© koaci.com– Lundi 18 Janvier 2016 – La commission de l'Union Africaine (UA) a nommé l'ex Premier togolais Edem Kodjo en République Démocratique du Congo (RDC) comme facilitateur en vue de mener les consultations pour le dialogue politique.

En sa qualité de facilitateur de l'UA en RDC, Edem Kodjo devra œuvrer pour un rapprochement

des points de vue entre les acteurs de la classe politique ceux l'opposition congolaise. Le dialogue en question est proposé par le Président congolais Joseph Kabila mais ne requiert pas totalement l'assentiment de l'opposition.

En attendant d'entamer sa mission, l'ex Secrétaire général de l'Organisation pour l'Unité Africaine (OUA) devra chercher les voies et moyens pour rassembler la classe politique dont les adversaires du Président Joseph Kabila s'opposent à l'idée d'un troisième mandat de l'actuel Chef de l'Etat.

Edem Kodjo reprend un dossier complexe en main là où l'ex envoyé des Nations Unies (ONU), Saïd Djinnit, n'avait pas réussi. Devant l'improductivité de sa mission, le diplomate onusien avait rendu son tablier en juin 2015.

Mensah, Lomé

UGANDA :

SOUTH AFRICA :

South Africa Vows to Avoid Downgrade to Junk, Business Day Says

January 19, 2016/bloomberg.com

South Africa's government, businesses and labor unions must act together to claw back lost fiscal credibility and avoid a credit-rating downgrade to junk, Business Day reported, citing Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan.

"Government is very alive to our environment both global and local so we will make the right decisions in the interests of the country," the Johannesburg-based newspaper reported Gordhan as saying. "We have now reached the point where borrowing more is not the easy answer to our difficulties."

Standard & Poor's cut the outlook on South Africa's BBB- credit assessment to negative from stable last month, indicating it may downgrade the nation's debt to junk. Fitch Ratings Ltd. has an equivalent reading of BBB- with a stable outlook, while Moody's Investors Service has South African debt one level at Baa2.

South Africa will stay on the path of fiscal consolidation, Business Day cited Gordhan as saying. The country has had a "very consistent record in matching action to words and intent on the fiscal side" in the 20 years since democracy, the newspaper reported him as saying.

Gordhan is seeking to reassure financial markets after President Jacob Zuma caused the currency to plunge after last month firing Finance Minister Nhlanhla Nene and replacing him with a little-known lawmaker David van Rooyen. Zuma reconsidered his decision four days later, replacing Van Rooyen with Gordhan, who had held the position for five years through 2014.

Phumza Macanda, a spokeswoman for the National Treasury, didn't immediately answer her mobile phone when Bloomberg News called seeking comment.

TANZANIA :

Tanzania: 80 Ethiopian migrants arrested

18/01/2016/africanews.com

Some eighty Ethiopian migrants have been arrested by Tanzanian authorities in a major crackdown South of the country.

The incident happened on the border with Malawi, officials said.

Most of the migrants were dehydrated and in a bad condition when they were rounded up, local Police said.

“After catching them, we had to have a team of nurses to put them on drips, they were starving, very weak, they were lying on top of each other in that lorry. We had to give them first aid and feed them with porridge before bringing them to Iringa town,” Peter Kakamba, Regional Commander said

Tanzania and Malawi have become key vehicles or dumping grounds for staging posts for people fleeing drought and conflict in countries such as Ethiopia and Somalia, a good number of which may also be trying to enter into South Africa.

Last year, some 100 illegal Ethiopian migrants were arrested in a similar exercise. In 2012, forty illegal migrants from Ethiopia were also found dead after they suffocated inside a truck transporting them.

‘Land loans’ offer Tanzania’s women entrepreneurs chance to grow

19 January 2016/citizentv.co.ke

Mshindi Mayenga, a hairdresser in the Tanzanian capital, had a vision to expand her business.

She wanted to transform her small salon from a dilapidated rented room into a larger ‘main street’ enterprise, but every time she applied for a bank loan her request was turned down.

She did not own her home, or any land, and had no assets to serve as collateral for the loan.

“I was asked to present valuable assets to support my application but I did not have any,” she said.

After a long struggle, the 31-year-old entrepreneur from a bustling Dar es Salaam suburb managed to secure a piece of land on loan, which in turn helped her to access the finance she needed.

Mayenga is among thousands of low-income women entrepreneurs in Tanzania who have acquired registered land on loan, which they can use as security to seek finance to grow their businesses.

As part of its broader policy to empower women, Tanzania Women’s Bank (TWB) has started lending registered plots of land to female entrepreneurs as a way to lift them from poverty.

“I am very happy to buy a plot of land through this arrangement, my loan was approved within days,” Mayenga told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

“I have already started building my house in Kigamboni where my new plot is located, and I hope to use my land title to borrow Tanzanian shillings 10 million (\$5,000) to expand my businesses.”

Despite shouldering the burden of family responsibilities and making up half of the agricultural workforce, women in Tanzania face discrimination when it comes to property rights, campaigners said.

Although Tanzanian law grants women the same rights as men to access, own and control land, and allows them to participate in decision-making on land matters, only 20 percent of women own land in their own names, according to USAID.

PROSPECTS FOR WOMEN

Women’s land rights are set out in the Land Act and the Village Land Act of 1999, which state: “The right of every woman to acquire, hold, use and deal with land, to the same extent and subject to the same restrictions be treated as a right of any man.”

But Tanzania’s customary norms make it difficult for women to own land in their own right. Instead many access it through their spouses or male relatives, meaning they often end up losing it if the men die.

Laws are poorly implemented, denying many women their land rights, campaigners say. A knock-on effect of this is that women have problems accessing credit to enable them to expand small-scale enterprises.

Women’s businesses tend to be smaller, have fewer employees and poorer growth prospects than those owned by men.

TWB, in conjunction with Ardhi Plan – a real estate company – is hoping to improve prospects for women entrepreneurs by lending low-cost land.

“We have realised that most women fail to get bank loans because they don’t have immovable assets as collateral,” Margaret Chacha, TWB Managing Director, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Since the project started a year ago, more than a thousand women entrepreneurs in Dar es Salaam have secured land loans, the bank said.

“We urge women entrepreneurs to seize this opportunity to acquire the plots and get their title deeds which they can use to get capital loans,” Chacha said.

Borrowers are required to deposit at least 30 percent of the plot’s value and pay the rest in instalments until they have paid off the loan and own the land outright. Campaigners have praised the initiative as a model for empowering women entrepreneurs, not just in Tanzania but across East Africa.

In Uganda, a similar project was launched by the Development Finance Company of Uganda in 2007 to help women obtain loans to purchase property to use as collateral.

“I think it is a positive step given that land is an asset whose value appreciates every single day,” said Jane Magigita, the Executive Director of Equality for Growth, an NGO that supports women in the informal sector.

Land registration is a cumbersome process in Tanzania, riddled by corruption and mismanagement, which is why most people lack formal rights to their land, according to Transparency International’s 2013 Global Corruption Barometer.

In Dar es Salaam, almost 70 percent of the city’s 5 million inhabitants live in informal settlements.

But Marina Agostino, who bought a 600 square metre piece of land under the new scheme, said she found it easy to access land through the TWB.

“It is hard to get land through official government channels because of bureaucracy and corruption,” Agostino said.

“I haven’t started construction yet but I intend to build a modest house to rent it out so that I earn more income to invest in my food catering business.”

KENYA :

Kenya: Four Caskets Draped With Kenyans Flags Received at Wilson Airport
19 January 2016/The Nation (Nairobi)

By Fred Mukinda

First batch of bodies of Kenya Defence Force soldiers killed in Somalia have arrived in Nairobi late Monday evening.

Four caskets draped with Kenyan flags were received by the Defence Secretary Raychelle Omamo and top military officers including the Chief of Defence Forces General Samson Mwathethe at the Wilson Airport at 10pm.

Two chaplains and an Imam said prayer before the bodies were carried away in ambulances.

Ms Omamo said a search, rescue and recovery operation is ongoing.

"Consequently we expect to see more of our soldiers in the coming days. We appreciate the support we are receiving from Kenyans. We urge patience and we shall keep the nation abreast. It's a complex situation and we are handling it meticulously," the Defence secretary said.

ANGOLA :

Angola starts murder trial of church group leader and followers
By Reuters/18 January 2016

HUAMBO, Angola, Jan 18 (Reuters) - The leader of a fringe Christian sect in Angola went on trial with 10 of his followers on Monday charged with the murder of nine police officers and attempted murder in central Huambo province last year.

Police say the officers were shot dead during raids which ended with the capture of preacher Jose Kalupeteka, leader of a millenarian sect called "The Light of the World", and his followers last April.

The raids were launched as a part of a drive against fringe Christian church groups now illegal under new rules that require denominations to have 100,000 registered members spread across at least a third of Angola's 18 provinces.

Kalupeteka's church has an estimated 3,000 members.

Angolan opposition party UNITA has said that more than 1,000 civilians were killed when police clashed with members of Kalupeteka's church, though police have said only 13 sect members died.

Defence lawyer David Mendes asked the court for a review of the trial process, arguing his clients had been tortured during detention. The trial will continue on Tuesday.

AU/AFRICA :

W. Africa to 'fight back' as Burkina hotel gunmen named

By AFP/19th January 2016

A source close to the investigation says 20 people were arrested on Sunday and Monday in connection with the attack

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) Monday named three gunmen behind a deadly attack on a top Burkina Faso hotel that has highlighted the growing reach of jihadist groups in west Africa, as French police joined in the probe.

Burkinabe troops fanned out across the capital, Ouagadougou, with security stepped up at key sites as visiting Benin President Thomas Boni Yayi pledged that west African nations would fight back against a mounting terrorist threat.

The toll from the weekend attack rose to 30 late Monday with the death of French-Moroccan photographer Leila Alaoui, Morocco's MAP news agency reported.

She was severely wounded when jihadist gunmen stormed the Splendid hotel and the nearby Cappuccino cafe she was visiting on Friday evening.

Alaoui, who has had several international exhibitions of her work, was on assignment in Burkina for Amnesty International.

A source close to the investigation said 20 people were arrested on Sunday and Monday in connection with the attack, which killed more than a dozen foreigners. Some of those arrested were later released.

Boni Yayi, speaking on behalf of the 15-member Economic Community of West African States, said: "We're not going to just sit on our hands. We will react and respond".

He spoke as details emerged about a delayed, ill-equipped response from Burkina Faso's security forces, which have been weakened by recent political turmoil.

Twenty five of the victims have now been identified, public prosecutor Maiza Sereme told AFP, confirming that six Canadians and eight locals were among the victims.

Internal Security Minister Simon Compaore earlier said the foreign dead also included three Ukrainians, two French nationals, two Portuguese, two Swiss and a Dutch person.

The US State department has said an American also died.

Search for clues

French President Francois Hollande spoke by phone on Monday with his Burkinabe counterpart Roch Marc Christian Kabore, pledging "any assistance needed... for a proper investigation of these heinous acts".

The first such incident in Burkina Faso, it came weeks after jihadists claimed an assault on a top hotel in Bamako, capital of neighbouring Mali, that killed 20 people.

At the Ouagadougou crime scene, an 18-strong team of French investigators, including forensic experts, joined local police combing for clues at the hotel and cafe.

In a statement carried by US-based monitoring group SITE, AQIM said the Splendid Hotel was "one of the most dangerous dens of global espionage in the west of the African continent".

It published photos of the three young gunmen dressed in military fatigues and wielding weapons, identifying them as Battar al-Ansari, Abu Muhammad al-Buqali al-Ansari and Ahmed al-Fulani al-Ansari.

The operation was claimed by AQIM in the early hours of Saturday morning while the attack was still ongoing.

In their earlier statement, AQIM said the gunmen were from the Al-Murabitoun group of Algerian extremist Mokhtar Belmokhtar.

Authorities in Burkina Faso have said the bodies of three assailants had been identified, but several witnesses said they saw more than three attackers and a manhunt was under way for accomplices.

'Equipment issues'

Until recently, Burkina Faso had largely escaped the tide of Islamist violence spreading in the restive Sahel region and the hotel assault will heighten fears that jihadist groups are casting their net wider in west Africa.

Witnesses said security forces waited hours before taking action against the attackers, with the first on the scene poorly equipped.

"Our men were raring to go. We were trained for this," said a gendarme military police source. "We

had equipment issues. No night vision goggles, no bulletproof shields, no door breaching tools."

The elite presidential guard unit, which had a well-equipped and trained anti-terror squad, was disbanded after a coup attempt it staged in September.

Additionally, the authorities jailed the unit's commander, General Gilbert Diendere, who led the intelligence services.

Previously the spying operation had provided intelligence to various countries, including France, during attacks and kidnappings across the region.

The attack began around 7:45 pm (1945 GMT) on Friday when the attackers stormed the 147-room Splendid Hotel in the heart of Ouagadougou.

The hotel and surrounding area became a battleground as local troops, backed by French forces based in the city under a regional counter-terrorism initiative, launched an attempt to retake the hotel around 2:00 am.

In a reminder of the fragile security situation, an elderly Australian couple were kidnapped on Friday in Burkina Faso's northern Baraboule region, near the border with Niger and Mali.

Le groupe jihadiste Aqmi publie la photo des assaillants de Ouagadougou

le 18 janvier 2016/Belga

PARIS

Le groupe jihadiste Al-Qaïda au Maghreb islamique (Aqmi) a publié la photo de trois membres du commando qui a attaqué plusieurs hôtels et un restaurant vendredi à Ouagadougou, faisant 29 morts, a indiqué lundi SITE, une organisation américaine qui surveille les sites internet islamistes. Selon SITE, Aqmi a publié son communiqué dimanche sur la messagerie Telegram et sur Twitter, avec les photos de trois jeunes assaillants, âgés tout au plus de 25 ans, que Aqmi identifie comme al-Battar al-Ansari, Abu Muhammad al-Buqali al-Ansari et Ahmed al-Fulani al-Ansari. Le nom "al-Ansari", commun aux trois jeunes hommes, désigne des combattants autochtones dans la terminologie jihadiste. Le terme Fulani signifie Peuls, une ethnie présente dans une grande partie de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, dont le Burkina Faso. Dans la nuit de vendredi à samedi, alors que l'attaque était toujours en cours, Aqmi avait déjà revendiqué l'opération, toujours selon SITE, en l'attribuant au groupe islamiste Al-Mourabitoune qui a récemment rejoint ses rangs. Dans son nouveau communiqué, Aqmi diffuse la photo de trois assaillants: de jeunes hommes en tenue de camouflage désert, kalachnikov en mains et bonnet noir sur la tête. Cette opération commando est "une goutte d'eau dans la mer globale du jihad", affirme Aqmi, ajoutant que les cibles visées vendredi soir, notamment l'hôtel Splendid, figurent parmi "les repaires les plus dangereux de l'espionnage global dans l'ouest du continent africain". (Belga)

UN/AFRICA :

14 million face hunger in southern Africa, says UN

January 19, 2016/ngrguardiannews.com

ABOUT 14 million people in Southern Africa are facing hunger because of last year's poor harvest,

caused by the El Nino weather pattern, the World Food Programme said.

In a statement released yesterday, the WFP, which is the UN's food-assistance branch, gave warning that the number of people without enough food is likely to rise further in 2016, as the drought worsens throughout the region.

"Worst affected in the region by last year's poor rains are Malawi (2.8 million people facing hunger), Madagascar (nearly 1.9 million people) and Zimbabwe (1.5 million) where last year's harvest was reduced by half compared to the previous year because of massive crop failure," the WFP statement said.

"In Lesotho, the government last month declared a drought emergency and some 650,000 people – one-third of the population – do not have enough food."

The WFP said that food prices across Southern Africa have risen sharply because of the reduced production and availability.

"I'm particularly concerned that smallholders won't be able to harvest enough crops to feed their own families through the year, let alone to sell what little they can in order to cover school fees and other household needs," said Ertharin Cousin, WFP executive director, after a visit to southern Zambia.

Al Jazeera said El Nino, which strictly refers to the surface warming of the eastern and central Pacific Basin, has had a knock-on effect across much of the world.

This naturally occurring phenomenon, which appears every two to seven years, was particularly strong in 2015.

US/AFRICA :

CANADA/AFRICA :

Deaths in African terror attacks not affecting aid, company recruitment

Jan 18, 2016 /Geordon Omand/The Canadian Press

VANCOUVER – Aid organizations and companies working in West Africa say terror attacks like last week's deadly siege in Burkina Faso haven't affected their ability to recruit people willing to work in the troubled region.

Several relief groups and Canadian mining companies say people interested in relocating to the fraught area of the world typically understand and accept the risks.

"Often those who commit to go are well aware of the consequences and the challenges involved," said Idriss Lomba, a spokesman for Doctors Without Borders Canada.

"They know that, like other aid organizations, we tend to go in those dangerous places (with)

hardship conditions.”

On Friday, a group of armed extremists stormed a luxury hotel and cafe in Burkina Faso’s capital city and killed 28 people, including six aid workers from Quebec.

Al-Qaeda has claimed responsibility for the attack, which targeted locations popular with foreigners.

Katharine Harris of Save the Children agreed that people who choose a career in humanitarian work understand the risks, but added that 90 per cent of the organization’s aid workers are locals.

“So, our workers in areas of conflict are typically people who are already conflict-affected and are responding to needs within their own communities,” Harris said in an email.

Plan Canada also emphasizes hiring local as much as possible, said Tanjina Mirza, the social-justice group’s vice-president of international programs.

While recruitment remains unaffected, Mirza said the recent spate of terror attacks has led to government-imposed travel bans that have hindered the organization’s work.

“We have a lot of programming in Burkina Faso, Mali (and) neighbouring countries,” she said. “We cannot go but we need to go because there are enormous needs.”

Canada banned travel to Mali after terrorists took about 170 people hostage, killing 20, at an upscale hotel in Bamako last November. As of Monday, no such outright restriction has been introduced for Burkina Faso.

“Before there used to be clear hot spots, but now it’s becoming countries like Burkina Faso, which were doing fairly well” Mirza said.

“Country after country is affected. It’s difficult to say which country will be next.”

Like humanitarian organizations, companies operating in West Africa don’t appear to be experiencing any recruitment challenges in the aftermath of the attacks.

Vincent Benoit, a spokesman for Endeavor Mining Corp., said the company’s foreign workers are very familiar with the risks, with many of them coming from nearby South Africa.

“Those guys (have) worked for decades in Africa and they know, unfortunately, it could happen,” Benoit said.

It’s the company’s duty to take all measures to ensure the safety of its workers, he added.

Endeavor has gold projects across the region, including Mali, Ivory Coast, Ghana and Burkina Faso.

For up-and-coming Burkina Faso-based mining outfit Roxgold Inc., recruitment has also been business as usual, said spokeswoman Toni Davies.

“The mining industry as such is in an economic lull or downturn so there are a lot of people who are trained in the mining industry who are without employment at the moment,” she said.

Burkina Faso is largely a Muslim country and had for years been largely spared from the violence

carried out by Islamic extremist groups who were kidnapping foreigners for ransom in neighbouring Mali and Niger.

Four of the six people killed in Friday's attacks were from the same family: Gladys Chamberland, her husband Yves Carrier, their adult son Charlelie Carrier and Yves' adult daughter, Maude Carrier.

The other two were family friends, Suzanne Bernier and Louis Chabot.

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU/AFRICA :

Le Maroc arrête un Belge lié aux auteurs des attentats de Paris
le 18 janvier 2016/AFP

Rabat (AFP)

Les autorités marocaines ont annoncé lundi l'arrestation d'un Belge d'origine marocaine "lié directement" aux auteurs des attentats meurtriers de novembre à Paris, alors que l'enquête sur ces attaques se concentre plus que jamais en Belgique.

Le Belge, identifié par ses seules initiales, a été arrêté le 15 janvier dans la ville d'al-Mohammadiya, près de Casablanca, a précisé le ministère de l'Intérieur à Rabat dans un communiqué.

Il est "lié directement à certains auteurs des attentats de Paris" qui ont fait le 13 novembre 130 morts et ont été revendiqués par le groupe jihadiste Etat islamique (EI), a ajouté le texte.

Selon l'enquête marocaine, ce Belge s'est rendu en Syrie avec l'un des kamikazes qui s'est fait exploser dans la région de Saint-Denis. Il a rejoint dans un premier temps le Front Al-Nosra, la branche syrienne d'Al-Qaïda, avant d'être enrôlé par l'EI, a ajouté le ministère.

Durant son séjour en Syrie, il s'est entraîné au maniement des armes et a établi des liens avec des commandants de l'EI, dont "le cerveau des attaques terroristes dans la capitale" française, selon le texte.

D'après l'enquête marocaine, le Belge a quitté ensuite la Syrie pour la Turquie puis s'est rendu en Allemagne et en Belgique avant d'arriver au Maroc via les Pays-Bas.

Le prévenu sera présenté devant la justice dès la fin de l'enquête, selon le communiqué.

Selon le site d'information marocain Le360, proche du palais royal, l'homme appréhendé a été interpellé au domicile de sa mère alors qu'il s'y trouvait seul. Sa mère se trouve actuellement en Belgique et son père est décédé.

Selon le parquet fédéral belge, il s'agit de Gelel Attar.

Il y a deux mois, un renseignement marocain a contribué à mettre les enquêteurs français sur la piste du Belgo-Marocain Abdelhamid Abaaoud, présenté comme le cerveau des attentats de Paris.

Abaaoud a été abattu le 18 novembre 2015 dans un assaut policier à Saint-Denis dans la banlieue parisienne.

Après son élimination, la Belgique avait aussi demandé au Maroc "une collaboration étroite et poussée en matière de renseignements et de sécurité" pour traquer des suspects impliqués dans les attentats de Paris ou préparant de nouvelles attaques.

- Mandat d'arrêt international -

Le quotidien flamand De Standard écrivait lundi sur son site internet qu'Attar avait déménagé en 2013 de façon permanente au Maroc et qu'il avait été condamné par contumace en juillet 2015 à Bruxelles à cinq ans de prison pour appartenance à une organisation terroriste et plusieurs vols. Abaaoud avait été condamné lors du même procès.

Selon un autre journal néerlandophone, Het Nieuwsblad, Gelel Attar est âgé de 26 ans et originaire de Molenbeek, commune bruxelloise à forte population immigrée. Il était depuis mars 2014 sous le coup d'un mandat d'arrêt international délivré par la Belgique.

Deux mois après les attentats de Paris, l'enquête se concentre plus que jamais en Belgique : quatre hommes restent traqués par les polices européennes dont Salah Abdeslam, un Français résidant en Belgique et trois des kamikazes restent à identifier.

Fin décembre, l'armée américaine avait annoncé avoir tué dans un raid en Syrie, le Français Charaffe El Mouadan, membre de L'EI, lié directement à l'instigateur des attentats de Paris. El Mouadan était "lié directement" à Abdelhamid Abaaoud et "préparait activement d'autres attaques en Occident", selon l'armée.

Perpétrées par au moins neuf jihadistes répartis en trois commandos, les attentats à proximité du Stade de France, les rafales de tirs contre des clients attablés à des terrasses de café et la tuerie dans la salle de concerts du Bataclan à Paris, ont fait 130 morts et des centaines de blessés.

Incident entre la France et le Gabon après le passage de Valls à ONPC

18/01/16/Source: Avec AFP

Le Gabon a rappelé son ambassadeur en France suite à une petite phrase lâchée par Manuel Valls lors de son passage remarqué à "On n'est pas couché".

Le moment de tension entre l'humoriste Jérémy Ferrari et le Premier ministre français sur le plateau de Laurent Ruquier fait décidément couler beaucoup d'encre. Le Gabon a en effet décidé de rappeler son ambassadeur après que Manuel Valls sous-entende qu'Ali Bongo, le président gabonais, n'avait pas été élu démocratiquement.

Alors qu'il était interrogé sur la présence du chef d'État africain à la manifestation de janvier 2015, suite aux premiers attentats de Paris, le Premier ministre français a répondu: "Dans cette manifestation, il y avait des chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement. Vous retenez Ali Bongo, moi je retiens surtout un autre Africain, élu lui: Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta. - Ah parce qu'il n'est pas élu Ali Bongo? demande alors Jérémy Ferrari. - Non, pas comme on l'entend", enchaîne Manuel Valls.

La petite phrase a vivement été dénoncée par l'entourage de la présidence gabonaise et qualifiée d'"incongruité irresponsable à huit mois de la prochaine élection présidentielle au Gabon". Dimanche, le pays a rappelé son ambassadeur à Paris pour "consultation", le ministre de l'Intérieur gabonais confiant pour sa part sa "surprise" et son étonnement". L'opposition gabonaise a quant à elle salué les déclarations du Premier ministre français.

C'est déjà la troisième fois que le Gabon rappelle ainsi son ambassadeur de Paris suite à des critiques par des journalistes ou des responsables politique envers le régime d'Ali Bongo.

CHINA/AFRICA :

What's Next for the China-Africa Nexus?

By Yishu Zhou/fairobserver.com/January 18, 2016

The world needs to come to terms with the fact that China's relations with Africa are not self-aggrandizing.

The latest Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), held on December 4-5 in Johannesburg, South Africa, was monumental for a number of reasons—not least Chinese President Xi Jinping's unveiling of an unprecedented \$60 billion development and investment deal in aid of Africa over the next three years.

Gargantuan Chinese financial packages have by now become par for the course during this triennial meeting of Chinese and African leaders, which is also hallmarked by the rhetoric of "mutual benefit" and "win-win cooperation," as the Chinese sought to differentiate themselves from the interventionist habits of their Western counterparts.

The size of the loan, which is almost triple of what was pledged during the previous FOCAC in 2012, is imbued with renewed significance. Most notably, it serves as reassurance of China's enduring support toward Africa, and its long-term ambitions in the continent.

A closer look into the breakdown of the financial package also reveals marked differences. While concessional loans occupied a large proportion of previous pledges, the \$60 billion will be channeled into a diversified portfolio comprising grants and commercial financing for infrastructure projects and capacity building.

An old Chinese adage springs to mind: "If you want to get rich, first you have to build roads." While China is already the foremost infrastructure investor in Africa, it is now promising to provide satellite reception in 10,000 African villages, as well as technical training programs run by telecoms giant Huawei to acclimatize Africa to the digital economy. This is not to mention the all-encompassing "One Belt, One Road" project that would traverse Africa, Central Asia and Southeast Asia in catalyzing new levels of investment and connectivity.

This heavy emphasis on capacity building thus functioned as a strategic move that would impart greater legitimacy into China's plans for Africa, and divert attention from its tendentious relationship with Africa's natural resources and accusations of resource extraction and exploitation. Beyond this exercise in formalism, it also signaled the shifting role of Africa in China's global outlook, and its new methods of economic engagement.

Chinese Interests in Africa

As China attempts to scale up the value chain of its exports industry, and eventually graduate from light industries to innovative manufacturing and industrial upgrading, many of its low-cost manufacturing bases will be relocated to Africa. It is in this way that Africa will become increasingly incorporated into the production and accumulation process, in a move that evidences the de-territorializing nature of capital.

The inclusion of Africa into global value chains has the potential to create employment opportunities, address potential deficiencies in infrastructure, and stimulate its supply-side capacity. A successful example of this is the fledging leather industry in Ethiopia. From a small manufacturing base in Addis Ababa, Chinese shoe company Huajian has created a specialized economic zone that employs over 4,000 locals and exports to Africa, America and Europe. The company also selects university graduates to receive training in China so they can subsequently fill supervisory roles back home.

However, there are also claims that the relocation of manufacturing hubs from China to Africa also effectively amounts to the relocation of polluting industries away from smog-filled China, which is currently bearing the brunt of severe air degradation. Just as China had previously served as the “World’s Factory,” it is now beginning to offload its excess industry and pollution to Africa, as it attempts to reorient its economy and exports toward a more efficient and innovative model.

It is important to note that China was in a similar position to Africa a mere 30 years ago, when it struggled to catch up with the earlier industrializers in Europe and the United States, which not only evaded the scrutiny of the stringent environmental codes most forcefully enforced by the West today, but also similarly employed a process of outsourcing of less lucrative industries to China. This again reinforces how the increasing fragmentation of the processes of production lends itself to an integrated, yet clearly segmented notion of global capitalism, as the locus of these industries are in a perpetual shift from center to periphery.

This might also allow us to step away from hyper-moralized perceptions of China-Africa activities as singularly pernicious or self-aggrandizing on China’s part. The features of Africa’s cooptation into the global economy cannot be said to bear the characteristics of an idiosyncratic model of “Chinese capitalism” alone, but rather reveal the ethics of a global capitalism at large.

The significance of the 2015 FOCAC, in this context, reveals the renegotiation of the identities of China and Africa on the international arena. As China moves toward the status of a global power, with an obligation toward the duties and responsibilities that accompany it, it has taken increasing ownership in its dealings with Africa—from deploying peacekeeping troops to South Sudan to establishing its first overseas military outpost in Djibouti.

Conversely, as Africa is increasingly incorporated into the paradigm of global capitalism, the often eluded question of African agency will emerge at the fore as African actors navigate a path toward development that would best suit them.

INDIA/AFRICA :

South Africa Tourism woos 'intellectual' Kolkatans

Subhro Niyogi/TNN/timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Jan 19, 2016

KOLKATA: Unlike tourists from Goa or Hyderabad that prefer to set their adrenaline racing by indulging in extreme adventures like bungee jumping and shark-edge diving, Kolkatans like a sedate vacation that are cerebrally stimulating like visits to museums, art galleries and theatres. Interestingly, holidayers from Lucknow want a certificate at the end and will do anything that offers them one: be it paragliding or scuba diving!

"Kolkata is the only market in India where tourists ask whether the National Museum is in the itinerary and want experiences like theatre and music thrown in with possible opportunities to interact with artists and craftsmen. This has led to the refinement in the 'made for India in South Africa' campaign to 'made for Kolkata in South Africa' offerings," said South African Tourism country head Hanneli Slabber.

She and other senior officials from South African Tourism (SAT) with an entourage of 50 partners from the travel trade community in the country held a roadshow in Kolkata on Monday to tap potential tourists and showcase three tours designed with them in mind. The first product is the Garden Route Tour from Cape Town. The second is urban life circuit that begins from Johannesburg and concludes in Cape Town. The third is a drive from Durban to Johannesburg. Tourists from Kolkata comprised 7-8% of the 86,000 Indian tourists into South Africa in 2014.

"Kolkatans are very keen on self-drive. Since South Africa is right-hand drive, the same as India, and Indian driving license is valid for up to 90 consecutive days, tourists from the city hire cars and enjoy driving from Durban to Johannesburg. But it is the lifestyle circuit that is most popular among Kolkatans as they get to experience heritage, culture, shopping and safari. Johannesburg being the port of entry and exit to businesses in Africa, one gets to experience the continental Africa in the city as is evident from the textile with designs from Senegal and Mali. The fabric in India and Africa are very different from the rest of the world with use of vibrant colours and bold patterns, unlike the pastel shades and subtle designs elsewhere. In Africa, one has the opportunity to make dresses with a fabric that tells a story," said SAT chief marketing officer Margie Whitehouse.

While the diversity can also be experienced in the cuisine that is available in Johannesburg, given the large number of Gujaratis and Marwaris that travel abroad from Kolkata, the delegation has brought a booklet that offers a guide to vegetarian, vegan and Jain dining in the country. "There are over 100 Indian restaurants in the country and nearly all restaurants offer vegetarian menu and are aware of Jain meals," said SAT general manager (international marketing) Monika Iuel.

Heritage culture is also becoming big with a museum in Johannesburg that retraces Gandhi's experiences in South Africa very popular. Also climbing up the popularity chart is Madiba's Journey. Designed along the lines of the Gandhi Map, it has 27 places of tourist attraction based on Nelson Mandela's life.

The appreciation of the Rupee against local currency Rand by 40% over the past five years has led to the average tourist increasing the length of tour from eight days earlier to 10 days. At Rs 4 to 1 Rand, the average 10 night trip to South Africa costs Rs 1 lakh per head inclusive of travel, accommodation, breakfast and activity.

BRAZIL/AFRICA :

EN BREF, CE 19 Janvier 2016... AGNEWS/DAM, NY, 19/01/2016