



## News: 7.12.2024

**By:**

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### **Guinea-Bissau and China Elevate Bilateral Relations to Strategic Partnership**

*Africa News* reports that Guinea-Bissau and China have agreed to elevate their bilateral relations to a strategic partnership during a meeting between President Umaro Sissoco Embalo and Chinese President Xi Jinping. The two leaders emphasized strengthening cooperation in education and youth development, with China continuing to offer scholarships and training opportunities to support Guinea-Bissau's national development. President Embalo highlighted the historical ties between the countries, including the significant contribution of a Chinese friend to Guinea-Bissau's national anthem. Additionally, the leaders signed cooperation documents in various fields, such as economic development and geology, underscoring their commitment to mutual support and collaboration.

### **Kenya's Debt Crisis Deepens Amid Rejected Finance Bill and Public Protests**

According to *Africa News*, Kenya's debt is expected to grow after deadly protests forced the rejection of a finance bill meant to raise revenue, leading President William Ruto to warn of significant consequences. Facing public dissatisfaction and calls to resign, Ruto plans to cut the \$2.7 billion budget deficit by half and borrow the rest while promising funding cuts in his own office and the offices of senior officials. Economists warn that further borrowing could harm Kenya's economy, which grew by 5.6% in 2023, and advocate for investment, debt restructuring, and job creation through low taxation and interest rates. The IMF, which suggested some of the controversial tax changes, remains a focal point of public dissatisfaction.

### **Kenyan President Dismisses Cabinet Amid Protests and Promises New Lean Government**

Kenyan President William Ruto dismissed nearly all his Cabinet ministers and the attorney general, reports *Africa News*, promising to form a lean and efficient government following weeks of protests over high taxes and poor governance. In a televised address, Ruto announced that ministries would be run by their permanent secretaries and that he would form a broad-based government after consultations. The decision comes after three weeks of unrest, during which more than 30 people died, and protesters stormed parliament in response to a controversial finance bill. Ruto cited the need to address debt, raise domestic resources, create jobs, and eliminate corruption as reasons for the overhaul.

### **Senegal Set to Become New Africa Powerhouse**

The West-African nation has been officially declared an oil-producing powerhouse, owing to its Sangomar offshore field. The Sangomar field, which officially began production this past month of June, is located south of Dakar in the Atlantic Ocean, and is estimated to hold over 500 million barrels of recoverable oil reserves. This new discovery has triggered a surge in the confidence and optimism of the nation. This not only presents a major opportunity for the Senegalese economy and populace, but also for the power of the nation in bilateral and international relations. Furthermore, this has led to a steel influx of international energy companies, highlighting the region's potential as a major oil-producing magnetic force. Senegal has now been

announced as an official member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). The production of oil by Senegal will be extremely transformative to its society, not only presenting a pivotal opportunity for the economic growth of the nation, but also meaningful bolstering development. Senegal's oil revenues are expected to amplify healthcare initiatives, education, government finances, infrastructure development projects, and much more. Additionally, the nation's oil industry will foster opportunities for employment, development, economic diversification, and overall growth in related sectors.

### **Western Governments Criticize South Sudan's Controversial Security Bill**

According to *Africa News*, the U.S. and other Western governments have criticized a controversial security bill in South Sudan that would allow detentions without warrants, arguing it would undermine political and civil freedoms ahead of the December 22 elections. The bill, passed by parliament on July 3, has raised concerns about arbitrary arrests and the potential collapse of peace talks. President Salva Kiir has 30 days to approve or veto the bill. Critics, including U.N. officials and Western diplomats, emphasize the need for open political participation and warn that the law would degrade civic space and human rights in the country.

### **Egypt and China to Enhance Agricultural Scientific Research Collaboration**

The *State Information Service* of Egypt reports that Agriculture Minister Alaa Farouk discussed boosting cooperation in agricultural scientific research with a delegation from China Agricultural University. Farouk emphasized the strong historical ties between Egypt and China and expressed interest in leveraging Chinese expertise. He highlighted Egypt's significant research centers and commitment to increasing agricultural production through scientific research. Additionally, New Valley Governor Mohamed el Zamalout offered land for research and investment projects, while the Chinese delegation showcased advancements in seed and fertilizer development, including a drought-resistant wheat variety, which Farouk directed to be tested in Egypt.

## **Southern Africa's Infrastructure Boost: Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Botswana Collaborate on Railway and Port Project**

*All Africa* reports that Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Botswana are collaborating on a major infrastructure project to upgrade the Beira-Zimbabwe-Botswana railway and develop a new deepwater mineral port in southern Mozambique. This initiative aims to enhance trade and economic growth, particularly in mining and transportation sectors, by facilitating the export of Botswana's extensive coal reserves through Zimbabwe to Mozambican ports. President Filipe Nyusi highlighted ongoing discussions to connect the railway networks further and emphasized the regional integration efforts between the three countries involved.

## **Guinea-Bissau's Deepening Dependence on China: Strategic Investments and Concerns**

According to *All Africa*, Guinea-Bissau's relationship with China has become crucial, with Chinese involvement spanning infrastructure development, economic aid, and resource exploitation. President Umaro Sissoco Embaló's recent visit to China aims to expand this partnership, focusing on new projects like a conference center and road renovations financed by China. Despite the benefits in education and infrastructure, concerns persist about transparency in agreements and potential economic dependencies. Critics warn of China's strategic interests in Guinea-Bissau's natural resources, such as fisheries and minerals, raising questions about sovereignty and sustainable development. Meanwhile, traditional partners like the EU struggle to match China's rapid and visible investments in the region.

## **Liberia Launches National Agriculture Development Plan to Drive Economic Growth**

Judoemue M. Kollie, writing for *All Africa*, reports that President Joseph Nyumah Boakai is set to launch Liberia's new National Agriculture Development Plan (NADP) in Monrovia on July 10, aimed at driving agricultural development throughout his administration. Agriculture Minister Dr. J. Alexander Nuetah highlighted the plan's goal of achieving food security and creating jobs by attracting investments from government, development partners, and the private sector. The NADP prioritizes support and development across various

agricultural value chains, including rice, cassava, maize, rubber, cocoa, coffee, oil palm, fisheries, and livestock. It seeks to empower smallholder farmers and promote sustainable farming practices through technological advancements, with an initial government investment of US\$418 million over six years.

### **Advancing Africa: Outcomes from the 7th AU STC on Finance, Monetary Affairs, & Economic Integration**

The Ministerial Session of the 7th African Union Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration began on July 6, 2024, in Tunis, Tunisia, under the theme of enhancing macroeconomic and sectoral policy coordination in Africa, reports *All Africa*. Led by Ambassador Albert M. Muchanga, discussions focused on advancing Agenda 2063 and achieving inclusive growth and sustainable development across the continent. Key objectives included finalizing the African Monetary Institute's statutes, launching an African Credit Rating Agency, advocating for African multilateral banks' preferred creditor status, and assessing readiness for an African Customs Union/Common Market. The meeting addressed the economic challenges exacerbated by COVID-19, the Russian-Ukrainian war, geopolitical tensions, and climate change, emphasizing coordinated policies to foster resilience and economic integration in Africa.

### **Central Bank of Nigeria Urges Banking Sector Recapitalization Amid Economic Reforms**

Writing for *All Africa*, Augustine Abu, states that the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Olayemi Cardoso, emphasized the necessity of recapitalizing banks to withstand economic reforms and policies under the current administration. Speaking at the launch of 'The Power of One Man', a book celebrating the 2004/2005 banking consolidation, Cardoso highlighted parallels between that era and today's efforts to strengthen banks amid economic challenges like unified FX rates and fuel subsidy removal. Former President Olusegun Obasanjo underscored the importance of cohesive government support, while Chukwuma Soludo, the architect of the consolidation, described the reform as transformative despite personal sacrifices. The event aimed to reflect on past successes and chart a resilient future for Nigeria's banking sector.

## **Egyptian President Sisi Reaffirms Support for Somalia's Security and Territorial Integrity**

*All Africa* reports that Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi reaffirmed Egypt's strong support for Somalia's security efforts and territorial integrity during a phone call with Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. President Sisi praised Somalia's initiatives aimed at stabilizing the country and improving living conditions. They discussed enhancing bilateral relations across economic, cultural, religious, and security sectors, emphasizing their shared commitment to ensuring security in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. The leaders underscored the importance of regional cooperation for stability and development in the Horn of Africa, highlighting the significance of multilateral frameworks in addressing regional challenges.

## **South Africa's Financial Regulator Proposes Stricter Risk Management Rules to Align with Global Standards**

Writing for *African Law and Business*, Dippy Singh reports that South Africa's Financial Sector Conduct Authority (FSCA) is proposing stricter risk management rules to align with international standards. In its three-year regulation plan (April 2024 to March 2027), the FSCA aims to enhance the integrity of the financial markets through the development of the Conduct of Financial Institutions (COFI) Bill, addressing emerging risks from AI, and implementing outcomes- and principles-based legislation. The FSCA acknowledged shortcomings highlighted by the World Bank and IMF, particularly in risk management for over-the-counter derivative providers (ODPs), and plans to strengthen these rules. Additionally, the FSCA is focusing on combating risks related to AI, fintech, crypto assets, sustainable finance, and cyber resilience, and addressing anti-ESG practices to align with sustainability goals.

## **Eni and Vitol vs. Ghana: Arbitration Tribunal Rules on Hydrocarbon Exploration Dispute**

*African Law and Business*' Robert Li reports that the arbitration between Eni and Vitol against Ghana and the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC) concluded with both sides achieving partial victories. The dispute, heard under UNCITRAL rules by the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce, revolved around a

petroleum agreement signed in 2006 and the subsequent directive to merge operations with a neighboring asset, which Eni and Vitol contested. The tribunal found Ghana's unitisation directives flawed and in breach of the agreement but rejected the claimants' damages request of USD 915.8 million, awarding only EUR 189,000 for SCC expenses. Ghana's Attorney-General hailed the outcome as a significant victory, emphasizing the dismissal of the monetary claims against the country.

### **Malawi Introduces Stricter Antitrust Regulations and Enforcement Powers for CFTC**

Writing for *African Law and Business*, Dippy Singh reports that Malawi has updated its antitrust regulations, strengthening the powers of the Competition and Fair Trading Commission (CFTC) under the new Competition and Fair Trading Act of 2024, which replaces the 1998 Act. The new law, effective from July 1, 2024, empowers the CFTC to impose significant fines and administrative orders for violations, including penalties up to 5% of annual turnover for individuals and 10% for companies. The Act also mandates the notification of mergers and acquisitions, expands consumer protection rules, and increases scrutiny on commissioners to ensure their independence. The changes address previous gaps and align Malawi's competition law with international best practices and current market dynamics.

### **Rwanda's Dr. Richard Mihigo Campaigns for WHO Africa Regional Director**

Hudson Kuteesa, of *The New Times*, reports that Dr. Richard Mihigo, Rwanda's candidate for the WHO Africa Regional Director, has begun his campaign by touring various African countries to gain support. On July 10, he, along with foreign affairs minister Olivier Nduhungirehe, visited Congo Brazzaville and met President Denis Sassou Nguesso. Elections for the position involve health ministers from African member states voting by secret ballot. Mihigo, a seasoned public health expert, aims to prioritize universal health coverage, strengthen primary health care systems, and address public health threats, communicable diseases, and maternal and child mortality across Africa.

### **ECOWAS Holds Pre-Validation Workshops for Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Highway Project**

From June 18 to 24, 2024, the ECOWAS Commission's Transport Directorate conducted pre-validation technical workshops in Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire. These workshops aimed to secure stakeholder support for the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Highway project's third phase, involving detailed design studies and technical specifications. This initiative follows the completion and validation of the first two phases in November 2022, delayed due to COVID-19. The next step involves a corridor-wide technical validation workshop to finalize design reports and tender documents for selecting investors and contractors. The project, funded by the African Development Bank, European Union, and ECOWAS, aims to build a 6-lane highway connecting Abidjan to Lagos.

### **Events - 07/12/2024**

["7th Annual SADC Industrialisation Week."](#) South African Development Community. *Harare, Zimbabwe*. 28 July – 2 August 2024.

["The Inaugural East African Community Regional Education Conference Commemorating the AU Year of Education."](#) East African Community. Arusha, Tanzania. 12-15 August 2024.

["44th Ordinary SADC Summit of Heads State and Government."](#) South African Development Community. *Harare, Zimbabwe*. 17 August 2024.

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