

WEEKLY POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC NEWS

Monday, February 9, 2015

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Drop in fuel prices, "insignificant and too late," according to the opposition



The Guinean opposition does not relish the drop in fuel prices announced Saturday by the government of Conde. Very conservative, first, they want to see the impact of this decline on transportation and the purchasing power of Guinea. Mohamed Tall of the Union of Republican Forces (UFR), very careful, believes that this decline is a non-event

although it is symbolic. "That will not change much at the consumer level. Personally, I would not be surprised to find the same market price." At the transport sector, for example, Sidya Toure's party announces two assumptions. "If in the previous fall, transporters were harmed, this time there is a risk to keep the same price with further decline to compensate transporters and vice versa." For François Bourouno's party of hope for national development (PEDN) this decrease is so insignificant and far below the expectations of the people. Further, the communication responsible of the PEDN lamented the fact that Guinea

waited February to lower the price of fuel by 10%, while the barrel was \$ 100 and dropped to less than \$ 50 since last November. "I wonder what this margin has served. However, we should have built roads, hospitals and schools, but now none of these has been done. The roads are degraded, there is a the status - quo" he said. For François Bourouno, this decline has no impact. "Guinea is a liberal country, any fluctuations in world prices should be felt by our people. The decrease in fuel liter price must be in step with the evolution of world prices of black gold."

The IMF reduces the debt of countries affected by Ebola by \$ 100 million



The Board of Directors of the International Monetary Fund decided on Wednesday to ease the debt of the three countries (Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia) severely affected by the Ebola virus disease. This decision comes at a time when the economies of the three countries

are experiencing a drastic decline and while the epidemic is experiencing a new upsurge.

Here is the full press release from the IMF: Ebola epidemic raging in some parts of West Africa is a humanitarian disaster that has attracted the attention of the international community about the threat of rapid spread of this life-threatening infectious disease, both nationally and internationally. February 4, 2015, the Board of Directors of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) met to discuss about how IMF could better assist low-income countries hit by disasters such as public health, taking into account both humanitarian arguments justifying to provide such support and wider international interest to support and start a strong action to contain and end as soon as possible a potential regional or global pandemic.

Orange and Ecobank launched a money transfer service between Orange Money accounts and bank accounts in Africa



The service will be deployed in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Conakry, Niger, Senegal and the Democratic Republic of Congo, during the first half of 2015.

Orange and the pan-African banking group Ecobank has launched a service allowing Orange Money account holders and customers of Ecobank to transfer money between their accounts. The service is already operational in Mali and will be deployed in several other African countries, including Cameroon, Côte

d'Ivoire, Guinea Conakry, Niger, Senegal and the Democratic Republic of Congo, in the first half 2015. This partnership aims to facilitate exchanges between common Orange and Ecobank customers, offering them the opportunity to feed their Orange Money electronic account with their bank account, and vice versa. Customers can perform these transactions from their mobile phone safely at any time, without moving and without carrying cash.

The two companies have launched the service following an agreement. This partnership represents the common will to develop mobile financial services and allow access to all banking services in Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa, where less than 24% of the population has a bank account, while over 60% are equipped with mobile

phones, Orange Money offers mobile financial services offering the comfort and ease to conduct remote Operations safely. With Orange Money, customers can transfer money from their mobile phone to any other customer in the country and some countries abroad. They can also remotely pay their water bills, electricity, television and telephone charges. They can also benefit from savings or insurance solutions in different countries. Such partnerships with banks allow a client to link their bank account to their Orange Money account. This service facilitates exchanges between people banked and those that are not. Ecobank Customers can also check the balance of their bank account and get mini-statements via the SMS service.

Mauritania



Issues of bank failures



It is a concern to citizens to question the scope of the sanctions imposed on certain local banks by withdrawing their authorization, without prejudice to criminal proceedings against their

leaders. The problem that lies at the confluence of the legal and financial world is not a matter for experts, teams of "compliance", risk managers, general inspections of banks etc.

This is quite the opposite of a holistic enough material to involve all citizens interested in financing the growth of their country and its economy, finance's objective is rather to transform the risk so that that investors can accept it and act collectively so that this risk won't pose significant

problems in our society. With the emergence of new technologies and the development of decision sciences and modeling, finance has grown into an industry that encompasses both, the payments industry, the market, the appropriations, while pressing industrial processes and process the same kind as those found in heavy industry.

Strike of workers of SNIM, the largest industrial company in the country



The workers of the largest industrial corporation, the National Industrial and Mining Company (SNIM, which produces the Mauritanian iron) observed a strike for 48 hours, paralyzing the exploitation of iron mines in northern Mauritania, the main lung of the economy of the country. The workers have stepped up their protest activities in recent days in the mining town of Zouerate (over 600 km

north of Nouakchott), for the reason they said, "to demand better conditions of life and work and to protest against the contempt displayed to them by the upper management of SNIM. " The workers who intend to continue their strike "to the satisfaction of their claims," require the application of an agreement signed last May with SNIM and provides a "significant" increase of wages. They also claim the payment of a performance bonus equal to 30% of their monthly salary, every time production reaches 1.2 million ton per month. They also require a premium proportional inciting profits last year by SNIM. "We started the strike after finding that SNIM will not negotiate with our delegates," said a worker representative. On Wednesday, the strikers had observed four hours of work stoppage to denounce the "irresponsible" attitude of SNIM they accused of having sanctioned "wrongly" three of their delegates. With its 5,000 employees, SNIM is the second largest employer in Mauritania after the state.

Mauritanian Fish exports in 2014



Mauritanian Fish Marketing Corporation (GSPC public) exported nearly 63,000 tonnes of fish products during the year 2014 for a total turnover of 274.38 million US dollars.

Despite the fall in the general level of exports in the Asian market - Japan-China 37 pc and 27 pc - both biological and unplanned shutdowns during the year, the turnover of the GSPC recorded an overall increase of 13.40 pc. The growth in revenues was driven

by surging exports of fishery products to the European Mauritanian market (22.17 pc) and especially Africa (44 pc). Following the economic crisis that affected the major importing countries (Japan and Europe), exports of the GSPC had declined in 2013. However, the fiscal year 2014 was marked by a sharp recovery of the tonnage of fishery exports. The General Manager of the Mauritanian company, whose headquarters are in Nouadhibou, 465 km north of Nouakchott, Abdoulaye Ba says this good result was embellished by a series of factors, 'even if the current Mauritanian fish is dependent on international market conditions, the good performance of 2014 primarily reflects the combined effort of all stakeholders. '

Thus, the GSPC has tried to improve its business strategy through the development of business relationships from many contacts made in different markets through a series of exploratory missions (Japan, Morocco, China and Spain) and participating in major international meetings and forums. Efforts have also been provided in the direction of transparency in governance and firmness during transactions during negotiations for pricing. Moreover, the government has supported the implementation of the outline of a coherent trade policy that safeguards the interests of the various stakeholders in the sector.

Niger



Meeting of the Parliamentary Network of the World Bank and the Head of Operations of the World Bank for Niger, Mali and Chad: Improving the lives of investment credit consumption rate of the population



The Parliamentary Network of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had last Friday in the morning, a working meeting with the Head of Operations of the World Bank Niger-Mali and Chad, Paul Noumba, visiting working in our country.

This session was held in the premises of the National Assembly in the presence of the Resident Representative of the World Bank in Niger Mr. Nestor Coffi.

After the meeting, the Chief of Operations of the World Bank for Niger, Mali and Chad indicated that his institution will continue to work with the Parliamentary Network for the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund parliament Niger to the realization of two important actions. This is according to Paul Noumba to support the efforts of the network by improving the investment credit consumption rate in Niger is a national priority which the international community, in particular the World Bank continues to mobilize funding. " We will accompany the network to accelerate and improve the rate of utilization of appropriations for the development projects that benefit can be achieved on

time and to strengthen collaboration at the national level to allow to fully play its role in this Mission " said the head of World Bank operations in Niger, Mali and Chad. Parliamentary Network Niger said Paul Noumba plays an important role when it is the best network for the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund for all Francophone networks that exist. "We hope that it can help other Francophone countries also develop such a network because the parliament plays an important role on the issue of accountability," he said.

WAEMU: An Inflation rate of zero in November 2014



The inflation rate, in year on year basis, was at 0% in November 2014, stable compared to the achievement of October 2014 in the Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa (UEMOA), according to Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO).

The Central Bank noted that the stability of the general level of consumer prices in WAEMU in recent months is explained by the compensation of lower prices of food and fuel in some countries by increasing water and electricity prices in other Member States. The prices of food products, including cereals, local and imported products such as rice, wheat and sugar have continued to fall as well. In addition, reports of the issuing institution show that the decline in global crude oil was reflected in the price at the pump in Benin, Côte

d'Ivoire and Mali.

However, it was recorded an increase in electricity and water prices in Mali and Burkina, decided in the context of new pricing policies in these countries. It also noted higher prices for Ivory Coast of building materials and services of housing in this country in connection with the increase of the minimum wage (guaranteed minimum wage) of 64%. As for the inflation rate underlying calculated by excluding the most volatile prices, it emerged, in year on year basis at 0.4% at the end of November 2014.

BMCE Bank reorganizes its African investment banking division



BMCE Bank, the parent company of the banking group Bank of Africa (BOA), has finalized the reorganization of its business banking division in Africa around an ad hoc platform based in Casablanca. The third Moroccan banking

group, in fact, combined the two entities Actibourse and BOA Asset Management, which are respectively the subsidiaries specialized in stock market intermediation and asset management group BOA within the BOA holding Capital. The operation is indicated by a capital increase of Capital fully dedicated to the group for 34 billion Moroccan dirham (1 dirham = 0.092 euro) in return for its contribution of 95% of the capital and Actibourse at 100% stake in BOA Asset Management. Othman

Benjelloun announced in October 2011 and confirmed in 2013 by the Bank of Africa Board, the holding BOA Capital has recently obtained the status of Casablanca Finance City (CFC). Chaired by Khalid Nasr, BOA Capital aims to contribute to the development and vitality of capital markets in sub-Saharan Africa, capitalizing on the extensive network of its parent company in the region as well as business expertise of BMCE Capital, the investment banking division of BMCE Bank.

Senegal



IMF is committed to supporting the reforms necessary for the effective implementation of the PSE (Plan Senegal Emergent)



The Managing Director of the IMF, Christine Lagarde who made an official visit to Senegal from 29 to 31 January 2014 to "strengthen the partnership between IMF and Senegal, a country that has built a strong economy, stability and solidarity within the second most dynamic region of the world. At the joint press conference with the President of the Republic, Mr

Macky Sall, Ms Lagarde praised the relevance of the economic vision of Senegal declined in the Plan for the emergence of Senegal. As a reminder, the Board of Directors of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) completed in December 2014 as the eighth review of economic performance of Senegal in the PSI (support instrument for economic policy). The economic and financial management of Senegal received the good report of the IMF. According to the institution, the macroeconomic situation of the country is "stable".

The results obtained under the program supported by the PSI are

"satisfactory." Thus, the institution noted that the targets for end-June 2014 were met, with the exception of a slight excess of the ceiling for non-concessional borrowing. The IMF nevertheless recalls that the authorities are addressing these shortcomings. For 2014, the IMF estimates growth rate of 4.5% (against 3.5% in 2013), or 0.4 percentage points below the previous estimates, mainly due to exogenous factors. Senegal has particularly suffered from a downturn in the tourism sector due to the outbreak of Ebola in some West African countries, combined with the delay in the start of the rainy season.

Commercial banks in Senegal: 60% of the assets held by four international banks



In a research study made by the Agency of Economic Studies and Previsions (DPPE), it is stated that four financial

actors, among the twenty that makes up the population of commercial banks in Senegal have an international stature. They are Attijariwafa Bank, Société Générale, Ecobank and BNP Paribas. These four banks control according to this study almost 60% of total assets.

Competition has, however, intensified over the recent period with the arrival of Pan-African banks according to the study. The agency has also made the observation that,

despite the near stability of the banking rate (6.9% in 2012), bank financing of the private sector grew strongly. According to them, it increased from 15% of GDP in 1995 to 33% of GDP in 2013. The study also indicates that the examination of the commercial bank portfolio structure shows a considerable increase in government securities in total receivables (14.3% in 2010 against 6.4% in 2005).

BGFI Bank of Gabon Expands to Dakar as Senegal Economy Rises



Gabonese lender BGFI Bank SA, which operates in 10 countries, plans to open in Senegal in June after winning a banking license in the West African nation. "Senegal authorities have a strategic plan to make the country an emerging nation, and we want to make our contribution to the development of its companies and basic infrastructure," BGFI Chief Executive Officer Henri-Claude Oyima said Tuesday by phone from Libreville, Gabon's capital. Oyima said his bank was particularly interested in

gaining corporate clients in the electricity, water and construction industries. BGFI's Senegalese branch will be in Dakar, the capital of the biggest economy in the eight-member West African Economic and Monetary Union after Ivory Coast. The countries in the union share a currency and mostly have French as an official language and the grouping excludes Nigeria and Ghana. BGFI's need for new markets has been underscored by the drop in crude oil prices, which account for more than two-thirds of government revenue in Gabon, where the bank has 40 percent of its operations. Oil slid almost 50 percent last year as the U.S. pumped at the fastest pace in more than three decades and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries resisted calls to cut supply. "In the years to come, falling oil prices will probably lead us to make some

adjustments," Oyima said.

Aside from Gabon, BGFI operates in the Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Benin, Sao Tome and Principe and France. BGFI also plans to expand in the insurance industry in two Central and West African countries in 2015, he said, without elaborating. The Gabonese lender acquired three insurance companies in Togo, Benin and Ivory Coast last year, he said. Loans to companies will rise 10 percent to 2.2 trillion CFA francs (\$3.8 billion) this year, Oyima said. BGFI is considering having its shares trade on the Libreville stock exchange by 2020, Oyima said. The bank may later explore a listing on the West African bourse based in Abidjan, the commercial capital of Ivory Coast, he said.

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