

[African states including the East African Community (EAC) member states have been urged to dismantle trade barriers in a move that would enable them to generate an extra \$20bn earnings per annum. A new World Bank report says that Africa's farmers can potentially grow enough food to feed the continent and avert future food crises if countries remove cross-border restrictions on the food trade within the region. "The continent would also generate an extra \$20bn in yearly earnings if African leaders can agree to dismantle trade barriers that blunt more regional dynamism," the report said.]

BURUNDI :

Burundi : Vers la normalisation des approvisionnements en produits pétroliers

lundi 29 octobre 2012/infosplusgabon.com

LIBREVILLE, 29 octobre (Infosplusgabon) - Le Burundi pourrait renouer avec des approvisionnements normaux en produits pétroliers dès le début de la semaine et rompre avec des pénuries sur le marché local qui durent depuis des mois et pénalisent considérablement l'économie nationale, a appris la PANA de source proche du ministère burundais du Commerce à Bujumbura.

Depuis le mois de juillet 2012, les produits pétroliers importés viennent à compte-gouttes suite à des problèmes d'encombrement des bateaux au principal port d'approvisionnement de Dar-es-Salaam, en Tanzanie, à en croire la ministre burundaise du Commerce, Mme Victoire Ndikumana.

Les chargements par camions citernes à destination du Burundi ont commencé mais prendront du temps pour ramener les quantités importées au niveau des 3,5 millions de litres, tous produits pétroliers confondus, dont le pays a besoin pour sa consommation mensuelle, dit-on dans les milieux pétroliers à Bujumbura.

Depuis le mois de juillet dernier, la quantité importée de ces produits pétroliers arrive à compte-gouttes, ce qui a installé le pays dans des pénuries d'une durée sans précédent.

Les consommateurs sont également pénalisés par la liquidation du stock stratégique national en produits pétroliers depuis quelques années pour des raisons qui ne leur ont pas été expliquées.

La dévaluation constante de la monnaie locale, le franc burundais, qui s'observe ces derniers temps n'est pas non plus de nature à motiver les importateurs par peur de pertes au change face au dollar américain.

Le gouvernement a consenti, à la mi-octobre dernier, une augmentation des prix de produits pétroliers à la pompe sur le marché local (entre 70 et 100 francs burundais), mais sans que la solution n'apporte d'amélioration à la situation.

FIN/INFOSPLUSGABON/MIN/GABON 2012

Burundi : Un parti de la majorité présidentielle réclame la légalité et la compétition dans l'attribution des marchés publics

Xinhua/Mardi 30 octobre 2012

BUJUMBURA (Xinhua) - Le Front national de libération (FNL), parti de la majorité présidentielle

burundaise dirigé par Emmanuel Miburo, se dit consterné par la façon dont sont octroyés les marchés publics et demande qu'il y ait égalité des chances et compétition dans l'attribution de ces marchés.

"Seules 5 personnes sont autorisées à obtenir de gros marchés. Parmi elles, figurent de hauts dignitaires de l'Etat qui touchent beaucoup de millions de Fbu allant jusqu'à plus de 5 millions par mois (plus de 3 300 dollars). En plus, elles reçoivent des marchés et perçoivent des milliards et sont même payées avant la livraison des commandes. Nous demandons au président de la République de suivre de près ce dossier. Il faut appeler tous les hommes d'affaire à la compétition", a affirmé Jacques Bigirimana, secrétaire général du parti FNL, cité lundi par la radio Bonesha FM.

Il s'est refusé à dire les noms de ces personnes mais a affirmé qu'il se base sur des rapports écrits dans ses dénonciations.

"Nous demandons au président de la République d'arrêter cette pratique qui ne nous honore pas et qui cause d'énormes pertes au pays car, si tu ne passes pas par ces personnes pour obtenir un marché, tu ne peux rien avoir et le risque, c'est qu'il y a des hommes d'affaire qui vont fuir le pays", a insisté M. Bigirimana.

Le FNL est l'un des quatre partis qui sont dans les institutions avec le parti présidentiel CNDD FDD, le parti UPRONA et le parti Sahwanya Frodebu Nyakuri.

L'autre branche du FNL est dirigé par Agathon Rwaswa qui s'exile après les élections de 2010.

RWANDA :

Rwanda: South Africa Opens Market to Rwanda

29 October 2012/East African Business Week (Kampala)

Kigali, Rwanda — The South African high Commissioner here George N. Twala has said improving trade relations with Rwanda will open investment opportunities in the two countries to benefit from bilateral trade.

"At government level we have done our job, the challenge is for both our people to take the struggle forward," said Twala said while officiating at the Rwanda-South Africa business roundtable in Kigali, Rwanda.

Twala explained the two governments will ensure all barriers to trade are removed, asking the private sector to identify barriers that could hamper trade.

"As government we will ensure that we remove all obstacles, so it is the private sector to tell us the obstacles," Twala noted.

Rwanda is yet to benefit from the 50.6 million South Africa population markets.

This is a move that is likely to boost its export revenues and strengthen the country's service needed to leap frog the economy into anticipated middle income.

Hannington Namara, Chief Executive Officer Rwanda Private Sector Federation (PSF) explained

the South African market provides a ready market for Rwanda exports mainly agricultural products which will see it improve its export revenues need to offset the trade deficit.

"South Africa being a good market for organic products for Rwanda is a fact and it is known," Namara said during a round table meeting between South African investors and Rwandan Business Community in Kigali.

Namara noted that Rwanda traders will access information and assistance concerning the South African market through the trade relations between two countries.

"The first advantage of this relation is to create trade awareness and help our business people have a better way to do business in South Africa," he noted

About the market Namara said, "Whether we can realize our products to a certain standard in form of quality and packaging to suit their requirement is a challenge we have to take on as Rwandans".

Accordingly, South Africa imports surged to over South African Rands 73.6 Billion in August of 2012, composed mainly of machinery, foodstuffs, equipment, chemicals, petroleum products and scientific instruments, with Rwanda able to export food stuff products.

While on the other hand, Rwanda's Growth Domestic Product GDP growth is estimated at 8.6 in 2011 with investment opportunities in rail, air transportation, Agriculture, productivity and value addition, Energy and Tourism.

But Rwandan traders are pessimistic that the relations would be major- minor relations with South Africa benefiting more than Rwanda since South Africa priorities for markets do not fully favour Rwanda.

"When you see South Africa's interest in this partnerships and investments, you find Rwanda may not benefit fully," Frank Mukama, a coffee exporter said.

For example, South Africa is always looking for large markets and purchasing power, large resource bases or possible growth engines.

Mukama also believes that "To build this as a viable partnership is to have an affirmative action for Rwandans to be competitive as well, access capital."

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

Uganda told to repay €4m in aid funds after fraud

By Fionnan Sheahan Political Editor/independent.ie/Tuesday October 30 2012

UGANDA is considering paying back the €4m of Irish aid funds that ended up in a bank account operated by officials from the prime minister's office.

The Government here told the Ugandan prime minister it wants the misappropriated funds to be repaid.

Irish Ambassador Anne Webster and her counterparts from the other countries affected by the €12m fraud met the Ugandan government yesterday.

Prime Minister Patrick Amama Mbabazi, who says he didn't pocket any of the aid, apologised on behalf of his government.

He said he was determined to apply full sanctions, including prosecution, against those implicated in the fraud. Mr Mbabazi said the country's criminal investigation division was very involved from outset.

In addition to two senior officials being charged, one of whom is the principal accountant, 17 have been suspended without pay while the investigation continues.

Investigation

Mr Mbabazi said his government was actively examining the issue of restitution of funds and would be coming back to the donors in the near future.

In a frank meeting, Irish ambassador Anne Webster made it clear the Government expects the funds to be repaid.

The Dail's taxpayer watchdog is set to launch a special investigation into the spending of the country's third world aid budget following revelations of a €4m fraud in Uganda.

Tanaiste Eamon Gilmore has suspended the €16m in aid due to go to the African country through its government after the €4m ended up in an account run by officials from Mr Mbabazi's office.

Ms Webster and other ambassadors met the prime minister in the capital Kampala.

But a member of the Dail's Public Accounts Committee wants a special meeting to deal with how Irish overseas aid is being spent.

Fine Gael TD Simon Harris wants to know what checks and balances are in place to ensure taxpayers' money sent overseas is being utilised as intended.

"Ireland and Irish taxpayers have continued to support overseas aid projects despite the economic difficulties in our own country.

"It is absolutely essential that these funds are spent correctly, arrive in the destination they are intended to and that the State has the appropriate checks and balances in place to ensure that this happens," he said.

— Fionnan Sheahan Political Editor

Uganda Prime Minister unaware of missing Irish aid

30.10.2012/— Nampa-Sapa

Dublin – Ugandan Prime Minister Amama Mbabazi insisted on Sunday he had no knowledge of the alleged misuse of Irish aid by officials in his office, after Dublin suspended all government assistance to Kampala.

Ireland shelved the programme on Thursday when an investigation found that €4m had been misappropriated.

“It’s true some of the payments were made to private accounts of some officials of the ministry in the office of the prime minister. But let me say this: I didn’t even know,” Mbabazi told Irish state radio.

“No money was ever paid to me and I never handle any money. As the prime minister, I never handle the money of government.”

After an investigation, the auditor general of Uganda found significant financial mismanagement by the prime minister’s office in relation to an aid programme in the country.

The Peace Recovery and Development Programme for northern Uganda was established to rebuild the region after decades of conflict and devastation.

It has been supported by Ireland and other donors, including Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

Irish officials flew to Kampala on Friday to launch an investigation, with Foreign Minister Eamon Gilmore suspending all aid to the country while the inquiry takes place.

“I regard it as intolerable that any development assistance should be misappropriated or diverted,” he said on Thursday.

No more aid

He added that Dublin would not provide financial support under its development co-operation programme unless it is clear that the money is being spent for the purpose for which it was allocated.

“Pending the satisfactory resolution of this matter, I have instructed that no further aid funding should be provided through Ugandan government systems,” he said.

Mbabazi apologised to Dublin over the matter and said further investigations were being carried out. He said he never became suspicious of the activities of his officials as his focus was limited to policy.

“I can only say sorry this happened in the Office of the Prime Minister. Of course we do understand the anger that has been expressed by the Irish authorities,” he said.

“My expectation is that more and more people will face prosecution in our courts of law,” he added. While he accepted money was fraudulently paid to private accounts, he said not all of the money paid to private accounts was stolen.

“Some it’s not the case, they used it for the purpose for which it was intended although it was irregularly managed but was actually used for the purpose for which it was given,” he said.

– Nampa-Sapa

SOUTH AFRICA :

Census: SA’s population of 51.8m is still young

by Sue Blaine/bdlive.co.za/ 30 octobre 2012

SOUTH Africa’s population increased by about 7-million to 51,770,560 between 2001 and 2011, Statistics South Africa revealed on Tuesday as statistician-general Pali Lehohla handed President Jacob Zuma the census results in Pretoria.

The country still has a young population, with most of the nearly 52-million under 39 years of age.

Divided by gender, 26,582,769 are female and 25,188,791 male. Along racial lines, 41,000,938 (79,2%) are black, 4,615,401 are coloured, 1,286,930 are Indian or Asian, and 5,586,838 (9,6%) are white.

The largest age group is the under-fives, which Statistics South Africa's demographic analysis executive director, Diego Iturralde, said was due either to an overadjustment for the 5-14 age group in the 1996 and 2001 censuses, or to the HIV pandemic tapering off.

"It could be that HIV (infection) rates have levelled out and fertility has begun to recover," he said.

There are 10.9-million under-fives, 9.3-million children aged 5-9, 8.8-million aged 10-14, and 9.6-million aged 15-19. The second-largest sector of the population is between the ages of 20 and 24, accounting for 10.4-million people.

Of these, 73.5% attend an educational institution (71.5% in 2001; 70.1% in 1996), while the proportion attending private educational institutions has increased from 5.1% in 2001 to 7.3%. Most of those attending private institutions are doing so in Gauteng (16.7%), followed by the Western Cape (7.5%) and the Free State (6.4%).

What will please some is that the proportion of the population that has completed higher education has increased to 11.8%, from 8.4% in 2001 and 7.1% in 1996.

The census showed the average annual household income had more than doubled in the 10 years from 2001 to 2011, to R103,204 from R48,385, while the consumer price index showed income should have increased 77.7% during this period to keep up with inflation.

The figures showed female-headed households' average annual income (R67,330) was just more than half the average annual income of a household headed by a man. Stats SA executive manager Nozipho Shabalala said this did not mean men earned twice as much as women, because many male-headed households included a woman's income too.

Whites are still the wealthiest population group, with white-headed households earning an average annual income of R365,134, black-headed households R60,613, coloured-headed households R112,172 and households headed by Indians or Asians R251,541.

However, white-headed households are proportionally poorer, clocking an average income increase between 2001 and 2011 of 88.4%, while blacks' salaries increased by an average of 169.1%, those of Indian- and Asian-headed households by 145.2% and those of coloured-headed households by 118.1%.

Gauteng's average annual household income is still the highest, at R156,243 (R78,541 in 2001), followed by the Western Cape at R143,460 (R78,157).

The census results do not compare employment rates over the decade from 2001, and Mr Iturralde said comparisons were difficult because each census measured employment rates differently. There was a 2.2 percentage point difference between the Census 2011 employment rate of 56.5% and last year's fourth-quarter labour force survey's 54.3%.

Stats SA's website shows the unemployment rate in the 2001 census at 24%, according to the formal definition of unemployment.

People in short-term or casual employment are more likely to be captured in the quarterly survey than in the census, according to the census document. Mr Iturralde said it was an international phenomenon that a census captured a higher unemployment rate than other measurements.

Gauteng had the highest employment rate, at 70%, followed by the Western Cape at 67.9%, with a drop-off after that to 56.9% in the Free State. The Eastern Cape had the lowest employment rate, at 43.4%.

The census counted 14,450,161 households across South Africa, up from 2001's 11,205,705, the average size of which was 3.4 people compared with 3.8 in 2001. Most (77.6%) live in formal dwellings (68.5% in 2001), with 7.9% in traditional dwellings (14.8% in 2001) and 13.6% in informal dwellings (16.4% in 2001).

Mr Iturralde said the 2011 census did not ask whether a householder's dwelling was provided by the state, but state-provided houses would have been counted as fully owned by the owner. Most South Africans have been counted as owning a fully paid-off home (41.3%), while 11.8% are paying off their homes. A quarter of South Africans rent their homes, with the highest percentage of renters (37.1%) in Gauteng, followed by the Western Cape (28.9%). Limpopo has the lowest percentage of renters, at just 12.6%, while 52.7% of households occupy their homes rent-free — the highest of all the provinces.

According to the census, there has been a rise in the number of orphaned children, in part due to the spread of HIV/AIDS. Among children younger than 17, 3.37-million have lost one or both parents, the census found.

Paternal orphanhood was higher than maternal orphanhood, although the latter has seen an almost twofold increase since 2001. KwaZulu-Natal has the highest number of orphans, followed by the Eastern Cape and Gauteng.

With Nick Hedley

Some South Africa Amplats strikers defy return deadline

Tue Oct 30, 2012 /Reuters/By Sherilee Lakmidas

RUSTENBURG, South Africa (Reuters) - Some striking workers at Anglo American Platinum's (Amplats) Rustenburg mines in South Africa refused to return to work on Tuesday despite an offer by the company to reinstate 12,000 men sacked for taking part in a six-week wildcat walkout.

Months of labour unrest in the mines have hit platinum and gold output, threatened growth in Africa's biggest economy and drawn criticism of President Jacob Zuma for his handling of the most damaging strikes since the end of apartheid in 1994.

However, the number of strikes has dropped in the last two weeks amid management threats of mass dismissals and some payment sweeteners.

At Amplats' Thembelani mine near Rustenburg, 120 km (70 miles) northwest of Johannesburg, hundreds of miners barricaded a road to one of the shafts with burning tyres.

"No one is at work today unless they snuck in," Mayford Mjuza, a worker representative, told Reuters as a police helicopter hovered nearby.

Amplats, the world's biggest producer of the precious metal, said it was still gathering details on attendance at its four strike-hit Rustenburg mines.

The company said last week it had reached a deal with several unions and would be offering sweeteners such as a one-off hardship payment of 2,000 rand (\$230) to end a strike that has crippled production.

A return to work on Tuesday was one of the conditions attached to the deal.

However, workers at Thembelani said they were determined to stay away until Amplats matched a salary increase of up to 22 percent offered by rival Lonmin after a violent wildcat walkout at its nearby Marikana platinum mine in August.

The Lonmin offer came in the wake of the police killing of 34 miners on August 16, the bloodiest security incident since apartheid.

MacDonald Motsaathebe, who has been with Amplats for 12 years, said workers did not agree to the deal struck at the weekend between Amplats and unions including the National Union of Mineworkers.

"We didn't agree to the offer. We want 16,000 rand. Lonmin miners got it, and we want it," said the 35-year-old, whose salary supports nine people. "We earn peanuts."

Workers are expected to meet later on Tuesday.

While the situation at Amplats has yet to be resolved, tensions at other mining companies have eased.

Striking workers at gold firms including AngloGold Ashanti and Gold Fields returned to work last week after threats of mass dismissals and an offer of a small pay increase.

(Additional reporting and writing by Agnieszka Flak; Editing by Ed Cropley)

South Africa's rand slightly firmer, bonds flat

Tue Oct 30, 2012/Reuters

JOHANNESBURG (Reuters) - South Africa's rand was slightly firmer against the dollar on Tuesday in range-bound trading with market players saying debt crisis concerns in the euro zone were casting a cloud over the currency.

By 0643 GMT, the rand was trading at 8.6600 to the greenback, from Monday's New York close of 8.6775.

"We've been basically trading in a range. There's a lot of liquidity not flowing through in the market," said Victor Mphaphuli, senior portfolio manager at Stanlib.

Global trading is expected to be slow with Wall Street firms set to open with limited staffing in New York City later in the trading session due to Hurricane Sandy, which has slammed the U.S. East Coast..

South African government bonds were barely changed, with the yield on the 3-year paper flat at 5.49 percent and that on the 14-year bond up a single basis points at 7.780 percent.

Treasury will sell a total of 2.1 billion rand over a range of its 2031, 2041 and 2048 government bonds in the session. Results are due after the auction closes at 0900 GMT.

Market players will be watching the auction closely as most of the offerings will be on the longer end of the curve with many expecting demand to be relatively tepid.

Mine unrest cuts South Africa growth forecast to 2.5 percent: minister

October 30, 2012/RECORDER REPORT/brecorder.com

South Africa's economic growth will slow to 2.5 percent this year after wildcat mining strikes cost \$1.2 billion and dimmed the outlook for Africa's powerhouse, Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan said Thursday. "Economic growth in South Africa has slowed to just 2.5 percent this year, held back by both global uncertainty and disruptions to domestic production," Gordhan said presenting a budget that cut the country's growth forecast from 2.7 percent.

The forecast is half of that expected for sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. Gordhan also revealed that the country's public deficit rose 0.6 percentage points to 4.8 percent of output this year owing to lower revenues, while public debt rose almost three points to 35.7 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). South Africa ramped up spending after falling into its first post-apartheid recession in 2009, leading to a dramatic widening of the deficit after posting a surplus five years ago.

"We have added more than one trillion rand to government's debt, because of the recession," said Gordhan. "Despite the fiscal stimulus, reinforced by accommodative monetary policy, South Africa's economic recovery has been tepid. Investment, trade and employment growth have remained hesitant."

Forced stoppages at several global mining giants since August has battered exports, curbed revenues and hit the nation's current account, with that deficit set to surge to 5.9 percent of GDP from 3.3 percent last year. "We say very clearly that the problems in the mining area do reflect upon our growth prospects and it's going to still take us some time to understand what the full impact on the growth is, depending how and when these strikes actually end," Gordhan said before addressing lawmakers. The widespread mining strikes which flared out of a deadly six week stand-off at platinum miner Lonmin had a significant effect on the economy, according to the Treasury's medium term budget policy statement which Gordhan presented. "The events at Lonmin's Marikana mine and the spread of industrial action since August have dented confidence and lowered growth prospects for the remainder of the year."

TANZANIA :

Tanzania: Dar Commuter Train Services Take Off

By Pius Rugonzibwa/Tanzania Daily News (Dar es Salaam)/30 October 2012

THE commuter train services in Dar es Salaam were launched in the city on Monday, as the government praised the Tanzania Railways Limited (TRL) for saving the country from spending billions of shillings by rehabilitating coaches and locomotives locally.

Transport Minister, Dr Harrison Mwakyembe, commended TRL engineers and other workers for their patriotic spirit by renovating coaches, wagons and locomotives efficiently and cheaply. "In the past we used to dish out 18bn/- a year for rehabilitation of the same workload, but TRL has done the work at the cost of 2.6bn/- only. This is wonderful. Thank you," the minister said at the launching ceremony.

TRL is reportedly in the final preparations to resume complete central line services from Dar es Salaam to Mwanza. The company currently operates on Dar es Salaam - Tabora - Kigoma and Dar es Salaam - Tabora - Mpanda routes twice a week. Dr Mwakyembe said the government would ensure commuter train services in the city were efficient and sustainable and warned those who plan to sabotage the project.

The minister also said despite having patriotic people in TRL, there were some few workers who were engaged in theft of fuel and other criminal activities. Dr Mwakyembe stressed that the government would not hire expatriates to work with TRL, but warned that it was going to have zero tolerance on dishonest local staff.

He admitted that in some areas the railway line was in a pathetic condition and needed urgent and extensive rehabilitation, noting that the situation would improve gradually. Dr Mwakyembe said the ministry was aware that some people have invaded areas owned by TRL and directed them to vacate within six months.

"We are giving them enough time to leave the areas and pave the way for smooth train operations," he said. According to him, both Tanzania and Zambia Railways Authority (TAZARA) and TRL services on Monday started well with estimates showing TAZARA's first route carried more than 900 passengers.

TRL Managing Director, Mr Kipallo Kisamfu, said an evaluation on the running expenses would be carried out after a while. Mr Kisamfu also said TRL will be receiving and working on public views and comments on the services for further improvement. He said TRL was in talks with some transporters on the possibility of moving an influx of passengers disembarking from the trains at Ubungu Maziwa heading for various areas including Kimara, Mbezi and Kibaha.

TAZARA Station Mistress, Ms Walivyo Maneno, said operations started well yesterday and hinted on a plan where seven more coaches will be added on top of present seven and make it 14 in the near future.

Minister Chikawe implores Africa to safeguard peace

By Lusekelo Philemon/SOURCE: THE GUARDIAN /30th October 2012

Justice and Constitutional Affairs minister Mathias Chikawe has implored African countries to ensure that peace and harmony are maintained in their countries, saying: "The quest for justice has been the foundation of our policy and guiding light."

He made the call here yesterday when speaking during retreat of African Court and People's Rights and the Permanent Representatives' Committee (PRC) of the African Union (AU) officials.

Tanzania, he said, fought tooth and nail, together with African brothers and sisters, to eradicate colonialism and besides making tremendous sacrifices to end the evil of apartheid.

“We believe that justice, equality and respect for human rights are the cornerstones of any meaningful development, and sine qua non for African unity and integration. We do not take these principles lightly, neither do we claim they are easy to realise. But we hold them to be very fundamental to the development of our country and that of our continent,” the minister said.

For her part, African Union Commission political affairs commissioner Dr Aisha L. Abdullahi called on African leaders to increase the number of women judges in the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights, because of their outstanding performance in delivering justice.

She said it was time for African women to showcase their ability and that spirit needs to be supported by AU member countries, by appointing more women in top posts in the continent’s legal sector.

Aisha said the appointment of Justice Sophia Akuffo, as President of the African Court was a clear case that African women “have the ability to manage any top post in the continent.”

“Justice Akuffo, we are proud of you and on my own behalf and that of the AUC, I would like to commend your fellow judges for electing a woman of your calibre and pedigree to head this important institution. Your election is undoubtedly yet another clear manifestation of remarkable progress being made towards ensuring that women occupy important political, executive, legislative and judicial functions on our continent,” she said.

She further noted: “This Court has only two women – the Judge President and my very own sister from Nigeria, Justice Elsie Nwanwuri Thompson – out of eleven judges at the Court. Allow me to take this unique opportunity to implore our leaders and representatives– members of the PRC – to do something about it, and ensure that in the next nominations and election of judges to the Court, our Heads of State and Government will address this imbalance.”

President of the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights Justice Sophia A. Akuffo, said the retreat was aimed at enhancing cooperation and facilitating the effectiveness of the Court to achieve its mandate within the AU.

“In fact, quite unaware of the Court’s plans for this retreat, during the strategic planning process of the Court, one of the recommendations that came out from human rights stakeholders, was the need for the Court to engage with other AU organs, like the PRC,” he said.

“The PRC has a role to play with regard to strengthening the institutional capacity of the Court on matters of programme budgeting, finance and accounting, as well as administrative matters, including the enforcement of the judgments of the Court,” he added.

SOURCE: THE GUARDIAN

KENYA :

Kenya: Two Dead in Protests Over Kisumu Politician's Murder

By Bernard Momanyi/Capital FM (Nairobi)/29 October 2012

Kisumu — Two protesters were killed and five other people - including a police officer wounded in a violent confrontation with security forces, following the murder of ODM politician Shem Onyango Kwegu.

The four were shot and wounded as police battled demonstrators in Kondele slum while the officer was hit by a stone hurled by the protestors near the Nyanza Provincial General Hospital, our correspondent said.

The chaos broke out soon after Kwegu was shot and killed by suspected gangsters on Monday morning as he drove in the town accompanied by his wife.

The demonstrators threatened to torch Kondele Police Station, as anger simmered over increased cases of insecurity in the lakeside city, forcing anti-riot officers to intervene.

Police said Kwegu, who was the Kisumu Town West ODM chairman and aspiring politician, was ambushed by gunmen while driving near a suburb known as Moscow.

He was shot in the head and later succumbed to injuries while undergoing treatment in hospital.

His wife sustained a gunshot wound and was still undergoing treatment at the Aga Khan Hospital in Kisumu on Monday evening, according to police.

On Saturday, a doctor was also attacked and clobbered to death by thugs in the town.

Monday's shooting of Kwegu drew sharp criticism over the inability of the police to stem rising insecurity in the lakeside city.

Protesters also accused police of abetting crime at the expense of protecting lives and property.

Muhoroni MP Ayiecho Olweny and his Kisumu Town East counterpart Shakeel Shabbir are among leaders who condemned Kwegu's killing and accused the police of failing to perform their duties.

Locals said they would hold a public security meeting on Tuesday to discuss the deteriorating security situation in the town.

Kisumu City Residents Association vice-chairman Audi Ogada said there was need for an overhaul of police officers in Kisumu.

"The killing of innocent people in Kisumu is now worrying and we won't allow police officers who have overstayed in their stations and continue colluding with thugs to be in charge of our security," he said.

Audi said the changes that were made only target the top police officers yet some junior officers have overstayed at various stations in the city.

"We need an overhaul on the police force in Kisumu. Transfers targeting the provincial police boss, criminal investigation departments heads will not solve the situation in Kisumu," said Ogada.

On Saturday, a doctor was also attacked and clobbered to death by thugs in the town.

There has been relative calm in Kisumu following the recent emergence of two rival gangs.

Kwegu was in the forefront of bringing the two warring groups together to denounce violence and embrace peace in Kisumu city, which is one of the towns that was hard hit by the 2008 post-election violence.

Police did not issue any statement over the Monday's killing, as Kisumu boss Moses Kongoli avoided the media.

Recently, a night watchman was killed and Sh200,000 stolen from a local church.

Kenya: Prime Minister Asks for Forgiveness

29 October 2012/Capital FM (Nairobi)

Nakuru — Prime Minister Raila Odinga has appealed to all ODM Members of Parliament who have left for other parties due to differences with him to rejoin the party and form a formidable team to win the next election.

Saying the apparent differences especially with Members of Parliament from the Kalenjin community were instigated and propagated by those who did not wish the party well, Odinga asked for forgiveness from anyone he could have wronged while executing his duties as the Prime Minister.

"Human is to err, and if I have offended anyone in the cause of my duties as Prime Minister, I ask for forgiveness. Let us look forward and continue to work together as before."

Odinga was speaking at Ngata farm in Nakuru county where he held consultative talks with leaders from the Kalenjin community.

Noting that some of the reported differences with members of the community could have arisen from cases facing four Kenyans including Eldoret North MP and URP party leader William Ruto at the ICC over post-election violence, Odinga reiterated that he had no powers over the Hague process.

"Even if I had the powers would I have taken Mr Ruto and Mr Kosgey (Industrialization Minister who was acquitted) to the Hague when they were my foot soldiers?" he posed.

Odinga however stated that ODM was willing to give evidence at the ICC if asked to prove the innocence of Ruto and expressed optimism that the truth shall set him free.

He admitted that they had held talks with Ruto regarding an arrangement that could make them work together to win the presidency of the country and added that the talks were still ongoing and that he had made representations to him(Ruto) which he was still awaiting response.

The PM also touched on the Mau issue saying his role was only to implement government directives that had been endorsed by the Cabinet. "My role therefore was to only implement Cabinet decisions that some of those now blaming me were privy to," he added.

On the issue of not bailing out ODM youth who had been arrested for demonstrating against the results of the bungled 2007 election, Odinga explained that he raised the issue in the Cabinet and the Attorney General was instructed to produce the list of those arrested. "Many of the youth were released after my intervention, it is therefore unfair to blame me for abandoning them in jail," he said.

Leaders who spoke at the function endorsed Prime Minister Raila Odinga for the presidency of the country and mandated him to continue engaging with the Eldoret North MP and URP party leader to

find a way of both of them agreeing to run on a single party ticket in the coming general election.

The leaders said the two leaders should find a solution to the issues that tore them apart and by extension the Kalenjin community from ODM, and find a convergence point with a view to forging a common ground to face the election together.

Speaker after speaker who were drawn from Nakuru, Baringo, Kericho, Bomet and Narok counties pointed out that the issues that caused a rift between the community and the Prime Minister were not big enough to alienate them from the Prime Minister and the Orange party.

Noting that a majority of residents of the Rift Valley still supported ODM, the leaders said URP was formed so that communities in the Rift Valley could also have a party they could call their own.

Emphasizing that they will not gamble with their lives by voting for people simply because they belonged to a party that was popular in the region, the leaders said they will persuade the electorate in the area to vote for a president who had leadership qualities that could take the Rift Valley and the country at large to the next level.

They noted that the Rift Valley was the most affected by the post election violence, and stated that Kenyans would not want to go that direction again. They called for fairness in the allocation of resources and job placements in the region and the country at large saying the feeling that some communities had been left out was the cause of the frequent clashes between different communities residing in the area.

The meeting was attended by Ministers Henry Kosgey, Musa Sirma, James Orengo, Paul Otuoma and Assistant Ministers Beatrice Kones and Magerer Langat and MP Wilson Litole.

Kenya: Mombasa Chaos Threatens Tourism

By Humphrey Liloba/East African Business Week (Kampala)/29 October 2012

Nairobi — The Kenyan economy could be headed for a serious blow following a sustained spate of violence in the Coast region long considered as the bedrock of the country's tourism industry.

The twin challenge of demands by a secessionist group and tribal clashes between the Muslim Somali and traditional Mijikenda in the region threatens to dwarf the efforts the government had made in marketing Kenya as a safe tourist destination.

The Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) a loose, uncoordinated collection of communities living at the Coast has slowly but surely been amassing numbers and is now demanding secession from the rest of the country on account of marginalization in terms of development by successive governments in Kenya.

On the other hand, the decision by the now defunct Boundaries Review Commission to lump the Somalis and Pokomo into Tana River County has led to incessant fighting over which community should produce the inaugural governor of the county. The fighting has already seen close to 200 people dead, houses torched and thousands displaced.

The two scenarios have seen the Nairobi-based government respond by deploying a battalion of the dreaded General Service Police Unit (GSU) to the region in a crackdown that has netted top officials of the MRC and suspected perpetrators of violence in the Tana Delta.

Top leaders of the MRC led by their chairman Omar Mwamnuadzi, secretary general among others are now languishing in custody after the government slapped them with unmanageable bonds ranging from \$23,000 onwards.

Although relative peace has been realized in the area, reports of cancelations of bookings by tourists fearing for their safety are all over the industry with some foreign missions warning their natives against travelling to Mombasa and the region in general.

It has been a difficult year for Kenya's tourism industry with the first quarter having largely been marred by terrorist activities, kidnappings and war activities mostly fronted by the Somali ragtag militia, the Al-shabaab. The Kenya Defence Forces are deep into Somali trying to crush the group that was causing a serious affront to Kenya territorial sovereignty.

Last year, Kenya raked in over \$1 billion from the tourism industry with the figure expected to shrink significantly this year on the back of the violence in the region, an erratic Kenyan shilling against the dollar, anxiety over the fourth coming elections among other factors.

The world will be watching keenly how the retirement-bound Mwai Kibaki and Presidential Hopeful and Prime Minister Raila Odinga handle these crises as the Coast region is key to Kenya's economic growth and development.

However, on the MRC bid, one thing is for sure, that the central government must advance a stick and carrot approach. In as much as it should crackdown on secessionist calls, the government must also listen to the pleas of marginalization by the locals.

ANGOLA :

AU/AFRICA :

London headlines

October 30, 2012 / by beyondbricks/blogs.ft.com

- * South Africa reaches 'tipping point'
- * US seeks Algeria help in Mali
- * Romney ad on Chrysler jobs to China attacked
- * Terra of Mauritius seeks \$200m sugar expansion in Africa
- * Yingluck reshuffles Thai cabinet
- * Syria violence marks end of failed truce
- * Markets: mixed

South Africa reaches 'tipping point'

South Africa is at a "tipping point" and the power of the African National Congress will decline amid public "despondency" if the ruling party fails to renew itself according to Kgalema Motlanthe, the country's deputy president, the FT reports.

http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/1289ac06-211b-11e2-9720-00144feabdc0.html?ftcamp=published_links%2Frs%2Fcompanies_energy%2Ffeed%2F%2Fproduct

US seeks Algeria help in Mali

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton pressed Algeria's leaders on Monday to support a broader Africa-led military intervention into northern Mali, where US intelligence agencies fear al Qaeda and other Islamist extremists are establishing an independent operating area to target American and European interests, the WSJ reports.

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204840504578086640858688684.html?mod=WSJ_World_LeadStory

Romney ad on Chrysler jobs to China attacked

A television advertisement by Mitt Romney's campaign that suggests the US carmaker Chrysler is shipping jobs to China has become the latest focal point in the fierce battle for Ohio in the presidential campaign, the FT reports.

<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/e408c3ce-21f3-11e2-9cb4-00144feabdc0.html>

Terra of Mauritius seeks \$200m sugar expansion in Africa

Terra Mauricia, a Mauritian investment company, plans to build or buy a third sugar factory in Africa at a cost of about \$200m as growth in its domestic market peaks, Bloomberg reports.

Yingluck reshuffles Thai cabinet

Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra has consolidated her position with a sweeping cabinet reshuffle nearly 16 months after she was sworn into office, the FT reports.

<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/17bf8064-2158-11e2-9720-00144feabdc0.html>

Syria violence marks end of failed truce

International efforts to impose a brief truce in Syria have failed, the UN chief admitted on Monday, as a new wave of violence underscored the crisis facing the country's people as winter starts to take hold, the FT reports.

<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/4d84c4c4-21d6-11e2-9cb4-00144feabdc0.html>

Emerging Markets

MSCI Emerging Market Index up +0.17% at 991.91

Americas

DJIA up +0.03% at 13,107

S&P 500 down -0.07% at 1,412

Bovespa down -0.17% at 57,177

Asia

Nikkei 225 up +0.37% at 8,963

Topix up +0.22% at 741.94

Hang Seng down -0.48% at 21,408

Shanghai Composite up +0.09% at 2,061

MSCI Asia ex-Japan up +0.17% at 514.20

S&P CNX Nifty Index up +0.22% at 5,678

Currencies

€/ \$ 1.29 (1.29)

\$/¥ 79.82 (79.77)

Commodities

Brent Crude (ICE) down -0.38 at 109.06

Light Crude (Nymex) down -0.27 at 85.27

100 Oz Gold (Comex) up +1.30 at 1,709

Africa: Trade Barriers Cost Africa U.S.\$20 Billions Yearly

By Leonard Magomba/East African Business Week (Kampala)/29 October 2012

Dar es Salaam — African states including the East African Community (EAC) member states have been urged to dismantle trade barriers in a move that would enable them to generate an extra \$20bn earnings per annum.

A new World Bank report says that Africa's farmers can potentially grow enough food to feed the continent and avert future food crises if countries remove cross-border restrictions on the food trade within the region.

"The continent would also generate an extra \$20bn in yearly earnings if African leaders can agree to dismantle trade barriers that blunt more regional dynamism," the report said

With as many as 19 million people living with the threat of hunger and malnutrition in West Africa's Sahel region, the Bank report urges African leaders to improve trade so that food can move more freely between countries and from fertile areas to those where communities are suffering food shortages.

The World Bank expects demand for food in Africa to double by the year 2020 as people increasingly leave the countryside and move to the continent's cities.

According to the new report dubbed 'Africa Can Help Feed Africa: Removing barriers to regional trade in food staples', rapid urbanization will challenge the ability of farmers to ship their cereals and other foods to consumers when the nearest trade market is just across a national border.

Countries south of the Sahara, for example, could significantly boost their food trade over the next several years to manage the deadly impact of worsening drought, rising food prices, rapid population growth, and volatile weather patterns.

With many African farmers effectively cut off from the high-yield seeds, and the affordable fertilizers and pesticides needed to expand their crop production, the continent has turned to foreign imports to meet its growing needs in staple foods.

"Africa has the ability to grow and deliver good quality food to put on the dinner tables of the continent's families," said Makhtar Diop, World Bank Vice President for Africa.

However, Diop said, "This potential is not being realized because farmers face more trade barriers in getting their food to market than anywhere else in the world. Too often borders get in the way of getting food to homes and communities which are struggling with too little to eat."

The new report suggests that if the continent's leaders can embrace more dynamic inter-regional

trade, Africa's farmers, the majority of whom are women, could potentially meet the continent's rising demand and benefit from a major growth opportunity.

It would also create more jobs in services such as distribution, while reducing poverty and cutting back on expensive food imports. Africa's production of staple foods is worth at least \$50bn a year.

Moreover, the new report notes that only five percent of all cereals imported by African countries come from other African countries while huge tracts of fertile land, around 400 million hectares, remain uncultivated and yields remain a fraction of those obtained by farmers elsewhere in the world.

The report said transport cartels are still common across Africa, and the incentives to invest in modern trucks and logistics are weak. The World Bank report suggests that countries in West Africa in particular could halve their transport costs within 10 years if they adopted policy reforms that spurred more competition within the region.

Other obstacles to greater African trade in food staples include export and import bans, variable import tariffs and quotas, restrictive rules of origin, and price controls. Often devised with little public scrutiny, these policies are then poorly communicated to traders and officials.

This process in turn promotes confusion at border crossings, limits greater regional trade, creates uncertain market conditions, and contributes to food price volatility.

A competitive food market will help poor people most, the report notes. For instance, poor people in the slums of Nairobi pay more for their maize, rice, and other staple food than wealthy people pay for the same products in local supermarkets.

The report underlines the importance of food distribution networks which in many countries fail to benefit poor farmers and poor consumers.

"The key challenge for the continent is how to create a competitive environment in which governments embrace credible and stable policies that encourage private investors and businesses to boost food production across the region, so that farmers get the capital, the seeds, and the machinery they need to become more efficient, and families get enough good food at the right price," the World Bank's Lead Economist for Africa and principal author of the report, Mr. Paul Brenton said.

World Bank Group support for trade and agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa and is recognized as a key source of knowledge on trade policy issues, analysis and investments for trade-related infrastructure at the country level.

The share of trade-related lending in total Bank lending has also grown from an average of 2% in 2003 to 5% in 2012 financial year. New trade-related commitments in 2013 are expected to increase to \$3bn, 70% of which will go to Africa.

Since 2008, World Bank Group lending for agriculture and related sectors in sub-Saharan Africa total approximately \$5.4bn.

Africa: AU to Establish Food Safety Body

By Théogène Ishimwe/The New Times/30 October 2012

The African Union (AU) aims to institute a food safety authority as well as a Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF), so as to boost trade competence and avert food-borne diseases.

This was announced at the opening of a two-day workshop in Kigali yesterday.

Prof. Ahmed El Sawalhy, the Director of the AU's Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources, which organised the workshop, observed that the establishment of the authority would boost trade and uplift the living standards of Africans, especially those in rural areas.

The workshop attracted food safety specialists and managers from member states and representatives from regional economic communities and the African Union Commission.

Officially opening the workshop, the Minister of Trade and Industry, Francois Kanimba, said the continent ought to have the food safety body based on the European model but tailor-made for Africa.

"In other parts of the world, such as European Union, there exists the "European Food Safety Authority and a Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed" (RASFF). Our body could be along similar lines but taking into consideration the several food safety, cultural, social, economical, political and even scientific peculiarities of our continent," he suggested.

Kanimba noted that Africa incurs huge losses in international trade due to food safety issues.

The minister pointed out that African food exports are at times destroyed or refused entry into developed markets thus leading to losses.

"This means that any initiative, be it at the AU or individual member state level aiming to improve food safety by particularly complying with international food standards, will not only reduce food losses and increase food availability in the continent, but also promote exports from our countries by taking advantage of international trade opportunities, thereby increasing incomes, prosperity and wellbeing of our citizens," said the minister.

The Food Desk Coordinator at the Uganda's National Drug Authority, Dr Agaba Edson Friday, stressed that food safety has a security aspect as some traders sell intentionally contaminated food. He called for the punishment of such offenders whose interest outweighs people's health.

He further observed that Rwanda was doing well in terms of food safety but called for resolving of outstanding issues.

Islamist rebels vow assault on Malian capital if international forces attack

Afua Hirsch in Bamako/guardian.co.uk/Monday 29 October 2012

Movement for Tawhid and Jihad in West Africa claims rebels are strengthening and foreign intervention would galvanise support

Islamist rebels will attack Mali's capital city if international military intervention is launched to regain control of the country's north, a senior member of an insurgent group closely linked to al-Qaida has told the Guardian .

Oumar Ould Hamaha, head of security for the Movement for Tawhid and Jihad in West Africa (Mujao) claimed that rebels have recruited thousands of new fighters and warned that intervention

would galvanise the international jihadist movement.

"If an international or Malian military force attacks us, we will take Bamako in 24 hours," Hamaha said in a telephone interview. "The international community is slow to strike because it knows that if it does, it will spark a worldwide jihad.

"Plans for a military intervention do not diminish in any way our determination to promote jihad," Hamaha added. "We are convinced that with the help of Allah we will defeat any army coming. We have the support of the local people, and we have people from all parts of Africa coming to join us. We are ready to die."

The defiant rhetoric from Mujao – which together with al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Ansar Dine control the northern two-thirds of Mali, including military bases, airports and several towns – came as US secretary of state Hillary Clinton arrived in Algeria to rally support for intervention.

Earlier this month, the UN security council adopted a resolution underscoring its "readiness" to send an international force to drive Islamists out of northern Mali, setting a deadline at the end of next month for a firm plan for military action. Mali is working on plans involving troops from the Mali army and west Africa regional bloc ECOWAS, with training, logistics and intelligence support from France, the US and other countries.

But military action would probably require the support of Algeria, which initially opposed intervention. The country shares an 2,000km desert border with Mali – seen as a key route for illicit trade of arms and drugs in and out of Mali – while many insurgents fighting in northern Mali are reported to be of Algerian origin.

"There is a strong recognition that Algeria has to be a central part of the solution," said a US official, who added that the situation in northern Mali would be a "central focus" of Clinton's talks with the Algerian president, Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

The role of the US in combatting AQIM in northern Mali has been a source of controversy in recent weeks. Hamaha told the Guardian the Mujao was aware that US surveillance drones were operating regularly in the region already, and that the unmanned aircraft were having the effect of encouraging support for the Islamist cause in northern Mali.

"We see drones passing overhead all the time. This is not something we take seriously – we are not afraid of drones. On the contrary, by trying to intimidate us, the west is only sharpening the sword we will use against it."

Experts said rebel threats to attack southern parts of Mali could not be discounted. "I think the claims about Bamako are mostly posturing, but we cannot rule out the possibility of attacks outside of northern Mali," said Andrew Lebovich, a researcher on the Sahel and north Africa. "AQIM and Mujao have operated beyond the confines of northern Mali in the past, and these groups do have the capability to stage attacks elsewhere, although it would be difficult given the attention on these groups at the moment."

Hamaha said that there were no prospects of negotiation.

"We don't recognise any government in Bamako," Hamaha added. "The minister of defence called me to talk about negotiating towards a secular state. I told him it's sharia or the sword. No sharia, no dialogue. Our mission is straight. There is no negotiation to be had."

The Mali government refused to comment on the status of its negotiations with the groups, but the head of the EU delegation in Mali said that negotiations were still considered a potential alternative to conflict in northern Mali.

"No one is talking about military intervention as if it is the end of the track," said Bertrand Soret, EU chargé d'affaires in Mali. "We have been pushing for dual track approach – negotiations and building up military force. We are not recommending talking to terrorists, but we are pushing for the Malian authorities to deal with some of the groups from their side."

UN/AFRICA :

US/AFRICA :

Algeria: Clinton in Algeria for Talks On Mali

29 October 2012/Tunis Afrique Presse (Tunis)

Algiers — US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was in Algeria Monday to press for possible military intervention in neighbouring Mali, where Islamic extremists have taken over large parts of the country.

Secretary Clinton talked with Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika about backing West African efforts against the Islamic extremists in northern Mali.

The UN Security Council has called on West African nations to ready a military force against al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), which is tightening its grip on the north of Mali. Rebels and extremists essentially partitioned the country after a coup in March.

Clinton said AQIM is working with other extremists to undermine democratic transitions in North Africa, and played a role in the September attack on the U.S. mission in the Libyan city of Benghazi that killed Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans.

A US State Department official travelling with Clinton said Algeria's role in a resolution to the crisis would be a "central focus".

CANADA/AFRICA :

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU /AFRICA :

EU to support development of sustainable energy in Africa

MENAFN - Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) / 30/10/2012

(MENAFN - Kuwait News Agency (KUNA)) EU Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs will begin a two-day visit to Ghana on Tuesday to take part in a High Level Forum "Towards Sustainable Energy for All in West-Africa".

This event is expected to result in the adoption of a regional renewable energy policy and an energy efficiency policy.

"One of my priorities is to promote the development of sustainable energy in Africa; Ghana is one of our most committed partners. We will also support West Africa, firmly in line with the EU's objective to provide access to energy to 500 million people in developing countries by 2030," said Piebalgs in a statement prior to his departure.

During his visit he will announce EU financial support to Ghana's efforts in tackling maternal health and to improve the role of local authorities.

"Ghana is a democratic and economic role model in the region. I am looking forward to discussing how we can deepen our political dialogue and ensure the country's sustainable and solid development," added Piebalgs.

EU Weighs Options for Helping Mali

By Horand Knaup, Gordon Repinski and Christoph Schult/spiegel.de/10/29/2012

The European Union wants to help the Malian army recapture the renegade north from terrorists with a military mission. But the French and the Americans have already been operating in the region for years without success. Can EU intervention really make a difference?
Info

When the French foreign minister talks about Africa in the European Council, his counterparts from other European capitals listen very carefully. Because of their colonial past, France's diplomats are viewed as experts on Africa.

This was also the case on Monday two weeks ago, when the foreign ministers of European Union member states came together in Luxembourg to discuss the division of the West African country of Mali. French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius used drastic language to warn of the "terrorist threat" developing in the northern part of the country. He made the case for an EU military mission to the country, saying: "Europe cannot simply stand on the sidelines."

Previously, French President François Hollande had used similar arguments to persuade German Chancellor Angela Merkel. But what politicians in Paris glossed over is that France has been fighting Islamic fundamentalists in the Sahel for years -- with its own elite soldiers, with instructors for the Malian army, with money and equipment and, most of all, without success.

Last Monday, Merkel had hardly given marching orders of sorts to high-ranking officers in Strausberg, near Berlin, telling them that "Mali's armed forces need support," when the political

debate began in Berlin. Economic Cooperation and Development Minister Dirk Niebel, a member of the business-friendly Free Democratic Party (FDP), the junior partner in Merkel's center-right coalition government, warned that the country could turn into a "second Afghanistan," and said that he believed "Germany's fundamental interests" are in jeopardy in the Sahel. Defense Minister Thomas de Maizière, a member of Merkel's conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU), was more reserved, but did make it clear to his generals that even a training mission could last "a few years." Military officials like Harald Kujat, the former general inspector of the German armed forces, the Bundeswehr, expressed concerns that there is a great "risk that this could turn into an armed conflict."

Skepticism also prevails in the German parliament, the Bundestag. "Let's not jump the gun," warns Florian Hahn, a defense expert with the Christian Social Union (CSU), the CDU's conservative Bavarian sister party. "We should tell ourselves what it is we want in Mali before running after Paris's interests," says FDP parliamentarian Elke Hoff.

Growing Concerns

In fact, the French have been the most enthusiastic about moving forward with a military mission. The Elysée Palace has believed for years that French interests in the Sahel zone are under threat. Faced with attacks, abductions of French citizens and shootings, Hollande's predecessor, former President Nicolas Sarkozy, already felt that the region was one of his most significant challenges on the foreign policy front. In July 2010, then Foreign Minister François Fillon announced: "We are at war with al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb."

Now the rest of the Western world is also concerned about developments in divided Mali. Islamists have seized power in the northern part of the country, where they have established an archaic legal system that includes stoning, whipping and amputation, in addition to forcing hundreds of thousands to flee the region.

The transitional government in the capital Bamako appealed for help, as did the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Even the United Nations Security Council favors intervention.

France and the United States want the entire EU to participate. The German government is preparing to send several dozen soldiers as part of the mission, and Defense Minister de Maizière says that he cannot rule out the possibility that they will be involved in armed combat.

The plans are being treated with great discretion in Brussels. Catherine Ashton, the EU's high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, describes the deployment options in a confidential, eight-page report. The situation in Mali, the report reads, constitutes a direct threat to the overall security of the European Union, as well as increasing the risk of terrorist attacks on European soil.

The military experts agree that European combat units will not intervene in Mali, at least not for the time being. The EU plans to provide the Malian government with instructors, money, military equipment and reconnaissance images. But is that enough? Can EU instructors sufficiently build up the ECOWAS troops and Malian soldiers so that they are capable of expelling the Islamists from the region?

Little Success in Recent Years

To stabilize the situation, French and US experts have been trying for years to improve the

condition of the Malian army. But the effort has been relatively unsuccessful, as evidenced by the military coup that ousted President Amadou Touré last March. The north declared its independence soon afterwards.

The desolate state of the Malian army is revealed in reports from the US embassy in Bamako published by WikiLeaks. The commanding officers were interested in a lot of things, just not in rapidly improving the fighting capacity of their soldiers. There is a long list of failures and handicaps, including elite units that are poorly equipped and wear sandals, demoralized troops from the south who show little enthusiasm for being sent to slaughter in the north and a lack of ammunition for training purposes.

When US observers visited a military outpost in northern Mali, they described it as a picture of misery: "Living conditions on the base are ... harsh. Meals for the troops consists of sandy rice with bean sauce. Meat is extraordinarily hard to come by." The situation for deployed troops is "considerably worse," the observers' report continues. "Lacking shelter, the troops sleep under their vehicles, and often run short of drinking water."

Mission Options

Now these very soldiers are to be trained, partly by Bundeswehr instructors, and brought to a level at which they can prevail against the heavily armed desert combatants. Military officials and security experts in Brussels are working feverishly on preparations for the mission, which could consist of one of three likely variants:

An advisory mission, known as EUSEC in the jargon of Brussels experts. Its goal would be to instruct Malian officers and noncommissioned officers at three military schools, including one in the city of Gao in the north, which is currently in the hands of the Islamists. This would require an estimated several dozen EU military trainers. Another aspect would include professionalizing the work of the general staff.

A training mission (EUTM), which would require sending some 150 instructors to Mali for at least two years. Each of them would train a battalion (up to 800 soldiers) in one of four locations. The Europeans are also considering training an elite unit that could spearhead the fight in the north.

A training mission with involvement in combat operations (EUTM+) that would accompany the Malian units into the war zone after their training is complete. The EU would deploy 400 to 500 of its own troops for this purpose. According to the EU, it would constitute "a military presence in the field, with direct involvement in the fighting."

Potential Failure

The problem with this is that EU governments want to minimize the risk for their soldiers. But this modest deployment would have "little effect in the short term," warn experts with the European External Action Service.

Proposals over what to do about Mali raise significant doubts elsewhere too. "A military intervention comes with enormous dangers," says Philippe Hugon, research director at the Institute for International and Strategic Relations in Paris. "Even after a recapture of the north, the effects of a military campaign on the country would be unforeseeable."

The Tuareg, who are currently suffering greatly at the hands of the Islamists, also warn against foreign intervention. Their representatives told members of the European Parliament in Strasbourg last week that al-Qaida is no longer popular in the northern part of the country, but that an offensive supported by the West could revive the terrorist group.

The mission threatens to become a failure, particularly because time is running out. If the Malian army and the West African intervention force hope to invade the north before the hot summer, the Europeans will have to begin their training activities in the winter. And if they delay the mission, the Islamists will have plenty of time to strengthen their positions.

Translated from the German by Christopher Sultan

CHINA/AFRICA :

Africa's first Nobel laureate in literature visits China

Updated: 2012-10-29/By Mei Jia (chinadaily.com.cn)

Wole Soyinka — the first African writer to win the Nobel Prize in Literature — kicked off his first visit to China on Monday.

The playwright and poet, born in Nigeria in 1934, will stay for a week. He will give three speeches in Beijing and tour Shanghai and Suzhou briefly after an invitation by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Renmin University.

Soyinka said at a speech at CASS that he has a strong interest in China's culture. "I'm greedy when it comes to new experiences," he said.

Soyinka won the Nobel Prize in 1986 for being a writer "who in a wide cultural perspective and with poetic overtones fashions the drama of existence".

Regarding the prize, he told a group of reporters before Monday's speech that "it's just a Nobel Prize, but people don't believe me when I say this."

He said he noticed the huge celebrations after Chinese writer Mo Yan won the same prize on Nov 11. "We had a massive celebration back in my country too when I won," he said.

"Of course the money of the prize is important for a poor writer like me," he said, adding that he used the money to build a house to be used as a retreat for other writers and expand his wine collection.

He has been associated with political activities that overthrew British colonialism and brought down dictators. Being imprisoned and expelled at times, Soyinka has a rich life experience that he presents in his plays and poems.

"Politics is one part of my writing," Soyinka said. "But political fashion changes, literature remains."

With degrees in English literature, he's also been teaching in British and American universities, including Yale, Harvard and Oxford.

"In my class of comparative literature, I've expanded the reading material from colonial literature to Asian literature, which includes Chinese and Japanese literary works," he said.

During the visit, Soyinka will also meet Chinese writers such as Yan Lianke, Xu Zechen and Zhang Yueran.

INDIA/AFRICA :

BRAZIL/AFRICA :

Latin flair at DISCOP Africa

Tue, 30 Oct 2012 /screenafrica.com

Leading distributor of TV content for and from Africa, Côte Ouest Audiovisuel, will collaborate with Brazilian TV giant Globo TV International and the Brazilian Independent TV Producers Association at DISCOP Africa 2012, which runs at Johannesburg's Sandton Convention Centre from 31 October to 2 November.

The collaboration will reflect the impact Brazilian telenovela content has made on the African TV industry. Côte Ouest will also host Globo TV International on its stand during the event.

At DISCOP Africa the companies will promote Brazilian TV content and explore new partnerships within and between African and Brazilian content producers. The collaboration forms part of Côte Ouest's long-standing relationship with Globo TV International as the company's exclusive distributor of telenovela content for Africa and the French overseas territories.

Utilising its knowledge of the Brazilian telenovela market, Côte Ouest has orchestrated a number of initiatives during DISCOP Africa to highlight the success of African and Brazilian companies in the arena of TV content sales and production:

Côte Ouest and Globo TV International will play co-hosts at a private TV industry networking dinner entitled 'When Brazil meets Africa', reflecting the collaboration between the two territories within the TV sector. The dinner will be attended by a number of influential figures including the South African Minister of Arts and Culture, the Honourable Paul Mashitile and Brazilian Ambassador to South Africa, Pedro Carneiro de Mendonça.

Brazil's telenovela's mega-star, Taís Araújo, will also be in attendance marking the impact the genre has made on the African TV industry. Araújo is a multi-award winning actress and is star of some of Globo TV International's most famous telenovelas including worldwide hit *Shades of Sin*, *Seize the Day* and *Snakes and Lizards*, both of which are soon to be aired by pan-African broadcaster, M-Net.

Côte Ouest is also hosting a invite-only cocktail party on its stand to further promote networking in and between African TV companies and their Brazilian counterparts.

Côte Ouest is also set to take part in two panels during the event specifically discussing the Brazilian TV market. Mike Dearham, SVP, Côte Ouest Group and GM of the Mauritian office and Leticia Ncho, General Manager of Côte Ouest's French business will join Daniel Djajah, the newly appointed head of Globo TV International Sales to discuss the global success of the Brazilian telenovela phenomena on the 'Content is King, Telenovelas Rule' panel.

Dearham is also set to participate in the Brazilian Producers Conference hosted by the Brazilian Independent TV Producers Association.

Bernard Azria, CEO, Côte Ouest says: "The recurring success of Côte Ouest's participation in previous editions of DISCOP has confirmed that African broadcasters have a significant appetite in high-quality Brazilian telenovela content. It is a great honour for Côte Ouest to host Globo TV International on the stand this year and to actively engage with members of the Brazilian Independent TV Producers Association on African distribution and to open up co-production possibilities."

Rachel do Valle, executive manager of Brazilian TV Producers adds: "It's the first time we are attending a market in Africa and through our partnership with Côte Ouest and Globo TV International, we believe that DISCOP Africa will help us to build on Brazil and Africa's already successful working relationship."

South Africa agrees to host planned development bank for BRICS

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Johannesburg: South Africa on Tuesday indicated that it was ready to host a planned development bank for the BRICS grouping of five emerging economies, including India.

"I cannot say if South Africa will be chosen as the site of this institution, but I can indicate that South Africa will be prepared to host such a bank," Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Ebrahim Ebrahim said.

Officials from Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa are working on feasibility studies for the creation of a BRICS bank expected to mobilise resources for infrastructural development projects in developing nations.

"I will discuss South Africa's readiness with my Indian counterpart," Ebrahim said as he indicated that preparations were well under way to host the 5th BRICS Summit in March next year.

He was speaking before leaving for India with a delegation of senior officials from various ministries. The delegation will attend the 12th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) in India over the next five days.

Ebrahim is accompanied by officials from his department as well as the Departments of Tourism, Transport and Higher Education in South Africa.

South Africa is one of the founding member states of IOR-ARC. The association was launched in Mauritius in March 1997 and currently has 19 Indian Ocean Rim Association Member States.

Ebrahim explained that the objective of IOR is to, among other things, promote the sustained growth and balanced development of the region and of the member states and to create common ground for regional economic cooperation.

This also includes formulating and implementing projects for economic cooperation relating to trade facilitation and liberalisation, promotion of foreign investment, academic, scientific and technological exchanges, tourism and the development of infrastructure and human resources.

"The forthcoming meeting of the Council of Ministers will see India completing its first year as chair of the IOR-ARC," Ebrahim said.

(Agencies)

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