



## **MEMORANDUM N° 16/2011**

**11/02/2011**

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## ONE) EU LEADERS SEND STERN WARNING TO EGYPT

Les dirigeants européens, réunis en sommet à Bruxelles, ont mis en garde les autorités égyptiennes contre tout nouveau dérapage à l'occasion de la grande journée de manifestations contre le président Hosni Moubarak. "Nous attendons que les forces de sécurité égyptiennes fassent en sorte qu'en ce vendredi décisif des manifestations libres et pacifiques puissent se dérouler", a lancé la chancelière allemande Angela Merkel à son arrivée à Bruxelles. Le Premier ministre britannique, David Cameron, a jugé pour sa part "insuffisantes" les premières mesures prises vers la transition par le pouvoir égyptien et estimé qu'il perdrait toute "crédibilité" en cas de nouvelles violences dans la journée contre les manifestants. "Si nous voyons aujourd'hui dans les rues du Caire de la violence orchestrée par l'Etat ou un recours à des voyous pour s'en prendre aux manifestants, alors l'Egypte et son régime perdront le reste de crédibilité et de soutien dont il dispose de la part de l'Occident, y compris de la Grande-Bretagne", a averti M. Cameron. Les manifestations prévues vendredi ne doivent pas "à nouveau" sombrer dans la violence, a aussi mis en garde la chef de la diplomatie européenne, Catherine Ashton. Vendredi, des milliers d'Egyptiens commençaient à se rassembler au Caire pour réclamer le départ du président Hosni Moubarak, qui refuse de démissionner et affirme craindre "le chaos" après des violences meurtrières entre opposants et partisans de son régime. **NOT ENOUGH** "Les mesures prises jusqu'ici n'ont pas répondu aux aspirations de la population égyptienne", a jugé David Cameron, estimant que le pays "devrait prendre des initiatives pour montrer qu'il existe un chemin clair, crédible et transparent vers la transition" politique à la tête du pays. Catherine Ashton a aussi estimé "absolument essentiel" que les autorités égyptienne démarrent sans tarder le dialogue avec l'opposition: "C'est au peuple égyptien, au gouvernement égyptien de faire avancer ce processus.... C'est à eux de faire cette transition, et à nous de les y aider". La question de l'Egypte, mais plus généralement de l'attitude que doivent adopter les Européens face à la vague de mouvements populaires dans le monde arabe dans la foulée de la révolution tunisienne, s'est invitée à ce sommet initialement consacré à l'économie et à l'énergie. "Quand le vent de la liberté et de la démocratie souffle, il est contagieux. Le malaise n'est pas seulement en Egypte. Ce sont les plus pauvres qui sont sur la place", a souligné Silvio Berlusconi. "Il y a une dynamique puissante à l'oeuvre avec des implications pour la région" entière "et pour l'Union européenne", a reconnu en ouvrant la réunion le président de l'UE, Herman Van Rompuy. "Nous espérons une transition en Egypte qui apporte plus de démocratie sans rupture avec Moubarak, qui était considéré comme un sage et un point de référence dans tout le Moyen-Orient", a commenté Berlusconi. Le sommet devrait déboucher sur une déclaration commune ainsi que sur une stratégie que devra mettre en oeuvre Mme Ashton, qui doit se rendre d'ici à deux semaines en Tunisie et en Egypte. Ces derniers jours, l'Europe a paru très à la traîne des Etats-Unis sur le dossier.

## TWO) – BELGIUM URGES EU MEMBER STATES TO GIVE THE FLOOR TO ASHTON

Le Premier ministre belge a reproché aux grands pays de l'UE de trop vouloir occuper le devant de la scène européenne sur l'Egypte et d'occulter la chef de la diplomatie européenne, Catherine Ashton, censée parler au nom des 27. "L'Europe doit parler d'une seule voix, la voix de Mme Ashton", a déclaré Yves Leterme aux journalistes en arrivant à un sommet avec ses homologues de l'Union européenne à Bruxelles, consacré notamment à la vague de contestation en Egypte. "Maintenant c'est un test de vérité" auquel est confronté l'Europe, "il faut donner un espace politique à Mme Ashton", a-t-il dit. "Les gens doivent apprendre les nouvelles réalités" institutionnelles nées du traité de Lisbonne qui a créé le poste de haut représentant de l'UE aux Affaires étrangères, confié à la Britannique et censé permettre à l'Europe de parler d'une seule voix. La Belgique a été clairement irritée par l'initiative prise jeudi par les dirigeants des cinq plus grands pays européens (France, Allemagne, Grande-Bretagne, Italie, Espagne) de publier un communiqué commun sur l'Egypte, en parallèle à une déclaration que faisait au même moment Mme Ashton sur le sujet. Et qui a du coup a été en grande partie reléguée au second plan. Les critiques à l'égard de la chef de la diplomatie européenne, récurrentes sur son manque d'expérience et de visibilité depuis sa nomination fin 2009, ont redoublé avec la révolution tunisienne et les manifestations anti-Moubarak en Egypte. L'Europe apparaît depuis le début à la traîne de événements dans le monde arabe, qu'ils s'agisse de la révolution en Tunisie ou des manifestations en Egypte, où l'UE a toujours un temps de retard sur les Etats-Unis. Jeudi, le chef de file du principal groupe politique au Parlement européen (Parti populaire européen, droite), Joseph Daul, a estimé que l'Europe avait "un problème de casting" avec Catherine Ashton au poste de haute représentante aux Affaires étrangères.

### THREE) – MEPs CRITICIZE ASHTON OVER TUNISIA, EGYPT

Catherine Ashton fait l'objet de vives critiques au sein du Parlement européen où des élus l'accusent d'être trop passive face à la contestation dans le monde arabe, le principal groupe politique parlant même d'erreur "de casting" à son égard. Depuis la révolution tunisienne, l'Union européenne donne le sentiment d'être à la traîne des événements dans le monde arabe et des Etats-Unis en particulier. Interrogé pour savoir si l'Union européenne avait un problème de "casting" en ayant choisi la baronne britannique pour être sa Haute représentante pour les Affaires étrangères, le président du principal groupe politique au Parlement, le Parti populaire européen (PPE, droite), Joseph Daul, a répondu par l'affirmative. "Moi, je crois que c'est un problème de casting", a-t-il déclaré. "Ce n'est pas facile de parler d'une seule voix à 27 (pays), ça je le conçois, mais je pense qu'il faut quelqu'un qui ait de la poigne et qui commence à se faire voir, à partir. Il faut aller en Egypte, en Tunisie (...) l'Europe doit être présente pour mettre en place la démocratie", a-t-il déclaré. Fait notable, le chef de file du groupe socialiste au Parlement, Martin Schulz, a aussi pris ses distances jeudi avec Catherine Ashton, qui fait pourtant partie de cette famille politique puisqu'elle est travailliste. Il a jugé "injustes" certaines critiques qui lui sont faites alors qu'elle n'est en fonction que depuis fin 2009. Mais "d'un autre côté, moi aussi je souhaiterais que Catherine Ashton soit plus active et je le lui ai d'ailleurs dit", a-t-il déclaré à l'AFP. "Je pense que la Haute représentante doit bien veiller à être une interlocutrice pour la population en Egypte", a-t-il ajouté. Du côté des Verts, l'exaspération est très nette à l'égard de la chef de la diplomatie, en particulier sur la Tunisie, au lendemain d'un débat sur le sujet au Parlement. "Force est de constater que Mme Ashton n'a démontré aucune volonté de tirer les leçons des erreurs du passé" de l'Union européenne "et n'a fait qu'assurer le service minimum. La crédibilité de l'UE n'en sort pas renforcée, elle n'est pas encore au rendez-vous de la portée historique des événements actuels", a jugé dans un communiqué l'élue Hélène Flautre. Lors de ce débat, Mme Ashton avait été mise en cause avec virulence par le président du groupe des Verts, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, et par le libéral-démocrate Guy Verhofstadt. "Pourquoi, Madame Ashton, l'Europe a-t-elle réagi de façon tellement faible?", l'a interpellée Guy Verhofstadt, "vous avez réagi, puis l'Allemagne, la France, la Grande-Bretagne ont aussi fait une communication sans concertation, comme si l'Europe n'existait pas". Daniel Cohn-Bendit l'a aussi accusée d'être "une résistante de la 25e heure" pour avoir évité pendant longtemps de critiquer ouvertement le régime du président tunisien Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

### FOUR) - MEPs VISIT TUNISIA

Une délégation de 12 députés du Parlement européen est arrivée jeudi à Tunis, quelques heures après le vote par leur assemblée d'une résolution appelant à renforcer la coopération entre l'UE et la Tunisie pour accompagner la transition démocratique dans ce pays. Lors de cette visite de quatre jours, les députés européens, conduits par l'Espagnol Jose Ignacio Salafranca, doivent rencontrer des membres du gouvernement de transition, des partis politiques et des représentants de la puissante centrale syndicale UGTT afin d'évaluer la situation en Tunisie après les troubles qui ont secoué le pays jusqu'au départ de Zine El Abidine Ben Ali le 14 janvier. Une réunion à huis clos étaient prévue à 18H00 (17H00 GMT) au siège de la délégation de l'Union européenne à Tunis, a-t-on appris auprès de cette dernière. "Nous attendons que Paris use son influence au sein de l'UE pour pousser à une accélération, faire progresser rapidement le dossier sur le statut avancé de la Tunisie", avait indiqué jeudi à l'AFP une source proche du ministère tunisien des Affaires étrangères. Mercredi, la chef de la diplomatie européenne, Catherine Ashton, a annoncé son intention de se rendre dans une quinzaine de jours en Tunisie pour parler de l'aide que l'UE compte apporter à la suite de la chute du régime Ben Ali. Elle a confirmé que l'UE était prête à revoir à la hausse le niveau de ses relations en accordant à la Tunisie un "statut avancé". L'Union européenne avait entamé en mai 2010 avec le régime du président Ben Ali, des négociations sur ce statut censé ouvrir la voie à un traitement douanier préférentiel pour les échanges et à une libéralisation en matière de visas. Mais ces discussions n'avaient pas fait de progrès sensibles depuis lors.

### FIVE) – TUNISIA GOVERNMENT STARTS COMPENSATING 'MARTYRS OF REVOLUTION'

La Tunisie a commencé à indemniser les familles des "martyrs de la révolution", trois semaines après la chute du président Ben Ali, alors que Paris et Tunis tentaient de dessiner les contours de leurs futures relations. Les autorités de transition du pays ont commencé à accorder des compensations aux familles des personnes

tuées à Ben Arous, dans la banlieue sud de Tunis, durant les semaines d'émeutes qui ont fait tomber le régime. Selon un communiqué officiel jeudi soir, le gouvernement a décidé des indemnisations de 20.000 dinars (10.300 euros) par mort et 3.000 dinars (1.546 euros) par blessé. Le 1er février, le chef de la mission du Haut Commissariat aux droits de l'homme de l'ONU, Bacre Ndiaye, avait avancé le chiffre d'au moins 219 morts et 510 blessés. Lors d'une conférence de presse, il avait précisé que 147 personnes avaient trouvé la mort dans les troubles et 72 autres dans des prisons. Ces chiffres sont encore "provisoires" et l'ONU poursuivait ses enquêtes, avait-il encore indiqué. Signe du retour à la normale qui se confirme depuis quelques jours, le gouvernement de Mohammed Ghannouchi a annoncé le rétablissement dès lundi prochain de la journée complète de travail dans les administrations et entreprises publique. Ce régime dit de la "double séance", 8H30-13H00, 15H00-17H45, avait disparu pendant les semaines agitées de la révolte et le début de la transition. Les fonctionnaires ne travaillaient alors que le matin. Le pays est toujours confronté à de brèves grèves sectorielles (transports en commun, personnels intérimaires à Tunis Air) ou de petites manifestations (protestation des employés de la radio nationale contre des nominations de nouveaux patrons sans concertation). Mais globalement, la machine économique a redémarré, notamment au port de Radès (Tunis), qui concentre 70% de l'activité import-export du pays. **SEEKING TO RESTORE FRENCH TIES** Concernant le tourisme, un secteur vital, une délégation de l'ensemble des compagnies aériennes et voyagistes français est attendue la semaine prochaine à Tunis pour rencontrer les autorités, alors que le couvre-feu en vigueur depuis le 13 janvier les pénalise lourdement. Au plan diplomatique, la France et la Tunisie post-Ben Ali cherchaient vendredi, lors d'une première rencontre bilatérale à Paris, à fonder une nouvelle relation en dépassant les critiques et incompréhensions suscitées par la position française. Paris est accusé d'avoir attendu le départ de Ben Ali le 14 janvier pour apporter enfin son soutien à la révolution, et la rue tunisienne n'a pas digéré l'offre de coopération policière faite par la chef de la diplomatie française Michèle Alliot-Marie en pleine répression. Lors d'un déjeuner avec son homologue Ahmed Abderraouf Ounaïs, Michèle Alliot-Marie devait exposer les actions menées par la France pour "donner un nouvel élan" à la coopération bilatérale. Une délégation de parlementaires européens, arrivée jeudi pour quatre jours, devait rencontrer vendredi deux ministres (Justice, Enseignement supérieur), des responsables de partis politiques d'opposition mais aussi de la mouvance islamiste Ennahda, ainsi que des syndicalistes, étudiants et journalistes. La Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme est également sur le terrain depuis quelques jours. Outre les autorités, la FIDH rencontre ONG, opposants et syndicalistes "pour dresser un état des lieux, a précisé à l'AFP sa représentante en Tunisie Khadija Chérif. Symbole de la normalisation en marche, une célèbre salle de théâtre de Tunis, "["El Teatro"](#)", rouvre ses portes avec une première pièce dont la recette ira aux "blessés et handicapés de la révolution". "Lettre à mon seigneur" raconte "l'histoire d'un roi sot, d'un peuple terrorisé et du jour où s'allume l'étincelle de la révolte".

## SIX) – TUNISIA: COUNCIL IMPOSES ASSETS FREEZE

The Council has adopted a decision and a regulation imposing the freezing of assets owned or controlled by persons deemed to be responsible for the misappropriation of state funds in Tunisia and persons associated with them.

The decision and the regulation, which target a list of 48 persons, including former president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and his wife, were published on 5 February 2011 in the EU Official Journal. [\[OJ L 31, 5.2.2011, p. 40\]](#) The decision amends and updates decision 2011/72/CFSP, adopted on 31 January.

At its meeting on 31 January, the Council expressed solidarity and support for Tunisians in their efforts to put in place a stable democracy, the rule of law and democratic pluralism with full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

It welcomed the creation of a high commission for political reform and national commissions to investigate the violence that took place during recent demonstrations and to investigate corruption.

## SEVEN) – RUSSIA WARNS AGAINST WESTERN MEDDLING IN EGYPTIAN AFFAIRS

La Russie a exprimé sur l'Egypte son hostilité de principe à toute solution "importée" par les Occidentaux. Dans sa première réaction jeudi aux événements d'Egypte, le président Dmitri Medvedev a appelé à "un règlement pacifique et dans le cadre du droit". Mais alors que les capitales occidentales, en particulier Washington, ont multiplié ces derniers jours les mises en garde au régime égyptien et sont présumées

négocier une transition avec le président Hosni Moubarak, Moscou a déclaré jeudi son hostilité de principe aux ingérences. "Nous n'estimons pas positif d'imposer de l'extérieur de quelconques solutions, de décréter des ultimatum. Ce sont les forces politiques égyptiennes qui doivent se mettre d'accord", a déclaré le ministre des Affaires étrangères, Sergueï Lavrov. En janvier déjà, lors de la révolte qui a fait tomber le président tunisien Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, qualifiée par la télévision russe de "coup d'Etat", le Kremlin était resté en retrait par rapport aux avertissements lancés au régime par les Occidentaux. La Russie critique régulièrement les modèles démocratiques imposés, selon elle, par les Occidentaux dans le monde, en particulier dans son ancienne zone d'influence, depuis les "révolutions" survenues dans plusieurs pays de l'ex-URSS comme l'Ukraine, la Géorgie et le Kirghizstan dans les années 2000. **GEOPOLITICAL WORRIES** Mais selon les analystes, Moscou est tout autant préoccupée que Washington et les capitales européennes par une déstabilisation du monde arabe qui pourrait profiter aux islamistes. La crise égyptienne "est une menace pour la sécurité de la région entière qui peut avoir des répercussions jusqu'au Caucase ou même au Tatarstan", une république à tradition musulmane du centre de la Russie, souligne Viktor Kremeniousk, de l'Institut USA-Canada de Moscou. La Russie a régulièrement accusé les réseaux islamistes internationaux de soutenir la rébellion à laquelle elle fait toujours face dans le Caucase du Nord, depuis les deux guerres successives qui ont ravagé la petite république de Tchétchénie à partir de 1994. En ce sens, Moscou pourrait ne pas voir d'un si mauvais œil le maintien d'une influence américaine en Egypte. "Si les islamistes arrivent au pouvoir et que l'influence des Etats-Unis en Egypte s'éteint, cela va sérieusement changer l'équilibre des pouvoirs dans la région et cela menace de déstabiliser la situation", estime Maria Lipman, analyste au centre Carnegie à Moscou. "Bien que les intérêts de la Russie dans la région soient incomparablement moindres que ceux des Etats-Unis, la Russie peut être confrontée à des problèmes sérieux si un régime hostile aux Etats-Unis arrive au pouvoir en Egypte", ajoute-t-elle. Privée de beaucoup de ses moyens d'influence dans le monde arabe depuis la chute de l'URSS en 1991, a fortiori en Egypte, un pays soutenu par les Etats-Unis, la Russie a en effet "peu pris sur la situation", souligne lui aussi Fiodor Loukianov, rédacteur en chef de la revue *Russia in Global Affairs*. Cette crise peut "indéniablement renforcer les liens entre la Russie et les Etats-Unis", estime Kremeniousk. Ce chercheur souligne cependant les relations parfois ambiguës entre Moscou et certains mouvements du monde arabe. "On doit se souvenir que la Russie a aussi une tradition de contacts avec certains des islamistes radicaux, comme le Hezbollah, par exemple", dit-il.

#### **EIGHT) – ITALIAN TOURIST KIDNAPPED BY GUNMEN IN SOUTH-EAST ALGERIA**

An Italian tourist was kidnapped by unidentified gunmen on Wednesday night in the south-east of Algeria, Algeria's state APS news agency reported Friday. The tourist was on holiday in the region of Tadrart, south of the oasis city of Djanet when she was nabbed by gunmen travelling in two vehicles, APS reported, quoting a police source in Djanet. Tadrart, a desert region, is close to Algeria's borders with Libya and Niger. Niger has experienced a number of kidnappings of Western nationals in recent months by a group calling itself Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). She, her guide and cook were intercepted as they were returning to Tadrart from Djanet, where they had gone by car to pick up some supplies, APS reported. The guide and the cook were let go. The kidnappers allowed the woman phone a local contact at TÚnUrÚ travel agency, which had organized her trip, to inform them she was being held hostage, the report said. The agency in turn alerted the authorities, which had begun searching the area for her. The APS report gave no details about the woman's age or name. Algeria's Echorouk newspaper gave her first name as Maria, said she was aged 53 and had been in the country since January 20, as part of a tour group.

#### **NINE) – ALGERIA PROMISES MORE FREEDOMS TO AVERT PROTESTS**

Algeria promised to end a 19-year-old state of emergency and provide more political freedoms on Thursday, concessions designed to keep out a wave of uprisings sweeping the Arab world. The announcement by the energy exporting nation followed pressure from government opponents, some inspired by unrest in Egypt and Tunisia, who demanded the emergency powers be scrapped and are planning a protest in the capital on Feb. 12. The government had argued it needed the extra powers under the state of emergency to fight Islamist militants linked to al Qaeda but the insurgency has abated, sparking public debate about whether those powers are still justified. The lifting of the state of emergency will happen "in the very near future," Algeria's official APS news agency quoted President Abdelaziz Bouteflika as telling ministers. Bouteflika said the government should adopt new measures to promote job creation, a nod to the problem of unemployment which is particularly acute among young Algerians and helped trigger the uprising in Tunisia. **AIRTIME FOR THE OPPOSITION** The Algerian president also instructed that national television and radio stations -- which

are controlled by the state and broadcast almost no voices of dissent -- must give airtime to all political parties. "It is a step in the right direction," political analyst Mohamed Lagab said of the proposed changes. "(It) shows that Bouteflika has understood how fragile the situation is." However, Bouteflika made clear there would be a limit to the new political freedoms. Restrictions on marches in the capital will stay in force even after the lifting of the state of emergency, he said. Bouteflika, who is 73 and serving his third term as president, issued a warning to opposition groups. "Freedom should not end in a situation where you have things sliding out of control or anarchy, which have already cost Algeria dear," he said. The state of emergency was introduced in 1992, soon after the authorities annulled a parliamentary election which a radical Islamist party was poised to win. That led to nearly two decades of armed conflict between Islamist insurgents and security forces which killed an estimated 200,000 people and from which the country, a major oil and gas producer, is still emerging. There was no indication that the end of the state of emergency would mean that Islamist parties banned two decades ago would now be able to resume their activities. The Algerian authorities have already made some concessions in the past few weeks to keep a lid on unrest. Early in January, before the wave of protests in other Arab countries, several Algerian cities were shaken by rioting over food prices which killed two people and injured hundreds. Since then, the government intervened to cut prices on staple foodstuffs and issued instructions to speed up imports of wheat, in an effort to ensure there was no disruption to bread supplies which could rekindle riots. Some analysts say that Algeria is different from Egypt and Tunisia because its huge revenues from energy exports allow it to satisfy many of its citizens' economic grievances, especially at a time when oil prices are around \$100 a barrel.

#### TEN) – **SUDAN ARMY SHOOTOUT KILLS NINE IN FLASHPOINT TOWN**

At least nine people, including two children and a U.N. driver, were killed in a shootout among Sudanese soldiers in the politically sensitive southern town of Malakal, officials said. Fighting broke out among members of the same military unit after some resisted new orders to move to north Sudan in a redeployment ahead of the expected independence of south Sudan, said government, army and U.N. officials. The incident underlined the challenges facing Sudan as it tries to untangle joint north-south military units and other state bodies before the split, expected to take place on July 9. "We don't know how many bodies will be found at the site of the fighting. We know that nine people have died and 22 wounded have been admitted to the hospital," said Bartholomew Pakwan Abwol, spokesman for the government of the surrounding Upper Nile state. He said the dead included two soldiers and two children. A Sudanese driver working for the U.N.'s refugee agency UNHCR was caught in the crossfire and died in hospital on Friday afternoon, said U.N. spokesman Kouider Zerrouk. Malakal, the main town in Upper Nile and the site of past north-south clashes, has been patrolled by a joint north-south unit made up of troops from the northern Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the southern Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). "There was a disagreement between (members of) the SAF component in Malakal. They were asked to move north," said a U.N. official on condition of anonymity. Abwol said the protesting SAF soldiers were ethnically southerners. "Some are refusing to go north and be disarmed. They are southerners and they have rights here. But they think they will have no rights in the north," he said. The southern army moved in to try to create a buffer zone between the fighting troops, said SPLA spokesman Philip Aguer. Aguer said the southern SAF soldiers were loyal to Gabriel Tang, a former southern warlord who joined the northern army then patched up his differences with the southern leadership ahead of the referendum. "It was they who objected to the order to move their equipment north. They did not want to see their tanks and artillery going north or to Khartoum," said Aguer.

#### ELEVEN) – **CONGO: ARMED GROUP TRIES TO TAKE CONTROL OF KATANGA AIRPORT**

Un groupe armé non encore identifié a tenté vendredi à l'aube de prendre le contrôle de l'aéroport de Lubumbashi, chef-lieu de la province minière du Katanga dans le sud-est de la RD Congo, où des tirs étaient entendus, a affirmé à l'AFP le porte-parole du gouvernement

## TWELVE) – DELAYED DRUG REGISTRATION COULD AFFECT REGION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Delays in drug registration by the country's Medicines Control Council (MCC), contribute to depriving South African HIV patients of important fixed dose combination antiretroviral (ARV) drugs. But there are indications that the effects of the delays are being felt even farther afield.

In December 2010, South Africa announced a new, two-year tender for ARVs which halved drug costs for the national HIV treatment programme; The tender however failed to include many fixed dose ARV combinations, which although approved by bodies like the World Health Organization are not yet registered by the MCC for use in South Africa.

By combining multiple drugs into one, fixed dose combinations reduce the number of pills HIV patients take daily and have been shown to improve treatment adherence – with added benefits for clinics, according to Dr Thembi Xulu, of the South African HIV non-profit, Right to Care.

"The more drugs you have, the more space clinics need to store them and our clinics just don't have that kind of space," said Xulu, adding that fixed dose combinations would also make managing and ensuring drug supply easier for clinics.

### Delays keep drugs off shelves

While the body has made recent progress in registering ARVs - which allowed for greater competition among suppliers and lower drug prices in the 2010 tender – there are fears that staffing changes could rob the MCC of its momentum.

According to Andy Gray, a senior lecturer at the department of therapeutics and medicines management at South Africa's University of KwaZulu-Natal, the recent upsurge in registrations was due, partly, to pressure from South African Health Minister Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, which led to changes in the historically understaffed MCC.

"They brought in an additional set of part time staff to work through the [drug registration] backlog on fixed term contracts, which made some dent, and priority was given to ARV applications" Gray says. "But the MCC remains quite opaque and it's difficult to know what's going on inside... whether the backlog was entirely eliminated and whether it is growing again now that those workers' contracts are finished."

While the MCC has approved many dual fixed dose combinations, there remains a shortage of registered fixed dose combinations including the first-line ARV tenofovir (TDF), according to South African human rights organisation, SECTION27.

For example, the body has approved only two generic alternatives to brand name two-in-one pill, TRUVADA, which combines TDF with the ARV emtricitabine. Without more generics approved and greater competition among suppliers, prices for this combination drug remain high in South Africa and the two-in-one pill was included only in only limited amounts in the 2010 tender.

"The idea is to reduce patients' pill counts but it has to be affordable to do it, and for this to happen we need generic competition to bring those prices down," he says. "I don't think we can point any fingers at those who did the procurement [for the tender] given what was registered in the country at the time, but we've raised the issue [of fixed dose combinations] to keep it on the agenda."

### Ripples in the pond

Drug registration delays in South Africa may also have far-reaching consequences for other African countries following the regional leader.

South Africa is currently the only African country that is a member of the international Pharmaceutical Inspection Co-operation Scheme (PIC/S), which strives to harmonise drug manufacturing standards and regulation among member countries. Gaining membership in July 2007, South Africa's MCC and drug manufacturers first had to pass stringent reviews by international teams.

According to Gray, there have been discussions within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to try to allow other countries to capitalise on this strong regulatory capacity, perhaps introducing formal arrangement in which MCC registrations would be recognised by other SADC countries.

While Gray says he believes there have been no formal agreements, there already exists a degree of informal recognition of MCC approvals in other countries, some of which have barely any regulatory capacity.

Currently, only Kenya and Uganda have anything close to the MCC and duplicating the body for countries that lack an equivalent would cost millions of dollars, according to Professor Peter Eagles, who spoke in his personal capacity. Eagles, is also the chairperson of the MCC.

Trevor Schoerie is the managing director of PharmOut, a pharmaceutical consulting company based in South Africa and says it's not uncommon for smaller regulatory authorities to take registrations done by larger counterparts into consideration, often through international mutual recognition agreements (MRAs). He cites

Asian examples.

"It's not uncommon for smaller authorities to accept larger authorities' work," he says. "This is done by [Singapore's] Health Sciences Authority (HSA), so if you have registered [a product] with five recognised authorities, HSA accept the product for sale more easily.

"Association of Southeast Asian Nations [member] countries 'look up' to HSA, i.e. if HSA has approved it, then it passes through a MRA," Schoerie adds. "The arrangements... are common and make drugs cheaper and safer, I think."

Countries that may be 'looking up' to South Africa's MCC may also be affected by delays in drug registrations, warns Brenda Waning, Coordinator of Market Dynamics for UNITAID, the United Nations drug-funding agency.

"Given the fact that some countries recognise what South Africa registers in their own countries, there could be a ripple effect as most of Africa is looking at South Africa to be the leader in drug registrations and that could cause delays [in other countries]," she says.

### THIRTEEN) – NEW, ASSERTIVE WOMEN'S VOICES IN LOCAL ELECTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Noncedo Pulana lacks many things, but she is certainly not short of confidence as she prepares to stand for election as Khayelitsha ward councillor. She feels her long years as an activist in the sprawling township have prepared her to do a better job. Khayelitsha is reputed to be the largest township in South Africa. Created in 1985 to accommodate an influx of black labour to Cape Town, in 20 years its population grew beyond 400,000. Seventy percent of residents still live in shacks of wood and corrugated metal; one in three must walk 200 metres or more to the nearest public water point.

Pulana can often be found at a communal house in the township that she calls "the 5-Star", a joking reference to the way the small structure seems to accommodate all who need it. She spends hours here meeting with, educating and politicising young people she refers to as her spiritual children.

#### **Councillors missing on key issues**

Three-quarters of Khayelitsha's population is under the age of 35. A quarter of these youth are HIV positive. Yozi, from the Site C section of the township, is one of them. He says people seeking healthcare have to wait outside clinics from 4 a.m. if they want to be sure to see one of the overworked doctors. People are often told there is a shortage of various medicines.

Yet ward councillors are not visible on health committees in the community. "If the ward councillors could take the lead in one of these challenges, being open, taking part, taking a lead by saying I am going to test [for HIV] publicly..." Yozi says.

"I want all of us to know our HIV status, but not just that: I'm also saying that due to the lack of employment that leads to this brutality that we have seen. You don't see (the ward councillors) leading such campaigns and attending such meetings and raising these issues publicly, opening up for community members to engage and to discuss."

Since 2003, Pulana has served as a member of the Khayelitsha Development Forum and as a community representative on the ward council. Community representatives can give input on the plans and budget for the ward, but it is the ward councillor who has the power to make decisions.

"What made me eager to become a councillor is that I saw myself that this work that I am doing it was supposed to be done by a councillor," she says.

#### **Coming to the party**

She is standing for election as a candidate for the DA, the Democratic Alliance party. It's a complicated choice for a community activist from this black African township where the ruling African National Congress (ANC) has dominated every election since 1994. The DA has so far drawn its support mostly from white and coloured voters, though it gained some seats in predominantly black areas in the most recent vote. Pulana says she grew disillusioned with the ANC several years ago, when she could not gain recognition as a leader, as a person with something to say in her local branch. Part of the reason for her frustration, she says, was resistance to her leadership potential based on her gender.

"The environment we are in, it needs a person like me. Because when you go to the meetings, who is in the forefront? It's the man. If you go to church, who is in the forefront?... Although the women are many, who is voicing the things? It's men. Who is organising? It's men. Why is it like that?"

In Khayelitsha, and similar townships across the country, the belief that councillors serve their constituents adequately has been badly eroded. The evidence lies in the thousands of protests across the country every

year, demanding faster progress in providing decent housing, healthcare and jobs. Pulana believes her history of community organising has already established a level of trust between her and her community. "The reason I can say so is that they know Noncedo. Noncedo is always there for the people."

### **Is elected office the answer?**

Eleanor Hoedemaker is a community activist from Zille-Raine Heights, an informal settlement in another part of the city. She knows Pulana well, but she rejects the idea of running for ward councillor as an effective means to work for change.

"You can't trust any of them (politicians)... male or female! We've been approached already to join political parties but we said we do not want to lose our identity, like other people who were activists and went into parliament. So rather not. Rather stay an activist, and let's not get involved in politics."

Will Pulana retain her commitment to securing the basic needs of her community should she be elected? There is little support from South Africa's political parties specifically to help women strengthen their influence as elected officials or within party structures.

Pulana has developed leadership skills in the course of her community work and with training by organisations such as the child health and rights group Children's Resource Centre and as part of a project called Building Women's Activism, run by a Cape Town NGO, the International Labour Research and Information Group.

She herself has no fears on this score. "If the men were doing it right, we would not have to waste our time and do it. We saw there is this gap, and we had to jump it, uyabo (you see?)" But first she has to win an election.

## **FOURTEEN) - HEAVY RAINS WELCOME IN THE MOUNTAIN KINGDOM IN SWAZILAND**

There's nothing quite like the enthusiasm that rises from the earth when rains come at last to a drought-stricken region. While heavy rains have caused extensive flooding across Southern Africa, with fears of worse to come, in at least one corner of the region the community is gazing with joy at an overflowing dam. For 20 years, residents of Siphofaneni and surrounding areas in the eastern Lowveld area of Swaziland have survived on food rations for want of rain to grow their own crops.

Four months after planting his fields this year, farmer Elias Mamba is excited about the coming harvest from his five-hectare plot.

"I guess these rains will bring to an end our dependency on food aid because we could not harvest anything during the drought," said Mamba. "For the first time in the history of this country, we can donate food to other countries."

Mamba, who is the chairperson of the Mganyaneni Farmers Association, is also beaming from ear to ear because for the first time since its completion in 2008, the Lubovane Dam is spilling over. The dam has reached its full capacity of 160 million cubic metres while water continues to flow in.

"The community went to view the dam and we're optimistic that there are more opportunities to come from this asset other than just agriculture," said Mamba.

The reservoir resembles the ocean, the farmer says seriously, something Swazis usually have to travel to neighbouring Mozambique or South Africa to see.

The water level is so high that its operators, the Swaziland Agriculture and Water Development Enterprises (SWADE) have had to send representatives to the households closest to its advancing edge to reassure them.

"They are placed above the probable possible flood line level where water would be in an unlikely event. Careful measures have been taken to ensure that the remaining homesteads around the dam won't be affected by floods," said communications manager Gugulethu Hlophe.

"The dam has two spillways which enable the water to flow back to the river once it has reached its full capacity," said Arthur Belsey, Lower Usuthu Small-holder Irrigation Project (LUSIP) director.

The prolonged drought had led Mamba and many other community members to worry that the Great Usuthu River, which contributes three-quarters of the water held in the reservoir, and the Umhlathuzane River which contributes the remaining flow, would dry up.

After many disappointing years of drought, the former cotton farmer says, sceptics were saying the Usuthu River, would run out of water as SWADE tried to fill up the dam.

The Lubovane Dam was built by SWADE to support commercial farming in these poverty-stricken

communities in the eastern part of the country. The first phase of the project is already irrigating 1,390 hectares of sugar-cane.

SWADE is a parastatal company with the motto "using water to drive poverty out of rural communities" and the Lubovane Dam is at the centre of a hub of projects in the area. The dam supplies water to irrigate 1,390 hectares of commercially-grown sugar cane, but it is also intended to provide water for the use of villagers. Recognising the interdependent uses of water, the project involves and organises the local community in improving water, sanitation and food security with water drawn from the irrigation canals.

SWADE is also working on studies to determine whether there is potential to start a tourism project around the dam, taking advantage of the fish already swimming in it.

"The dam is a vehicle to start other income-generation projects, of course determined by the community," said Belsey.

Mamba's dream of donating food to hungry people in other countries may be over-optimistic, but the coming of the rains has doused a community in hope.

## FIFTEEN) – WOMEN'S VOICES TO THE FORE IN NEW DEVELOPMENT POLICY IN MALAWI

As Malawi works on its second development blueprint, the Malawi Development and Growth Strategy (MDGS II), the country's women are hoping health and education will be prioritised and given proper attention in implementation.

Up to 27 percent of Malawi's women have never attended school compared to only 16 percent of males, according to Malawi's 2008 population and housing census. The United Nations says health indicators continue to be worse for women. The country's maternal mortality rate is at 807 deaths per 100,000 births -- among the worst in Africa.

The first MDGS, which has guided the country's development agenda since 2006 and expires this year, attempted to translate the U.N. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including those on women, education and health, into a local context. However, the plan placed an emphasis on investment, especially agricultural and industrial development, and so many women are as disadvantaged today as they were five years ago.

"Women continue to die at an alarming rate, especially in childbirth, as they do not have access to health facilities. They mostly live in rural communities where clinics are far apart. When they encounter complications they have little chance of survival. Maternal mortality represents the largest health inequity in the world," worries Faustace Chirwa, executive director of a local NGO, the National Women's Lobby Group (NWLG).

The low level of literacy among women worsens matters, says Chirwa. "Many women, especially from the rural areas, fail to participate in development work because they have never been to school. Their voice is excluded from decisions that eventually affect them. They are not involved in community development initiatives because they are not empowered and they also fail to demand their rights."

Ganizo Makwiti, 39, from Malawi's southern district of Machinga in Chiuta area, is frustrated with poor access to education for girls.

"I was never educated because my parents felt uncomfortable to send me to the school, which is a walking distance of one and half hours from our home. There is a forest in between and they said it was unsafe for me.

"My two brothers were still able to go because men are seen as stronger as and braver than women. Now they both work as teachers and are better off than me," Makwiti explains. She ended up getting married at 16 and now has six children aged between 22 and 7. Her husband died three years ago and she is struggling to look after four of the children.

"All my four daughters dropped out of school because of the distance to school. Two have since married. I know they will end up as poor as I am. We need assistance from government to bring schools closer," Makwiti says.

Chirwa, believes that investing in women and girls will set the arena for long-term economic growth that will eventually reduce inequality between men and women and reduce poverty.

NWLG works with other civil society organisations and the Ministry of Gender in making women's voices heard through community participation, networking and partnerships and the main goal is to empower women and to improve their status.

"We are assisting women in the rural areas to demand their rights so that government prioritises their needs. Issues of education and health rank high as women's needs," Chirwa asserted.

NWLG also blames the negative situation facing women on the absence of local government councilors.

Since the multiparty dispensation in 1994, the country has held local government elections only once, in 1995, and the mandate of the councillors expired in 2005. Yet Malawi's Constitution stipulates, under Section 147

sub section 5, that local government elections shall take place in the third week of May in the year following general elections. General elections were held in May 2009 and as such, the local elections were due in May 2010.

President Bingu wa Mutharika moved the local election date to April this year but he has since fired the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) saying an audit of the Commission showed it was unable to account for millions of dollars meant for the 2011 elections.

Meanwhile, the country's Secretary to the Treasury, Joseph Mwanamvekha, this week local media that he was unsure of when the elections would be held because preparatory activities for the polls were off track due to the suspension of MEC.

"It looks like we are not going to have local councilors anytime soon and our only hope is to have women's issues addressed in the MGDS which is being developed now," says Chirwa.

There is some hope that Malawian women's needs will be incorporated in the MGDS II. Government, through the Ministry of Development Planning and Cooperation has, since last September, been carrying out nationwide consultations on what the blueprint should contain and prioritise.

Many NGOs, including the NGO Coalition on Child Rights -- a network of seven strong local non-governmental organisations -- are, among other issues, lobbying for more schools and the improvement of sanitary facilities so that more girls stay in schools.

The Minister of Development Planning and Cooperation has since assured the country, through the local press, that money to implement the MGDS II will be allocated in the 2011/2012 national budget to be released in June 2011.

#### SIXTEEN) - ANNUAL LETTER FROM BILL GATES

At a time when governments everywhere are facing tough decisions about how to reduce spending, this [letter from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Co-Chair](#) makes the case for investments in development which are cost-effective and benefit the whole world. He says: "I believe it is in the rich world's enlightened self-interest to continue investing in foreign aid. If societies can't provide for people's basic health, if they can't feed and educate people, then their populations and problems will grow and the world will be a less stable place. Whether you believe it a moral imperative or in the rich world's enlightened self-interest, securing the conditions that will lead to a healthy, prosperous future for everyone is a goal I believe we all share." The letter focuses on vaccines and eradicating polio. The letter also talks about progress on malaria, HIV/AIDS, agricultural development, and maternal and newborn health.

#### SEVENTEEN) - AFRICAN FUTURES 2050

This [study from the African Futures Project](#), a collaboration between the pan-African Institute for Security Studies and the Frederick S Pardee Center for International Futures seeks to provide a glimpse of where change could take the Africa by 2050. It takes a macro and long-term view and presents the base case (or business as usual) development of the continent across the interaction of key global systems. It is, however, not as attentive to trends at the micro-level that can eventually have broad impact.

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