



MEMORANDUM N° 139/2011

31/08/2011

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ONE) – EU REAFFIRMS ITS SUPPORT TO PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA WITH €300 MILLION

The European Commission has decided to replenish the African Peace Facility (APF) with €300 million to support African peace and security actions both at regional and continental levels. The funding will be available to the African Union and African Regional Organisations for the period 2011-2013 in order to support relevant, targeted, continental and regional initiatives in the area of conflict prevention, management and resolution, and peace building.

The Peace Facility provides substantial and predictable funding to African-led peace support operations and relevant capacity building activities for African organisations. It constitutes the major financing instrument of the Africa-EU strategic partnership in Peace and Security.

In addition to peace operations, the APF supports the African Peace and Security Architecture, which focuses on the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. In this area, approximately €100 million have been earmarked since 2004 for activities aimed at strengthening capacities of African institutions at the continental and regional level.

Operations financed through the African Peace Facility

Ongoing operations, financed through the APF, are the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) Mission for the consolidation of peace in Central African Republic (MICOPAX) and the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM).

In Somalia, the APF funds the African Union Peace Support Operation (AMISOM) which provides support to the Somali Transitional Federal Institutions in their stabilisation efforts and in the pursuit of political dialogue and reconciliation. AMISOM is also mandated to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and to create the necessary conditions for reconstruction, reconciliation and the sustainable development of Somalia.

Since the deployment of AMISOM, the EU has been one of the main funders of the operation both through the African Peace Facility and through bilateral contributions of its Member States. The overall APF contribution to the mission amounts to €208.4 million and covers costs such as allowances, medical care, housing, fuel and communication equipment.

Another example of mediation actions funded through the Facility is the support to the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) on **Sudan**. The initiative has contributed to the mediation process in Sudan and has allowed the inclusion of civil society in the negotiations. The work of the panel has been instrumental in contributing to resolving the conflict in Darfur. The AU mission in Sudan has so far received the largest share of EU funds, with a contribution of €305 million.

African Peace Facility

Originally established by the EU in 2003 in response to a request of the African Union, the APF is an instrument of EU support to the Africa Peace and Security agenda. Over the years it has provided funding to African-led peace support operations (€607 million) and provided significant contributions to the strengthening of African institutional capacities in peace and security at continental and regional level (€100 million) as well as supported a number of mediation activities (€15 million).

The facility is also a major financing instrument of the joint Africa-EU strategy, in particular the partnership on peace and security, adopted in Lisbon in December 2007.

TWO) - THE AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

When establishing the African Union (AU) in 2002, its Member States entrusted the organisation with a broad political mandate in the area of conflict prevention, management, resolution and peace building. Promoting peace, security and stability on the continent has since become one of the main objectives of the AU.

As a structural, long-term response to the peace and security challenges on the continent, a comprehensive African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) has been set up. The APSA consists of several components and structures, in particular:

- AU Peace and Security Council (PSC), which works as the central AU decision-making body
- a Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)
- a 'Panel of the Wise', with a mandate in conflict prevention and resolution
- African Standby Forces (ASF) to be deployed in peace support operations

The African regional organisations (Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms - RECs/RMs) are the pillars of the overall security architecture.

Since 2002, the AU has gradually emerged as a major political and security actor, engaging in concrete actions. In parallel with political initiatives leading to the prevention and resolution of conflicts, a number of African-led peace support operations have been deployed, often in a very hostile environment and sometimes in an extremely sensitive political context. The AU missions in Sudan (AMIS) and in Somalia (AMISOM) and the ECCAS mission in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX) illustrate the important role played by the AU and the RECs.

The EU response

The resolve of the African side to take responsibility for peace and security on the African continent has been strongly supported by the EU from the outset, both politically and financially.

In 2004, the African Peace Facility (APF) was established in response to a request by African leaders at the AU Summit in Maputo (2003). Through the APF, the EU has been at the forefront of international support to the African Peace and Security agenda, providing, in parallel to EU political backing, substantial and predictable funding to African peace support operations (PSOs) and relevant capacity building activities at the regional and continental level. Financial support of nearly €440M, channelled through the APF, was provided under the 9th European Development Fund (EDF) and through additional voluntary contributions from EU Member States. Under the 10th EDF €300M were committed in 2008 and it is foreseen that these funds will be exhausted by mid/end 2011. For this reason it was decided in 2011 to replenish the Facility with an additional €300M.

The financial support provided by the APF has enabled the African partners to strengthen their respective roles in peace and security, take responsibility for the stability of the continent and emerge as an internationally recognized, major player in the political and security areas.

The close EU-AU cooperation on peace and security has become a driving force for the development of a true partnership between Africa and the EU. Leaders from both continents adopted a Joint Africa-EU Strategy and an action plan in December 2007 in Lisbon. This was followed by a second action plan at the Tripoli Summit in November 2010. In the post-Tripoli strategic context, the APF is one of the major financing tools to support the implementation of the Joint Strategy and the Second Action Plan in the area of Peace and Security.

The African Peace Facility

Objectives

The general objective of the African Peace Facility is to contribute to the African peace and security agenda through targeted support at the continental and regional level in the area of conflict prevention, management and resolution, and peace building. APF specific objectives are to provide a response to all three priorities of the Africa-EU partnership on Peace and Security, which are designed to mutually reinforce each other, namely:

- enhance dialogue on challenges to peace and security
- support the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture
- predictable funding for Africa-led peace support operations

Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries of the APF are the African Union, African regional organisations and relevant institutions/national structures within or related to the African Peace and Security Architecture. Peace in Africa also means a more secure environment for Europe – the consequences of conflicts do not stop at continental borders. Finally, the peoples of Africa are gaining from the work of the APF: strengthening the capacities for peace and security also benefits the victims of insecurity such as refugees and internally displaced persons.

Activities

Capacity Building programmes

Capacity building is a major component of the African Peace Facility. The objective is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the African Union and the African regional organisations as regards planning and conduct of peace support operations in Africa and the implementation of the APSA. €100M (9th and 10th EDF) have been allocated for this purpose.

Current priorities are to:

- enhance synergies built between the African Union Peace and Security Council, the core organ of the APSA, and regional entities dealing with conflict prevention, management and resolution;
- increase the capacity of the Continental Early Warning System to anticipate and prevent conflicts;
- contribute to the optimal functioning of the Panel of the Wise and mediation structures;
- provide support to the operational capability of the African Standby Force;
- enhance the capacity to develop and implement strategies and policies in related peace and security areas;
- build project and finance management capacity in support of APSA.

Peace Support Operations

The EU support enables the African Union and African sub-regional organisations to plan and conduct peace support operations: €840M (€400M under the 9th EDF and €440M under the 10th EDF) have been earmarked for Peace Support Operations (PSO).

Ongoing Operations financed by the APF include the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Mission for the consolidation of peace in Central African Republic (CAR) –MICOPAX.

Through the APF the EU also supported the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) in Darfur from 2004 until 2008 when AU forces were incorporated into a hybrid UN/AU mission.

Early Response Mechanism (ERM)

The purpose of the Early Response Mechanism is to endow the African Union and Regional Economic Communities with a source of immediate funding for the first stages of mediation actions or fact finding missions aimed at the prevention, management or resolution of crises.

To date a number of initiatives have been financed by the APF including:

- Mediation operation in Madagascar
- The AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) on Sudan
- The Office of the IGAD Facilitator for Somalia Peace and National Reconciliation

THREE) - INDIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH PLUNGES ...TO 7.7 %

India's economy grew at its weakest pace in six quarters but outperformed even gloomier predictions, reinforcing expectations the central bank will keep raising interest rates to put a lid on inflation. GDP growth in Asia's third-largest economy slipped to 7.7 percent in the three months through June, slightly exceeding the median forecast in a Reuters poll for an annual rise of 7.6 percent. "The latest growth number reinforces the view that although growth is slowing down, it is not collapsing as feared by some," said Ashutosh Datar, economist at IIFL in Mumbai, who said another 25 basis point increase at the central bank's next policy review on Sept. 16 was likely. India's economy grew 7.8 percent in the previous quarter. The Reserve Bank of India's 11 interest rate increases since March 2010, including a sharper-than-expected 50 basis point increase last month, have failed to bring inflation under control, but have undermined sentiment and demand in an economy that grew at 8.5 percent in the fiscal year that ended in March. Wholesale prices grew 9.22 percent in July, the latest inflation data shows, a tad below June's 9.44 percent, but well above the central bank's 4-4.5 percent comfort zone. India's slowing growth is the latest sign of cooling in the big emerging BRIC economies. Brazil's economic activity fell in June from a month earlier, the first such drop since late 2008, while China posted

slower growth in its June quarter. India's benchmark 10-year federal bond yield rose 2 basis points to 8.35 percent after the data failed to weaken the case for a rate increase at the next policy review in September. The 1-year overnight indexed swap (OIS) rate rose 5 basis points to 7.85 percent while the 5-year rose 3 basis points to 7.03 percent. Dealers said the move reflected expectations of a maximum 50 basis points more rate increases in 2011, after which the central bank may press the pause button. (Reuters)

FOUR) - IMPALA MAY INVEST US\$10 BILLION IN ZIMBABWE

Impala Platinum Holdings Limited – the world's second-largest producer of the precious metal – may invest as much as US\$10 billion in Zimbabwe to expand production if the government backs down on the demand that the company's business there be controlled by black citizens of the country. Zimbabwe, which has the world's largest platinum reserves after South Africa, passed a law earlier this year to force foreign companies to cede at least 51% of their local assets to black Zimbabweans. "It would run into the billions of dollars, probably between US\$5 and US\$10 billion," CEO David Brown said in an interview here. "Fifty-one percent equity just does not work."

Impala is now the biggest investor in Zimbabwean mining.

The Impala unit, now known as Zimplats Holdings Limited, produced 182,100oz of platinum in the year to 30 June and is in the middle of a US\$460 million expansion of its Ngezi mine, southwest of Harare, to boost output to 270,000oz by 2014, according to a company statement.

"We could begin to look at phase three and beyond, but this requires stability," Brown told investors at a presentation. Impala has until Wednesday of this week to revise its May proposal to satisfy ownership rules, after it was rejected last week.

Impala, which produces about 25% of the world's platinum, is spending R35 billion over the next five years to expand production as rising demand drives up prices. While most of its deposits are in South Africa, 11.3Moz, or almost a third of its total platinum reserves, are in Zimbabwe. That's worth about US\$21 billion at the current platinum price.

"It's a huge disappointment that we find ourselves in this position - we've been a model investor in this country," Brown said in the interview. "Impala believes an appropriate level of ownership will be the final result of talks with the government," Brown told investors. "The ownership rule could retard investment in mining and other industries at a time when it's needed," he added.

When Bloomberg News reached him by phone in Harare, mines minister Obert Mpofu said he could not comment yet because he had not heard about the possible investment. Calls to Indigenisation Minister Saviour Kasukuwere's office in the city weren't answered.

FIVE) - SA MUST BE BETTER POISED TO ATTRACT INVESTMENT

Pretoria - South Africa, as an emerging market, should get its house in order if it is to attract and support investment inflows, says Public Enterprises Minister Malusi Gigaba. "With the turbulent global economic environment, the attractiveness of the emerging economies from an investment destination perspective implies that we should get our house in order with regard to ensuring competitiveness and sound policy framework that is able to attract and support investment inflows," Gigaba said on Sunday.

Speaking at the Black Business Executive Circle's Kaelo Awards, the minister said the country's economic and social infrastructure must also be able to rise to the occasion.

"South Africa's competitiveness, in comparison with the Brics league, still needs a fair amount of improvement. In the past we have relied on our advantaged position as entry point and favourite destination as head office for African trade. We are fast losing that position and our attractiveness even in the African context is sliding backwards," said Gigaba.

Brics comprises a powerful grouping of emerging markets including Brazil, Russia, India and China and

South Africa.

Uncertainty in the current global economic situation has shifted focus to emerging economies even though emerging economies face enormous challenges.

"The implication for South Africa is therefore to galvanise its leadership and competitiveness," said Gigaba. With South Africa's battle against joblessness, poverty and inequity, the minister said state-owned entities have a meaningful role to play in economic growth. "Contrary to some opinion, state-owned entities are not inherently inefficient and characterised by incompetency and corruption."

There was a need for dialogue around how South Africa will achieve long-term and sustainable growth that will address unemployment, inequity and poverty. "It will be very difficult to deliver growth if we fail to ensure that we are competitive as a nation and indeed as an economy, collectively."

Transformation also needed to be addressed, particularly when coming to the success of black people. "Black success has erroneously, although not fortuitously, been viewed negatively, as often as though it transpired from corrupt practices. Black success needs to be hailed and celebrated and must resolutely be defended in public as in private."

The minister added that racism must be eradicated. "Even though our country might have made such enormous and impressive progress during the 17 years, none of us who is black can avoid the daily recognition that racism continues to be a defining feature of what we justly call the new South Africa." (BuaNews)

SIX) – SA'S POWER PRICES APPROACHING AFFORDABILITY 'TIPPING POINT'

South Africa's electricity prices, which have more or less doubled from an average real level of 25c/kWh in 2008 to the current level of 50c/kWh, were approaching an affordability "tipping point", the Energy Intensive User Group (EIUG) cautioned again on Monday. Chairperson Mike Rossouw said that coordinated regulatory, policy and investment efforts were required to moderate the price path to mitigate further deindustrialization and to ensure that the policy aspiration of extracting further value from the country's minerals ahead of export could be achieved.

Some smelters had already closed partly as a result of rising administrative prices, including Exxaro's Zincor, while the margins at others were becoming increasingly unattractive. The EIUG was currently conducting a survey of industrial and mining firms to improve visibility of the level of vulnerability.

Current and possible future tariff increases could lead prices to rise beyond 110c/kWh level by 2020, which the EIUG warned would result in disinvestments by firms dependent on competitively priced power.

Rossouw estimated that an average real price of below 80c/kWh would be required to ensure a balance between tariffs that were "just sufficient" to support the funding of new generating capacity and price affordability. In the absence of such equilibrium, a 'worst-case scenario' could emerge, whereby demand actually decreased and prices increased as Eskom sought to recover the revenue allowed to it under South Africa's price-setting methodology.

The EIUG had, therefore, decided to begin openly voicing its concerns over the future sustainability of energy-heavy intensive industrial activity generally, as well as the sustainability of its members, which together consume about 44% of the country's electrical energy. The organisation draws its members for the country's leading mining and industrial organisations, including large resources groups such as Anglo American, BHP Billiton and Xstrata, steelmakers, as well as chemicals and paper and pulp producers.

Next tariff round

It was also airing its price-path concerns ahead of Eskom's next tariff application under the third multiyear price determination period (MYPD3), for the period April 1, 2013, to March 31, 2016. The EIUG was particularly keen for the regulatory return on Eskom's assets to be lowered in the MYPD3. But it accepts that the ratios should be sufficient to sustain the State-owned utility's credit rating.

The National Energy Regulator of South Africa (Nersa) stipulated previously that the MYPD3 application should be submitted within six months of the 2013 implementation date. But regulatory member Themrani

Bukula told *Engineering News Online* that it had indicated to Eskom that it would like “at least nine months” to adjudicate the MYPD3 application – a process that would include public submissions and hearings.

He also stressed that Nersa’s methodology was “flexible” enough to cater for new circumstances, which he acknowledged had changed since the approval of the MYPD2 application. That determination allowed for three increases of around 25% a year for the period 2010 to 2013 and Eskom was on record as stating that it intended seeking at least two more years of similar-sized increases.

At the MYPD2 stage, Nersa’s focus was on ensuring that sufficient capital was available to support Eskom’s massive investments into new generation capacity.

The MYPD3 focus, however, was likely to be different, given under investment by the utility, the introduction of renewable energy projects, as well as current price-path concerns.

The process, Bukula said, would also interrogate why Eskom’s primary energy costs had surged as they had over the last few years – a point also raised by the EIUG. Eskom’s primary energy costs rose 19.8% for its financial year to March 31, 2011, and the utility said these costs had risen to 16c/kWh and were likely to rise at rates well ahead of inflation in 2011/12.

Eskom’s Hilary Joffe told *Engineering News Online* that Eskom was aware of Nersa’s nine-month requirement and that it was also taking account of the need to consult with the National Treasury and the South African Local Government Association ahead of the submission to the regulator. Therefore, the submission should be made early next year.

The utility was still conducting its own research and modelling exercises and had not arrived at any conclusions as to the percentage increases for which it might apply, notwithstanding the indicative price path of an additional two years of 25%-type increases.

Joffe said that Eskom’s modelling would take full account of the effect of higher tariffs on demand and on the economy as a whole, and would seek to strike a balance between affordability and ensuring that Eskom remained financially robust. She also noted that Eskom’s current return on assets remained well below the 8% indicated as acceptable by the regulator.

Climate change & carbon taxes

But Rossouw indicated that the EIUG’s intervention had also been designed to set the tone for fact-based analysis of the implication of South Africa’s climate change abatement commitments, as well as the proposed carbon tax, which was currently being considered by the National Treasury. From the EIUG’s perspective, an acceptable electricity price path should be determined ahead of the design of policy remedies expected to transition South Africa towards a lower-carbon economy.

Should a carbon tax be pursued on top of an as-yet uncosted plan to lower South Africa’s carbon emissions by 34% as against a ‘business as usual’ trajectory by 2020, it could prove to be the “last straw” for large-scale, energy-heavy investors. The climate change abatement challenge for South Africa was likely to be particularly difficult given the structure of the domestic economy and would “take a long time”, particularly assuming that the country was not prepared to put economic and job growth at risk.

The EIUG did not dispute the desirability of such a transition and the fact that the energy sector – which accounted for 83% of South Africa’s 461-million tons of emissions measured as carbon-dioxide equivalents – would be central to that transition. But it said a range of options were needed to reduce emissions, and that the options did not have to include a tax. Instead, South Africa should pursue a detailed analysis of the abatement opportunities and costs, as well as the investments required.

Rossouw also cautioned against a fixation on South Africa’s relative emissions, which were high. “South Africa should do its share. But when 60% of emissions are produced by five countries, we also have to accept that, in absolute terms, our contribution to the collective effort will be small.”

Further, international experience had shown that it was unlikely that South Africa could buck the international trend, whereby any increase in per capita wealth was associated with a rise in emissions. A reality demonstrated by the fact that, despite its climate commitments, China was still expecting its emissions to rise substantially by 2020.

SEVEN) – IMF IN TALKS ON FINANCING BOOST FOR DROUGHT-HIT AFRICA

The IMF, welcoming international support for drought-hit countries in the Horn of Africa, is discussing with Djibouti and Kenya increasing existing loans to the two East African countries as part of the response. In an interview, IMF African Department Director Antoinette Sayeh said that there is also room to boost disaster-relief aid effectiveness. Sayeh was speaking ahead of an August 25 pledging conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, convened by the African Union to raise financing for drought relief in East Africa. In a separate statement, IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde welcomed support from the international community that has been pledged so far in a twin-track approach to provide immediate relief and ensure food security in the long term. Excerpts:

What is the impact of the drought on the countries in the Horn of Africa?

The Horn of Africa is undergoing its worst drought in some 60 years. In the case of Somalia, the World Food Program, for example, has concluded that the famine there is a catastrophe. We have some 800,000 refugees who have fled Somalia to go to Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti. Food prices in the region as a whole have increased significantly, creating severe hardship for people both in rural and urban areas.

And on the economic front we have seen increased inflation across the subregion. In Kenya and Tanzania inflation is now in double digits, around 13–14 percent, as a result of significantly increased food prices.

In relation to import bills, because of the dependence of this region on hydropower for electricity, many countries are seeing shortages in power and are forced then to import fuel to facilitate generation of power. In addition to that, we expect some negative impact on overall growth because of the adverse consequences for agriculture.

Let me also underscore the significant pressures upon the budgets of countries in the region, because they are forced to make available emergency food supplies, which are only partly covered by international aid being provided in response to the drought.

You've described a very dire situation. What can the international community do, and especially the IMF, to help those countries?

The Fund will work in the context of a broader international coordinated effort. First and foremost, disaster relief is the priority. The World Food Program has made an appeal for some \$2.4 billion in financing for disaster relief to help with the famine. Unfortunately, much of that amount is still outstanding and has not been raised.

So the priority is really to get some support for this effort and to have this financing in place. And in that context we're hopeful that the forthcoming August 25 pledging conference convened by the African Union in Addis Ababa will be successful and that we'll see some rallying around this request.

In the case of the Fund, we have to work in our areas of a mandate. We're not a disaster relief institution. On the other hand, it's clear that affected countries are going to have a significant balance of payments financing need. In that context, the Fund can work very quickly to make available concessional loans.

We are, in fact, working already with Kenya and discussing with Kenya and Djibouti raising additional resources in the context of existing loans that are already in place for those countries. For other countries we can also quickly put together new loans if they make a request for Fund assistance.

In addition to financing there's an opportunity for us to work to increase the effectiveness of aid in support of disaster relief. We can also, through our public financial management technical assistance, help countries better target their support on those who really need help.

The Fund, unfortunately, is not able to provide much support to Somalia given the absence of a recognized government in Somalia. But through our support to other countries that are now hosts to large numbers of Somali refugees we can certainly help to provide relief.

So in the future, what policies should countries follow in the event of similar disasters?

In the last 10 to 15 years or so the frequency of intense droughts has increased, and so it is absolutely important to mitigate the impact of droughts so that we protect sustained economic growth in these countries.

And this is not an area of the Fund's expertise, but certainly we think that there are things that countries can do on the economic policy front to mitigate the impact of droughts.

One of them is to actually remove barriers to trade and to facilitate trade under those circumstances. And certainly it's not a wise thing in that context to have export bans, which there are temptations sometimes to put in place.

Countries can also work to minimize a very significant dependence on hydropower in East Africa. That is, of course, disrupted when you have a drought, and in that context you have to then start to import significant amounts of fuel, which is very expensive.

So to the extent that countries are able to develop more geothermal sources of power, as Kenya is now trying to do, they have an opportunity to really mitigate the impact of a severe drought on power supply and, through that, on broad economic activity.

EIGHT) – SUDAN FILES STRONG COMPLAINT AGAINST SOUTH TO UN COUNCIL

Sudan said on Tuesday it had submitted an official complaint to the United Nations Security Council, accusing South Sudan of causing instability in South Kordofan state, the latest sign of growing tension between the two nations. Tensions have flared in the oil-producing state after South Sudan seceded last month, taking its oil fields with it. The Security Council said in July it was gravely concerned about violence in the volatile border territory. U.N. officials have complained they are being granted only limited or no access to the area, which contains large populations that sided with South Sudan during the 20-year civil war. "The complaint accuses South Sudan of causing instability, disrupting peace and offering support to rebel groups in the South Kordofan state," a spokesman from Sudan's Foreign Ministry told Reuters. The Sudanese Foreign Ministry statement accuses South Sudan of providing military support to tribes in the area. Sudan's foreign minister, Ali Ahmed Karti, said in a copy of the complaint carried by the Sudanese news agency SUNA that Sudan was committed to stability and peace, but that the South Sudanese government was "hostile" towards its neighbour. "We were the first to acknowledge an independent South Sudan and extended a hand of cooperation," Kerti said, accusing Salva Kiir, president of the new South Sudan, of claiming South Kordofan and the Blue Nile province, both north of the new border. "The newly-born state adopted a hostile attitude towards the state that gave it the right to self-determination, and that was evident when it .. hosted rebel groups from Darfur, offering them camps, shelter, training and equipping with arms to be used against the Sudanese republic," he said. Activists have accused Khartoum of launching airstrikes and attacks in Southern Kordofan, targeting the state's ethnic Nuba group, in a bid to stamp out opposition and assert its authority after South Sudan's independence. Sudan's government has dismissed the accusations and accused local armed groups, many of which fought alongside the south during decades of civil war with the north, of launching a rebellion to try to control the territory. The United Nations said on June 22 that 73,000 people had fled Southern Kordofan after more than two weeks of fighting although some later returned to their homes. (Reuters)

NINE) – BURKINA FASO: JUSTICE CAMPAIGNERS WELCOME POLICE CONVICTIONS FOR FATAL BEATING

The conviction of three policemen for the February death of high school student Justin Zongo should be another building block in the struggle against impunity in Burkina Faso, say student leaders and human rights defenders. At the conclusion of a two-day trial on Aug. 23, in Ouagadougou, the capital of this West African country, police constables Belibi Nébié and Béma Fayama were each sentenced to ten years in prison. They were found guilty of intentionally beating and injuring Zongo in February: the injuries led to his death soon afterwards. An officer, Narcisse Roger Kaboré, was sentenced to eight years for his involvement in the incident.

Lawyers for the three convicted men, who say the punishment is excessive, have announced they will appeal the judgement, but Ambroise Farama, lawyer for Zongo's family, is satisfied. "Justice has been served, because those responsible (for his death) have been named," said Farama. "The aim of a lawsuit like this is to remind the forces of law and order that they cannot simply stop someone and torture him." The family had demanded only the symbolic amount of one franc as compensation.

Pushing back impunity

The death of Justin Zongo, on Feb. 20 in the southwestern town of Koudougou provoked violent demonstrations throughout the country, including the torching of public buildings, extensive destruction of private property, and six deaths, among them a police officer in the centre-west region.

The authorities, who initially attributed Zongo's death to meningitis, retracted this claim following the riots as well as pressure from human rights organisations. A full inquiry into the death was ordered, leading to charges being laid against the police for the teenager's death.

"The key point is that they have recognised that Justin did not simply die of meningitis. One must realise that his meningitis was provoked by his injuries," said Kisito Dakuyo, the head of the Burkina Faso Movement for Human and People's Rights (MBDHP) in the central Boulkiemdé province.

"We are interested in an educational significance that goes well beyond this verdict, and which challenges all those who harbour the idea of carrying out such acts," said MBDHP's national president, Chryzogome Zougmonré. Zougmonré, who last year launched a campaign against all forms of torture under the theme "torture is an illegal, barbaric and cowardly act", draws a parallel between the Justin Zongo affair and that of Arnaud Somé, 23, who died in suspicious circumstances in July 2010, also provoking riots in the southwest of the country.

Somé died after he was detained by police for possession of cannabis. The police were accused of torturing him and people took to the streets in several days of violent protest, setting fire to the regional police headquarters in Gaoua. The intervention of the army and the gendarmerie - armed elite police with responsibility for public order - was needed to restore order in the city.

In June, two members of the police force were found guilty of Somé's fatal beating and sentenced to five years in prison.

Following the verdict, Dakuyo has renewed hope for justice in other cases, such as the unsolved assassination of Norbert Zongo, a journalist who was killed in December 1998.

"We believe that this is the beginning of justice for all the other dossiers which are pending, because our people have a thirst for justice, and this verdict gives hope for all outstanding cases," said Dakuyo.

"There is positive momentum," agreed Zougmonré. "We have noted that for too long, some police have been committing acts like these (beatings), particularly at certain sites of preventive detention (commissariats and guard posts). This must stop, because in a state ruled by law, one cannot tolerate the daily abuse of Burkinabè citizens."

TEN) – PETROVIETNAM SIGNS \$451M OIL DEAL IN ALGERIA

PetroVietnam Exploration Production Corporation (PVEP) and partners, PTT Exploration and Production Pcl (PTTEP) of Thailand and Japan Gasoline Corporation on Sunday signed a US\$451.3 million contract with Algerian state-owned oil firm Sonatrach. PVEP and its partners have been commissioned to build an oil treatment centre, capable of treating 20,000 barrels a day; a gas transportation plant, capable of carrying 1 million cubic metres per day; two oil pipelines, an electricity generating plant and a water separation unit.

The facilities will be based at the Bir Seba mine in southern Algeria and will take 31 months to build. Oil output is expected to reach 20,000 barrels a day by 2014 and 36,000-40,000 barrels in 2016.

Under the deal, Sonatrach will receive 51 per cent of the income of the oil produced. PetroVietnam will be covering 40 per cent of the cost of the project.

Meanwhile, Russian-Vietnamese oil and gas joint venture Vietsovpetro announced last Saturday it had successfully launched the 11,000-tonne Moc Tinh drilling platform – the biggest to have been made in Viet Nam. (VNS)

ELEVEN) – CHINA BLOCKS EU INITIATIVE TO UNBLOCK LIBYAN FUNDS FOR REBELS

La Chine a arrêté une initiative européenne visant à demander au Comité de l'ONU chargé des sanctions de débloquer 5 milliards de dollars, puisés dans les fonds libyens gelés, pour acheter des vivres et du matériel humanitaire pour le pays. La semaine dernière, les Etats-Unis avaient menacé de chercher à faire approuver une résolution par le Conseil de sécurité pour pousser l'Afrique du Sud à permettre le dégel de 1,5 milliard de dollars en avoirs libyens gelés. Finalement, l'Afrique du Sud avait donné son consentement. Cette fois, la mission diplomatique chinoise préfère connaître l'avis des autorités de Pékin avant de se prononcer sur cette initiative émanant de la France, de la Grande-Bretagne et de l'Allemagne. Les trois pays souhaitent affecter ces fonds à l'achat d'aide d'urgence pour la Libye. Londres souhaite le déblocage d'un milliard de livres (environ 1,6 milliard de dollars). L'Allemagne a prié le Comité des sanctions des Nations unies de "permettre le dégel d'un milliard d'euros provenant des avoirs de la banque centrale libyenne en Allemagne", a indiqué un porte-parole de la mission allemande. La France de son côté souhaite aussi le déblocage d'un milliard d'euros, selon des diplomates. En règle générale, ces requêtes sont approuvées par le Comité des sanctions sur la Libye si aucune objection n'est formulée durant une période de trois jours après le dépôt de la demande. Des diplomates des Nations unies ont indiqué que la Chine s'opposait aux demandes des pays européens. "Nous espérons qu'il ne s'agit que d'un problème technique et que la mission chinoise recevra bientôt des instructions" de Pékin, a expliqué un diplomate occidental. Le Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies a adopté le 26 février dernier une résolution à l'unanimité qui impose des sanctions sévères à Mouammar Kadhafi, sa famille et son entourage, y compris un gel des avoirs et une interdiction de voyages. (AFP)

Fernando Matos Rosa

Brussels

