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To all EBCAM Members

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ONE) – **SHOWDOWN AT CLIMATE TALKS: U.S. BACKS \$100 BILLION ANNUAL AID TO CLINCH CARBON DEAL**

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and leaders of major players at the summit -- from Europe to Asia to Africa to Latin America to the Maldives -- emerged from a meeting at about 3 a.m. local time Friday, saying they would discuss a new draft agreement later in the morning, on the two-week conference's final day. "We're not there yet," said Denmark's prime minister, Lars Løkke Rasmussen. He said the late-night

discussion had been "very fruitful." But Indian Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh described the meeting differently, saying it had been "stage-managed" by European officials "to show they consulted everybody."

The White House tried to lower expectations Thursday. White House officials said they don't anticipate any new offers by the president, since the targets and financing figure have already been announced. But depending on the status of negotiations Friday, that could change. On Friday afternoon Mr. Obama has one-on-one meetings with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. The White House left open the possibility Mr. Obama would choose to come back to Washington with no deal.

"Coming back with an empty agreement would be far worse than coming back empty-handed," said Robert Gibbs, Mr. Obama's press secretary.

President Obama played a big card Thursday, authorizing Mrs. Clinton to tentatively endorse European proposals that rich nations come up with \$100 billion a year over the next decade to help poor nations fight climate change. The decision -- which surprised European officials who said they hadn't been flagged -- was made after the conference hit an impasse Wednesday. All day Wednesday, U.S., European Union and Australian negotiators talked with representatives from the Group of 77 developing nations, floating aid figures that might satisfy those countries' demand for greater, longer-term financing for efforts to curb or cope with climate change. Previously, the U.S. had stuck to a \$10 billion annual figure by 2012, and declined to specify what it thought would be a longer-term financial target. The U.K. had long advocated for \$100 billion by 2020, while other European nations wanted more.

Mrs. Clinton said in her speech Thursday that the money would be aimed at the "poorest and most vulnerable among us" -- a phrase that excludes fast-rising China, which many in the West think shouldn't receive aid. She said the money would come from "a wide variety of sources, public and private, bilateral and multilateral, including alternative sources of finance."

"The private sector is going to be the engine that drives all of this," an administration official said. "A lot of this is not aid in the traditional sense of aid."

TWO) - CHINA RULES OUT CLIMATE DEAL IN COPENHAGUEN

China has told participants at U.N. climate change negotiations it sees no possibility of achieving an operational accord to tackle global warming this week, an official involved in the talks said on Thursday. Dozens of heads of state are descending on the Danish capital to address the conference, hoping to sign a new pact to curb greenhouse gas emissions on Friday. The official, who asked not to be identified, told Reuters the Chinese had instead suggested issuing "a short political declaration of some sort," but it was not clear what that declaration would say. The official said negotiations were continuing in an attempt to reach a breakthrough that would allow a more meaningful agreement to be signed. U.S. President Barack Obama has called for an "operational accord" -- essentially a political agreement with teeth that can get countries working to cut or curb their greenhouse gas emissions while a more formal and binding treaty is hammered out in 2010. Some ministers warned that slow, often stalled talks during the Dec. 7-18 summit meant it was staring at failure. "We may not get there on the substance. It is quite possible we'll fail on the substance. But at least let's give it a try," said Britain's energy and climate minister Ed Miliband. "At the moment the problem is we're not giving it a try." Developed and developing nations are at odds over who should cut emissions, how deep the cuts should be and how much funding should be provided to poor countries to help them shift to greener growth and adapt to a warmer world.

THREE) – OBAMA PRESSE CHINA FOR ACCOUNTABILITY ON CLIMATE

President Obama called on world leaders to move swiftly to address climate change, and, in a direct challenge to China, pressed for a global climate change accord to include a way to monitor whether countries are complying with promised emissions cuts.

FOUR) – HORN OF AFRICA: COMMISSION ALLOCATES 50 MEUR IN HUMMANITARIAN AID FOR DROUGH-AFFECTED PEOPLE

The European Commission is providing €50 million in humanitarian aid to vulnerable drought-affected people in Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. The funds are channelled through the Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO).

"We face a disastrous situation in the Horn of Africa that demonstrates the terrible potential of climate change. This crisis, which is happening now, underlines why it is so important to reach agreement in Copenhagen", said Mr. De Gucht, European Commissioner in charge of Development and Humanitarian Aid. "Large parts of the Horn have had less than 75% of normal rainfall this year, having already endured a series of severe droughts. The population can no longer cope with such extreme and protracted hardship which often comes on top of conflict situations. As a result, more than 16 million people desperately need help. The European Union, as the biggest aid donor to the Horn region, is living up to its responsibility by boosting its humanitarian response."

Ethiopia: €25 million

After several consecutive crop failures and with poor harvests forecast again, the nutritional situation in parts of Ethiopia has deteriorated badly and is expected to worsen further. The new funds will cover food assistance and multi-sector relief including health services. Support will go to epidemic response, and improvements to water supply, sanitation and hygiene practices in the affected areas.

Somalia: €7 million

Since the outbreak of conflict in 1991, Somalia has been plagued by fighting, massive human displacement, political and ethnic tensions, localised insecurity, economic hardship and climatic shocks. The combined effect has been a serious erosion in livelihoods, aggravating poverty and increasing food insecurity and vulnerability.

The funding decision will cover health, water/sanitation and nutrition projects as well as livelihood support.

Kenya: €13 million

In Kenya, an estimated 3.8 million people rely on humanitarian aid and the situation is worsening with acute malnutrition (above 20%) reported in five districts.

The immediate focus is on providing food/nutrition and livestock protection together with other forms of short-term livelihood support.

Uganda: €5 million

Around 2.2 million people in the Acholi and Karamoja regions of northern Uganda face food insecurity. The new funds will be used to deliver basic services to the population, including food assistance, water and healthcare.

This decision brings the total amount of humanitarian aid provided for these four countries in the Horn of Africa in 2009 to almost €150 million. All Commission-funded humanitarian projects are implemented by non-governmental relief organisations, specialised UN agencies and the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement. ECHO has support offices in most of the countries concerned. Its field experts closely follow developments in the humanitarian situation and play an active role in local coordination of relief efforts. They also monitor the use of the Commission's relief funds.

FIVE) – NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE EU AND MOROCCO IN THE AGRI-FOOD AND FISHERIES SECTOR: SIGNATURE OF THE AGREED MINUTES

The Moroccan and EU negotiators signed agreed minute concluding negotiations that have been ongoing for almost four years in view of a future agreement on improving bilateral trade conditions for products from the agri-food and fisheries sector. The conclusion of the negotiations is subject to the approval of the respective authorities. In particular, the agreement will reinforce the position of European exporters on the Moroccan market, particularly exporters of processed agricultural products, representing a major offensive interest for the EU with full liberalisation planned in stages over the next ten years, with the exception of pasta, for which a quantitative restriction is provided. In the agricultural products sector, the agreement will allow for the immediate liberalisation of 45% of the value of EU exports and 70% in ten years. The tinned food, dairy products, oilseeds and fruit and vegetable sector will benefit fully from total liberalisation. The fisheries sector will also be opened up for EU products (91% after five years and 100% in 10 years). Community exports for the three sectors reached almost 944 million during the years 2006-08 and will benefit from better access to a neighbouring market that is seeing strong demographic growth against the background of an overall trade balance that is largely favourable to the European Union, with exports of €14 billion as opposed to imports of €8 billion.

The two parties have also agreed to open negotiations on the protection of geographical indications. Moreover, the agreement includes provisions on the respect of international obligations with regard to health and plant health matters.

This agreement will allow both parties to take full advantage of changing consumption and market potential, while reinforcing cooperation and safeguard mechanisms. The agreement marks an important stage in trade relations between the EU and the Kingdom of Morocco, in line with political commitments made in the framework of the Barcelona Process.

In the context of the Euro-Mediterranean roadmap for agriculture (Rabat roadmap) adopted on 28 November 2005, in February 2006 the European Commission and Morocco began negotiations to improve the existing agreement on the liberalisation of trade in agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products.

Starting from a limited level of liberalisation under the current agreement, Morocco agreed to a major effort to open up by immediately liberalising 45% of imports from the EU in terms of value. As provided for in the Rabat roadmap, Morocco will benefit from a transition period for the complete liberalisation of certain products. Thus the value of fully liberalised trade will increase to 61% in five years and 70% in ten years.

The EU's tinned goods and fruit and vegetable sectors, with the exception of beans, sweet almonds, apples and tomato concentrate (for which tariff quotas have been negotiated) will be entirely liberalised within ten years. EU dairy products will see their access to Morocco completely liberalised, with the exception of liquid milk and whole milk powder. Oilseeds and cereals (with the exception of common wheat and durum wheat and their derivatives) will also be liberalised.

For the more sensitive products for which trade will not be fully liberalised, such as meat, cured meat products, wheat, olive oil, apples and tomato concentrate, Morocco has improved their conditions of access to its market in the form of tariff quotas.

From the European Union's perspective, the agreement is intended to respond to the opening agreed by Morocco by immediately liberalising 55% of imports from Morocco. The improved concessions in the fruit and vegetable sector, which accounts for 80% of the EU's imports, have taken account of particular sensitivities, with the aim of integrating Moroccan exports into the EU market and promoting complementarities between the production systems.

To this end, the production schedules have been maintained for the products considered to be the most sensitive, tomatoes, strawberries, courgettes, cucumbers, garlic and clementines. The concessions agreed for these products were made in the form of tariff quotas.

SIX) - EU URGES CONGO PRESIDENT TO ACT ON 'DRAMATIC' STATE OF THE COUNTRY

L'Union européenne a exhorté mercredi le président Joseph Kabila à faire davantage pour mettre fin aux violences contre les civils dans l'est de la République démocratique du Congo (RDC), se disant "préoccupée" pour "l'avenir du pays". "Les autorités congolaises ont la responsabilité de faire en sorte que la politique de tolérance zéro (proclamée par M. Kabila contre les violences) ne soit pas que des mots, mais soit traduite dans la réalité", a prévenu la ministre suédoise des Affaires européennes, Cecilia Malmström devant le Parlement européen. De son côté, le commissaire Karel De Gucht a invité le chef de l'Etat congolais à faire preuve de "volonté politique" pour mettre fin à "l'impunité" des auteurs. Il a aussi rappelé que l'Union européenne versait beaucoup d'aide humanitaire à la RDC mais laissé entendre que les pouvoirs publics n'en faisaient pas toujours le meilleur usage, vu le peu de résultats sur le terrain. "Quel est l'intérêt de tout cela si vous n'avez pas en face de vous des interlocuteurs politiques appropriés?", s'est-il interrogé. M. De Gucht a parlé de l'"énorme gâchis qu'est devenue la RDC, un pays ou presque tout est à refaire, à commencer par la reconstruction de l'Etat, dont l'absence est au coeur du problème". Il a aussi appelé à "consolider la démocratie" dans le pays en vue des élections prévue en 2011. Mme Malmström a qualifié d'"extrêmement dramatique la situation au Congo, où les droits de l'Homme sont foulés au pied et où il y a beaucoup d'actes de violences sexuelles" notamment dans l'Est du pays. "Nous sommes préoccupés par l'avenir de ce pays", a-t-elle ajouté. Le tout dernier rapport de l'ONG Human Rights Watch (HRW) sur la situation dans l'est de la RDC recommande à l'ONU de mettre en place "des stratégies de protection des civils" dans cette zone où des soldats de l'armée congolaise et des combattants rebelles des Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) s'en prennent massivement à la population.

SEVEN) - CONGO GOVERNMENT BLASTS CRITICISM

Le gouvernement de la République démocratique du Congo (RDC) a dénoncé "les critiques totalement injustifiées" de l'Union européenne qui a exhorté mercredi le président Joseph Kabila à faire davantage pour mettre fin aux violences contre les civils dans l'est. "Nous avons besoin qu'on nous aide dans le travail que nous faisons pour éradiquer les mouvements armés (présents dans l'est). Au lieu de nous aider, on ne fait que nous enfoncer la tête dans la boue avec des critiques totalement injustifiées", déclaré à l'AFP Lambert Mende, porte-parole du gouvernement de la RDC et ministre de la Communication. "Nous sommes préoccupés par l'avenir de ce pays", avait ajouté la ministre suédoise. "Le gouvernement congolais ne l'est pas moins que Mme Maltröem", a répondu Mende pour qui les critiques de l'UE sont "une façon de se donner bonne conscience face à l'insuffisance de la solidarité vis-à-vis des problèmes que notre pays connaît". "Les autorités congolaises ont la responsabilité de faire en sorte que la politique de tolérance zéro (proclamée par M. Kabila contre les violences) ne soit pas que des mots, mais soit traduite dans la réalité", avait prévenu la ministre suédoise. "Si la politique de tolérance n'était que des mots, je me demande pourquoi il y a plus de 2.300 militaires dans les prisons militaires", pour des faits de violences, a relevé M. Mende. "Manifestement, ce sont des gens qui ne suivent pas les informations du terrain, qui se contentent de relayer des communiqués de certaines ONG parce que c'est plus facile (...) et de taper sur, excusez-moi le mot, mais des petits nègres", a ajouté le porte-parole. **DE GUCHT IS NOT SANTA CLAUS** Le porte-parole du gouvernement de la RDC a estimé mercredi que Karel de Gucht "se pren(ait) pour un donateur divin". "Qu'un pays qui a organisé des élections, qui s'est donné des institutions, ne soient pas considéré par M. de Gucht, qui se prend pour un donateur divin du monde, comme interlocuteur: on croit rêver", a répondu le porte-parole du gouvernement congolais, Lambert Mende. "De qui parle-t-il ? Des associations humanitaires européennes et occidentales qui gèrent 100% de l'aide humanitaire donnée par l'UE, ou du gouvernement congolais ? ", s'est-il interrogé. "Bien souvent nous nous demandons de quel pays M. de Gucht parle. Est-ce la RDC d'il y a 10 ou 15 ans, est-ce le Congo belge ou la RDC, un pays qui a ses difficultés, qui essaye de se reconstruire (...) et qui exige du respect et la dignité", a réagi Mende.

EIGHT) – CRITICIZED UN CONGO OPERATION TO SHUT DOWN

A U.N.-backed military operation in eastern Congo in which government soldiers are accused of massacring hundreds of civilians will end this month, the top U.N. official in Congo said on Wednesday. "Kimia II will be completed on Dec. 31," U.N. special envoy to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Alan Doss, told the Security Council during a meeting on the U.N. peacekeeping mission there, known as MONUC. The United

Nations has backed Congolese government forces in a nine-month operation called Kimia II against Rwandan Hutu rebels in Congo's east. The United Nations says it bolstered stability by supporting the operation but aid agencies had argued against U.N. support due to heavy civilian casualties. Doss said the operation's main goal -- to disperse the rebels and weaken their ability to exploit Congo's mineral wealth -- "has been largely achieved although we do recognize that there have been very serious humanitarian consequences." But the fight against the rebels, some of whom are suspected of participating in neighboring Rwanda's 1994 genocide, is not over, he said. "The FDLR (Rwandan Hutu rebels) remains a potential threat and they will seek to return to their strongholds and punish the population for collaboration with governmental forces, if they are allowed to do so," he warned the 15-nation council. Although the criticized operation will be ending, Doss made clear that MONUC had no plans to end its cooperation with the Congolese army. He praised the army's newly approved strategy, under which it would focus on holding ground recovered from the rebels and preventing attacks on civilians. The army will also hunt down rebel units in areas where they may have regrouped, he added.

NINE) – INTERPOL, EUROPOL TO COOPERATE IN FIGHT AGAINST SOMALI PIRATES

Interpol et Europol se sont associés pour combattre la piraterie dans le golfe d'Aden par le biais d'un projet d'analyse et la mise en commun d'informations, ont-elles annoncé mercredi dans un communiqué. Les deux organisations ont signé mercredi un "accord pour une nouvelle initiative globale commune Interpol-Europol a fin de combattre les nouvelles menaces de piraterie dans le golfe d'Aden", indiquent-elles dans un communiqué. "Ceci inclura un nouveau projet d'analyse d'Europol", l'organisme de coopération policière européen basé à La Haye, "dans lequel Interpol a accepté de participer", poursuit le communiqué. Il précise que les deux organisations veulent encourager l'utilisation d'Interpol, basé à Lyon (est de la France), par les Etats comme une "base de données centrale pour collecter des informations sur des pirates présumés". Les organisations vont aussi "échanger des experts", selon cette source. La piraterie somalienne moderne, qui depuis 2007 a fait des eaux de la Corne de l'Afrique la zone maritime la plus dangereuse au monde, a conduit la communauté internationale à y déployer de nombreux bâtiments de guerre. L'Union européenne a ainsi déployé la mission Atalante en décembre 2008 pour dissuader les pirates d'attaquer les navires marchands. De nombreux pays qui y participent connaissent des difficultés pour traduire en justice les pirates capturés par leurs navires ou pour les remettre aux pays de la région, faute d'informations suffisantes pour les inculper et de dispositions légales précises applicables en la matière.

TEN) – UN COUNCIL TO SANCTION ERITREA

U.N. Security Council members have agreed to impose an arms embargo on Eritrea this month, as well as travel bans and asset freezes for government and military leaders aiding Somali insurgents, diplomats said. The United States and other council members accuse Eritrea of supplying Islamist rebels with money and weapons in their fight to topple the fragile U.N.-backed transitional government in Somalia, a virtually lawless Horn of Africa nation. Western diplomats on the 15-nation Security Council said most members of the panel have agreed to support a Ugandan-drafted resolution to punish Eritrea and that they hoped to approve it by next week. Reuters obtained the latest draft resolution on Wednesday. In addition to imposing sanctions on Eritrea, the resolution orders Asmara to end all support to "to armed groups and their members, including al Shabaab," which is battling to oust Somali President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed. The diplomats said they were not expecting a unanimous vote, as Libya has made clear it would vote against the resolution. But they said they were ready to make further revisions to secure Tripoli's vote. Russia and China, which are generally reluctant to back sanctions, came around after it became clear the overwhelming majority of African Union members support taking the action against Somalia's neighbor, diplomats said.

ELEVEN) – CLIMATE CHANGE: ZENAKI STANDS ALONE IN COPENHAGEN

Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi says Africa must compromise and be flexible towards other countries, if the U.N. Climate Conference ending on Dec. 18, is to reach an agreement. Speaking to the press in the Danish capital, Zenawi - ostensibly leading the African front on climate change - said the continent would suffer the most should the world fail to seal a deal.

"Because we have more to lose, we should compromise and be flexible with (other countries)," said Zenawi, after admitting that his proposals at the U.N. summit fall short of African expectations. But he was quick to point out that Africa's bending did not mean desperation: "We will not accept any empty words".

Millions of Africans are banking their hopes on the Ethiopian Prime Minister, who was chosen to lead the African delegation during the High Level Meeting of heads of state that concludes the U.N. Climate Conference.

The prize is to bring home a sound deal that will act to slow the rising average temperatures that have caused catastrophic droughts and severe rains in recent years, and to secure funding from the historically-polluting countries to cope with changes that are already unavoidable.

While maintaining that Africa had virtually no responsibility for the greenhouse gas emissions causing climate change, Zenawi slashed the 67 billion dollars a year that African leaders agreed to demand from the industrialised nations who are responsible. Instead his proposal accepts the developed world's offer of a start-up fund of \$10 billion a year for Africa over the next three years, with the future to be decided on later. This fund will be dedicated to adaptation and mitigation actions, including the fight against deforestation, in poor countries.

"I support that the fund be established through the creation of a tax on international financial transactions, and that other sources be considered, such as taxes on sea freight or air transport," he said. "I also support that it should be administered through the African Development Bank."

In the long term, Zenawi proposed that funding rise to \$50 billion a year in 2013, and reach \$100 billion by 2020 - a proposal perfectly in line with what U.S. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton outlined in a press conference on Dec. 17.

His proposal touched a raw nerve among African civil society organisations, who have demanded that he resign as coordinator of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change.

The proposal has caused outrage in Africa, according to Pan-African Climate Justice spokesperson Mithika Mwenda. He accuses Zenawi of caving in to the dictates of industrialised nations, leaving Africans to fend for themselves as best they can

"His statement is undermining the bold positions of African negotiators and ministers represented in Copenhagen, and threatens the very future of Africa," said an angry Mwenda.

The proposed \$10 billion a year for Africa is an insult, said Mwenda, who did a quick calculation and came up with \$4 a year for each African. In his view, it should be the size of the pocket, that determines the expected contribution from industrialised countries. They are, he said "paying their debt for polluting the earth".

A difficult start for Africa in the final phase of negotiations. The collective front put up by Africa Group negotiators as part of the Group of 77 and China block had failed to convince the Rich World to either commit to substantial greenhouse gas emissions or the \$200 billion a year the developed world will need to cope with floods, droughts, rising sea levels and the spread of diseases due to climate change.

But the bloc had at least made it clear that the developing world would not stand peacefully by any abandoning of Kyoto Protocol commitments to reduce emissions, or easily settle for a modest though immediate sum.

Zenawi's break with this position to endorse a Western position is a worrying sign that this solidarity amongst the countries whose people will bear the full weight of climatic changes may not hold firm.

TWELVE) – MULTIPLE APPEALS TO SUPPORT ZIMBABWEANS

While food is readily available in shops and some political and economic stability is returning in Zimbabwe, vulnerable groups such as children and people living with HIV and AIDS still face a shortage of food. It is this vulnerable group that has galvanised the international community into action to mobilise humanitarian support in the form of food, medication and water facilities.

This week the Red Cross launched an appeal for \$33.2 million to extend an on-going emergency food operation in Zimbabwe to September 2010. The operation is led by the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society (ZRCS) with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). The operation, begun last year, is providing food assistance to over 220,000 beneficiaries across Zimbabwe. ZRCS Secretary-General Emma Kundishora said that vulnerable people in rural areas will be assisted with

direct food aid, while those in the urban areas will receive food vouchers to be redeemed in supermarkets. "The food vouchers are a pilot project for us and we are currently negotiating with the selected supermarkets where our beneficiaries will be able to buy food items," told Kundishora.

"We are hoping to start the programme early next year as we have already received positive indications of support from our sister societies. It is critical to extend the programme because our beneficiaries do not have food and most of them are unable to produce food anywhere."

In the long term, the ZRCS will provide agricultural inputs like seeds and fertilisers, agricultural training, and increasing community access to safe water.

The U.N. Assistant Secretary General for humanitarian affairs, Catherine Bragg, visiting Zimbabwe at the beginning of December, commended the "great progress" made in easing Zimbabwe's humanitarian crisis but called for continued donor support.

The U.N. has launched the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP), a planning and resource mobilisation tool used mainly for emergency responses. Under the CAP, the UN has appealed for \$378 million in aid for 2010 to cover food and medicines, and bolster health, education, sanitation and access to safe water.

The United Nations Children's Educational Fund (UNICEF) is operating a malnutrition monitoring programme for children across the country. UNICEF Zimbabwe Spokeswoman Tsitsi Singizi, told the Voice of America Studio 7 that conditions for children are most severe in districts such as Mudzi, Mashonaland East province, where food is often in short supply.

UNICEF says a third of the country's children are not getting enough to eat, and as a result, one Zimbabwean child in five suffers stunted growth.

According to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), seven percent of under fives suffer from acute malnutrition. The U.N. agency estimates that 1.9 million Zimbabweans will need food assistance between January and March 2010.

"The need to support 'humanitarian plus' or early recovery programmes is highlighted by the deterioration in existing infrastructure and loss of employment opportunities," OCHA said in a statement.

The National Aids Council (NAC) estimates that 761,000 children in Zimbabwe have lost one or both parents to HIV and AIDS. Currently there are more than 1.1 million children under the age of 15 who have been orphaned as a result of the disease.

"The food situation is a cause for concern but food aid is not sustainable," Fambai Ngirande, spokesman for the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations told IPS, adding that the country's economy is still not on a firm footing.

"We should also be focusing on full economic recovery (to allow) us to consolidate local food security and this rests on government creating a politically-conducive environment that will bring in investors to benefit the economy."

THIRTEEN) – VIOLENCE THREATENS POLLS IN ZAMBIA

Prisca Musonda is an ardent supporter of Patriotic Front leader Michael Sata and his party. She has travelled with him to most parliamentary constituencies campaigning in elections. But now she fears Zambia's general elections set for 2011 could turn violent and go wrong for most voters, unless the latest spate of violence can be curbed. Musonda has dropped out of the PF cavalcade, as her friends were brutally beaten by ruling Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) cadres, and admitted to hospital suffering from multiple injuries. This was during the November 19 by-election to replace the late local government minister and MMD member of parliament for Solwezi Central, Benny Tetamashimba.

Musonda, though also beaten, was lucky to escape with minor injuries. But colleagues who were with her – Faron Mbao and Elias Kamanga – were not so lucky. They were badly beaten by MMD cadres armed with stones and iron bars, and suffered multiple head and body injuries.

Two-and-a-half months earlier Zambians woke up to a rude spectacle on the front page of the Post newspaper, in which the deputy minister in the vice-president's office, Gaston Sichilima, was pictured indulging in 'fists of fury' with an opposition United National Independence Party (UNIP) cadre, identified only as Kaziko. In that incident in Serenje town, Central Province, as later in Kasama where there was also serious inter-party violence, election monitors from civil society organisations like the Anti-Voter Apathy Project (AVAP) fingered MMD campaigners as the main culprits, who when faced with possible failure in a

by-election resorted to violence and thuggery.

"The MMD, as the party that is ruling us, must lead by example. I don't know why they cannot follow the law, especially the Electoral Code of Conduct," Bonny Tembo, who witnessed the fracas in Solwezi and is leader of elections watchdog AVAP, observed in Lusaka.

Under the Electoral Code of Conduct the Zambian government set out guidelines of what candidates can and cannot do. Under regulation seven it is an offence for political parties and their candidates to engage in 'violence or use any language or engage in a course of conduct which leads to violence or intimidation during election campaigns or elections'.

The rules also prohibit candidates from carrying or displaying 'arms or weapons, be they traditional or otherwise'. For offenders the law has set a penalty of one year's imprisonment. Police too have their own guidelines in this law.

On paper, critics say, the Electoral Code of Conduct looks solid, but in practice it has been undermined by the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), that has failed to drag all offenders to court.

For example, under Regulation 10 it is an offence to use government vehicles, money and other resources in political campaigns, but the MMD has broken this law without punitive action.

In addition Zambian police have been accused of favouring MMD cadres against campaigners from opposition parties. In the Solwezi by-election, PF and United Party for National Development (UPND) leaders were teargassed as though they were the offenders, when their side fought running battles with MMD campaigners after both parties wanted to address a public rally at the same time.

The MMD were not supposed to be there, but went anyway despite being advised against it by police.

North-Western Province police commanding officer Fabian Katiba later admitted the mistake of police firing teargas, but said this had been necessary to prevent serious public disorder.

He agreed with the opposition that violence erupted between cadres of the MMD and the two parties of UPND and PF (which had entered a pact to contest elections as one entity), after MMD supporters abandoned their venue and went to where the PF and UPND were due to hold their meeting.

"We need protection from the police. They should not act like a wing of the ruling MMD," opposition UPND leader Hakainde Hichilema complained to Katiba after the fracas.

But police are particularly vulnerable. It is not uncommon for commanding officers who insist on being fair to all parties to end up out of the job.

The latest victim of this bullying tactic is former Inspector-General of police, Ephraim Mateyo, who in the run-up to the presidential by-election last year tried to act fairly to all candidates.

In Lusaka two days before the by-election that picked Rupiah Banda (MMD) as president of Zambia, Mateyo decided to set aside areas to enable all political leaders in the election to have their rallies simultaneously.

The MMD were given Lusaka north, UPND Lusaka west and the PF Lusaka south-east. This arrangement did not please the MMD, as it allegedly split the attention of voters.

After Banda won the vote Mateyo was promptly out of a job, under the pretext that he was going abroad as a diplomat. He is still languishing in Lusaka.

ECZ spokesperson Chris Akufuna blames political parties for the upsurge of violence, insisting that though there is the Electoral Code of Conduct, MMD party leaders have chosen not to obey it.

The ECZ has been heavily criticised after their credibility was severely eroded in 2001, when they allegedly allowed the government of former president Frederick Chiluba to rig the presidential election in favour of late president Levy Mwanawasa.

PF president Michael Sata again made this claim against the ECZ at the end of the 2008 presidential by-election, which he lost.

"We need fairness from the leaders of political parties. Let them tell their members to abide by the Electoral Code of Conduct. That is our Bible. That is what guides all of us during the conducting of elections," Akufuna declared.

In the wake of the Solwezi incidents, the Zambia Centre for Inter-Party Dialogue (ZCID), an umbrella grouping for major political parties, has turned its concerns into action by holding talks with the leaders of all major political parties.

"We need to hold elections that are free of violence in 2011, and that is why as the Zambia Centre for Inter-Party Dialogue we will continue discussions with party leaders," declared Langton Sichone, ZCID spokesman.

"We don't want to go the Kenya or Zimbabwe way," remarked Alfred Mwape, a third-year political science

student at the University of Zambia, in reference to the fatal violence that paralysed and tore apart the two nations two years ago.

FOURTEEN) – EU AND WEST AFRICAN ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION SIGN A HORIZONTAL AGREEMENT ON AIR SERVICES

The European Union and the West African Economic and Monetary Union ¹ (WAEMU) signed today in Brussels an aviation agreement which will provide legal certainty to bilateral air services agreements between the Member States of both the EU and WAEMU. Delegations of the European Union and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU Member States: Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo) signed on 17 December 2009 in Brussels an aviation agreement which will restore legal certainty to the bilateral air services agreements between the Member States of WAEMU and EU.

The agreement brings several provisions of the 47 existing bilateral air services agreements between EU and WAEMU Member States in line with EU law. In particular, and following the so-called "open skies" judgments of the European Court of Justice of 5 November 2002, it will remove nationality restrictions in the bilateral air services agreements between the Member States of both organizations and allow any EU airline to operate flights between any EU Member State and any WAEMU Member State where a bilateral agreement between the two countries concerned exists and traffic rights are available. The agreement also provides WAEMU carriers with increased opportunities to operate to the EU from WAEMU countries other than their licensing state, in a reciprocal recognition of a WAEMU designation.

The agreement is the first "horizontal" agreement with another regional organisation. It constitutes an important step towards further strengthening the EU-Africa aviation relations and will foster cooperation in the aviation area between the EU and WAEMU on a number of important aspects, such as aviation safety and security.

As of today, the European Commission has negotiated forty two "horizontal" aviation agreements with third countries.

Fernando Matos Rosa

Brussels

