(AT ministerial level, Uganda has chosen Tanga Port in Tanzania as the suitable route to export its crude oil from Hoima given approving scientific reasons put forward by technical teams in Kampala)

BURUNDI :

Burundi: Sepp Blatter en médiateur auprès de Nkurunziza
Par RFI/le 21-04-2016

L'information a été révélée dans un livre qui paraît cette semaine : la Fédération internationale de foot aurait envoyé son président de l'époque, Sepp Blatter, en mission au Burundi l'année dernière. Avec pour objectif de dénouer la crise politique qui commençait.

A l'époque, Pierre Nkurunziza a déjà annoncé son intention de se présenter à la présidentielle et les opposants manifestent contre cette candidature qu'ils jugent illégale. La situation est très tendue.

Plusieurs pays étrangers tentent de convaincre le chef de l'Etat de renoncer à son projet ou au moins de dialoguer avec l'opposition, et la Suisse fait appel à un médiateur plutôt inattendu : Sepp Blatter, à l'époque président de la FIFA.

En fait, le choix ne s'est pas fait par hasard : Pierre Nkurunziza est fan de football et Sepp Blatter n'arrive pas les mains vides. Il lui propose un poste d'ambassadeur de ce sport, en Afrique ou ailleurs.

Essayer de trouver une solution politique à la crise

Les autorités suisses confirment, en précisant qu'elles n'ont jamais demandé au président burundais de ne pas briguer de nouveau mandat, il s'agissait juste d'essayer de trouver une solution politique à la crise.

Sur Twitter, le conseiller en communication de Pierre Nkurunziza confirme lui aussi que des contacts avaient été établis. Mais il précise que « le président n'aurait jamais abandonné les Burundais pour un poste ni pour de l'argent ».

La mission s'est donc soldée par un échec. Pierre Nkurunziza a décliné l'offre, mais à en croire Sepp Blatter, il s'est quand même dit très touché par la proposition.

« Ils ont essayé tout ce qu'ils pouvaient pour piétiner nos principes démocratiques fondamentaux au Burundi. Nous les avons battus », a également commenté dans un tweet le responsable de la communication présidentielle du Burundi, Willy Nyamittwe.

RWANDA :

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

Tanga Port to handle Uganda oil
dailynews.co.tz/22 April 2016

AT ministerial level, Uganda has chosen Tanga Port in Tanzania as the suitable route to export its crude oil from Hoima given approving scientific reasons put forward by technical teams in Kampala, Tanzania's Minister of Energy and Minerals, Prof Sospeter Muhongo, confirmed yesterday.

In a related development, the Uganda's Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador James Mugume, was quoted in a state-owned newspaper confirming that the final decision will be made during the Heads of State summit slated for this weekend in Kampala.

"As far as Energy Ministers from Uganda and Tanzania are concerned, the Tanga Port is the ideal route and this has been reinforced by technical arguments by technocrats from Uganda. The decision was made basing on facts and figures.

"We (the ministers) have signed recommendations advanced by the technical teams in favour of Tanga Port, the next step is to inform respective Heads of State for further action," Prof Muhongo told the 'Daily News' in a telephone interview from Kampala.

The envisaged pipeline through Tanzania, according to Prof Muhongo, will be of benefit not only to Uganda and Tanzania but others countries in the region such as Kenya, South Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). "It will be cheaper and easier for these countries to use the pipeline compared to any other port in the East Africa Region.

The Tanzanian route is cost-effective, reliable and secure," Prof Muhongo remarked, matter-offactly. He added: “We are now waiting for our host (the Ugandan government) to make a formal announcement. We hope President (Yoweri Museveni) will be making the decision.”

Prof Muhongo stressed that the decision by Ugandan technocrats to endorse the Tanga Port in Tanzania was solely based on technical grounds rather than politics or friendship that the two countries enjoy. Kenya has been competing with Tanzania to have the pipeline pass through its oil-rich region in Turkana to be constructed in Lamu Port in North Eastern Kenya.

If all goes as planned, construction of the planned US $4 billion dollars (about 8trl/-) pipeline from Kabale in Uganda to Tanga port in Tanzania will commence by August this year, pending ongoing discussions between the two governments and investors. The 24-inch conduit to cover 1,403 kilometres is expected to convey 200,000 barrels of crude oil per day for exports.

President Joseph Magufuli of Tanzania and Yoweri Museveni of Uganda discussed the ambitious project prior to the 17th Ordinary East African Community (EAC) Heads of State Summit in Arusha, early this year.

The governments of Tanzania and Uganda signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for implementation of the venture in October, last year. The project is envisaged to create 15,000 jobs during its execution after which upon completion it will employ about between 1,000 and 2,000 people. It will pass through Kagera, Shinyanga, Tabora and Singida to Tanga.

Uganda has so far discovered 6.5 billion barrels of the precious liquid along the Lake Albert basin. The first finding was made by Hardman Resources in 2006 which was later acquired by Tullow Oil.

At present, three companies own 33.3 per cent each of the oil fields and they include Total E&P, Tullow Oil and CNOOC.

The companies plan to construct an oil refinery to process 60,000 barrels per day to cater for a demand of petroleum products in East Africa while between 200,000 and 600,000 barrels will be transported in crude form through the pipelines for exports outside the EAC.

SOUTH AFRICA :

South Africa's first Starbucks opens to long queues

April 22 2016/stuff.co.nz

Scores of Johannesburg's caffeine crowd lined up in the shopping hub of Rosebank on Thursday to buy a first cup of Starbucks coffee in sub-Saharan Africa.

Not to worry, though, rooibos, the local bush tea favourite, also features on the menu.

Starbucks, brought in under licence by South Africa's Taste Holdings, is the latest US chain to court brand-conscious consumers in South Africa, which has Africa's most advanced economy.

The same queues snaked out from Krispy Kreme when the doughnutmaker opened its first store 50 metres up the road last year.

And more on-the-go snacks are coming.

Grand Parade Investments, the Cape Town-based group which also runs Burger King in South Africa, said it will open the first Dunkin' Donuts by the end of June, despite economic growth forecast to be below 2 percent this year.

Taste Holdings Chief Executive Carlo Gonzaga said last month that he plans to open up to 15 Starbucks outlets over the next two years.

While Johannesburg has coffee shops in virtually all shopping malls and a wide choice in most well-to-do suburbs, Starbucks brings a range of syrupy lattes that are less common in South Africa.

"The flavours are something we're not that used to here, and could be their selling point," said Katy Meurs, a twenty-something queueing for her latte.

Taste, which is also the master franchisee of Dominos Pizza in South Africa, holds the local licence for Starbucks and has the right of first refusal in several other African markets.

"People will only queue on day one, after that Starbucks needs to be good enough to compete with the coffee shops that are already around here," said Prince Ndlovu while waiting for his coffee.

STARBUCKS SALES FALL SHORT

Starbucks said its profit rose 16 percent during the first three months of the year, but sales fell shy of Wall Street expectations.

Shares of Starbucks were down 4.7 percent at $US57.72 in after-hours trading.

The Seattle-based coffee chain said global comparable sales rose 6 percent for the period. That reflected a 7 percent increase in its flagship Americas market and a 3 percent increase in Asia. The unit including Europe, the Middle East and Africa rose 1 percent.

Total revenue rose 9 percent to $4.99 billion, but was short of the $5.03 billion analysts expected.

For the quarter ended March 27, Starbucks Corp. earned $575.1 million, or 39 cents per share, in line with expectations. A year ago, it earned $494.9 million, or 33 cents per share.

- Reuters and AP

Is South Africa Bullying Banks Over Closed Gupta Accounts?
By Dana Sanchez/afkinsider.com/ April 21, 2016

The South African government is intervening on behalf of the Gupta family company, Oakbay Investments, after four leading banks in South Africa severed relations with the company. The family is under investigation for alleged undue influence on President Jacob Zuma.

ABSA, FNB, Nedbank and Standard Bank as well as Safin and auditing firm KPMG, have stopped services to Oakbay investments, which holds assets for the family including the New Age newspaper, TV channel ANN7 and Sahara computers, EyewitnessNews reported.

The country’s biggest banks decided to cut ties with the company over potential “reputational risk.”

Their action may deter potential investors wanting to do business in South Africa, said Jeff Radebe, Minister in the Presidency.

Radebe dismissed suggestions that the move could be seen as an attempt by the government to bully the banks into submission over their decision not to do business with controversial Gupta family, EyewitnessNews reported.

The government will not be conducting an investigation, but "a normal interaction" where ministers meet with the banks' representatives to get information, Radebe said, according to a report in News24.

Three South African ministers including Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan, Labour Minister Mildred Oliphant and Mineral Resources Minister Mosebenzi Zwane will open "constructive engagement" with the banks to find a lasting solution, he said.

At stake are 7,500 jobs at Oakbay, BusinessTech reported.

The government needs to find out why the banks don't want to have a certain company as their client, Radebe said.

Oakbay Investments CEO Nazeem Howa told staff in a letter that the closure of its bank accounts "made it virtually impossible to continue to do business in South Africa," BusinessTech reported.

Redebe didn't address questions about government interference, or whether it could justify negotiating on behalf of a private company, or whether the government had done the same for other private businesses, News24 reported.

TANZANIA :

'President Magufuli on good footing'
22 April 2016 /dailynews.co.tz

FORMER Prime Minister Judge (rtd) Joseph Warioba has shown trust in President John Magufuli. He says his style of leadership will help unite Tanzanians and iron out all misunderstandings that resulted from last year's polls.

He said that a number of predicaments such us hatred and segregation emerged during the election process, but Dr Magufuli will, certainly, normalise the situation.

Judge Warioba made the remarks in Dar es Salaam during a meeting jointly organised by Research and Education for Democracy in Tanzania (REDET) and Legal and Human Right Centre (LHRC) to assess the 2015 general election.

The theme of the meeting was "A Postmortem of Tanzania 2015 Elections: Observers' Contribution Towards Enhanced Credibility, Freeness and Fairness."

He hailed President Magufuli for his graft-fighting drive which aims at putting public offices in order and restoring ethics and discipline. The former PM noted that though elections were held fairly and peacefully, there were shortcomings that were fuelled by political ideologies.

“There were some offensive words used by candidates which created hatred and disunity. These are things which are likely to breach peace and cause instability,” he said. He warned that currently there is a gap that has emerged between elders and young people.

In contesting for various posts the youth feel that elders are outdated while the elders believe that young people are rude. Judge Warioba cautioned the youth to refrain from political moves that aim at sowing seeds of hatred and disunity.

He said that youth should focus on participating in socio-economic activities. On his part, the Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Dr Harrison Mwakyembe, said the government was going to work on various challenges that would be highlighted in the report.

Dr Mwakyembe, who was speaking on behalf of the Vice-President, challenged local election observers - Tanzania Election Monitoring Committee (TEMCO) and The Tanzania Civil Society Consortium on Election Observation (TACCEO) - to cross borders and monitor polls in other countries.

“You should start to organise your institutions to observe elections abroad, outside the zone of East Africa and Southern Africa and possibly even outside Africa,” he said. He noted that by so doing, they would be in a position to learn how other countries conduct elections.

KENYA :

AG applies to be friend of court in case by two Kenyans wanted by ICC
Apr. 21, 2016/the-star.co.ke

AG Githu Muigai has applied for participation in a case filed by two Kenyans wanted by the ICC over claims of witness tampering.

Muigai said he wants to explain the relationship between Kenya and the ICC in the case by lawyer Paul Gacheru and truck driver Philip Bett.

He applied to join the case as amicus curiae (friend of the court) and requested two months to prepare a brief for the court.

"[This is] in respect of Kenyan’s international obligations to the ICC, the Kenya constitution and the application before court,” his representative Mungai Njoroge told justice Luka Kimaru.

In a ruling on Thursday, the judge gave the Attorney General 30 days to file and serve parties with his documents.

The two Kenyans were accused of witness tampering in the case that DP William Ruto and journalist Joshua Sang faced.

The case concerned the 2007/8 post-election violence in which 1,200 people died and at least 600,000 were displaced.

It was dismissed on April 5 "due to a troubling incidence of witness interference and intolerable political meddling".

Kimaru further directed victims lawyer Wilfred Nderitu to file court papers on their position on the matter.

Gacheru and Bett were arrested on July 10, 2015, after Trial Chamber II judges issued sealed warrants against them. Bett was a witness in the case.

Kimaru said the proceedings which were being conducted in camera will now be public as there is no longer need to protect ICC witnesses.

Muigai earlier said Kenya will ask the ICC to hand over the investigation files of Gicheru, Bett and former journalist Walter Barasa.

"The files will be used to support the preferring of charges and subsequent prosecution of the accused locally. We want to work with the court in fairness," he said.

"The charges against the three suspects are for crimes that fall within Kenya's normal criminal justice jurisdiction and can thus be effectively prosecuted and adjudicated domestically."

President Uhuru Kenyatta said last Sunday that Kenya will not hand any other citizens over to the International Criminal Court as the country will use local legal mechanisms to solve its problems.

The Long Arm of Chinese Law Reaches All the Way to Kenya

April 21, 2016/chinafile.com

A sign at a Democratic Progressive Party news conference in Parliament in Taipei on April 12, 2016 reads ‘China Illegally Abducts Taiwanese People.’ Taiwan accused China of kidnapping eight Taiwanese cleared of criminal charges by a Kenyan court, and demanded their immediate return from China.

The Kenyan government’s consent to a Chinese request for the deportation of dozens of alleged cyber and telecom fraud has now bloomed into a full-scale diplomatic crisis. Among those forcibly sent to China included dozens of Taiwan nationals, many of who were cleared on all charges by Kenya’s courts. The Taiwan government, for its part, blasted Beijing for orchestrating an “uncivilized act of abduction” that is illegal under international law.

Not surprisingly, the Chinese government rejects Taiwan’s accusations, sparking a serious challenge for the island’s newly elected president Tsai Ing-wen who assumes office in May. Tensions between the two governments have been on the rise since Tsai’s landslide election win that brought the pro-independence opposition Democratic Progressive Party back into power for the first time in almost a decade.

Although this is the first time that an African country has collaborated with China to forcibly deport alleged criminal suspects of telecom fraud, the practice is widespread among various governments and has a long history on the continent. Eric and Cobus explore the context of the Sino-Kenyan action and discuss how it is part of a broader global trend of the Chinese reaching far overseas to enforce its laws at home.

ANGOLA :

AU/AFRICA :

Moving away from Africa's oil addiction
April 22, 2016/theindependent.co.zw

The year 2015 has been an annus horribilis for several economies in Africa. First, currencies across the board have depreciated dramatically against the dollar. Second, prices of almost all major commodities have crashed, which has had huge impact on government revenues. Third, China's slowdown has put a damper on Africa's economic growth.

John Mbu

As a result, Africa's economy will grow by 3,75% — lower than the 5% average of the last decade — and is expected to grow slightly higher in 2016 at 4,25%. While certain trends can be seen, recent economic events have affected Africa's economies very differently with huge variations in economic growth for 2015.

The most striking feature of the high growth economies is that except for Côte d'Ivoire, which exports cocoa and coffee, these economies are not producers and/or exporters of commodities. In particular, they are net oil importers.

Oil subsidies represent about a third of total government expenditure in most African economies, so the significant plunge in the international price of crude oil, from US$110 in March 2014 to less than US$35 today has been a blessing for net oil importers. Thus, allocations for oil subsidies have been reduced and channelled to other important sectors of the economy, resulting in higher economic growth rates.

Conversely, major oil exporters such as Nigeria and Angola were not so lucky. Major commodity exporters such as South Africa, Botswana and Ghana were also severely affected. These economies experienced wider fiscal deficits (as was the case in Nigeria, where it almost doubled from 2% of GDP in 2014 to 3,9% of GDP in 2015), wider current account and external trade deficits, and significant currency depreciations (for example, the South African rand lost over 50% of its value in early December 2015). Contrasting growth rates between the 2015 winners and the 2015 losers have some lessons for African economic policy in 2016 and beyond.

The first is that commodity exports are not the only catalyst for economic growth in Africa. As can be seen from the 6%-plus economic growth rates in Ethiopia, Rwanda, Côte d'Ivoire, Mozambique and Tanzania, economic prosperity can be achieved through sound economic policies, particularly through targeted investments especially in the infrastructure sector, and not just through the exports of commodities.

African countries need to increase infrastructure investment components of their capital investment budgets.
Although debt levels have been rising in several countries as a result of increased infrastructure spending, present levels are still sustainable.

Moreover, it is not harmful for countries to borrow heavily to finance infrastructure projects, which reduces the cost of doing business, expands private sector activity, and results in the creation of wealth and jobs.

The second lesson is that major oil and commodity exporters need to diversify their economies and those who have started need to diversify even further. This will enable them to cushion themselves from external shocks such as the fall in the price of principal revenue earners.

Some countries are already making some strides, for instance, through the creation of industrial parks, mostly for the local transformation of textile products with some of the most notable in Ethiopia and Gabon.

The third lesson is that regional integration, both at a continental level and at a sub-regional level is beneficial to Africa.

This is very glaring in East Africa, particularly in the East African Community (EAC), which comprises Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

Several infrastructure, and particularly, transport infrastructure projects, in that sub-region have led to a significant drop in transport costs as well as travel times, especially to landlocked countries such as Burundi, Uganda, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Rwanda. In this regard, goods now take just three to four days from the port of Mombasa in Kenya (Africa's second largest port after Durban) to Kampala in Uganda and Kigali in Rwanda, down from 18 to 20 days respectively.

The Tripartite Free Trade Agreement signed in Sharm el-Sheikh in June 2015 regrouped the EAC, the Southern African Development Community (Sadc) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (Comesa). It thus represents a total GDP of US$1,5 trillion and combined population of 600m (roughly 60% of Africa's GDP and its total population) and will usher in even more benefits of regional integration.

The fourth and final lesson for African economies is to eliminate oil subsidies, which represent a significant proportion of government expenditures. Cancelling these subsidies will free up much-needed finance that can then be channelled to other productive uses such as agricultural transformation, the creation of industrial parks, infrastructure investment (energy, road, railway and airport projects, amongst others). And there's no time like the present to implement the change. — African Business Magazine.

Mbu is an economic and policy analyst at the African Development Bank. The views expressed are his own and not those of his employer.

UN/AFRICA :

US/AFRICA :

CANADA/AFRICA :

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU/AFRICA :

CHINA/AFRICA :

INDIA/AFRICA :

BRAZIL/AFRICA :

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