News: 12.06.2024

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12 December, 2024

McKinsey Africa Fined $122M for South Africa Bribery Scheme

Africa News reports that McKinsey & Company's African subsidiary will pay over $122 million to settle a U.S. Justice Department probe into a bribery scheme involving South African officials and state-controlled agencies. Between 2012 and 2016, the scheme helped McKinsey secure contracts, yielding $85 million in profits. Under a deferred prosecution agreement, McKinsey Africa avoids prosecution if compliance conditions are met. The company claims it has strengthened compliance measures and distanced itself from individuals involved in the misconduct.

Ramaphosa Emphasizes Global Cooperation Amid Trump's Return

Africa News reports that as Donald Trump prepares to begin his second term as U.S. president on January 20, South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa has reaffirmed the G20's commitment to global collaboration. Ramaphosa expressed concerns about Trump's "America First" policies, including threats of 100% tariffs on BRICS nations and moves to undermine the use of the U.S. dollar in global trade. Despite potential challenges, Ramaphosa emphasized the

G20's role in advancing global interests and invited Trump to a state visit and the G20 summit in South Africa in 2025. South Africa currently holds the G20 presidency, set to transfer to the U.S. in late 2025.

South Africa Takes Historic G20 Leadership

According to *Africa News*, South Africa is set to assume the G20 presidency, becoming the first African nation to lead the group. Johannesburg will guide the G20 until late 2025, focusing on inclusive growth, climate change, and global equity amidst trade wars and geopolitical tensions. Recent G20 declarations addressed issues like hunger, Gaza aid, and Ukraine but lacked concrete actions. Proposals included a global billionaire tax and reforms to expand the U.N. Security Council, highlighting ambitions for systemic change.

Ramaphosa Urges Action on Free Trade and Poverty Ahead of G20 Presidency

According to *All Africa*, President Cyril Ramaphosa has called on South African companies to leverage the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as South Africa prepares to assume the G20 presidency on December 1. Under the theme "Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability," South Africa plans to prioritize African and Global South development issues, focusing on fair trade, debt relief, and climate action while advocating for the Sustainable Development Goals. Ramaphosa also announced plans for a National Dialogue to address poverty, unemployment, and inequality, aiming to forge a new social compact aligned with the National Development Plan. Echoing Nelson Mandela, he emphasized collective action to eradicate poverty and build a just, equitable society.

Countering Contraband Trade to Protect Zimbabwe's Economy

All Africa reports that contraband trade, particularly counterfeit goods, poses a severe threat to Zimbabwe's economy by undermining local industries, reducing government revenue, and endangering public safety. Counterfeit products harm legitimate businesses, leading to layoffs and lost investments, while smuggled goods deprive the government of funds crucial for public services. Additionally, fake pharmaceuticals and unsafe counterfeit products endanger lives and consumer trust. Addressing this issue requires a multi-faceted strategy: strengthening border controls with advanced technology and

training, enhancing legal frameworks with stricter penalties, and raising public awareness about the risks of counterfeit goods. Supporting local industries through incentives and promoting "Buy Zimbabwe" campaigns can help reduce reliance on imports. International cooperation and robust anti-corruption measures are critical to curbing contraband trade. By taking these steps, Zimbabwe can safeguard its economy, ensure public safety, and promote sustainable growth.

Tinubu's Frequent Travels Amid Nigeria's Challenges Spark Debate

According to *All Africa*, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's extensive foreign travels, with 33 trips to 18 countries in 18 months, have drawn scrutiny as Nigeria faces pressing domestic challenges. While signing trade agreements like a $1.2 billion deal with Brazil for agricultural modernization, critics argue that the focus on international relations neglects urgent economic and social issues at home. Concerns include reliance on raw exports, underdevelopment, and insufficient planning to address poverty, unemployment, and education gaps. Calls for Tinubu to reduce foreign trips and prioritize governance rooted in national interests and constitutional principles have intensified, particularly in light of evolving global dynamics, such as BRICS alignment and potential U.S. policy shifts under President-elect Trump.

Angola Strengthens Strategic Partnership with U.S. Through Lobito Corridor Investment

According to *All Africa,* Angola's ambassador to the U.S., Agostinho Van-Dúnem, highlighted President Joe Biden's historic visit, culminating in a $600 million U.S. investment in the Lobito Corridor. The funds will boost infrastructure, agriculture, and agribusiness across Angola's key provinces, promoting job creation and food security while enhancing regional trade. Angola seeks to deepen its partnership with the U.S. in areas like renewable energy, education, and anti-corruption initiatives, focusing on economic diversification and a favorable business environment. Despite the U.S. presidential transition to Donald Trump, Angola remains optimistic about strengthening bilateral relations, emphasizing mutual interests like food security and infrastructure development.

Okonjo-Iweala's WTO Reappointment Celebrated as a Triumph for Africa and Women

According to *All Africa,* Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala's reappointment as Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) has been hailed by the African Diaspora Corporation (ADC) as a major victory for Africa, women, and global leadership. Her historic first term as the WTO's first African and female leader saw her navigate the organization through post-COVID economic recovery and geopolitical challenges. The ADC praised her exemplary leadership, dedication, and trailblazing efforts, which continue to inspire Africans worldwide and elevate Africa's global profile.

Equity Group and DEG Launch German Desk to Boost Africa-German Trade

All Africa reports that Equity Group Holdings Plc and Germany's DEG have launched the German Desk in Nairobi to strengthen Africa-German business relations and accelerate trade in East Africa. Designed for European SMEs and local partners, the desk offers trade facilitation, credit lines, and investment advisory, while enabling local firms to access German technology and equipment. The initiative supports Equity Group's Africa Recovery and Resilience Plan, fostering cross-border partnerships and socio-economic development. Germany, a key trading partner for Kenya, aims to deepen trade ties through this collaboration, with benefits extending across Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, South Sudan, and Ethiopia. The German Desk aligns with Germany's Africa Business Network and the EU-Kenya Economic Partnership Agreement, showcasing the potential of SMEs to drive regional prosperity.

Biden's Angola Visit Highlights U.S. Strategic Focus on Critical Minerals

All Africa reports that outgoing U.S. President Joe Biden's state visit to Angola underscores the nation's strategic pivot toward securing access to critical minerals essential for its economy. Despite political challenges, Biden announced the Lobito Corridor Development Project, a multibillion-dollar rail initiative linking Zambia, Congo, and Angola to the Atlantic, unlocking mineral-rich regions. This visit reflects the U.S.'s enduring reliance on global resources and highlights the need for shared interests in international partnerships. South

Africa and other nations are encouraged to adopt similar pragmatic approaches, learning from U.S. adaptability in pursuit of strategic benefits.

Experts Highlight Steps for Nigeria to Harness $3.4 Trillion AfCFTA Trade Opportunities

All Africa reports that at the MARAN Annual Maritime Lecture in Lagos, experts outlined strategies for Nigeria to maximize benefits from the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Key recommendations included improving information management, with Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) facilitating trade through clear Standard Operating Procedures and addressing barriers like alerts and logistics inefficiencies. Transportation, especially maritime infrastructure, was identified as vital for seamless regional trade, alongside removing duties on vessel acquisition to support shipping. Speakers emphasized that Nigeria must dismantle structural barriers, invest in trade infrastructure, and leverage its position as an oil producer to become a logistics hub. Encouraging innovation, improving policy, and fostering economic ties are seen as crucial to increasing intra-African trade from 10% to 20% and unlocking AfCFTA's estimated $3.4 trillion potential.

AfDB Approves $4M Guarantee for Access Bank Sierra Leone to Boost SME Trade

According to *All Africa*, the African Development Bank (AfDB) has approved a $4 million trade finance guarantee for Access Bank Sierra Leone Limited (ABSL) to support SMEs, local firms, and women-led businesses in Sierra Leone. The AAA-rated guarantee will cover non-payment risks for ABSL's trade transactions, enabling the importation of essential goods like rice, cereals, and cooking oil, while supporting $36 million in trade over three years. This facility aims to close financing gaps, empower SMEs in regional and global trade, and promote intra-African trade aligned with AfCFTA goals. ABSL plans to use the guarantee to grow its trade finance operations, particularly in agribusiness and intermediate goods trading. The initiative leverages the AfDB's AAA rating to mitigate risks and enhance trade finance access for African banks.

Biden's Angola Visit Highlights Strategic Lobito Corridor and Renewed US-Angola Ties

According to *All Africa*, U.S. President Joe Biden's historic visit to Angola emphasized the strategic importance of the Lobito Corridor in connecting southern Africa to international markets. At the Multilateral Summit in Benguela, Biden announced a $600 million investment to expand agricultural infrastructure, high-speed networks, and reforms to the Benguela Railway. He praised the corridor's transformation, which reduced copper transport times from the DRC to the U.S. from 45 days to less than 45 hours. The visit also marked a turning point in US-Angola relations, shedding Cold War dynamics and fostering cooperation on clean energy, rail connectivity, and historical reconciliation, symbolized by Biden's visit to Angola's Museum of Slavery. Angola's President João Lourenço highlighted the country's commitment to peace, stability, and international partnerships, with the Lobito Corridor positioned as a critical infrastructure for global trade.

Unlocking Africa's Trade Potential Through Digitalization

All Africa reports that the African Development Forum in Kigali emphasized the transformative potential of digital infrastructure and emerging technologies in boosting Africa's trade under the AfCFTA framework. Experts highlighted fragmented regulations, infrastructure gaps, and trust deficits as key barriers to digital trade. Aligning policies under the AfCFTA Digital Trade Protocol and building secure, interoperable systems can enhance cross-border trade and empower marginalized groups, including women entrepreneurs and smallholders. Speakers stressed the need for investments in data centers, internet connectivity, and digital payment systems, alongside fostering consumer trust and digital literacy. Collaborative financing models blending public and private sector efforts were identified as critical for Africa's digital transformation. Empowering women through decentralized technologies and fostering innovation can create inclusive trade opportunities and drive sustainable economic growth.

Events – 12/06/2024

"**Africa Business Forum 2025**" ECA. *Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe*. 18-19 December 2024.

"**ICCA-KIAC Conference**." African Arbitration Association. *Kigali, Rwanda*. 5-6 January 2025.

View online: News: 12.06.2024

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