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To all EBCAM Members

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ONE)- DEVELOPING NATIONS AGREE TARIFF CUT TO BOOST TRADE

Nearly a dozen developing countries led by Brazil and India will sign an accord this week to cut tariff barriers and boost trade among themselves, a senior Brazilian government official said on Monday. Negotiations under the Global System of Trade Preferences Among Developing Countries were relaunched in 2005 in an attempt to diversify developing countries' trade revenue and reduce their dependence on rich countries. Around 43 countries are signatories to the original GSTP agreement from 1988, and 11 countries will sign the updated accord in southern Brazil this week. Under the deal, countries will cut applied tariffs by 20 percent on 70 percent of their products. "So far the GSTP had no importance at all ... it was more political, now it has become an instrument for opening trade," Carlos Marcio Cozendey, head of the Brazilian foreign ministry's department of economics, told a news conference. The agreement covers fast-growth economies with combined gross domestic product of around \$5 trillion and nearly one-third of the world's population. The other signatories are Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea, Morocco, Egypt and Cuba. But the accord's ability to generate large new trade flows is likely to be limited, as countries are granted significant exemptions and tariffs could remain prohibitive if they were high to begin with. In addition, some countries do not have proper trade ties or adequate infrastructure to act on the new incentives. "It's an accord that allows you to protect your sensitive goods but gives you a larger number of small preferences on a big array of products," said Cozendey. "It's an agreement to open new opportunities, it doesn't focus on existing trade." In Brazil, manufacturers are more likely than farmers to benefit from new access to markets in Asia and elsewhere. Critics say the administration of outgoing President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva focused too much on building stronger ties with other developing countries, while neglecting its traditional partners in Europe and the United States.

TWO)- ZAMBIA INVITES SUDAN PRESIDENT TO REGIONAL SUMMIT

Zambia has invited Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir to a regional summit and says he will not be arrested if he attends. «Zambia is a member of the African Union and the AU says he has not been found guilty. So he will not be arrested,» chief government spokesman Ronnie Shikapwasha told reporters from state-run newspapers over the weekend. In September, the African Union called for a year's delay in al-Bashir's prosecution, saying a trial would interfere with efforts to end the seven-year conflict in Sudan's western Darfur region. On Monday, Zambian government spokesmen refused to say whether al-Bashir was expected to accept his invitation to the regional summit, which is scheduled to open Wednesday. The meeting will review environmental issues about Lake Tanganyika, whose fragile ecosystem has been a matter of concern to countries like Zambia, Tanzania, Congo, Rwanda and Burundi which share its waters. The International Criminal Court has called for the arrest of al-Bashir on suspicion of war crimes and alleged genocide in Darfur. But several African and other nations have declined to carry out the warrant. At the Hague Monday, court spokesman Fadi El Abdalla said prosecutors have alerted the court's judges to Zambia's decision. «Judges will decide what is the best measure to take,» the spokesman said. Al-Bashir denies wrongdoing and rejects the authority of the Hague-based court known as the ICC. Zambia became a full member of the ICC in 2002 and a Zambian, Florence Mumba, has

served on the court's panel of judges. The decision to invite al-Bashir to Zambia has been criticized by opposition politicians in Zambia.

THREE)- CHINESE COMPANIES SEEN ACTING IN AFRICA INDEPENDENT FROM GOVERNMENT

Les hommes d'affaires chinois bénéficient de plus en plus d'autonomie pour investir en Afrique, loin du stéréotype de la Chine perçue comme un Etat autoritaire qui contrôle directement ses intérêts sur le continent, selon des analystes. "Assumer que tout le monde est un bon petit soldat à Pékin est incorrect", estime Martyn Davies, président de la société d'investissements Frontier Advisory à Johannesburg. "Il n'est pas tout à fait vrai qu'il existe une sorte de plan stratégique grandiose, que tout le monde est dirigé comme des pions sur un échiquier", ajoute-t-il. La présence chinoise sur le continent, en particulier en Angola, en Afrique du Sud, au Soudan et au Nigeria, s'est fortement accélérée ces dix dernières années. Elle investit massivement dans les secteurs pétrolier, minier, agricole et manufacturier. Le commerce bilatéral a atteint 106,8 milliards de dollars (80 milliards d'euros) en 2008, un chiffre qui devrait être équivalent cette année, contre 10,6 milliards en 2000, soit une croissance annuelle de plus de 30%. En échange de matières premières, la Chine aide l'Afrique à construire les réseaux d'électricité, d'eau, les routes ou les hôpitaux, qui lui font cruellement défaut. Les accords sont souvent signés en grande pompe par les représentants des deux gouvernements, faisant croire que Pékin tire toute les ficelles. Mais pour de nombreux experts, les autorités chinoises jouent plus un rôle de facilitation que de contrôle, poussant les hommes d'affaires chinois sur le marché africain avec des avantages financiers sans maintenir un lien direct sur le terrain. "Les compagnies pétrolières, en particulier, bénéficient d'une très grande liberté de gestion et peuvent vendre sur le marché international", souligne Alex Vines à la tête du programme Afrique de l'institut de recherches Chatham House. "C'est différent pour les entreprises de construction. Mais elles sont si nombreuses que le gouvernement a des difficultés à suivre leurs traces en dehors de la Chine", développe-t-il. **FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE** Autre facteur d'émancipation: la formation de partenariat avec des acteurs africains. En 2007, la Banque industrielle et commerciale de Chine a acheté 20% des parts de la banque sud-africaine Standard Bank pour 5,6 milliards de dollars. "Les entreprises chinoises ne dépendent plus seulement des fonds chinois", ajoute Chris Alden de la London School of Economics (LSE). "Elles répondent aux appels d'offres et obtiennent de plus en plus de prêts de la Banque mondiale ou d'autres organismes publics, qui ne sont pas liés aux intérêts financiers chinois." Pour les Américains cependant, "la Chine est un concurrent économique très agressif et pernicieux, dénué de sens moral", selon un télégramme diplomatique révélé cette semaine par Wikileaks. L'emploi de main-d'oeuvre chinoise plutôt que locale, le non-respect de l'environnement et des lois sociales, le soutien à des régimes peu soucieux des droits de l'Homme comme le Soudan ou Zimbabwe sont des critiques récurrentes adressées à la Chine, qui s'abstient de sermonner les dirigeants africains sur les droits de l'Homme et la corruption. "Ce ne sont pas des investisseurs sinistres, peu soucieux des droits de l'Homme et de l'environnement comme les gens les présentent", rétorque l'investisseur Martyn Davies. "Ce serait plutôt l'opposé..."

FOUR)- EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK TO CO-FINANCE USD 468M TANZANIA ELECTRICITY BACKBONE PROJECT

The European Investment Bank has agreed to provide a USD 135 million loan to co-finance a new 667km high voltage transmission line being built by TANESCO between Iringa and Shinyanga in Tanzania. The formal financing agreement was signed in Dar es Salaam by Ramadhani M. Khijjah, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs and Kurt Simonsen, Head of the European Investment Bank East Africa regional representation. The Tanzania Backbone Interconnector Project will improve electricity transmission from existing and future generating sources in the south of the country to the north. As a key link in future interconnection with Zambia and Kenya the project will also promote regional economic cooperation and development.

The Tanzania Backbone Interconnector Project is part of the Tanzania Electricity Supply Company (TANESCO) National Grid reinforcement strategy and will provide access to cost-efficient electricity essential for private sector development in the country. The project comprises the construction and operation of a 667km 400kV AC double circuit transmission overhead line between Iringa, Dodoma, Singida and Shinyanga. The link will transfer hydropower generated in the south to northern Tanzania, currently experiencing strong economic growth and increased demand for electricity due to developing mining and industrial activities. Eventually the line will become part of the infrastructure connecting the East and Southern African Power Pools.

The USD 468 million transmission project will be co-financed by the European Investment Bank, World Bank, African Development Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Korean Economic Development

The European Investment Bank, the long-term lending institution of the European Union, whose shareholders are the 27 European Union member states, has been active across Africa for over 40 years. EIB activities follow policies and objectives set down by European Union member states whose Finance Ministers are the EIB's Governors. Over the last 5 years over EUR 8.6 billion has been provided by the European Investment Bank for projects across Africa.

FIVE)- EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK TO PROVIDE EUR 50-MILLION FOR ETHEKWINI WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

The European Investment Bank has formally agreed to finance upgrading and expansion of the water infrastructure programme for eThekweni Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The municipality provides water and sanitation services to nearly four million people in the greater Durban area. The Bank will provide a long-term loan of EUR 50 million, representing 15% of the total investment cost of the programme, to Rand Merchant Bank (RMB), the investment banking arm of FirstRand Bank Limited in South Africa, to allow it to fund this project at reduced rates. The eThekweni Municipality investment programme includes replacement of 1,600 km of old asbestos water mains and the construction of both the 60km Western Aqueduct and the 57km Northern Aqueduct, to be implemented by the eThekweni Municipality's Water and Sanitation Unit.

This project will improve efficiency of the water supply system by reducing leakage as well as interconnecting networks and enhancing resilience of the overall system to enhance service levels, supplement existing water supply and better cope with climatic uncertainties. The programme will contribute to South Africa's achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by improving access to piped drinking water in previously un-served areas and ensure the free basic water consumption policy developed by the municipality, in line with the country objectives. The South African public sector is committed to addressing the shortage of capacity of water networks and meet demands resulting from increased access, economic development and population growth, across the country.

This project is consistent with the European Investment Bank's water lending policy encouraging sound water management, optimising use and efficiency of existing networks and increasing its resilience to climate change. The long-term funding for bulk water and additional infrastructure will contribute to reducing tariff increases for end users.

The eThekweni water project is part of an integrated approach by the European Investment Bank to support the water supply chain in KwaZulu-Natal, including upstream bulk water and the upgrade of water supply network and treatment facilities by Umgeni Water. The European Investment Bank is currently considering financing Trans Caledon Tunnel Authority Mooi-Mgeni Transfer Scheme Phase 2, a crucial upstream bulk water project that will provide additional resources to the region.

European Investment Bank lending in South Africa focuses on public interest infrastructure projects, including municipal infrastructure, power, water and private sector support and contributes towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Previous South African water projects funded by the European Investment Bank include the Berg Water project (EUR 100-million), the Vaal pipeline project (EUR 85-million) and the South African component of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (EUR 45-million).

Since 2000, the European Investment Bank has provided over EUR 531-million funding for water projects across Africa. In southern Africa, this has included projects in Lesotho, Mozambique, Tanzania, Swaziland, Botswana and South Africa.

SIX)- EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE CATHERINE ASHTON APPOINTS TWO MANAGING DIRECTORS FOR THE EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE

Catherine Ashton, has today announced the appointment of Miroslav Lajčák as Managing Director for Russia, Eastern Neighbourhood and the Western Balkans and Christian Leffler as Managing Director for the Americas in the new European External Action Service. "These two key appointments cover vitally important relationships for the EU with our neighbours and strategically important partners across the Atlantic. Miroslav and Christian will bring experience and authority to these key posts in the new External Action Service," said Catherine Ashton.

Miroslav Lajčák has an impressive track record of achievement in the Slovak foreign service, including as Minister for Foreign Affairs in 2009-2010, political director in 2005-2007 and a number of senior ambassadorial positions. He has also worked as High Representative and EU Special Representative in Bosnia and a senior advisor in the Council Secretariat on the referendum on the independence of Montenegro.

Christian Leffler is currently deputy director general in DG Development in the European Commission, with previous experience as Head of Cabinet of former Commission Vice President Margot Wallström. Before joining the Commission, he worked as a diplomat in the Swedish foreign service with postings including Cairo and Paris.

SEVEN)- SUDAN OUT OF TIME ON ABYEI REFERENDUM, SAYS WASHINGTON

Sudan has run out of time to organize a referendum on the future of its disputed Abyei region, meaning the North and South must agree to a political solution for the oil-rich territory, a senior U.S. official said on Monday. Scott Gration, the Obama administration's special envoy for Sudan, also said veteran U.S. diplomat Dane Smith had been appointed to deal with Darfur, where violence continues even as the international community focuses on Sudan's January plebiscites. Gration said the United States believed Sudan was on course for a Jan. 9 referendum on independence for the South but that a simultaneous vote on the future of Abyei, which both North and South claim, was no longer possible. **ONLY SOLUTION IS NORTH/SOUTH ACCORD** "I think we've passed the opportunity for there to be a poll," Gration told reporters. "It will take a political solution to resolve this issue." The fate of Abyei has emerged as one of the most serious potential flashpoints between North and South Sudan, which are bound by the 2005 peace deal that ended their long civil war to hold two referendums on Jan. 9 on whether the South becomes independent and which region Abyei joins. Most political analysts expect the South to vote for independence and the two sides are now trying to thrash out a deal on Abyei, which straddles the border and contains at least one significant oilfield -Defra, part of a block run by the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company, a consortium led by China's CNPC. Gration said Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and Salva Kiir, the president of the South, were personally involved in discussions. **PARTITION OR COMPENSATION** Analysts say a potential deal could involve either partitioning the region or allowing the South to take it over while compensating the North. Gration said the United States and others were working hard to defuse any potential violence over Abyei. "This is probably not a situation where either side will be happy," Gration said. "What we're looking for is a solution that probably makes both sides angry but neither side mad." **NEW U.S. ENVOY FOR DARFUR** Gration said the United States remained worried about the western region of Darfur and was naming Dane Smith, a seasoned State Department Africa hand, to work with the United Nations, the African Union and the Khartoum government on ways to stabilize the situation. "It gives us that additional focus, that additional specific effort that we need to be able to turn the tide here in Darfur," Gration said. **U.S. LOBBIES WELCOME MOVE** "With so much of the world's attention understandably focused on the upcoming referendum, President Obama's decision today to appoint Smith as a high-level diplomat for Darfur must be applauded," stated Ruth Messinger, President of [American Jewish World Service](#). "The decision to appoint Ambassador Smith is a vital step towards increasing the United States support for Darfuri civilians", said [Save Darfur](#), a lobby founded by the the [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#) and the [American Jewish World Service](#). Activist groups said Smith's appointment may help to re-energize efforts on Darfur. "From bringing key rebel movements back into a revitalized peace process to delivering tangible improvements in security on the ground, the challenges in Darfur are considerable," said Omer Ismail, a policy adviser at the [Enough Project](#) lobby. "But with the right levels of attention and expertise they can be achieved." Gration, who recently traveled to Darfur, said the United States held the government of Sudan primarily responsible for improving conditions in Darfur but said the rebel groups must also refrain from violence and permit humanitarian access.

EIGHT)- BELGIUM'S DE KEYSER TO LEAD EU OBSERVERS' MISSION IN SUDAN REFERENDUM

L'eurodéputée belge Véronique De Keyser (PS) dirigera la mission d'observation de l'Union européenne au référendum d'autodétermination du Sud Soudan. Mme De Keyser a déjà dirigé la mission électorale au Soudan pour les élections du mois d'avril dernier. Elle dirigera cette nouvelle mission qui comportera, au moment du référendum, en janvier, 120 observateurs, plus des fonctionnaires européens et locaux. "La taille de la mission témoigne de l'importance attachée par l'Union européenne à cet enjeu africain", a-t-elle souligné dans un communiqué. "J'espère que, quels que soient les résultats, le président Al-Bachir les acceptera et que l'expression démocratique des citoyens sera entendue. Il n'y a d'autre alternative à la guerre que la voix des urnes et la paix", a-t-elle ajouté. L'eurodéputée fera un premier voyage du 18 au 23 décembre 2010 pour lancer la mission à Khartoum et à Juba. Elle retournera au Soudan dès le 7 janvier 2011 pour le reste de la mission.

NINE)- NORTH, SOUTH SUDAN NEED DEAL TO KEEP OIL FLOWING

Oil inflamed Sudan's civil war for decades but could now help seal the peace as the south becomes independent and needs the north to refine its crude. Rhetoric and tensions are rising between the former north-south foes as Sudan hurtles towards the Jan. 9 southern referendum on secession -- the culmination of a 2005 peace deal which shared wealth and power and promised democracy. In Africa's largest country almost 75 percent of the current 500,000 barrels per day of crude output comes from wells in the south, but is exploited, refined and transported by the north. But that very equation, along with the fact that both governments in the north and south are heavily dependent on crude revenues, could draw a line which neither side is willing to cross and stop them short of resuming full hostilities. "Oil has a bad image -corruption, fuelling war. But in the case of Sudan, it's helped push for peace," said al-Sir Sidahmed, an energy expert advising Sudan's petroleum ministry. "They simply can't afford to have oil to stop even for one day." **98 % OF SOUTH REVENUE** The autonomous southern government, formed in 2005, derives some 98 percent of its revenues from crude. Some 45 percent of Khartoum's budget comes from oil, which makes up around 90 percent of its exports. Neither economy has moved to diversify away from oil dependency since 2005 and it will take years for either economy to do so in any significant way. This leaves no option but to continue -in a form still open to negotiations- the sharing of oil wealth even in a likely post-secession scenario. **SOUTH WANTS BIGGER SHARE** The 2005 accord shared oil from the south roughly 50:50. The southern ruling party, the SPLM, may well use its oil leverage to gain political concessions from Khartoum's government -- likely in the disputed central Abyei region. Continued sharing of the landlocked south's oil with the north may well be difficult to sell to a southern population bent on full independence from the north they see as having oppressed them for so long. So a likely solution would be to rename the oil sharing as "rent" or "fees" for the use of the pipelines, refineries and port in the north. "As much as 40 percent of oil revenues could end up going back to the north," deputy finance minister Marial Awour -and a southerner- told a news conference. Southern officials have raised the possibility of building refineries in the south and a pipeline to neighbouring Kenya's ports to be independent from the north. But this would be a political solution, rather than the most economically viable one, analysts say. "It's technically possible but they will simply spend so much," said the deputy foreign minister Espen Barth Eide of Norway, which is advising Sudan on its oil management. "The cost of a pipeline to Kenya would be too high to warrant it... and you'd have to build a very specialised refinery," he added, because of the low quality crude in Sudan. **RUNNING OUT OF OIL** There is also a lack of technical oil expertise in the south which would leave them dependent on foreign experts for extraction, an added cost. And time is a constraint given Sudan's oilfields are running low with new discoveries over the years being less promising than hoped. "If you look at the projection of oil revenues, the production is peaking now - they know that it's decreasing," said William Battaile, a senior economist from the World Bank. Oil giants such as Total SA with the expertise and a contract to drill in the south's massive swamps have been reluctant to begin work because of the political uncertainty. Others have been too prudent to enter Sudan at all despite the 2005 peace deal, worried that contracts signed with Khartoum might be voided after the south secedes and that conflict with the north or within the south could hinder work. "If war starts and oil stops flowing - who's going to benefit from that?" said Sidahmed.

TEN)- WEST OFFERS 'INCENTIVES' FOR SUDAN TO ACCEPT SOUTH SECESSION

Western nations are offering Sudan economic incentives including lifting U.S. sanctions and reintegration with the World Bank to tempt it away from isolation after the south splits next year, Norway said. The oil-producing south is expected to vote for independence in a Jan. 9 referendum, part of the 2005 north-south peace deal that

ended Africa's longest civil war. Norway, the United States and Britain represent nations who were instrumental in sealing that accord and are guarantors. "Western countries are increasingly focusing on the need to have clear incentives for the north, of course contingent on the willingness of the north to take part ... in a positive way," Norway's Deputy Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide told Reuters. "Removal of sanctions, re-entry into economic institutions, the World Bank, the IMF and so on, investments ...that dialogue is going on," he said in an interview in Khartoum on Tuesday. He said Norway could also help Sudan with debt relief for its more than \$36 billion external debt. Western nations fear that once the south splits, the north will become increasingly isolated and Islamist. "The hope is that this approach will tilt it in this more open, more pluralistic direction," Eide said. **OIL REVENUE** Norway, a major oil producer, has been advising both north and south on cooperation over Sudan's about 500,000 barrels per day of crude, which lies mostly in the south with the infrastructure in the north. It has also provided technical help on extraction and revenue management. "We are looking at ways to take more gains out of each field ... this is a question of money and technology and you balance the cost to the gain," he said, adding Norway could raise the yield from Sudan's oil from 18 percent to 20 percent. The minister said properly-managed oil revenues would help the impoverished south develop. "It's going to start as a weak state -- they have some institutions but those institutions have very limited capacity," Eide said. He said Norway was helping to strengthen government, political parties and civil society. "(Government is) also tax collection, border guards and all the nitty gritty institutions that you need to get things going and a lot of that has to be built almost from scratch," he said of the south. "What I do not want to see is that we do it for them," he said of donor nations. Sudan's north-south war killed about 2 million people and destabilised much of east Africa. Eide said he believed there was enough incentive for both sides not to return to violence, blaming aggressive rhetoric from the north and south on building leverage ahead of end-game negotiations. The former foes have still to agree on post-referendum issues including how to continue sharing oil, sharing assets and the debt, citizenship of millions of southerners and nomads who have built lives across the border and on demarcating the disputed north-south border itself, where much of the oil lies.

ELEVEN)- SUDAN PRESIDENT AIDE ADMITS THAT SOUTH SUDAN WILL SECEDE

An aide to Sudan's president said on Thursday efforts to keep the country united had failed, in the first public acknowledgement from the ruling northern elite that the south would likely secede after a referendum. Presidential assistant Nafie Ali Nafie, seen as a hardline supporter of unity, said it was now "expected" that people from the oil-producing south would choose to declare independence in the Jan. 9 vote, the state Suna news agency reported. The announcement from Nafie, one of the most powerful men in Sudan, could mark a change in direction in the north. President Omar Hassan al-Bashir previously said he would campaign up to the last moment to keep north and south united and members of his party have threatened not to recognise the result of the vote, citing irregularities. The south is now just 24 days away from the scheduled start of voting in the plebiscite. Analysts have long predicted southerners would choose to split away. "Dr Nafie Ali Nafie has acknowledged the failure of all the efforts to maintain the unity of Sudan," Suna said, reporting on a speech by the aide in Khartoum. Nafie said he had been campaigning to keep north and south together, "but we shall accept the reality and must not deceive ourselves and stick to dreams," Suna quoted him as saying. **WESTERN POWERS DID IT** "Dr. Nafie said that the separation of south Sudan has become something expected because it is the orientation of Sudan People's Liberation Movement (the south's dominant party, the SPLM), which is backed by the West," said Suna. A Sudanese journalist at the event confirmed the accuracy of the quotes to Reuters. Referendum observers from the Carter Centre late on Wednesday praised organisers for holding a "generally credible" registration of voters, despite a series of logistical problems.

TWELVE)- SUDAN'S HIGHEST COURT TO PROBE CHALLENGE TO SECESSION REFERENDUM

The Constitutional Court agreed on Tuesday to investigate a petition by Sudanese lawyers for the dissolution of the body organising the referendum on a southern secession, which could derail the Jan. 9 vote, state media said. Most believe the south will secede in the vote, which was built into the 2005 north-south peace deal that ended Africa's longest civil war. The northern ruling National Congress Party, which wants unity, has accused the south of manipulating the voter registration which ended on Dec. 8. "The Constitutional Court provisionally accepted a petition against the referendum commission," the Sudanese Media Centre said. "Now it will look into the demands of the group of lawyers and ask the commission to react before making a final ruling." The head of the south Sudan referendum commission, Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil, said he knew of six legal petitions against

the process, and added that the court would hear both sides' arguments before giving a ruling. "This kind of situation which is fraught with emotion and political overtones, I don't think it would accept it so easily," he told Reuters. Lawyers said the court would likely rule after three days. The ruling southern party, the former rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), accused the NCP of masterminding all the legal challenges to the referendum in an effort to delay or derail it. The referendum commission was sworn in in July, some three years late, and given an extremely difficult mission. But the United Nations and the commission say the vote is still on schedule for Jan. 9. To meet the tight deadline, the commission had to cut corners, including ignoring an article in the referendum law saying voter registration must be completed three months before the plebiscite, which left it vulnerable to legal challenges. If the court rules against the commission, there will be a delay in the vote.

THIRTEEN)- OVER 350 MOROCCAN WORKERS SUE FRENCH RAILWAYS FOR DISCRIMINATION

Quelque 360 salariés ou retraités marocains de la SNCF, privés du statut de cheminot du fait de leur nationalité, ont attaqué l'entreprise publique pour discrimination devant les Prud'hommes de Paris qui examineront leurs dossiers au cours de plusieurs audiences en 2011. Une audience prévue ce mardi portant sur plusieurs dizaines de cas a été reportée au 6 octobre 2011, à la demande de la SNCF. Une autre audience est maintenant prévue le 28 mars pour une autre série de dossiers, a indiqué Me Léopold Mendes, avocat des salariés. Ces salariés ont été recrutés au Maroc dans les années 70 par la SNCF avec un statut de contractuel, donc de droit privé, et non avec le statut de cheminot, longtemps réservé aux seuls détenteurs de la nationalité française, et depuis quelques années ouverts aux ressortissants de l'Union européenne. Le statut n'est également pas accessible aux personnes embauchées au-delà de 30 ans et à certains temps partiels. Ce statut donne notamment droit à certains avantages particuliers en matière de protection sociale et de retraite. Le statut donne aussi droit à des facilités de circulation (billets gratuits ou réduits), des prestations du comité d'entreprise, un accès à des logements. "Ces salariés n'ont pas pu passer certains examens en interne", ajoute Bouabdellah Frahlia, délégué SUD Rail, qui soutient l'action des cheminots marocains. "Il y a eu des discussions avec la SNCF sur la suppression de la clause de nationalité, mais elles n'ont pas abouti, contrairement à la RATP qui l'a abolie en 2002", souligne M. Frahlia.

FOURTEEN)- MOROCCAN INTRANSIGENCE MAINTAINS BLOCKADE OF UN WESTERN SAHARA TALKS

Le Maroc et le Polisario ont repris jeudi en mi-journée dans la banlieue de New York un quatrième cycle de discussions informelles sur l'avenir du Sahara occidental qui doit durer jusqu'à samedi en mi-journée sous l'égide des Nations unies. Une précédente série de discussions s'était achevée le 9 novembre sans résultat probant, les deux camps restant sur leurs positions. Elles avaient démarré deux jours auparavant dans une atmosphère tendue après le raid déclenché par les forces marocaines près de Lâayoune, chef-lieu du Sahara occidental, qui a fait 13 morts selon le Maroc et "plusieurs dizaines" selon le Polisario. Ces discussions se déroulent sous la houlette de l'émissaire de l'ONU dans la région Christopher Ross et en présence de représentants de l'Algérie et de la Mauritanie, pays voisins. "On parle de mesures de confiance. Mais la confiance n'existe pas. Le Maroc est figé sur ses positions. Rien ne peut sortir de cette phase de discussions", a déclaré Ahmed Boujari, représentant à l'ONU du Front Polisario. "Nous voudrions maintenir ouverte la voie diplomatique. Mais une solution définitive ne peut voir le jour sans que le Maroc ne prenne ses responsabilités. Nous demandons l'implication active et sincère du Conseil de sécurité. La position de la France est aussi critiquable car elle soutient le Maroc", a-t-il ajouté. Un porte-parole du Maroc a de son côté indiqué qu'il avait pour consigne de ne pas communiquer avec la presse. Ancienne colonie espagnole, le Sahara occidental a été envahi et annexé en 1975 par le Maroc. Le Polisario réclame un référendum d'autodétermination sous l'égide de l'ONU, qui donnerait aux Sahraouis le choix entre trois options: indépendance ou autonomie sous souveraineté marocaine ou rattachement au Maroc.

FIFTEEN)- ZIMBABWE IMMIGRANTS HAVE TWO WEEKS TO REGISTER IN SOUTH AFRICA OR FACE DEPORTATION

A steady rain made the wait particularly miserable for Zimbabwean immigrants crowded outside a South African immigration office, trying to legalize their status before a feared wave of deportations. As many as 3 million Zimbabweans are believed to be living and working in South Africa after fleeing entwined economic collapse and a political crisis in their homeland. South African authorities, who had allowed many to stay without even passports, announced the crackdown in September, saying that those who did not apply for legal status before Dec. 31 would have to go home. That has led to crowds at immigration offices across South Africa on Wednesday, with some Zimbabweans lining up for several days before even getting in the door to apply for work or study permits. Human rights groups complained that four months was insufficient and that bureaucrats in Zimbabwe and South Africa were unprepared for the large numbers of applicants. «Just being legal, it would change my life. I would be more comfortable,» said Frank Nkathazo, a 37-year-old gardener who was waiting to submit his application Wednesday with little hope of reaching the doors before they closed at 4 p.m. Zimbabweans make up the largest immigrant group in South Africa. Rights groups say legalizing Zimbabweans would ensure they pay taxes and that their children go to school so that they can grow up to contribute to the economy of their adopted country, echoing arguments in immigration debates in the United States and Europe. The decision to document Zimbabweans is «very worthwhile,» said Kaajal Ramjathan-Keogh of the Johannesburg offices of Lawyers for Human Rights, but she stressed that the deadline should be extended.

NO IMMEDIATE DEPORTATIONS Immigration minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma said deportations would not start until all applications are processed, acknowledging that could take some time. Speaking to reporters Tuesday, she said she could not say when deportations would begin. In early 2009, South Africa announced Zimbabweans could travel here on a free 90-day visitor's permit and apply to do casual work during their stay. It was the end of that «special dispensation» that was announced in September, with South African officials citing improved economic and political conditions in Zimbabwe. Nkathazo, the gardener from Plumtree in western Zimbabwe, stood under his umbrella outside a handsome concrete and brick office tower on the edge of downtown Johannesburg, clutching a purple plastic folder stuffed with his new passport and a letter from his employer. He even brought a South African ID card he had lied to obtain years ago. South African authorities have said those who obtained South African identity documents illegally will get amnesty if they return them. Nkathazo had arrived at 6 a.m. to find hundreds already there even though the office did not open until 8 a.m. Nkathazo said he would wait all day, and come back earlier the next time if he failed to get in on Wednesday. To qualify, applicants must prove they have been in South Africa since at least May this year. Nkathazo has been here 15 years, and the ease with which he has regularly ferried between his wife and four children in Zimbabwe and his job in South Africa demonstrates how just how porous the border is. Ahead of Nkathazo a woman sat wrapped in a blanket, huddling under an umbrella on a concrete stump planted at the entrance to the building to keep cars from parking too close. Bryan Khumalo, a 27-year-old computer consultant, said he had lined up for four days to apply in September, and last week received a cell phone text message informing him he had been granted a work permit. He arrived at 4 a.m. Wednesday, but was still 87th in line. Experience had taught him only 50 or 60 people make it inside on any day, and he was resigned to returning. «Some guys sleep here,» Khumalo said.

SIXTEEN) -GADDAFI ISSUES WARNING TO EU OVER AFRICAN TRADE

Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi warned the European Union on December 1st that Africa would turn to other trade partners if the EU continued to impose terms for cooperation. Gaddafi's warning, at an EU-Africa summit attended by senior European officials, echoed complaints from some other African leaders who say Europe is trying to make them open their borders to trade but not giving enough in return. "Our choice now is to cooperate with our brothers in the European Union but if that cooperation fails, Africa has other choices," Gaddafi said in opening remarks at the summit in Tripoli. "Let every country and every group govern itself. Every country is free to serve its own interests." "Africa can look to any other international bloc such as Latin America, China, India or Russia." A leaked internal document from the African Union this month showed some governments on the continent felt that trade deals being offered by the EU were one-sided. It said the bloc was asking African countries to liberalise their economies to comply with World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules but was not doing enough to help them develop their own economies. "We do not benefit from the WTO and we call for its abolition," Gaddafi said. "All its interests are in opening our borders for industrial goods and killing national industries in the Third World, so I call (on everybody) not to join it." The Libyan leader also took a swipe at the

EU's practice of linking economic assistance to African countries' respect for human rights and good governance.

SEVENTEEN) - AFRICA'S FUTURE LIES IN A GREEN ENERGY GRID

Development in Africa could falter as climate change grips the continent, increasing the length and severity of droughts and floods by altering precipitation patterns, among other impacts. The region needs a major shift in its economic development policies and thinking towards decentralised, green economic development, experts now say.

"The world's big economies are largely living off financial transactions which are unconnected to development," warns Supachai Panitchpakdi, secretary-general of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. "Export growth does not automatically result in green economic growth, we must look at trade for development," said Panitchpakdi.

In a rejection of failed neoliberal economic policies, Panitchpakdi said strong national policies on investments, taxation, protection of local industries, including subsidies, and changes to less restrictive intellectual property regimes are what is needed to green economies in Africa and elsewhere. "Green economic development underpins environmental protection, economic growth and development," he said.

The tentative global economic recovery this year is largely a jobless recovery because the current economic growth model is designed to make "people redundant", said Achim Steiner, executive director of the U.N. Environment Programme (UNEP).

"It favours large concentrated power grids, for example, which require very few people," Steiner told IPS. A low-carbon economy is not for the rich countries, it is for the poorest because it is more resource-efficient, employs more people and brings development at a lower cost, he said, adding, "We have to grow the economies of Africa but only through green sustainable development, delinked from increasing resource use."

"After 50 years of development, 80 percent of Kenya's population had no access to electricity. Now, after a 2008 shift to renewable energy, more Kenyans have access to electricity than ever before," he noted.

Kenya's feed-in tariff, similar to Germany's, is expected to produce about 1300 MW of electricity generation capacity from biomass, geothermal, biogas, solar energy, wind, and small hydro this year. A feed-in tariff offers long-term contracts at a set price based on the cost for renewable energy generation.

Germany now employs more than 380,000 people in its renewable energy sector and 1.8 million in its environmental sector - far more than its vaunted automobile sector, Steiner said.

"More than half a billion people in rural Africa have little or no access to electricity," noted Nebojsa Nakicenovic of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Austria.

"They pay a large part of their incomes for some kerosene lighting or diesel electric at a cost that is twice that of what the average European pays," said Nakicenovic, a leading energy economist. "Or worst of all they are forced to rely on flashlights, which is the most expensive form of lighting available."

Universal access to modern energy services globally has been estimated to cost between \$80 and \$100 billion a year in a number of recent studies, including those by the International Energy Agency and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation in Vienna.

"That seems like a lot of money but it is significantly less than the \$300 to \$600 billion being spent annually to subsidise the fossil fuel sector," Nakicenovic pointed out. Technically, it is doable, representing roughly 20 gigawatts of energy generation - less than what countries like Brazil and South Africa have been able to add in recent years.

Increasing energy access in Africa has a huge range of benefits, he says. It would drive economic development, improve the health of millions by reducing indoor air pollution from kerosene and biomass burning, reduce emissions of greenhouse gases like black carbon and reduce deforestation.

Local technology and local energy distribution in the form of small-scale hydro, biomass, biogas, solar, wind and other forms of production are best suited to Africa. The challenge is mobilising the investments needed, he said.

These should be national programmes with long-term financial commitments from the international community.

"We don't need international climate treaties to do this," said Nakicenovic. "Doing things right will bring green growth and prosperity."

EIGHTEEN) - BRAZIL EXPECTS RISE IN TRADE SURPLUS THANKS TO RAW MATERIALS

Les matières premières devraient sauver la balance commerciale brésilienne en 2011 en dépit de la valorisation du real face au dollar qui porte préjudice aux exportations, a indiqué jeudi l'Association du commerce extérieur (AEB). En 2011, le Brésil table sur des exportations de 225,8 milliards de dollars soit une hausse de 13,1% par rapport à 2010 et des importations de 199,7 milliards de dollars (+9,5%), soit un excédent commercial de 26,1 milliards de dollars, a précisé l'AEB. L'excédent prévu pour 2010 est de 17,3 milliards de dollars. "L'augmentation prévue des exportations est due exclusivement aux cours actuels des matières premières sur le marché international", certains d'entre eux ayant atteint des niveaux record, comme le minerai de fer, le coton et le sucre, ont souligné les exportateurs dans leur rapport trimestriel. Cependant, les difficultés de plusieurs pays de l'Union européenne "ont rendu le marché international volatile et instable ce qui pourra influencer sur les cours", selon eux. Pour la première fois depuis des décennies, les exportations de matières premières ont dépassé cette année celles de produits manufacturés.

NINETEEN) - FRANCE SHOCKED, BY STALEMATE OF 'MEDITERRANEAN UNION'

Renaud Muselier, président du conseil culturel de l'Union pour la Méditerranée (UPM), a jugé jeudi, en marge de la présentation à Marseille d'une anthologie des poètes de la Méditerranée, que l'UPM connaissait actuellement d'"énormes difficultés". "Ce grand projet d'Union pour la Méditerranée a d'énormes difficultés parce que les ministres des Affaires étrangères ne se parlent pas entre eux, qu'on a du mal à réunir les chefs d'Etat et les présidents", a-t-il dit. "Pour autant l'Union pour la Méditerranée fonctionne parce qu'elle est basée à Barcelone, parce que les moyens financiers lui sont donnés, parce qu'il y a un secrétaire général qui est jordanien, parce que les universités continuent à travailler, mais les politiques ne travaillent plus ensemble", a-t-il ajouté, jugeant que "par la culture on arrive à faire quelque chose". Fin novembre, le président Nicolas Sarkozy avait assuré, lors d'un discours à l'Élysée, qu'il ne renoncerait pas à l'UPM, "un élément majeur de la politique étrangère" française. Initialement prévu en juin à Barcelone, puis reprogrammé en novembre, le deuxième sommet de l'UPM a été reporté dans l'espoir de progrès dans les négociations de paix israélo-palestiniennes. Lancée en grande pompe à Paris en 2008 à l'initiative de Nicolas Sarkozy, l'UPM, qui regroupe les 43 pays dont les 27 de l'UE, la Turquie, Israël et les pays arabes du pourtour méditerranéen, s'était fixée pour objectif de relancer le dialogue euro-méditerranéen mais bute depuis sur le conflit israélo-palestinien.

TWENTY) - EU PREPARES IVORY COAST SANCTIONS LIST

L'Union européenne prépare une liste de 18 ou 19 noms, essentiellement des proches du dirigeant ivoirien Laurent Gbagbo, qui seront l'objet de sanctions comme un gel d'avoirs et des restrictions de visas, a-t-on appris jeudi de sources diplomatiques. Le placement ou non du dirigeant ivoirien lui-même sur la liste faisait encore débat jeudi, a indiqué à l'AFP un diplomate européen. "Les Français envisagent de ne pas le placer sur la liste parce qu'ils pensent qu'ils doivent se garder dans la manche un moyen de pression supplémentaire. Les Allemands plaident le contraire", a affirmé ce diplomate. Selon un autre diplomate, le Royaume-Uni, l'Espagne et l'Italie sont sur la ligne française. A Paris, Christine Fages, porte-parole adjointe du ministère français des Affaires étrangères, n'a pas confirmé cette affirmation, rappelant que l'UE avait décidé le principe de sanctions "à l'encontre de ceux qui font obstruction au processus de paix et de réconciliation nationale et en particulier menacent le bon aboutissement du processus électoral". Concernant l'élaboration de la liste, elle a précisé que les discussions se poursuivaient à Bruxelles. "Le contenu en sera déterminé en fonction de l'évolution de la situation sur le terrain et des responsabilités de chacun", a-t-elle ajouté. "La liste pourrait être adoptée la semaine prochaine. Nous souhaitons dans tous les cas qu'elle le soit rapidement", a souligné Mme Fages. Selon un diplomate européen, l'UE considère comme décisif une décision "rapide" de la part de la Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest de transférer le siège de la Côte d'Ivoire au sein de la BCEAO au camp Ouattara, afin de "prouver aux supporters de Gbagbo et à ceux dans l'administration qui lui sont encore loyaux qu'il sera bientôt à court de ressources financières pour payer leurs salaires". L'UE avait annoncé lundi qu'elle comptait faire davantage pression sur le régime de M. Gbagbo via des restrictions de visas et un gel d'avoirs, face à son refus de reconnaître la victoire d'Alassane Ouattara à l'élection présidentielle. L'AFP avait obtenu mardi une première liste de onze noms sur laquelle figuraient entre autres le conseiller pour la sécurité de M. Gbagbo, Kadet Berlin, le secrétaire général de la présidence, Desiré Tagro, le président du Conseil constitutionnel, Yao N'Dre et Pascal Affi N'Guessan, secrétaire général du parti de Laurent Gbagbo, le Front

populaire ivoirien (FPI). Au moins onze personnes ont été tuées et près d'une trentaine blessées jeudi dans des affrontements en Côte d'Ivoire entre les partisans des deux rivaux à la fonction présidentielle, a-t-on appris de diverses sources.

TWENTY ONE) - **U.S. ISSUES STERN WARNING TO IVORY COAST'S GBAGBO**

The United States, France and African powers have given embattled Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo an ultimatum to leave the country within "a matter of days" or face punishing sanctions, a U.S. official said on Thursday. "We've said clearly that we are prepared to impose sanctions on him and others. He understands what we're prepared to do and we've given him a finite amount of time to make up his mind," said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity. Soldiers loyal to Gbagbo and his rival presidential claimant, Alassane Ouattara, clashed on Thursday, escalating fears the world's top cocoa producer could slip back into the civil war that tore the country apart in 2002 and 2003. The U.S. Embassy in Ivory Coast's main city, Abidjan, was hit by an errant rocket-propelled grenade on Thursday during the violence, which occurred near the hotel where Ouattara and his allies have set up a parallel administration. "We deplore the use of violence and again call on everyone to remain calm as we continue to work with the international community to help resolve this situation," U.S. State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said. Crowley said a joint delegation from the African Union and West Africa's ECOWAS bloc was due in Abidjan and "would continue to encourage President Gbagbo to step aside. **ULTIMATUM** The U.S. official said Gbagbo had been given "a matter of days" to decide whether to step down. "We believe strongly that he is listening attentively to what the United States, France, ECOWAS, the African Union are all making clear to him," the official said. "He's got a decision to make and he's got a limited amount of time to make it." The official indicated that Gbagbo would be required to accept exile, although it remained to be determined where. "He has multiple homes in multiple countries. He has the opportunity to avail himself of any of them. He has to leave," the official said. U.S. President Barack Obama earlier this month offered to invite Gbagbo to the White House if he respected Ivory Coast's election and stepped down, but has not received a response. Obama also warned he would support efforts to isolate Gbagbo and hold him to account if he refused to step down, according to U.S. officials. The United States has said it is weighing sanctions against Gbagbo and his family if he stayed in power, while European Union foreign ministers have already agreed to target Gbagbo and his associates with sanctions. **UN SOLDIERS PROTECT IVORY COAST'S OUATTARA** Quelque 800 Casques bleus étaient postés jeudi autour de l'Hôtel du Golf d'Abidjan, en Côte d'Ivoire, où se trouve Alassane Ouattara qui a été désigné vainqueur de la présidentielle par la commission électorale, a indiqué un porte-parole de l'ONU.

TWENTY TWO) - **OUATTARA TO TRY NEW ASSAULT ON IVORIAN TV**

Malgré l'échec de sa marche de jeudi, le camp d'Alassane Ouattara entend repartir vendredi à l'assaut de la télévision d'Etat ivoirienne et du siège du gouvernement à Abidjan pour mettre à bas le régime de Laurent Gbagbo, au risque d'un nouveau bain de sang. Les pro-Ouattara ont maintenu leur appel à la mobilisation au moment où la Côte d'Ivoire, en proie à une quasi-guerre civile après le putsch manqué de 2002, était encore une fois au bord du précipice. Abidjan a été jeudi le théâtre de scènes de guerre et dans l'intérieur du pays une reprise du conflit menaçait entre l'ex-rébellion des Forces nouvelles (FN) - qui tient le nord depuis huit ans - et les forces fidèles à Gbagbo. Dans la capitale économique, les partisans de Ouattara, qui comme Gbagbo revendique la présidence après l'élection controversée du 28 novembre, sont descendus par milliers dans les rues en direction de la radio-télévision RTI. Mais les forces de sécurité loyales au président sortant les ont empêchés de rejoindre ce lieu stratégique, n'hésitant pas à tirer à balles réelles. De neuf à une trentaine de personnes, selon les bilans, ont été tuées et au moins 80 blessées. Retranché à l'hôtel du Golf, le gouvernement Ouattara n'a pu en sortir, les FN ne parvenant pas à lever un barrage des FDS à proximité malgré de violents échanges de tirs. Les ex-rebelles ont perdu deux éléments. Dans l'intérieur, la situation était aussi extrêmement tendue: les FN se sont affrontées aux FDS à Tiébissou (centre) mais ne sont pas parvenues à descendre sur la capitale politique Yamoussoukro. Semblant pour l'heure maître de la situation sur le terrain, Gbagbo restait cependant sous forte pression internationale. Il dispose d'un "temps limité" pour céder le pouvoir, a affirmé Washington, qui, comme la quasi-totalité de la communauté internationale, reconnaît Ouattara comme président. L'Union européenne se préparait à sanctionner 18 ou 19 personnes, essentiellement des proches de Gbagbo, par un gel d'avoirs et des restrictions de visas. Quant au Conseil de

sécurité de l'ONU, il a mis en garde les auteurs d'attaques contre des civils, soulignant qu'ils seront tenus responsables de leurs actes et "traduits en justice".

TWENTY THREE) - **EU URGES IVORY COAST ARMY TO OBEY OUATTARA**

Les dirigeants des pays de l'Union européenne ont appelé vendredi l'armée ivoirienne à se placer sous l'autorité du "président démocratiquement élu" Alassane Ouattara, alors que le pays est confronté à des violences qui ont fait entre neuf et une trentaine de morts. Dans une déclaration adoptée à l'issue d'un sommet à Bruxelles, ils appellent "tous les dirigeants ivoiriens, tant civils que militaires, qui ne l'ont pas encore fait, à se placer sous l'autorité du président démocratiquement élu, Alassane Ouattara". Les chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement rappellent que le procureur de la Cour pénale internationale (CPI) Luis Moreno-Ocampo a prévenu qu'il engagerait des poursuites contre quiconque serait responsable de violences meurtrières en Côte d'Ivoire. Et ils réaffirment "la détermination de l'UE à prendre des mesures ciblées contre qui voudraient continuer à empêcher le respect de la volonté exprimée par le peuple ivoirien". L'Europe prépare une liste de 18 ou 19 noms, essentiellement des proches du dirigeant ivoirien Laurent Gbagbo, qui feront l'objet de sanctions comme un gel d'avoires et des restrictions de visas. (See also [Statement by the spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire](#).)

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EBCAM wishes to all its Members and readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Fernando Matos Rosa

Brussels

