



[Au moins cinq militaires ont été tués et dix autres blessés dans l'explosion d'une voiture piégée près d'une académie militaire à Benghazi, dans l'est libyen, a-t-on appris de sources militaire et hospitalière. Selon le Centre médical de Benghazi, «cinq cadavres sont arrivés à l'hôpital, ainsi qu'un nombre indéterminé de restes humains, et plus de dix blessés». Une source militaire a précisé qu'une voiture piégée qui était garée devant une académie de l'armée a explosé à la sortie de militaires qui venaient d'assister à une cérémonie de présentation de nouveaux promus de l'armée libyenne.]

BURUNDI :

RWANDA :

Kenya's military 7th highest spender beating Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi combined

Monday, March 17th 2014/standardmedia.co.ke/By FRANKLINE SUNDAY

NAIROBI: Kenya has been ranked seventh in military expenditure in Africa importing more weapons in 2012 than Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi combined. This comes amid heightened security concerns in the region that have seen Kenya suffer several terrorist attacks resulting in deaths of hundreds of people in the last three years. Kenya's military spending in the last five years has grown by more than 300 per cent, according to data from an independent think-tank that aggregates world-wide defence spending. Kenya is said to have spent Sh68 billion in military purchases, an increase of more than Sh40 billion from Sh20 billion spent in 2004. Cumulatively, Kenya has spent over Sh430 billion on its military in the last ten years alone.

In the East African region, Kenya was the leading country in terms of military expenditure with Tanzania coming a distant second and Uganda in third position. Rwanda and Burundi spent the least on their military and in importing arms and ammunition. Military spenders South Africa is said to have been the biggest arms stockpiler spending the most on arms and ammunition in Africa at Sh384 billion in 2012. Angola emerged second on the continent spending Sh356 billion with Morocco, Libya and Nigeria summing up the list of top military spenders. The increasing instances of terrorism and border intrusions in the country have been a major cause of concern the past few years. Five months ago, Kenyans were treated to brutal scenes of terror when armed terrorists took over a crowded up-market shopping mall in Nairobi. Prior to the Westgate siege, Kenya had embarked on Operation Linda Nchi, a military operation in Somalia that begun on October 16, 2011. The data was compiled by Swedish think tank, Swedish International Peace Research Institute (Sipri), which has aggregated military expenditure data over the past 25 years. Sipri states that the data is based on open sources including a questionnaire sent out annually to all countries in the database. Other sources of the military expenditure data have been listed as national budget documents.

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

Uganda needs an adequate legal framework for telecoms

newvision/By Innocent Ddamulira/Date: Mar 18, 2014

March 15, 2014 was the world consumer rights day and in commemoration of the same, Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), a body with the mandate to regulate communications in Uganda organised the inaugural communications consumer parliament on March 13, 2014.

This consumer parliament was intended to bring together a spectrum of consumers face to face with the telecom operators in presence of the regulator to present their grievances in a candid but straight forward manner. I was privileged to make a presentation on behalf of the 17 million subscribers alongside the Uganda consumer protection Association which presented a petition to the minister highlighting consumer grievances.

The grievances that heavily dominated the discussion included, among others, dropped calls, unsolicited messages, unsolicited promotion calls, unexplained charges on mobile money, bad complaint handling mechanisms, poor quality services, environment destruction and unexplained data reductions.

It is necessary to contextualise these problems to clearly see the problem, propose appropriate solutions and map a customer centric way forward. Take for example, the effect of unsolicited messages on the customer.

On average, if you receive two unsolicited messages a day from the providers of the network you subscribe to. Simple arithmetic would quickly indicate that considering that each message costs sh110 then you should be losing sh220 daily. If all subscribers lost that average minimum amount this would translate to about sh3.7b lost daily to the already giant telecom sector.

I informed this parliament that this only represents the financial perspective but the inconvenience caused by the unsolicited intrusion of privacy is enormous and must be regulated now. Some of these messages come in past 11:00pm, and no one makes no audit on the interruption of presumably pleasurable activities! I also came out clearly on the complaint handling mechanisms.

While the Communications commission indicated that it received a total of 269 complaints as a regulator and resolved 217 (81%) and 52 (19%) are pending, this is not sufficient indicator of a good mechanism. Wouldn't a proper complaint handling mechanism indicate the average times lines within which complaints that are escalated to the regulator are solved?

Surprisingly and very interestingly, the telecom operators are not apologetic for the dropped calls! They insisted that a call technically stops billing when it drops. Now this counter argument is made with the assumption that all of you are on per second tariff which is wrong, and besides who wants to have breaks in the middle of conversations?

The solution to the above conundrum can only lie in enactment of an adequate legal framework in form of consumer protection laws as well as specific competition laws. Such laws should be able to spell out clearly the contractual obligations of the telecom operator to the innocent customer, indicate avenues and timelines of re-imburements should there be any unsolicited service to the customer and also give guidelines on all growing services in the telecom sector such as mobile money and unsolicited messages.

Whereas it is true that UCC has submitted guidelines in relation to unsolicited messages to Parliament for approval, this may not be a lasting solution. Uganda needs consumer protection law as well as completion laws to regulate the fast growing telecom sector.

Other countries in the region have also picked this up; Tanzania, for example, has an independent body, The Fair Competition Commission (FCC). Kenya also has an independent body (MPC) in place.

This makes Uganda the only original East African country with minimum interest in this critical area of legislation.

SOUTH AFRICA :

GE among winners of \$4.7 billion South Africa deal

Bloomberg News/Monday, March 17, 2014

Transnet, South Africa's state-owned ports and rail operator, picked four companies to supply new locomotives as part of a \$4.7 billion investment to renew its aging fleet and boost capacity.

Fairfield-based General Electric and China's CNR Rolling Stock will supply 465 diesel locomotives while Bombardier and China's CSR Zhuzhou Electric Locomotive won the contract for 599 electric engines, CEO Brian Molefe told reporters in Johannesburg Monday. Most of the locomotives will be built in South Africa, he said.

"Ability to stick to an extremely tight delivery schedule was one of the key considerations in assessment of the bids," Molefe said. "It is our view that no single supplier would have the capacity

or resources to deliver within the timelines we had envisaged."

Africa's largest economy needs the locomotives to upgrade its transport infrastructure and improve export capacity. Transnet, which owns and manages about 20,000 kilometers (12,400 miles) of rail lines, transports commodities such as iron ore and coal as well as general freight goods.

The train engine contract is worth 50 billion rand (\$4.7 billion), Transnet said Monday. The figure is more than 40 percent higher than a previous government allocation for the commission. By 2019, all the 1,064 units will be delivered, according to Transnet Freight Rail CEO Siyabonga Gama.

The CSR Zhuzhou locomotives will cost 15 billion rand, those from Bombardier 10 billion rand, those from CNR 7.8 billion rand and those from GE 7.1 billion rand, Transnet Chief Financial Officer Anoj Singh told reporters. The 50 billion rand contract value includes hedging cost, he said.

More than two-thirds of Transnet's capital expenditure will be used to renew and expand the company's freight-rail infrastructure. The new locomotives, to be deployed on the general freight lines, will cut the average fleet age to 22 years from 33 years.

South Africa has general transportable freight of about one billion metric tons a year, including commodities, Gama said in an interview. The unit is targeting a freight market share of 25 percent by 2022 compared with 15 percent now.

"It's a game changer for us," Gama said. "It is going to assist us tremendously not only in road-to-rail strategy, but also helping with building South Africa's industrial capacity."

To create jobs and develop expertise, South African state-owned companies in the past favored suppliers who committed to manufacturing major parts of their offerings domestically. The investment is expected to contribute over 90 billion rand to the local economy and create about 30,000 direct and indirect jobs, Molefe said.

GE already built 143 locomotives for Transnet at a South African factory, according to the rail operator. The Export-Import Bank of the U.S. backed a 1.1 billion-rand loan to Transnet to pay for the engines, the company said in September. Transnet in 2012 also agreed to pay CSR Zhuzhou 2.6 billion rand for 95 locomotives.

The dangers of telling a single story about South Africa

by Zama Ndlovu/bdlive.co.za/18 mars 2014

LAST week, President Jacob Zuma released South Africa's official post-1994 story, the 20-Year Review. As we approach the May 7 elections, the contest to define South Africa's chief narrative since its first democratic elections in 1994 is becoming more intense.

South Africa is a diverse country, demographically and in its socioeconomic experiences, and as such we should expect that various sectors and political parties would have their own versions of the South African story to tell. Although it is healthy for our democracy, some stories offer opportunistic binary narratives aimed only to revise an unpalatable past.

While some stories are harmless, others are underpinned by spurious arguments that are harder to detect, mainly because they appeal to those who are invested in their conclusions.

To demonstrate the inadequacies of the present government, one particular story compares South

Africa to a "similar" country, such as South Korea, which has managed to do what the African National Congress has failed to do in 20 years.

The story is not particularly clear on which part of the South Korean story we must compare ourselves to, and which we must ignore. Do we begin the comparison in 1910 and equate the cruelty of Japan, which institutionalised forced labour and sex slavery, with the cruelty of the apartheid government? Do we consider that South Korea's First Republic was elected democratically, but that it was autocratic by its collapse in 1960? When comparing South Africa to South Korea, do we consider that while South Korea spent from 1948 to 1987 oscillating between periods of democratic rule, South Africa has remained a democratic country since its liberation? At what point do we factor in that the first five-year development plan for South Korea was adopted in 1962, while South Africa would see a plan for all South Africans only after 1994?

Do we callously equate 30 years of an unspeakably brutal industrial colonialism in Korea with 40 years of a racial ideology that used political power to entrench perceived social and economic supremacy? In this assessment, does it matter that the Japanese left Korea while the once oppressive minority in South Africa stayed behind to be part of the good and the bad? Where is South Africa's history of colonialism in all of this?

With a different emphasis, one could come to a different conclusion, one that favours South Africa. So which bits of the comparisons stay and which bits go so we are left with a neat comparison?

In a talk, *The Danger of a Single Story*, Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie spoke of our vulnerability when confronted by stories, saying that "it is impossible to talk about the single story without talking about power.... How they are told, who tells them, when they're told, how many stories are told, are really dependent on power. Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person.... Start the story with the failure of the African state, and not with the colonial creation of the African state, and you have an entirely different story."

In the case of the South Korean comparison, starting with a mandatory salutation to apartheid without mentioning colonialism allows the storyteller to spin a tale that power finds comforting.

There are facts, and then there are ways in which the various social actors use these facts to their own advantage. In a year when it has become extremely difficult to make fair assessments on things relating to politics for elections and for broader discussion on South Africa's future, those with the power to shape narratives must aim to tell the truest version of our story, not the most convenient.

It should be possible — mandatory — for all those who try to tell this story to find an honest balance between assessing areas where we have not progressed enough due to decisions made today, while acknowledging how deeply entrenched other problems are because of our past. These two sides are inextricably linked, and neither should be disingenuously ignored for the sake of a gripping story.

Anything less is a stunning abuse of our own history, the histories of other nations, and the storyteller's power.

- Ndlovu is the author of a *Bad Black's Manifesto*.

Floods leave 32 dead in South Africa

March 18, 2014/thehindu.com

Floods caused by heavy rains which affected most parts of South Africa left 32 dead and about 3,000 displaced, authorities said on Monday.

“Regrettably, the present disaster events have resulted in 32 fatalities. These include 25 drownings. Six fatalities were also caused by lightning and one person died due to a collapsed wall,” Xinhua quoted Andries Nel, deputy minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs.

“At this time, provincial reports indicate that 3,000 people are still displaced in the Lephalale Local Municipality (Limpopo district) due to the high water levels,” Mr. Nel said.

He said water has subsided in other parts of the country with people returning to their homes which had been covered in water.

He added the government is trying to help those affected by the floods. “A number of people have been rescued from the roofs of their vehicles and several were trapped in their homes. Rescue efforts continue in the search for these missing people,” he said, adding the government is still looking for those reported missing.

“There has been considerable damage to roads and bridges, houses, and water pumps, pipes and other water infrastructure. In some areas communities are unable to access workplaces, health services, shelter and schools.” The government could not provide the cost of damage caused by the rain as the assessment is still underway.

The government advised South Africans to follow the weather forecasts and be vigilant while driving. “On Monday and Tuesday we expect floods in Mpumalanga and low lying areas of Limpopo provinces. We will continue to have isolated showers on Thursday and in future but not like the one we had,” said Johan Vermeulen, the weather forecaster from the South African Weather Service.

Nigeria Overtaking South Africa Masks Poverty Trap: Economy

By Daniel Magnowski/businessweek.com/March 18, 2014

As Nigeria gets richer, more Nigerians live in poverty. That’s the paradox of growth in Africa’s biggest oil producer, its most populous nation and which, as of March 31, may be its top-ranked economy.

The National Bureau of Statistics is recalculating the value of gross domestic product based on production patterns in 2010, the first time it’s overhauled the data in two decades. That may boost the size of the economy by as much as 60 percent to between \$384 billion and \$424 billion, according to London-based Renaissance Capital Ltd., putting Nigeria ahead of South Africa and close to Austria and Thailand in the World Bank’s global league table.

Yet the most recent poverty survey by the Nigerian statistics agency, published in 2012, shows that 61 percent of Nigerians were living on less than a dollar a day in 2010, up from 52 percent in 2004. In the desert north, where Amnesty International estimates more than 600 people have been killed this year as the government struggles to quell a violent Islamist insurgency, poverty is even more stark.

“Reducing poverty and inequality requires not just economic growth but also job creation and investment in improving the productive capacity of the economy and its people,” Giulia Pellegrini,

sub-Saharan Africa economist at JPMorgan Chase & Co. in London, said in an e-mail.

Oil Dependency

These tensions underscore the shortcomings of the region's economic powerhouse, whose growth potential has spurred investment from Cincinnati-based Procter & Gamble Co. (PG:US) to MTN Group Ltd. (MTN), Africa's biggest mobile-phone operator. While Nigeria's economy has expanded 6 percent a year since 2006, according to the World Bank, the nation's power supply is less than a 10th of South Africa's.

Nigeria's benchmark stock index has dropped 11 percent since the beginning of the year, after surging 47 percent in 2013. The currency strengthened 0.2 percent to 164.36 per dollar as of 8:07 a.m. in Lagos, the commercial capital, paring losses this year to 2.5 percent.

Oil production is concentrated in the south, with revenue accounting for about 80 percent of government funds and more than 95 percent of foreign income, according to the Finance Ministry. The government anticipates oil and gas income of 7.16 trillion naira (\$43 billion) in 2014.

Joblessness among young Nigerians may undermine economic progress in a nation where 23.9 percent of the working population is unemployed, according to data from the Central Intelligence Agency's World Factbook. It estimates that 62 percent of the nation's 177 million people are below the age of 25.

Jobseekers Stampede

"The large number of underemployed youth is a serious threat to the economic and political stability of the country. The median age in Nigeria is 14, and the population continues to grow at a rate close to 3 percent" a year, John Litwack, the World Bank's lead economist for Nigeria, said by e-mail.

On March 15, seven young jobseekers were killed in a stampede at an immigration service recruitment day in Abuja. Another eight people died in crowds at recruitment drives in three other cities.

The north is particularly vulnerable with poverty rates estimated at about 80 percent, according to Oyin Anubi, sub-Saharan Africa economist at Bank of America Merrill Lynch in London.

The government says its Federal Initiative for the North East will revive schools, health services and farming, in a region where poverty and lack of opportunity have bred a sense of alienation. Islamist militant group Boko Haram has sought to exploit that sentiment in order to destabilize the government, conducting a deadly campaign of bomb and gun attacks since 2009.

'Persistent Inequality'

"Unequal distribution of this oil wealth has contributed to a persistent inequality problem," Anubi said in an e-mailed response to questions. Poverty poses "a risk to the stability of that region."

One reason why tens of millions of Nigerians still live in poverty is that growth has been concentrated on sectors that are less labor-intensive, such as oil, telecommunications, and banking. Development of agriculture, the biggest employer in the economy, has been largely ignored by the government until recently, said Funmi Akinluyi, investment director at Silk Invest, a frontier markets specialist based in London.

"Growth in Nigeria has not been inclusive in decades," she said in an e-mail. "Once agriculture gets

the traction it needs we will have a stronger and a more diverse economy.”

Business Ranking

Paul Nwabuikwu, spokesman for Finance Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, said in a Feb. 26 statement that there have been “visible achievements in roads, rail, power privatization, agriculture and job creation programs.”

While the boost to GDP may improve the investment outlook for Nigeria, social progress is slow. Nigeria is, along with Afghanistan and Pakistan, one of only three countries in the world where polio is still endemic, according to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

The U.S. and U.K., fearful of terrorism and kidnapping, warn their citizens to stay away from huge swathes of the country, while the World Bank’s most recent Ease of Doing Business survey in June ranked Nigeria at 147, only marginally better than Iraq and Sudan. By contrast, South Africa was at 41 and Ghana 67.

Corruption Index

Nigeria was listed at 144th out of 177 countries on Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index last year.

Nigeria’s leap up the wealth league table may intensify scrutiny of President Goodluck Jonathan’s administration.

“The greater economic visibility should place more pressure on the Federal Government to undertake economic reforms, infrastructure, job creation, necessary to sustain the current trajectory of GDP growth,” Adewale Okunrinboye, an analyst at Lagos-based ARM Asset Management, which manages the equivalent of about \$2.7 billion in assets, said in an e-mailed response to questions.

Pistorius trial starts late after delay of testimony of police photographer who recorded scene

March 18, 2014/Associated Press

PRETORIA, South Africa – Proceedings in the Oscar Pistorius murder trial began after a delay of over an hour Tuesday as the court waited for a police photographer who took pictures of the scene of Reeva Steenkamp's shooting death to continue testimony.

Warrant Officer Bennie van Staden was asked by the defense Monday to produce a disc relating to photos he took inside Pistorius' home in the hours after the double-amputee athlete killed his girlfriend. The defense also requested results of gunshot residue tests conducted on Pistorius by van Staden.

Van Staden took photos of blood marks, bullet casings and the gun at the scene inside Pistorius' home. The policeman says he also took nine photographs of Pistorius, who is seen in some of the images standing in blood-stained prosthetic legs in his garage.

S.Africa faces biggest post-apartheid mine strike

18 March 2014 Tuesday/worldbulletin.net

Shareholders are concerned at the prospect of steeper losses this time with almost half of mine shafts already unprofitable.

World Bulletin/News Desk

With no end in sight, South Africa's platinum strike is set to become the biggest single stoppage to hit the country's mining sector since the end of apartheid in 1994, and now threatens the viability of an industry already in deep trouble.

Revenue and production losses look sure to top those experienced in 2012, when a wave of rolling, wildcat strikes pushed Anglo American Platinum into the red and forced Lonmin into a rights issue to shore up its finances.

Shareholders are concerned at the prospect of steeper losses this time with almost half of mine shafts already unprofitable.

Entering its eighth week, the wage strike by the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) against the world's top three platinum producers - Amplats, Lonmin and Impala Platinum - is likely to drag on for several more weeks, with both sides poles apart and neither blinking.

As costs mount, the sheer scale of the strike is also an unwelcome development for President Jacob Zuma and the ruling African National Congress, with a general election on May 7.

The current strike has so far taken around 440,000 ounces of platinum out of production, as 44 working days have been lost and the daily losses are almost 10,000 ounces.

Amplats, Implats and Lonmin collectively lost around 544,000 ounces to the wildcat strikes in 2012, according to estimates and data provided to Reuters on Monday by the companies.

But there was no single stoppage in 2012 - the big three platinum producers were hit at different times, in periodic eruptions - and the current strike will pass the 544,000 ounce mark if it continues another 11 working days.

The companies have lost over 8.8 billion rand (\$820 million) in revenue so far to the strike, according to a website provided by South Africa's Chamber of Mines which constantly tallies the losses. ()

In 2012, according to the data provided to Reuters on Monday, their revenue losses reached around 10.5 billion rand.

So at the current rate of losses, around 200 million rand per working day, the strike will top 2012 for lost revenue in nine working days - a fact certain to cause boardroom alarm.

The social and political consequences are also mounting.

Employees' lost earnings according to the industry stand at almost 4 billion rand (\$372 million) and counting, meaning the household incomes of tens of thousands of mineworkers - who have already missed their February pay check and will soon miss their one for March - are being sorely stretched.

The ANC already has trouble in the platinum belt and by extension areas such as the rural Eastern Cape from where many platinum miners are from, with the government held accountable for the

police killing of 34 striking mineworkers shot down at Lonmin's Marikana mine in 2012.

AMCU emerged as the dominant union on the belt by poaching tens of thousands of members from the once dominant National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), a key ANC ally, in a violent 2012 turf war that killed dozens. That conflict triggered violent strikes that in turn led to credit downgrades for the country.

NO END IN SIGHT

With no talks currently scheduled, losses are just going to mount. AMCU's chief negotiator Jimmy Gama told Reuters the union would reiterate its demands on Tuesday to Amplats.

"The employers have to come to their senses and listen to the demands of the workers," he said, adding there were no plans at the moment for a resumption of negotiations.

AMCU said in early March it had softened its stance for the first time, saying it wanted staggered increases to bring the basic entry wage to 12,500 rand (\$1,200) a month in three years' time, more than double current levels, instead of immediately.

The companies are sticking to their latest offer of rises of up to 9 percent on the grounds they cannot afford any more given rising costs and depressed prices for the precious metal used for emissions-capping catalytic converters in automobiles.

Government-moderated talks collapsed almost two weeks ago.

Union and industry veterans cannot recall a single mining strike in the post-apartheid era on this scale, with comparisons drawn to a huge, nationwide stoppage in the gold sector in 1987, seven years before the end of white rule.

"Since 1994, there has been no strike of this magnitude," Frans Baleni, General Secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, who took part in the 1987 strike, told Reuters.

The strike of 1987 involved far more workers, coming at a time when South Africa was the world's top bullion producer, with around 350,000 downing tools compared to 70,000 now.

"You need to go back to 1987, there has been no strike like the current one since then," said Peter Major, a fund manager with Cape-Town based Cadiz who has decades of experience in South Africa's mining industry.

The 1987 strike only lasted around three weeks and according to NUM cost producers around 250 million rand in lost revenue, which at the exchange rates then was around \$125 million.

Bombardier to build trains for Sth Africa

March 18, 2014/news.com.au

BOMBARDIER Inc is one of four companies picked to supply a total of 1,064 locomotives to South Africa's state-owned freight rail system.

Transnet Freight Rail on Monday said the total contract is worth about \$US5 billion (\$A5.59 billion).

Bombardier's announcement didn't disclose how much its share of the contract is worth but a spokesman said the company will supply 240 electric locomotives.

In total, Transnet says it's buying 599 electric locomotives from Bombardier and CSR Zhuzhou Electric and 465 diesel engines will be supplied by General Electric and CNR Rolling Stock.

Montreal-based Bombardier says it will build all its Traxx Africa design locomotives in South Africa.

The Canadian company, which is more involved in passenger rail equipment and commuter trains than freight equipment, has been in South Africa since 1995.

South African union plans mass protest

Tuesday March 18, 2014/skynews.com.au

South Africa's largest union is calling a nationwide strike on Wednesday to protest at the government's failure to stem rampant youth unemployment.

The 340,000-member National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), which has emerged as the government's biggest critic, has called for marches in major cities across the country, including the economic hub of Johannesburg.

'We are tired of political parties and business organisations that often refer to youth unemployment as a ticking time-bomb but do little to address the problem,' Irvin Jim, NUMSA general secretary, said on Monday.

'The majority of the people who are out of jobs are the children of our members. Some have never worked in their entire lives.'

NUMSA, which largely represents workers in the automotive and metal sector, is at odds with the African National Congress (ANC) government over how to tackle youth joblessness.

It opposes the government's youth wage subsidy legislation, which will incentivise companies that employ young people, preferring a job-seekers grant or basic income grant.

Last year the union, which forms the biggest part of the labour federation COSATU, the government alliance partner, broke ties with the ANC, saying the former liberation movement's policies had become too capitalist.

'The present neo-liberal policies have failed to reverse the injustices caused by the previous apartheid government, the working class continue to suffer,' Jim charged Monday.

South Africa, which is the continent's wealthiest country but dogged by stubborn levels of inequality, is rocked every year by hundreds of violent protests over substandard delivery of housing, electricity and water.

Unemployment officially stands at 24 per cent, but the true figure is believed to be higher and the bulk of the jobless are young people.

TANZANIA :

Dar es Salaam Airport welcomes new aircraft at its hub

By Prof. Dr. Wolfgang H. Thome, eTN Africa Correspondent /eturbonews.com/ Mar 18, 2014

Air Tanzania has made good of announcements made earlier in the year of an impending fleet upgrade when the airline last weekend presented their newly-leased Bombardier CRJ200 regional jet, registered as 5Y-WWA, to the public at their Dar es Salaam hub. The single class (all economy) 50-seater jet was reportedly leased from Kenyan company DAC Aviation which is based at Wilson Airport and was manufactured in October 1999 before entering commercial service with Air Nostrum. DAC then acquired the aircraft according to information received in December 2012.

The 14½-year-old jet is the first of overall three additional aircraft Air Tanzania proposes to add by mid this year. Prior to the arrival of the new jet did the airline operate an owned Bombardier Q300 aircraft on a limited domestic route network and a wet leased B737-200 which is reportedly due to be returned to the lessors when two CRJ700 aircraft are due to join the fleet in a few weeks' time. These additional Bombardier jets will also be configured in a single class (all economy) cabin and offer 78 seats.

Acting CEO Capt. Milton Lazaro was quoted to have said, when welcoming the airline's new aircraft: "This aircraft received today is part of three aircraft we planned to acquire this year. The other two are expected to arrive between April and May this year. The addition of this aircraft to our fleet will enable us to open new frontiers and add more routes. With the expansion of our fleet our passengers will enjoy daily flights from Dar es Salaam to Mwanza. We will be going to Mbeya four times a week on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. To Moroni, Comoros, we will fly on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday,"

Air Tanzania is also working to launch additional domestic destinations, offering flights to among other towns Tabora, Kigoma and Mtwara.

KENYA :

Kenya arrests two after bombs 'found in car'

18 March 2014 /bbc.com

Police in the Kenyan port city of Mombasa say they have arrested two people who were driving a car with two improvised bombs hidden inside it.

The suspects, one Kenyan and the other of Somali origin, were planning to attack an unspecified target, they say.

The arrests followed a tip off, a police official added.

Kenya is on a heightened state of alert after militants from Somalia's al-Shabab Islamist group attacked a shopping centre in Nairobi last year.

Security was increased further following Monday's incident.

"We have not established where the target was, but we have detained two terror suspects who were in the vehicle," said Henry Ondiek of the Mombasa Criminal Investigation Department.

"We were tipped off that the two were headed for an attack on an unspecified place and we laid an ambush," he said.

Two homemade bombs were found in the car along with a mobile phone, which could have been used as a detonator, according to police.

In last September's attack, at least 67 people died when al-Shabab stormed the Westgate shopping centre.

In February more than 100 people appeared in court in Mombasa accused of being members of al-Shabab, after a raid on a mosque.

Al-Qaeda-affiliated al-Shabab has carried out a series of attacks in Kenya in what it says is retaliation for Nairobi's decision to deploy troops to Somalia.

ANGOLA :

AU/AFRICA :

Food security, economy to be hit by climate change, leaked IPCC draft report shows

Date : March 18, 2014 /Peter Hannam Environment Editor, The Sydney Morning Herald

Global warming will displace millions of people, trigger falling crop yields, stoke conflict and cost trillions of dollars in lost economic output, a United Nations report will warn.

A draft of the report to be finalised later this month by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and obtained by The Independent in Britain, says "hundreds of millions of people" will be forced to move because of coastal flooding and land loss as sea levels rise.

Food security will increasingly be threatened, with median crop yields to drop by as much as 2 per cent per decade for the rest of the century. Demand, though, is on course to rise 14 per cent per decade until 2050, the Independent cited the IPCC draft as saying.

Poverty and economic shocks from climate change will have a significant impact on migration, increasing the risks of violence from protests and from civil or international conflicts, according the draft version of the report on Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability states.

Among the projections likely to attract scrutiny from reviewers when the final report of the IPCC's Working Group II is settled on in Japan later this month is the draft's estimate that annual global gross domestic product will drop by 0.2-2 per cent if temperatures rise 2.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels.

Global mean temperatures have already risen about 0.9 degrees, with at least a 2-degree rise

increasingly likely as carbon dioxide emissions from the burning of fossil fuels and land clearing continue to rise, scientists say.

Based on 2012 figures of GDP at \$US71.8 trillion (\$A79 trillion), the annual loss would be as much as \$1.4 trillion (A\$1.54 trillion), the Independent said.

Underestimated losses

A report released this week by several US groups, including the Environmental Defence Fund, though, argued economic impacts from climate change are more difficult to predict than changes in nature itself. Models deal better with rising sea-level and temperature predictions, for instance, than the impacts of extreme weather events such as droughts and floods, according to the report, *Omitted Damages: What's missing from the social cost of carbon*.

Biodiversity loss is also hard to value, the report said. Famine, political unrest and migration, which are often the result of multiple stresses “are usually omitted because they are difficult to quantify, predict and value”, the study found.

Food issues

Food security is among the key issues involving climate change impacts. A report published this week in *Nature Climate Change* by scientists including Mark Howden from the CSIRO found yield losses for wheat, rice and corn output are expected for 2 degrees of local warming if farmers didn't act to reduce damage.

“(T)he impact of climate change on crops will vary both from year-to-year and from place-to-place – with the variability becoming greater as the weather becomes increasingly erratic,” said the report's lead author, Leeds University Professor Andy Challinor, according the university's website.

Impacts will be increasingly negative on crop yields from the 2030s onwards, with decreases of more than 25 per cent increasingly common, the website said, adding that the impacts were likely to be felt earlier than had previously been expected.

Macquarie University's Professor Lesley Hughes, a lead author of the IPCC's up-coming report, declined to comment on its contents but said scientists have increasing confidence the climate is shifting both from research and a rise in observations of extreme events.

“The climate system is very different from what it was three or four decades ago,” Professor Hughes said, citing the incidence of heatwaves and droughts among the changes.

The summary of the draft report alone runs for 76 pages, with the full 30 chapters extending for hundreds more. The draft summary notes that the number of papers on adaptation to climate change had doubled in the five years to 2010, adding to the material to be assessed by the reports' authors.

Au moins 5 militaires tués dans un attentat à Benghazi

Mardi 18 Mars 2014/lexpressiondz.com

Au moins cinq militaires ont été tués et dix autres blessés dans l'explosion d'une voiture piégée près d'une académie militaire à Benghazi, dans l'est libyen, a-t-on appris de sources militaire et hospitalière. Selon le Centre médical de Benghazi, «cinq cadavres sont arrivés à l'hôpital, ainsi qu'un nombre indéterminé de restes humains, et plus de dix blessés».

Une source militaire a précisé qu'une voiture piégée qui était garée devant une académie de l'armée a explosé à la sortie de militaires qui venaient d'assister à une cérémonie de présentation de nouveaux promus de l'armée libyenne. La région orientale de la Libye et en particulier Benghazi, bastion de la révolution qui a renversé en 2011 le régime de Mouamar El Gueddafi, est depuis le théâtre d'une vague d'assassinats visant des policiers et des militaires. Le 22 décembre, un attentat suicide à la voiture piégée visant un poste de sécurité à 50 km de Benghazi, faisant 13 morts. Les autorités n'ont jusqu'ici pas réussi à identifier les auteurs de ces attaques, qui n'ont pas été revendiquées. La situation politique du pays est en outre très instable. Le Premier ministre Ali Zeidan a été limogé après un vote de défiance du Parlement le 12 mars, ce qu'il a qualifié de «décision illégale», dénonçant une «falsification» du vote et une «manoeuvre». Depuis l'entrée en fonction de M.Zeidan en novembre 2012, son gouvernement et le Congrès s'accusent mutuellement des difficultés. Peu après l'éviction de M.Zeidan, le ministre de la Défense Abdallah al-Theni a été chargé par le CGN d'assurer l'intérim jusqu'à la nomination d'un nouveau chef du gouvernement, dans un délai de deux semaines.

Making the Case That Africa Needs Drones More Than Roads

By Rachel Feltman/ Quartz/nextgov.com/ March 17, 2014

Could African countries with poor road infrastructure leapfrog right from donkeys to drones? They can and should, according to the man behind the Flying Donkey Challenge. The competition will support the development of drones that can be used to carry goods to market and deliver medication to remote villages. The goal is to have drones as affordable as motorbikes flying around the continent within a decade. The first leg of the challenge is now under way: Thirty-three teams from around the world have applied to take part in the first competition in November 2014.

“We feel that if drones are going to be used to transport goods, the most logical place is Africa,” Simon Johnson, director of the Flying Donkey Challenge, told Quartz. “Not for humanitarian reasons. We’re not doing this because we feel bad for Africa. It’s just the perfect place to start. The fact is, there’s incredible growth happening there, but not a lot of infrastructure. Roads just can’t be built fast enough. So why not use flying robots instead?” Once developed, he says, he hopes the drones can be exported elsewhere, creating a new industry for the first countries to adopt their use. If a remote farm in Kenya can send fresh goods out on a drone, he says, a remote farm in the US could do the same.

Johnson hopes that Africa will embrace drones the way it did mobile payments. In the US and Europe, there are large financial institutions already in place that handle payments—and they wouldn’t allow a mobile alternative to replace them without a fight. “It’s a great idea,” Johnson says, “but you have existing businesses—banks—that won’t allow it. Africa was able to leapfrog that, because there was a demand and no provider. This is the same idea.” It’s his hope that the continent can skip right over using cars and trucks to deliver goods, and favor unmanned aerial vehicles instead.

The 2014 competition will consist of three challenges: Precision takeoff and landing using a remote, navigation without GPS, and sense and avoid—where drones will fly a kilometer and back, avoiding balloons along the way. Johnson says that future competitions will demand more sophisticated designs. But teams are welcome to compete with any type of flying robot, as long as the materials cost less than \$500. And while some teams aren’t based in Africa, the rules state that all must collaborate with an African institute, school, or lab.

The first round of challenges will take place in Kenya—Mount Kenya represents a particularly good obstacle to practice navigation with, and separates areas that could do lots of trade with the right

infrastructure—but Johnson hopes to spread around the continent in the future. “We want the whole continent involved and interested, because lots of countries stand to benefit,” Johnson says. “We don’t know if anyone will be ready to complete the first full challenge when we hold it in 2018. But as long as we’re learning something, it doesn’t matter.”

The African Union on Travel : The latest from regional tourism ministers

Mar 18, 2014/eturbonews.com

The African Union Ministerial Working Group on tourism sector development strategy have concluded a two-day brainstorming meeting on 14 March 2014 in Seychelles in view to strategise on how to make an African brand through tourism while attracting visitors to chose Africa as major destination.

Key speakers at the opening ceremony of the Ministerial Working Group include, Dr. Elham Mamoud Ibrahim, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy of the African Union, Mr Jean-Paul Adam, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Seychelles, Mr Alain ST Ange, Minister of Tourism and Culture of the Republic of Seychelles, Mr Marthinus Van Schalkwyk, Minister of Tourism of the Republic of South Africa and Mr Regis Immongault, Minister of Mines, Industry and Tourism of the Republic of Gabon in the presence of the Ambassador of the Republic of Seychelles in Addis Ababa, Mr. Joseph Nourrice, representatives of the diplomatic corps in Seychelles, AUC officials and invited guests.

Addressing the participants Commissioner Elham Ibrahim recalled that the idea of organizing the Ministerial working group meeting, was initiated and discussed in Seychelles some times ago, between the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Seychelles. “For sure, there could not be a better venue for this meeting than this place which embodies the very spirit of tourism of our continent. For me, the name Seychelles immediately creates in my mind, images of all that is beautiful with Africa.”, she noted. The Commissioner underscored that the Ministerial Group Meeting will define the long term aspirations of the continent in the tourism sector.

The African Union Commission, Commissioner Elham Ibrahim said, is in the process elaborating its long term strategy for speeding up development and integration of the continent. “This strategy which envisages Africa's prosperity in the next fifty (50) years since 2013 is known as the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063. It will be comprehensive and articulate on the aspirations of the African peoples in all their socio-economic endeavors”, she underlined. The Commissioner added that, the African Union Commission is well aware of the huge direct and indirect contribution of tourism to the economies of African countries at both macro and micro levels. (See complete statement of the AUC Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy on the AU website: www.au.int).

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Seychelles reiterated the need for AU Member States to strengthen the role and place of tourism within the political discourse in Africa so as to build on the African brand by harmonising policies on the tourism sector. Minister Jean-Paul Adam reassured the AU Commissioner that his country will work with the AU Commission to further strengthen this sector to achieve all the dreams expressed in the 2063 agenda.

The Minister of Tourism and Culture of the Republic of Seychelles, on his part , hoped that the Ministerial working group will prepare a robust long-term strategy on tourism in Africa that will strengthen the role of the private sector and take into account the promotion of air connectivity among other infrastructures within the continent. “It is important for us as Africans to better connect our countries to create shared opportunities”, Minister Alain ST Ange added. He pointed out that

Africa has a huge tourism potential in all aspects of the sector such as natural environmental wonders, exotic wildlife and plants, ancient cultures and historic relics. All these have not yet been well exploited and promoted to the extent of generating commensurate benefit to African countries.

A presentation on the AU Agenda 2063 was done during the Ministerial Working Group on Tourism. According to the agenda, the Ministerial working group was called upon to identify and implement interventions that are required to optimize the role of tourism as an engine and a catalyst for economic development and growth in Africa. Some examples, within the AU Agenda 2063 framework were highlighted such as: undertaking joint marketing including packaging and promotion of cross-border tourism attractions; promoting joint projects for infrastructure development and investment– for example, promoting African cross-border investment in hotels, airport, roads, ports; capacity building for people working in the tourism industry; and removing tourism visa constraints among others.

Analysis: Decade after debt relief, Africa's rush to borrow stirs concern

Tosin Sulaiman/ Reuters/March 18, 2014

JOHANNESBURG (Reuters) - Nearly a decade after Nelson Mandela and anti-poverty activists Bono and Bob Geldof persuaded the rich world to forgive Africa's crushing debts, many countries' debt levels are creeping up again, which could undermine the region's growth boom.

As African states line up to join the growing club of dollar bond issuers, economists and analysts warn of a slide back into indebtedness that could undo recent economic gains and create a "Eurobond curse" to match the distorting "resource curse".

"Eurobonds have become like stock exchanges, private jets and presidential palaces. Every African leader wants to have one," said one investor, asking not to be named.

In 2007, Ghana became the first African beneficiary of debt relief to tap international capital markets, issuing a \$750 million 10-year Eurobond. Since then, previously debt-burdened countries, such as Senegal, Nigeria, Zambia and Rwanda, have also put their names on the list of bond issuers.

Governments seeking to replace declining foreign aid and pay for infrastructure are also taking concessional funds from multilateral institutions, more expensive commercial bank loans and bilateral financing from lenders like China and Brazil.

No Sub-Saharan countries are in immediate danger of default and most are largely financing themselves domestically, but the debt build-up is stirring up troubling memories of the past.

"The financial sector loves to find people to prey on and their most recent prey are governments in developing countries," Nobel prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz told Reuters in an interview during a conference in Johannesburg this month.

"They get overindebted, they get a bailout from the World Bank and IMF and they start over again. I think it's unconscionable, but their memory is short and their greed is large, so it's going to happen again."

Up to 30 low-income sub-Saharan African countries had their debts reduced under the IMF and World Bank's Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, which was later supplemented by the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI).

An estimated \$100 billion of debt was wiped out, easing countries' onerous debt burdens, often the result of loans taken on by corrupt regimes. These had meant more being spent on debt service payments than on health and education combined.

RISK OF OVER-BORROWING

Although debt sustainability in Africa has improved since the debt relief initiative, a forthcoming World Bank paper warns of a risk of over-borrowing, especially by countries expecting new revenues from resource discoveries. One of the co-authors of the study shared its findings with Reuters.

In Ghana, Uganda, Mozambique, Senegal, Niger, Malawi, Benin and Sao Tome and Principe, debt levels are creeping back up. If all continue to borrow and grow at current rates their debt indicators could be back to pre-relief levels within a decade.

Others with rapidly rising debt ratios include Ethiopia, Tanzania and Burkina Faso.

Nevertheless, the study finds that on average there has only been a modest rise in debt-to-GDP ratios in nearly a decade.

In the 26 African HIPC beneficiaries studied, nominal public debt fell from a GDP-weighted average of 104 percent of GDP before relief, to 27 percent by 2006 when most had received full debt relief. Half a decade later the ratio was at 34 percent.

The trend has been broadly the same for resource-rich and resource-poor, and high- and low-income economies, said Mark Roland Thomas, a World Bank manager and co-author of the paper, the first review of debt dynamics in Africa since debt relief.

Ghana, which sold a new \$750 million Eurobond and bought back a portion of the 2017 issue last year, shows how growing debt levels can threaten countries' fiscal dynamics.

Ghana's stability and roaring economic growth, reaching 14.5 percent in 2011, have made it an investor favourite. But the government's inability to tame widening fiscal deficits has led to a deterioration in its debt ratios. Its debt now represents just over half of its GDP, from 32 percent in 2008.

An expanding current account gap has hit the cedi currency, which has weakened more than 9 percent against the dollar this year, after a 24 percent slide in 2013. Fitch downgraded the cocoa, gold and oil producer to B from B-plus last October.

In a sign of waning market confidence, yields on Ghana's sovereign debt are higher than for any other African country with an actively traded international bond, at around 9 percent for its 2023 Eurobond and over 20 percent for domestic debt.

Zambia's story is in some ways a slow-motion version of Ghana's. Africa's biggest copper producer, which sold a hugely oversubscribed debut \$750 million Eurobond in 2012 and plans to return to the market, was also downgraded by Fitch last year.

Zambia's debt is around 30 percent of GDP, still quite low. The government needs to spend on roads and energy but economists worry its current pace of borrowing cannot be sustained.

"EUROBOND CURSE"?

For Michael Cirami, an emerging markets fund manager at Eaton Vance Corp, Ghana and Zambia challenge the notion that sustained growth is a given for African nations. While international bonds bring countries into the global financial market and scrutiny from investors can improve policymaking, there may also be a flipside of looser fiscal policy, he said.

"I wonder and sometimes fear about a Eurobond curse, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where all of a sudden you get what seems like a windfall of money and you end up with policymaking deteriorating," he said.

Ghana's GDP will likely only grow by 4.8 percent in 2014, the IMF says, from 5.5 percent last year. The market has less faith than the government that future growth will be enough to repay debtors, said Antoon de Klerk, a fund manager at Investec.

"If Ghana's growth falls short of expectations, it will very quickly run into debt servicing problems," de Klerk wrote in a note to clients.

Ghana's finance ministry declined comment for this story.

In Zambia, ministry of finance permanent secretary Felix Nkulukusa told Reuters that concessional financing from the IMF and World Bank was insufficient to fund big infrastructure projects, forcing the country to turn to private creditors.

"The pace of borrowing is sustainable because we are not going to be borrowing forever," he said.

The World Bank and IMF say Ghana and Zambia's debt is sustainable at current levels but Ghana is vulnerable to shocks.

TOUGHER QUESTIONS

Despite misgivings about certain countries, Africa is still in a fundamentally different place than it was 20 or 30 years ago when the old debts were taken on, thanks to robust growth and better public sector management, said Todd Moss, a senior fellow at the Washington-based Center for Global Development.

Borrowing from private creditors also puts a higher burden on leaders to be responsible, Moss said, "whereas borrowing from the World Bank, there's clearly a dynamic of lend and forgive."

The challenge for governments will be to ensure that borrowed funds are invested wisely and not mismanaged.

Eurobonds may also be a short-term funding solution for Africa as tapering of the U.S. Federal Reserve's bond-buying stimulus ends an era of low interest rates in the rich world that sent investors rushing to higher-yielding emerging markets.

Investors will do more homework on issuers' fundamentals than in the past and ask tougher questions about use of funds, bankers say. A key test will be if infrastructure investments generate returns that enable governments to service their debts.

Nick Dearden, director of the World Development Movement, says governments should use borrowed funds to reduce commodity dependency, still a widespread problem for Africa.

"Getting more minerals out of the ground may be very beneficial for Western nations ... but if it's not developing African economies in a genuine way they're likely to be left with the debt and none of the resources they've invested in."

TransGlobe-Caracal merger eyes 'more in Africa' despite political unrest

March 17, 2014/leaderpost.com

CALGARY — Caracal Energy Inc.'s move to buy Egypt-focused TransGlobe Energy Corp. creates one of the largest independent oil companies targeting Africa in a move executives say will help accelerate growth in a country rocked by political unrest.

Shares of Calgary-based TransGlobe jumped about 5% on the Toronto Stock Exchange early on Monday after the company agreed over the weekend to sell itself to Caracal for about \$696-million in stock. The shares retreated and finished the day up 15¢ or 1.8% to \$8.56.

The deal, billed as a merger by the companies, values TransGlobe's stock at \$9.32 a share, a premium of 11% to its closing price on March 14. The merged entity would have a market capitalization of roughly US\$1.8-billion, the companies said. Combined oil production would be 21,500 barrels a day, with a year-end target of up to 34,000-barrels.

Shares of Caracal, which trade on the London Stock Exchange, fell 6.1% to 385 pence. The company, which operates in Chad, would own 65.6% of the combined entity, according to a joint investor presentation.

"This is about creating a stronger entity," TransGlobe president and chief executive Ross Clarkson said Monday. "I don't think we're done yet. I think we're looking at more in Africa."

In an interview, he said the combined company would benefit from access to cheaper capital needed to fund expansions and growth in Egypt.

Related

The country is the largest non-OPEC producer of crude in Africa, with output averaging 720,000 barrels a day, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. But it has been roiled by violence following the ouster of President Mohamed Morsi last July.

The unrest has made life difficult for some companies. U.K. natural gas giant BG Group PLC in February reported a US\$1.3-billion after-tax write down on assets in the country, which it blamed in part on a deteriorating business environment.

Mr. Clarkson said the tumult has not affected TransGlobe operations, which are isolated from clashes in major urban centres.

The company produces nearly all of its oil from fields in Egypt. It said March 5 output climbed 5% last year to about 18,000 oil-equivalent barrels a day. Profits for the year tumbled 33% to \$58.5-million.

TransGlobe had been looking to diversify into other regions for at least two years before launching talks with Caracal, he said.

FirstEnergy Capital Corp. analysts led by G.F. Donnelly said the deal is "compelling," but noted it

wouldn't result in "significant" cost savings.

Nor would it "preclude the need for additional financing for Caracal further down the line," the analysts said in a note.

The transaction also makes it "unlikely" that TransGlobe will follow through with a recently announced 5¢ quarterly payout, they said. FirstEnergy is acting as a strategic advisor to Caracal.

Credit Suisse analysts David Phung and Robert Loebach said the combined company is more likely to attract a takeover bid from a national oil company down the road.

"It attracts the attention of a different set of investors that won't even look at you until you're of that critical mass," Caracal chief executive Gary Guidry said in an interview. He would lead the merged company.

Caracal changed its name from Griffiths Energy International Inc. and completed an initial public offering in London last year. Under terms of the deal, Caracal would seek a listing on the TSX.

The company was formed in 2009 by Brad Griffiths, a Toronto investment banker who died in a boating accident in 2011.

Griffiths Energy last year agreed to pay a \$10.35-million fine under Canada's Corruption of Foreign Public Officials Act related to a 2011 bribe in Chad.

The deal with TransGlobe requires shareholder and regulatory approvals. It is expected to close soon after shareholder meetings in June.

UN/AFRICA :

US/AFRICA :

L'US Navy arraisonne un pétrolier nord-coréen parti de Libye

le 17-03-2014 /par Feras Bosalum et Ulf Laessing/Reuters

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Des forces spéciales américaines ont pris le contrôle dans la nuit de dimanche à lundi au large de Chypre d'un pétrolier transportant illégalement du brut chargé il y a huit jours dans un port libyen tenu par des rebelles, ont annoncé les gouvernements américain et libyen.

L'intervention des Navy SEALs, qui n'a pas fait de blessés, a été décidée par le président Barack Obama à la demande des autorités libyennes et chypriotes.

Aucun coup de feu n'a été tiré lors de cette opération spectaculaire qui avait pour but d'empêcher la vente du pétrole par les rebelles libyens sur le marché international et de dissuader toute tentative ultérieure de détournement.

Battant pavillon nord-coréen, le pétrolier Morning Glory se trouvait dans les eaux internationales au large de Chypre lorsque l'opération a été lancée, a précisé John Kirby, du service de presse du Pentagone.

D'après le ministère chypriote des Affaires étrangères, le commando, à bord d'un canot pneumatique, est passé à l'action peu après minuit heure locale alors que le navire était stoppé. L'opération a duré deux heures et trois Libyens armés qui se trouvaient à bord du pétrolier ont été capturés. Deux fusils d'assaut AK-47 ont été saisis.

Le tanker faisait route lundi vers la Libye, sous escorte américaine.

Le Morning Glory, un navire de 37.000 t., avait appareillé il y a une semaine du port d'Es Sider, tenu par des rebelles autonomistes de l'Est libyen, malgré les mises en garde des autorités de Tripoli.

L'affaire a coûté son poste au Premier ministre, Ali Zeidan, qui a été destitué par les députés du Congrès général national (CGN) et s'est réfugié en Europe.

TRIPOLI REMERCIE LES ÉTATS-UNIS ET CHYPRE

"Le Morning Glory transporte une cargaison de pétrole qui appartient à la Compagnie nationale libyenne des pétroles", a souligné le Pentagone.

Le gouvernement de Pyongyang avait rejeté dès jeudi toute responsabilité dans cette affaire.

So Se Pyong, ambassadeur de Corée du Nord auprès des Nations unies à Genève, a déclaré lundi avoir discuté de la situation avec son homologue libyen et lui avoir expliqué que son pays n'avait jamais eu l'intention d'acheter du pétrole aux rebelles libyens.

C'est une compagnie maritime basée en Egypte qui est à l'origine de ce chargement et Pyongyang n'a rien à voir avec cette affaire, a-t-il dit. "Que le pétrolier ait été pris par les Américains, ou par qui que ce soit, si ce navire faisait quelque chose de mal cela ne nous concerne pas", a-t-il insisté.

Le gouvernement libyen a remercié les Etats-Unis et Chypre et a précisé que l'équipage serait traité conformément à la législation libyenne et au droit international.

C'est la deuxième fois en six mois que les forces américaines interviennent directement dans des affaires libyennes. En septembre, un commando avait enlevé en pleine rue à Tripoli un homme soupçonné d'appartenir à Al Qaïda.

De source proche de la police chypriote, on déclare que trois hommes - présentés comme deux Israéliens et un Sénégalais - ont été interrogés samedi dans l'île, soupçonnés d'avoir cherché à acheter la cargaison du Morning Glory. Ils ont été ensuite libérés, la justice chypriote refusant de délivrer contre eux des mandats d'arrêt.

PASSEPORTS DIPLOMATIQUES

Deux de ces hommes détenaient des passeports diplomatiques, l'un du Sénégal et l'autre d'un pays d'Afrique centrale, a-t-on précisé de même source.

Ils étaient arrivés à Chypre vendredi soir à bord d'un avion d'affaires Learjet et avaient affrété un bateau à Larnaca, à bord duquel ils se sont dirigés vers le pétrolier.

"Ils ont parlé à quelqu'un à bord du Morning Glory et puis sont repartis. Au port de plaisance de Larnaca, la police les a interpellés pour les interroger. Une fois libérés, ils sont partis pour Tel Aviv", a-t-on ajouté de source policière.

Les rebelles de l'Est libyen se sont emparés en août dernier de trois terminaux d'exportation qui représentaient à ce moment-là des exportations de 700.000 barils par jour.

Abb-Rabbo al Barassi, Premier ministre autoproclamé du mouvement rebelle de Cyrénaïque, a déclaré samedi que son groupe était prêt à négocier la fin du blocus des ports à condition que le gouvernement libyen renonce d'abord à son projet d'offensive militaire.

Le président du CGN a donné aux rebelles deux semaines pour se retirer des ports, faute de quoi ils en seront chassés par la force.

Mais les analystes doutent que l'armée libyenne, toujours pas reconstituée depuis la mort de Mouammar Kadhafi il y a deux ans et demi, puisse être capable d'affronter des rebelles lourdement armés, dont beaucoup ont servi autrefois au sein de la Force de protection des infrastructures pétrolières (PPF).

La production pétrolière libyenne est tombée ces derniers temps à un peu plus de 200.000 barils par jour, alors qu'elle était de 1,4 million de bpj l'été dernier.

CANADA/AFRICA :

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU/AFRICA :

EU Adopts Strategy For Gulf Of Guinea

3/17/2014/by RTT Staff Writer

The European Council has adopted an EU strategy on the Gulf of Guinea to support the efforts of the region and its coastal states to address the many challenges of maritime insecurity and organized crime, it was announced Monday.

According to an EU press release, the strategy is aimed at supporting partner countries and the regional African-led coordinating platforms emerging to tackle the complex and wide-ranging challenges of maritime insecurity and organized crime facing West and Central Africa.

The strategy focuses on four specific objectives. Building a common understanding of the scale of the threat in the Gulf of Guinea and the need to address it among the countries in the region and the international community.

Secondly, it helps governments of the region build robust institutions, maritime administrations and multiagency capabilities to ensure maritime awareness, security and the rule of law along the coast.

The move also supports prosperous economies in this region in line with national and regional development strategies, to create employment and assist vulnerable communities to build resilience and resist criminal or violent activities.

Finally, the strategy aims to strengthen cooperation between the countries of the region and the regional organizations to enable them to take necessary actions to mitigate the threats at sea and on land.

The strategy also recognizes the need to protect both the populations in the Gulf of Guinea region and European citizens from the threats that emanate from the region, including piracy, terrorism and trafficking of people, drugs and arms. It covers the 6.000 km coastline from Senegal to Angola including the islands of Cape Verde and Sao Tome and Principe.

EU Foreign Policy chief Catherine Ashton welcomed the Council's decision and said: "I am glad that the Council has today adopted the EU strategy on the Gulf of Guinea. Its adoption just ahead of the EU-Africa Summit showcases the strong relationship between the EU and Africa and the importance we attach to close and comprehensive cooperation with our African partners."

"It is crucial now to support our West and Central African partners' efforts to tackle the complex challenges of maritime insecurity and organized crime. These threaten stability in the wider sub-region and pose a growing threat to the EU as well," she added.

by RTT Staff Writer

CHINA/AFRICA :

INDIA/AFRICA :

BRAZIL/AFRICA :

EN BREF, CE 18 Mars 2014... AGNEWS/DAM, NY, 18/03/2014