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ONE) - CATHERINE ASHTON SETS UP TASK FORCE FOR THE SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN

Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Commission Vice President, today established a new Task Force for the Southern Mediterranean. The Task Force will bring together expertise from the European External Action Service, the European Commission, the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and other international financial institutions to act as a focal point for assistance to countries in North Africa which are going through political transformation.

The European Union has responded quickly to the events of the Arab Spring, providing financial assistance and political support to countries like Tunisia and Egypt which are seeking to establish new deep democracies. The EU is also working with its international partners, including the United Nations, the Arab League, the African Union and the Gulf countries Council, to apply political and economic pressure to regimes, like those in Libya, Syria and Yemen, which are seeking to repress the democratic will of the people for change.

In response to the Arab Spring the EU adopted the communication 'Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity' on 8th March and then on 25th May complemented it with a new European Neighbourhood Policy. This proposal - "A new response to a changing Neighbourhood" - establishes a new relationship between the EU and its neighbours based on mutual accountability, and increases EU financial support by 1.24 billion Euros between 2011 and 2013, in addition to increased funding from the EIB and EBRD.

TWO) - WORLD BANK SEES EMERGING ECONOMIES SLOWDOWN THIS YEAR, REBOUND IN 2012

The global economy will slow down this year but pick up again in 2012, thanks to the booming engine of developing economies, like those in East Asia, even as wealthier nations struggle, the [World Bank](#) said Tuesday. But the international finance agency that helps developing nations also warned that those flourishing countries face the double inflationary challenge of rising fuel and food prices. "Developing countries have been resilient despite remaining tensions in high-income countries," said Hans Timmer, director of development prospects for the World Bank. "But many developing economies are operating above capacity and at risk of overheating, most notably in Asia and Latin America." In its twice-yearly update, the World Bank projected that world growth in 2011 would be 3.2 per cent, slower than the estimated 3.8 per cent for 2010. Growth in 2012 and 2013 was projected to rebound at 3.6 per cent. The figures, when adjusted to purchasing power, were in line with other recent projections. The World Bank's 2011 figure was slightly lower than estimated in January, when global growth was projected at 3.3 per cent. Taken separately, emerging economies were expected to grow 6.3 per cent in 2011, down from 7.3 per cent in 2010. They were expected to maintain 2011 growth levels in the next two years. "But further increases in already high oil and food prices could significantly curb economic growth and hurt the poor," said Justin Yifu Lin, the World Bank's chief economist. Japan's destruction from the March tsunami and the political turmoil in the Middle East and North Africa have cut into domestic growth in those areas, but were not expected to have major spillover effects on the global scene, officials said. So-called high income countries continued to languish at 2.2-per-cent growth this year, down from the post-recession recovery rate of 2.7 per cent in 2010. **EMPLOYMENT ALREADY BACK TO PRE-RECESSION LEVELS** Unlike wealthier countries, the developing countries have largely "put the crisis-biting stage" of the recession behind them, said Andrew Burns, who oversees global monitoring for the World Bank. Employment levels there have returned to pre-recession levels. These countries now need to focus on the "more boring, more difficult" measures of structural reforms, monetary policies and looming high commodity prices, Burns said. Domestic food prices in developing countries rose about 7.9 per cent since June 2010, much less than the 40-per-cent rise in international food prices, but still a worry. Uncertainty over Middle East developments and the oil production lapse during the Libyan crisis have pushed up both fuel and food prices, Burns noted. More use of grains for biofuel have contributed to the upward spiral of food prices, Burns said. On a geographic basis, East Asia and the Pacific, including China, Indonesia, and Thailand, comprised the world's fastest growing region, with estimated 2011 growth at 8.5 per cent, down from 9.6 per cent in 2010. The World Bank expects growth of 8.1 per cent in the region in 2012 and 8.2 per cent in 2013. South Asia, including India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, had estimated 2011 growth of 7.5 per cent, down from 9.3 per cent in 2010. Growth for 2012 and 2013 was projected at 7.7 and 7.9 per cent. Sub-Saharan Africa's 2011 growth was estimated at 5.1 per cent, up from 4.8 per cent in 2010. For both 2012 and 2013, growth of 5.7 per cent is projected. The Middle East and North Africa have estimated growth of 1.9 per cent this year,

down from 3.1 per cent 2010. But growth in the next two years was expected to rise, to 3.5 and 4 per cent. Europe and Central Asia have estimated growth of 4.7 per cent this year, down from 5.2 per cent in 2010. Growth of 4.4 and 4.6 per cent is expected in the ensuing years. Latin America and the Caribbean have estimated growth of 4.5 per cent this year, down from 6 per cent in 2010. The World Bank projects growth of 4.1 and 4 per cent in 2012 and 2013. (See [Global Economic Prospects 2011](#)) (Dpa)

THREE) - CANADA WOULD WELCOME IMF CHIEF FROM EMERGING ECONOMIES

Le Canada accueillerait favorablement un nouveau chef du Fonds monétaire international (FMI) provenant d'une économie émergente, mais n'a pas encore indiqué qui il appuiera, a affirmé mardi le gouverneur de la banque centrale du Mexique, Agustin Carstens après une rencontre à Ottawa. M. Carstens s'est entretenu mardi avec le ministre canadien des Finances, Jim Flaherty, et le patron de la Banque du Canada, Mark Carney, afin de pousser sa candidature pour succéder à Dominique Strauss-Kahn à la tête du FMI. La rencontre a été "fructueuse" et MM. Flaherty et Carney ont indiqué que le Canada "accueillerait favorablement" un candidat provenant "d'un marché émergent", a déclaré M. Carstens lors d'une conférence de presse. Le Canada ne lui a pas signifié qui il appuiera, a-t-il précisé. M. Carstens doit se rendre vendredi en Inde où il aura été précédé mardi par sa concurrente, la ministre française des Finances, Christine Lagarde, qui a déjà l'appui des pays européens. Selon un accord tacite, un Européen dirige le FMI et un Américain la Banque mondiale. Mais le gouverneur de la banque centrale mexicaine remet en cause cette vision. "Un Européen peut très bien faire ce travail, mais je m'oppose à l'idée que seul un Européen puisse le faire", a dit M. Carstens. (AFP)

FOUR) - AFRICA LOOKS TO A GREEN FUTURE

As G20 ministers met here Tuesday to discuss nuclear safety, another meeting has been taking place 6,000km away - to examine green business growth.

In Brazzaville, capital of the Republic of the Congo, environmentalists, policy-makers and businesspeople kicked off the second international Green Business Forum in Africa, a four-day conference that looks at opportunities for sustainable economic development.

Both meetings come at a crucial time. The industrialised world is rethinking its policies on nuclear energy, following the Fukushima disaster in Japan, while many African leaders have realised that the future of their continent is green.

The conference in Brazzaville aims to respond to "current concerns" and to "sensitise" the public to the importance of sustainable business, conservation of the forests in the Congo Basin and the fight for food security, according to Sylvestre Didier Mavuenzela, president of Congo's Pointe-Noire Chamber of Commerce, who spoke in Paris ahead of the meeting.

"For investors from central Africa, Europe, Asia and America, the forum represents an occasion to benefit from the real opportunities offered by eco-business in the sub-region, on one hand, and emphasises the need for the development and the improvement of conditions for the people who live there, on the other hand," he said.

Mavuenzela told journalists that the organisers (including Congo's Ministry of Sustainable Development and the Environment) were aware of the boom in green business.

"If central Africa doesn't get involved and move forward in this sector, it won't be able to benefit from the advantages of green business that would allow it to reduce its economic vulnerability," he said.

The Paris-based Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has said that "governments must look to the green economy to find new sources of growth and jobs" and that countries should "put in place policies that tap into the innovation, investment and entrepreneurship driving the shift towards a greener economy."

In a report published late last month titled "Towards Green Growth", the organisation outlined a practical framework for governments to boost economic growth and protect the environment.

"Many countries in Africa have strong wealth in natural assets, and there is the need to have specific policies to develop these assets in a sustainable way and this is now happening in an organised fashion," Nathalie Girouard of the OECD's Green Growth Strategy team told IPS.

Green growth makes economic as well as environmental sense," the OECD has stated. "In natural resource sectors alone, commercial opportunities related to investments in environmental sustainability

could run into trillions of dollars by 2050."

In the run-up to Rio+20 - the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 – various countries across Africa and other regions have already come to that understanding, with new investments being made and many partnerships being formed, according to experts.

In Rwanda's "Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy", for instance, environment is "identified as a key cross-cutting issue", said Girouard.

"In the area of green growth, Rwanda of course has a different need than Germany or Canada, so the idea is to tailor policies to different stages of development," she said.

Rwanda has also identified various sectors with strong "environmental and natural resource content" as critical to achieving its development objectives, the OECD says.

The measures taken, for example, to preserve the country's mountain gorilla habitat has boosted tourism, which now accounts for the biggest share of national GDP, the organisation adds.

African businesspeople based at home and abroad, are also getting actively involved in the green industry, some through partnerships with other developing countries as well as with Europe. For many this is a chance to improve the living conditions on the continent.

In Benin, the non-governmental organisation Association Béninoise pour l'Eveil et le Développement (Beninese Association for Mobilisation and Development – ABED) has been installing solar panels in villages and working to "create a replicable model for encouraging solar energy," says Christèle Adedjoumon, the Paris-based, French-educated renewable energy project manager.

"The project consists of solar electrification of rural areas by rural women themselves," she says. Rural Beninese women were trained in solar PV technology at Barefoot College in India for six months to solar electrify their villages, she told IPS. Barefoot College, which itself is solar-powered, educates women from poor villages to become health and engineering professionals.

Adedjoumon said that the aim was to "drive sustainable social development" through the effects on family life, health, education, employment and protection of the environment.

She and other experts have pointed out that some 1.4 billion people worldwide are lacking access to electricity, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa where the electrification rate is 30 percent on average and 12 percent in rural areas.

If specific measures aren't put in place, the number of people without access to electricity is predicted to remain around 1.2 billion by 2030, they say.

France, which holds the G8 and G20 presidency in 2011, has stressed that energy access and development in Africa is a top priority. In April, the French Environment Minister, Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet and Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga launched the Paris-Nairobi Climate Initiative, which seeks to contribute to achieving universal access to clean energy by 2030.

"The poorest population of the world pays energy among the most expensive, least effective and least sustainable," says a joint French-Kenyan report.

Reflecting the stakes involved, the launch of the initiative in Paris drew 90 delegations, from Africa, from G20 member states, Europe, United Nations agencies, development groups and energy companies (including the French EDF and the Central African Republic's Enerca).

In the final declaration of the meeting, participants said they agreed on "the urgency of achieving universal energy access, of economic development and of the fight against climate change."

Kenya will host the next conference of the Initiative in Nairobi, in February 2012. That meeting will report on "actions taken to improve the climate for investments, to establish new financing mechanisms, and to launch Clean Energy Flagship Projects", the partners said.

FIVE) – U.N. CHIEF SEEKS SECOND FIVE-YEAR TERM FROM 2012

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who completes his five- year term by the end of this year, offered himself "for consideration" for a second five-year term as chief administrative officer of the world body. Hours before he made the announcement Monday, Ban addressed the 53- member Asian Group, which unanimously gave its endorsement supporting the secretary-general's request.

At least 28 Asian countries, including Japan, India, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Iran, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines and Qatar, openly expressed support for his candidature.

The Asian Group, one of the largest regional groups at the United Nations, represents more than 60 percent of the world's population.

Since various regional groups have held the post for two consecutive five-year terms, it was Asia's turn to field a candidate for a second term.

A former foreign minister of South Korea, Ban said he was not taking "anything for granted" until both the 15-member Security Council and the 192-member General Assembly formally elect him to office, possibly by the end of June, while he continues to complete the remaining six months of his first term.

Addressing reporters, he said he has sent letters this morning to both U.N. bodies "offering humbly" his services for another five years beginning January 2012.

According to his critics, including human rights groups, Ban's primary weakness was his refusal to be vociferous in his condemnation of civilian killings and human rights abuses by the five veto-wielding permanent members (P-5) of the Security Council, namely the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia.

But at his press conference Monday, Ban defended his record, pointing out that he continued to take a tough stand against all repressive regimes and violators of human rights.

Asked whether he will be more outspoken against the P-5 once he gets his second term because he does not have to fear their vetoes, Ban said: "First of all, I would like to make it quite clear that, when it comes to universal human rights, there is no distinction or difference. I will make the same priority issue on that."

Ban has consistently maintained he did "discuss" human rights issues in his private talks with world leaders - "where diplomatic discourse has sometimes to be conducted in confidence".

When Boutros Boutros-Ghali of Egypt failed to win a second term in late 1996, he lost the post of secretary-general because he irritated a single member state: the United States.

Despite the fact that the overwhelming majority in the Security Council voted for him (14 out of 15 votes), he was drummed out of office when the United States cast its veto against him.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, an Asian diplomat told IPS that Ban most likely has received private assurances from the P-5 that his candidature will not be vetoed by any of them.

In Korean culture, he pointed out, failure is not an option. "Anything short of a second term for Ban Ki moon," he said, "would be the equivalent of committing political hara-kiri." A downfall will also be construed as a monumental disaster for a country fast emerging as one of Asia's major political and economic powers wielding immense clout in the international arena.

Sam Koo, a former Korean ambassador for cultural cooperation and an ex-senior U.N. official, told IPS that Ban was a role model for young Koreans.

He has inspired an entire generation of young Koreans to think and act globally, he said.

The result? "We now have tens of thousands of young volunteers seeking overseas service (the Korean overseas volunteers are number two in size only after the U.S. Peace Corps)," said Koo, a former journalist who worked for the Associated Press (AP) in Rome.

"Ban has carved out his unique efficient style of diplomacy combining (Dag) Hammarskjold's energy and quiet passion and (U) Thant's consensus-building skills in just over four years of service," he said.

"We all have great expectations for his second term," said Koo, who was also the representative of the U.N. children's agency UNICEF in Tokyo.

Both Hammarskjold (of Sweden) and U Thant (of Myanmar) held the post of secretary-general during 1953-1961 and 1961-1971, respectively.

Surprisingly, Ban also had strong support from Sri Lanka, a country which has been critical of the secretary-general for establishing a U.N. panel of inquiry to probe war crimes charges.

Asked about the overwhelming Asian support for Ban, Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative Dr. Palitha Kohona said the unanimous endorsement "strongly reflects Asia's recognition of and confidence in Ban Ki-moon's unobtrusive style of leadership, his distinctly Asian approach to problem-solving, his quiet diplomacy, his dedicated search for solutions to problems affecting humanity, in particular developing countries, and his hard work."

At a time when Asia is reasserting its leadership role in the global arena, said Kohona, "Ban Ki-moon would be the ideal Asian to continue to lead the United Nations."

At his press conference Monday, Ban was challenged on his double standards in judging the mass demonstrations sweeping across the Arab world where thousands of civilians have been killed.

Asked why he was not firm in his condemnation of Yemen and Syria, Ban said: "With my due respect to you, I don't agree that I was not firm enough as I've been to other situations.

"I have been speaking quite firmly with President (Ali Abdullah) Saleh of Yemen and also President (Bashir al) Assad of Syria. In fact, you name any country, I have been speaking with almost all the leaders in the region, whether there were demonstrations or not.

"Because, wherever I saw some potentiality of such aspirations moving out, then I have discussed this matter, so that they would take necessary measures, and listening more attentively to the aspirations of their people. That is why you have seen in some areas still they have been trying to manage the situation."

Asked whether he would be willing to ask President Saleh and President Assad to leave their respective

countries, he deftly sidestepped the question: "That will have to be determined by the people of both Yemen and Syria."

"My message to the leaders in the region has been consistent: that the leaders have a very important responsibility to reflect the will of their own people and listen carefully, more attentively to their will and aspirations," he declared.

SIX) – WORLD BANK SHOCKED TO FIND THAT CORRUPTION HINDERS CONGO ECONOMIC PROGRESS

Poor government and corruption have hindered Congo's economic progress and hampered efforts to tackle massive unemployment, the World Bank said on Tuesday. A combination of extortion and badly targeted taxation was preventing the creation of small businesses which are the lifeblood of economies and employment in most countries, it said in a report. The vast mineral-rich country, which is due to hold an election in November, is still suffering from widespread poverty following a civil war that ended in 2003 with more than five million people dead. After November's polls, the new government should adopt an urgent economic plan to stimulate growth and create more opportunities for skilled workers, the World Bank said. Since the war, poor government at the state level has stopped the emergence of small and medium-sized businesses, which could be an important driver of growth but currently employ less than 5 percent of the workforce, it said. "Poor governance translates itself into abuses by public bodies and officials, who collect both formal and informal taxes from the private sector," the report said. Large private businesses have more or less succeeded in insulating themselves but small and medium-sized businesses with few resources and little political clout have been unable to overcome these obstacles, it said. The unemployment rate in the formal sector is at about 75 percent in Congo, a vast Central African nation of around 67 million people, of whom 71 percent live below the poverty line, according to the World Bank. Congo achieved more than 7 percent economic growth last year, according to IMF figures, driven largely by a booming mining sector in the south of the country, where major international companies are exploiting copper reserves. But mining alone will not help lower unemployment unless the profits are re-invested wisely by the government, said Marcelo Giugale, the World Bank's poverty reduction and economic management chief for Africa. "The truth is that extractive industries, by definition of their technology, don't employ a lot of people directly. But they can create jobs indirectly through expenditure if the government manages this effectively," he told a briefing. Poverty indicators for Congo remain poor in comparison to other countries in the region, with infant mortality running at 15 percent and less than a quarter of the population having access to drinking water, the World Bank report said. (Reuters)

SEVEN) – GUINEA BISSAU WANTS MORE EU CASH FOR FISHING AGREEMENT

La Guinée-Bissau va réclamer une hausse de la compensation financière versée par l'Union européenne (UE) pour un nouvel accord de pêche, au centre de négociations entamées mardi à Bissau, a annoncé le secrétaire d'Etat bissau-guinéen à la pêche. L'actuel accord de pêche entre la Guinée-Bissau et l'UE, d'une durée de quatre ans, expire le 15 juin. Il avait rapporté à Bissau 7,5 millions d'euros en contrepartie des autorisations de pêche accordées à 60 navires européens. La Guinée-Bissau va demander à l'Europe une hausse de la compensation financière, a affirmé devant la presse le secrétaire d'Etat bissau-guinéen à la pêche, Mario Dias Sami, à l'ouverture des négociations sans toutefois avancer de chiffres. "Si l'UE maintient sa tendance à faire baisser le fonds de compensation, il est clair que nous ne parviendrons pas à un accord. Il faut que cela soit clairement compris et sans détour", a-t-il déclaré. "Le futur protocole (de pêche) va s'inscrire dans un nouveau cadre d'accords de pêche que l'UE signe avec ses partenaires. Cette nouvelle génération d'accords tient compte de certains aspects politiques, notamment le respect des droits de l'Homme, la notion de partenariat sur l'impact social, économique et l'intégration de la notion de développement durable", de son côté affirmé le délégué de l'UE, Joaquim Gonçalves Ducai. L'UE réclame également des autorités guinéennes l'engagement d'empêcher les navires asiatiques, coréens et chinois pour la plupart, de pêcher sans licence dans les eaux guinéennes, sans licence. Les discussions se déroulent jusqu'à jeudi. Il s'agit du deuxième round des négociations entre les deux parties pour le nouvel accord de pêche. Un premier round s'était tenu en mai 2010. L'UE est le principal partenaire de la Guinée-Bissau, pays confronté à une instabilité politique et militaire chronique et parmi les plus pauvres au monde. (AFP)

EIGHT) – NO AGREEMENT ON FUTURE OF MOROCCAN-OCCUPIED WESTERN SAHARA

The Moroccan government and Polisario Front rebels have failed to resolve their dispute over the future of Western Sahara during a seventh round of informal talks. The U.N. envoy for Western Sahara, Christopher Ross, said in a statement Tuesday that during the three-day meeting on Long Island, east of New York City, "each party continued to reject the proposal of the other as a sole basis for future negotiations." Morocco has offered wide-ranging autonomy to the mineral-rich Western Sahara while the Polisario Front wants a referendum with independence as an option. Ross said the two sides did "deepen their discussions on the two proposals, including the issue of the electoral corps and mechanisms for self-determination." He said they will meet again in the second half of July. **OBAMA ADMINISTRATION 'UNHAPPY'** Les Etats-Unis ont espéré mardi une "résolution pacifique" du conflit au Sahara occidental, soulignant que l'instabilité accroissait le risque de terrorisme. "Nous voulons une résolution pacifique de cette situation", a déclaré Mark Toner, le porte-parole du département d'Etat: "La poursuite de l'instabilité, comme nous l'avons vu dans de nombreux endroits du monde, est exactement le type d'environnement dont se nourrit le terrorisme". Les Etats-Unis soutiennent l'option d'une autonomie sous souveraineté marocaine. (AP)

NINE) – MOROCCO'S UPRISINGS AND ALL THE KING'S MEN

Thousands poured into the streets of Rabat on Sunday Jun. 5 to condemn the death of a protester and to demand an end to the country-wide government crackdown on peaceful demonstrations.

"We are here today to protest the murder of Khaled al-Amari," said a 40-year-old Rabat resident who did not give her name out of fear of the authorities. "But we are also here because we demand dignity, democracy and freedom. This repression must end."

Last Thursday, 30-year-old Khaled al-Amari, a member of Morocco's main opposition group, died after reportedly suffering a severe beating at the hands of police during a protest in the city of Safi. Officers deny that his death was a direct result of police violence, despite eyewitness accounts that he was severely beaten. Police violence against peaceful demonstrators in Morocco has exploded in recent weeks, in what protesters say is a significant escalation of government repression.

The swelling crowd proceeded from the Old City down Muhammed VI Avenue, many holding pictures of Khaled al-Amari's beaten face. Protesters chanted: "Down with despotism. We want freedom and dignity," and "peace, peace, freedom is coming," as they made their way to parliament. At many points in the march, protesters clasped each other's hands, sat down in the street, or waved peace signs in the air.

"We are demanding democracy and dignity," declared Mohammed Aghmaj. "The police are not being violent today because there was a martyr. But we know they have been violent in the past," he said, referring to the relative calm at the demonstration.

Coercing protesters and journalists

The protesters are part of what has been termed the February 20 Movement, led largely by young people demanding pro-democracy reforms and an end to government corruption and repression - as well as an end to poverty and inequality. Launched on February 20 this year, the protests have swelled in conjunction with the so-called "Arab Spring" protests and revolutions sweeping the Middle East and North Africa. Gatherings continue regularly, culminating weekly in coordinated demonstrations throughout the country.

Many believe that the recent escalation in violence is meant to quash mass mobilisations before the July 1 referendum on reforming the constitution. The referendum itself was a concession offered by King Muhammed VI to the February 20 Movement protesters. "Police have been given orders to break protesters' legs and heads," said Mohamed Elboukili, from the Moroccan human rights organisation Association Marocaine des Droits Humains ["Moroccan Association of Human Rights"]. "This is a very dangerous situation."

Police violence against protests in several cities throughout Morocco on the past two Sundays have garnered international attention, with several images of police beatings captured on video. "According to the law, police must ask people to leave three times and give time for this," explains Elboukili. "But the police don't do this. They charge and beat people. In our opinion, this does not respect the right to peacefully demonstrate."

Police violence has been accompanied by a crackdown on journalists. Last month, Al Jazeera was forced by the Moroccan government to cease broadcast operations in Rabat, with a ban on all land and satellite transmitters.

Furthermore, Rachid Nini, editor of Morocco's el-Massa newspaper, who has been outspoken against government corruption, was jailed for writing articles critical of Morocco's security services and counter-terrorism law. Amnesty International has condemned the jailing as "a severe attack on freedom of expression".

Last Wednesday, dozens of his supporters gathered in downtown Rabat to demand that the government release him.

The king's repressive tactics

The Association Marocaine des Droits Humains has received reports that police have started paying house visits to protest organisers' homes, telling them they should not attend protests. "Now they are intimidating and watching people," says Elboukili. "The police are making their presence known."

This approach contrasts sharply with police treatment of pro-monarchy demonstrators on Sunday, May 29. At midday, a pro-monarchy rally on Muhammad V Avenue in front of the parliament chanted slogans supporting the king, with many attendees holding his portrait.

The crowd went undisturbed by police, who hung back leisurely at the outskirts. Journalists were allowed to roam freely, marking a drastic distinction from February 20 Movement protests, where journalists covered demonstrations at considerable personal risk from the police.

One attendee, a Rabat native in his mid-fifties who did not give his name, explained: "This demonstration has a permit, unlike the other demonstrations," in reference to mobilisations of the February 20 movement.

This comes on the heels of Saudi Arabia's invitation to Morocco to join what has been termed the "club of kings", the Gulf Cooperation Council, intended to protect the interests of monarchs against the "Arab Spring" uprisings throughout the region. While Morocco is a constitutional monarchy on paper, in practice, power is consolidated in the hands of the king, who can nominate and dismiss the prime minister and cabinet, dissolve parliament, and levy emergency powers.

Muhammad VI is a close ally of the United States, which exports arms to the Moroccan government, reportedly to maintain its military occupation in Western Sahara. Muhammad VI has attracted praise from the Obama administration for his alleged moderation and embrace of democratic reforms.

"Things need to change in my country," said a 35-year-old Casablanca resident who spoke on condition of anonymity. "This repression makes me fear for my children. We need so many things, we need education and freedom and an end to poverty. The people of Morocco are demanding change. We will not tolerate this repression."

TEN) – NATO INTENSIFIES BOMBARDMENT OF GADDAFI RESIDENCE

Mouammar Kadhafi a affirmé mardi qu'il ne se soumettrait pas, alors que l'Otan a mené ses raids les plus violents sur Tripoli faisant 31 morts et que le président américain Barack Obama a prévenu que la pression allait s'intensifier jusqu'au départ du dirigeant libyen. Dans la nuit de mardi à mercredi, de puissantes explosions ont secoué à nouveau le secteur de la résidence du dirigeant libyen au centre de la ville, selon un journaliste de l'AFP. "Malgré les bombardements, nous ne nous soumettrons jamais", a déclaré le colonel Kadhafi, dans un message audio diffusé par la télévision libyenne le jour où l'Otan a mené ses raids les plus violents sur Tripoli depuis le début des opérations internationales le 19 mars. Ces raids sont intervenus le jour de l'anniversaire du dirigeant libyen, né il y a 69 ans le 7 juin 1942. "Je suis à proximité des bombardements mais je résiste toujours", a-t-il assuré, appelant "le peuple à résister". Les raids aériens sur Tripoli se sont succédé dans la matinée, puis dans l'après-midi et juste après la diffusion du message de M. Kadhafi. Selon le porte-parole du régime, Moussa Ibrahim, "l'Otan a mené une attaque haineuse sur Tripoli qu'il a frappé avec plus de 60 bombes". Il a ajouté au cours d'une conférence de presse que ces raids avaient fait 31 morts et "des dizaines de blessés". Les bombardements ont visé la résidence du colonel Kadhafi dans le centre de Tripoli, la banlieue de Tajoura (est), ainsi que la route de l'aéroport au sud de la capitale, a-t-il précisé. Dans le vaste complexe résidentiel du dirigeant libyen, régulièrement visé par les avions de l'Otan, il ne reste désormais presque que des gravats et des ruines fumantes, selon un journaliste de l'AFP. "Nous continuons à faire pression sur le régime en limitant la capacité de Kadhafi à donner des ordres à travers ses centres de commandement", a expliqué un porte-parole de l'Otan, Mike Bracken. (AFP)

ELEVEN) – NATO SUED FOR WAR CRIMES IN LIBYA

Aïcha Kadhafi, fille du dirigeant libyen Mouammar Kadhafi, a porté plainte mardi à Bruxelles et Paris pour "crimes de guerre" et "assassinat" après la mort présumée de quatre membres de sa famille dans un raid de l'Otan fin avril à Tripoli, ont indiqué ses avocats. Une première plainte contre l'Otan pour "crimes de guerre" a été déposée devant le parquet de Bruxelles et le parquet fédéral belge, a déclaré à l'AFP l'un des avocats

d'Aïcha Kadhafi, le Français Luc Brossollet. Une seconde plainte a été déposée au parquet de Paris pour "assassinat", a indiqué un autre avocat de la fille de Mouammar Kadhafi, Me Dominique Atdjian. Les plaintes, déposées simultanément, concernent le raid effectué par l'Alliance atlantique le 30 avril dernier au cours duquel le plus jeune fils du colonel Kadhafi, Seif al-Arab, 29 ans, et trois des petits-enfants du dirigeant libyen, Seif (2 ans), Carthage (2 ans) et Mastoura (4 mois), ainsi que des amis et voisins, auraient été tués, selon Tripoli. Des doutes ont cependant été émis sur la réalité de ces décès. Le chef du gouvernement italien Silvio Berlusconi a ainsi affirmé qu'il s'agissait de "propagande" de part du régime libyen et que ce fils de Kadhafi n'était pas mort mais qu'il se trouvait dans un autre pays avec les trois petits-enfants. Pour les conseils d'Aïcha Kadhafi, les décès sont néanmoins avérés. "La décision de l'Otan de prendre pour cible une habitation civile à Tripoli constitue un crime de guerre", a déclaré Me Brossollet après le dépôt de plainte à Bruxelles. La résolution 1973 du Conseil de Sécurité de l'ONU autorise l'Otan à agir militairement pour protéger les populations libyenne, mais "même en cas de guerre, il ne faut pas s'en prendre aux civils", a souligné le troisième avocat d'Aïcha Kadhafi, Jean-Charles Tchikaya. "Or, en l'espèce, la cible était une construction civile, habitée par des civils (...) et n'était ni un poste de commandement ni de contrôle militaire" du régime libyen, indique le texte de la plainte qu'a pu consulter l'AFP. "Mme Aïcha Kadhafi, en sa qualité de mère (de Mastoura), de tante (de Seif et de Carthage) et de soeur (de Seif al-Arab), a subi un préjudice considérable, incontestablement liés aux faits dénoncés", ajoute le texte. Techniquement, les plaintes ont été déposées "contre x", mais celle déposée en Belgique vise bien l'Otan, dont le siège est à Bruxelles, ce qui selon les avocats rend compétentes les juridictions belges. Selon la loi belge dite de "compétence universelle", les tribunaux du royaume peuvent poursuivre les auteurs présumés de crimes de guerre, de crimes contre l'humanité et de génocide s'il existe un "lien de rattachement" avec la Belgique, ce qui serait le cas puisque les décisions importantes de l'Otan sont prises à Bruxelles. Les parquets saisis doivent à présent décider s'il y a suffisamment d'éléments pour entendre des responsables de l'Otan ou "toute personne qui pourrait être impliquée" dans la chaîne de commandement, ont souligné Me Brossollet et Tchikaya. Les avocats ont en outre indiqué avoir été mandatés pour "introduire un recours en annulation" devant la Cour de justice européenne à Luxembourg afin de faire casser la décision des ministres de l'UE de geler les avoirs du régime libyen. Ce recours devrait être introduit "jeudi ou vendredi", selon Me Tchikaya. L'UE a décrété fin février le gel de ces avoirs libyens et l'interdiction de visas à l'encontre du colonel Kadhafi, de son entourage et de sociétés soupçonnées de financer son régime. Elle a étendu mardi le gel des avoirs à six autorités portuaires, dont Tripoli et Brega. (AFP)

TWELVE) – EGYPT SOUNDS ALARM ON ECONOMY

Egyptian officials are warning that the country, just emerging from a popular uprising that ousted the regime of former President Hosni Mubarak, could be facing a major economic crisis with lagging international aid and foreign investment.

General Mahmoud Nassr, a member of the Supreme Military Council, which is running the country's interim government, told an economic conference in Cairo last week that foreign direct investment (FDI) has come to a standstill while Western rating agencies race to downgrade the country's sovereign credit rating. The poverty rate has also worsened to 70 percent, Nassr added.

The General Authority for Investment and Free Zones (GAFI), whose job is to attract foreign businesses, says FDI in Egypt fell by 500 million dollars in the first quarter of 2011 - down to 1.2 billion dollars from 1.7 billion the previous year.

The country's Finance Ministry also forecast at least a 9.4 percent budget deficit this year, while growth was seen slowing to less than 2 percent - down from a 5.8 percent growth forecast before the revolution. Egypt's spending on food and energy subsidies will increase by 40 percent this year from last year, further straining the budget, the government says.

Other ominous indicators include the withdrawal of 8 billion dollars from the country's foreign currency reserves during the past three months alone. The reserves now stand at 28 billion dollars, down from 36 billion in December - enough only for a few months' supply of imported staples such as sugar, wheat and vegetable oil. The country's 86 million people are heavily dependent on imported food.

Since the start of the year, the Egyptian pound dropped 2.5 percent in value.

The country is also witnessing revenue declines especially from tourism, and expatriate remittances. Before the start of violence in neighbouring Libya, the 1.5 million Egyptians who were working in Libya were sending millions of dollars home to Egypt every year. Because of slow industrial activity, the country is exporting much less and consequently earning less.

Egypt's once booming tourism industry is losing one billion dollars per month as a result of tourists staying

away from the country in the wake of the Jan. 25 revolution.

"The effects have been drastic," said Omayma El-Husseini, spokeswoman of the Egyptian Tourism Ministry, told IPS. Egypt was forecasting 16 million tourists for 2011 before the Jan. 25 uprising, she said. But in just a few days, a million tourists packed-up and fled the country, vacating the usually bustling hotels and restaurants in Cairo, Luxor, Aswan and the Red Sea resorts of Hurghada and Sharm El-Sheikh. Egypt received 14.5 million tourists in 2010 - making tourism the second largest revenue source after expatriate remittances, government figures show.

"It is obvious we are in a bad economic shape," said Rashad Abdou, Professor of Economics at Cairo University. "The political turmoil led to blows coming nearly from every direction."

To lure back foreign investors spooked by sweeping corruption investigations, the government has said that it will make it easier for foreign companies to set shop in the country.

Ahmed Al-Saman, spokesman of the Egyptian Cabinet, also announced that the Justice Ministry is preparing a bill that would penalise former government officials involved in corruption, while absolving foreign investors who were coerced into corrupt deals.

The law will be controversial but if passed would allow foreign investors to keep their projects, properties or lands they obtained in illegal transactions as long as they "adjust their situation with the new government" perhaps through paying modest fines, he said.

Mamdouh Al-Wali, managing editor of the business section of the Al-Ahram newspaper, the country's largest daily, said the new incentives were not enough and that the main fault of the current government was its neglect of the security situation and of the political atmosphere.

"Foreign investors look first for political stability, safety and the rule of law," said Al-Wali. "These haven't yet been fully established after the revolution."

Egypt has been affected by a wave of crimes and street violence after heads of the police force under Mubarak let loose thousands of convicts from prisons to penalise the public for their support of the revolution. Thousands of criminals remain loose intimidating the people here.

"This is now a country run by the military and it is without a president and parliament," said Al-Wali. "When the country improves politically, we can talk about the next wave of incentives and of reviving the economy."

THIRTEEN) – EAC SECRETARY GENERAL OUTLINES PRIORITIES

The new Secretary General of the EAC Amb. Dr. Richard Sezibera today identified the realization of a single Customs territory, making the Common Market work, achieving a Monetary Union, infrastructure development and industrialization as the priorities for his term. Addressing his maiden press conference at the EAC Secretariat headquarters in Arusha, Dr. Sezibera told journalists "my priorities have been laid out by the Summit [of EAC Heads of State] both within the Treaty Establishing the East African Community and the Protocols therein." "But within those broad areas and in the context of implementing the Treaty and the attendant Protocols, there are four or five areas that are critical," the Secretary General asserted. First, he said, would be consolidating the implementation of the Customs Union and in this regard, he affirmed that "the formation of a single Customs territory is a critical priority going forward". The 9th Extraordinary Summit at its meeting in Dar es Salaam in April this year tasked the Council of Ministers to undertake studies on how the region can attain a single Customs territory. Dr. Sezibera also reiterated the need to tackle non tariff barriers, especially those that are procedural in nature. He identified the implementation of the Common Market Protocol as another priority area, lauding Partner States for the commitments they have made and stating that the EAC would, during his tenure, work to ensure that provisions of the Protocol are fully implemented. The Secretary General went on to note that delivering on the third pillar of the EAC integration process – the Monetary Union – was also high on the priority list. "We have very strict deadlines on the Monetary Union," Dr. Sezibera observed, before adding that work had already begun and "therefore we shall put emphasis on making sure that Partner States reach agreement" to deliver the Monetary Union "on schedule". The EAC boss added that development of regional infrastructure was also key as good roads, railways and ports, among others, would be critical in order for the region to have an effective Customs territory and Common Market. He said the EAC was working with various partners to actualize Public-Private Partnerships as a financing option for key infrastructure projects in the region. Industrialization and private sector development completed Dr. Sezibera's list of key priorities noting that the region needed to pursue equitable industrial development which would necessitate the involvement of the private sector in the integration process, backed by innovation and research in the Community.

The Secretary General reiterated that while concentrating on the identified priorities, he will not lose focus on how to involve the people of East Africa in the integration process. He said he intends to involve the youth, women, civil society, private sector, government officials and the general public to be part of "this exciting journey of the integration process". He pledged to engage members of the Media fraternity frequently and urged them to work with the EAC Secretariat in advancing the integration agenda. Amb. Sezibera was sworn in as EAC Secretary General on 19 April 2011 during the 9th Extraordinary Summit of EAC Heads of State held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Prior to his appointment he was Rwanda's Minister of Health.

FOURTEEN) - **FIGHTING KILLS SIX IN SUDAN'S SOUTH KORDOFAN**

Fighting between northern and southern-allied forces in the capital of Sudan's South Kordofan state has killed six people, the U.N. Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) said on Tuesday. "UNMIS is concerned about the ongoing fighting between SAF (Sudanese Armed forces) and the SPLA (Sudan People's Liberation Army) and the deteriorating security situation in Kadugli," UNMIS spokesman Kouider Zerrouk said. He said six bodies had been received by the local police hospital, including four policemen and two civilians. (Reuters)

FIFTEEN) – **CLIMDEV AFRICA STEERING COMMITTEE MEETS**

The meeting of the Program Steering Committee for ClimDev-Africa took place on May 23 in Addis Ababa. ClimDev Africa is a joint programme between the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. The [African Climate Policy Centre](#) is the Secretariat for the Programme.

ClimDev aims to guide the effective integration of climate information and services into development planning and to ensure the mainstreaming of climate considerations into policies and programmes directed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and sustainable development in Africa. ClimDev Africa will bring to bear the collective efforts of these three key African institutions to foster a common and coordinated response to climate change throughout the continent. Eight million euro has been pledged by EU to support the programme, and is only one of many ways EU assists developing countries in fighting [climate change](#).

Participation was strong at the Steering Committee, that was opened by AU Commissioner Tumusiime. Besides the three institutions the members present were AMCEN, UNEP Director Regional Representative for Africa as well as UNEP liaison office to AU, UNDP Country Representative to Ethiopia, GCOS, WMO and partners (UK, SE, NO, EU).

Fernando Matos Rosa

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