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South Africa's Unemployment Rate Hits 33.5% Amid Economic Struggles

According to *Africa News,* South Africa's unemployment rate rose to 33.5% in Q2 2024, up from 32.9% in Q1, reflecting ongoing struggles with job creation exacerbated by a prolonged recession and the Covid-19 pandemic. The number of unemployed people increased to 8.4 million, while employed individuals fell by 92,000 to 16.7 million, with notable job losses in trade, agriculture, and construction. The data, released post-May's elections, underscores the economic challenges faced by the new coalition government, which prioritized economic recovery. The Western Cape, Mpumalanga, and KwaZulu-Natal provinces experienced the largest employment declines.

Sudan's Humanitarian Crisis Deepens Amidst Ongoing Conflict and Famine

Africa News reports that the conflict in Sudan, which erupted in April last year between the military and the Rapid Support Forces, has displaced over 10.7 million people and caused a severe humanitarian crisis, with over 2 million

fleeing to neighboring countries. The violence has led to widespread famine, with over 25 million people facing acute hunger and inflation soaring to 159%. Peace talks, scheduled for later this week in Switzerland, face uncertainty as Sudan's military has not confirmed its participation, leaving many citizens, like Hanan Ahmed, desperate for reform and relief.

Ethiopia Faces Economic Turmoil as Inflation Soars and Currency Fluctuates

According to *Africa News*, following the implementation of a flexible exchange rate policy, Ethiopia's birr has plummeted 60% against the dollar, leading to rampant inflation and instability in Addis Ababa. Prices at local businesses, like the Samra Hotel, are changing hourly, while supermarkets hoard goods to avoid penalties, and authorities attempt to curb price hikes. The IMF's recent approval of a $3.4 billion credit facility has not yet alleviated the immediate economic pressures, with ongoing challenges for those on fixed incomes and recent price increases for essential services, such as passport fees.

South Sudan's Economy in Crisis: Oil Pipeline Rupture and Unpaid Workers Fuel Unrest

Africa News reports that South Sudan's economy is in severe distress following the rupture of a key oil pipeline and the ongoing conflict in Sudan, which has drastically reduced oil revenues. The government has struggled to pay its employees, leading to widespread protests in the capital, Juba, and forcing many, including soldiers and civil servants, to seek alternative sources of income. Inflation has surged to 35%, exacerbating the economic hardships, while the government grapples with corruption and mismanagement amid efforts to diversify revenue and secure international support.

Ethiopia and Rwanda Boost Their Aviation Hubs as Kenya Faces Expansion Hurdles

Gerald Andae writing for *All Africa,* reports that Ethiopia and Rwanda are advancing their positions as key aviation centers in East Africa through major investments in airport infrastructure. Ethiopia is set to build Africa’s largest airport by 2029 to relieve congestion at Bole International Airport, while Rwanda's Bugesera Airport, backed by Qatar Airways, will open in 2027 with an

eight million passenger capacity. In contrast, Kenya's efforts to expand Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) face significant delays and public backlash, complicating its goal to remain the region's leading aviation hub.

Uganda's Struggle with Transitioning to Cleaner Fuels Amidst Rising Charcoal Costs

In Uganda, the government is pushing for a shift from charcoal and firewood to cleaner fuels, but the transition faces significant obstacles due to high costs and cultural resistance, reports All Africa. The recent ban on charcoal production in northern Uganda has led to skyrocketing fuel prices, affecting small businesses and daily life. Despite incentives like tax waivers on cooking gas and lower electricity rates, many Ugandans find the alternatives either too expensive or incompatible with traditional cooking practices. As a result, people like Gertrude Arineitwe and Ian Migadde are struggling with increased costs and are hesitant to adopt new methods until they become more affordable and familiar.

Tanzania and Cuba Reinforce Bilateral Ties Focused on Education, Health, and Tourism

Ally Mayala, writing for *All Africa,* reports that the Tanzanian Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa has reaffirmed Tanzania's commitment to enhancing its partnership with Cuba during a recent visit to Havana. Emphasizing ongoing collaborations, Majaliwa highlighted the benefits of Cuban expertise in Tanzania's education and health sectors, including a successful medical training program and the impactful presence of Cuban doctors in Tanzanian hospitals. The visit also focused on learning from Cuba's achievements in tourism and promoting Kiswahili in Latin America, with preparations underway for a Kiswahili International Symposium in Havana.

Ethiopia Launches CEHA National Chapter to Boost Horticulture Sector

Lynet Igadwah, writing for *All Africa,* reports that Ethiopia has launched the COMESA-EAC Horticulture Accelerator (CEHA) National Chapter in Addis Ababa, marking a significant step in advancing the horticulture sector. The initiative, part of a regional program driven by ACTESA-COMESA, aims to foster sustainable growth in horticulture, focusing on key crops like potatoes,

avocados, and onions. The program will support MSMEs through grants and technical assistance, with the goal of creating jobs, boosting regional trade, and reducing postharvest losses. Development partners, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and AGRA, have expressed strong support, emphasizing the potential for economic growth and innovation in Ethiopia's horticulture sector.

ExxonMobil to Resume Major Gas Project in Mozambique by 2026

According to *All Africa,* ExxonMobil has announced that it will resume its major natural gas liquefaction project in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, by the end of 2026. The project, led by ExxonMobil in partnership with ENI and CNPC, has faced delays due to violence in the region. The initiative will involve constructing a large onshore LNG plant and floating export platforms, with a production capacity of 18 to 19 million tonnes of LNG per year. ExxonMobil emphasizes the project's commitment to low greenhouse gas emissions and its potential to drive significant economic development in the region. The company is currently in the engineering and design phase, awaiting final approvals.

Kenya Faces Revenue Loss as Refined Palm Oil Disguised as Crude Evades Taxes

All Africa reports that Kenya has incurred an estimated $413 million revenue loss over the past three years due to the misclassification of imported refined palm oil as crude palm oil at the Mombasa Port. The refined oil, primarily sourced from Malaysia and Indonesia, was declared as crude palm oil to evade higher taxes. Refined palm oil is subject to a 35% import duty, while semi-refined oil attracts a lower duty of 10%. The misdeclaration scheme involved blending 60% crude palm oil with 40% refined palm oil. In 2022 alone, Kenya lost approximately $123 million from 233,000 metric tonnes, with losses rising to about $260 million in 2023 from 387,868 metric tonnes. The practice has continued into 2024, with about $92 million lost so far. This scheme undermines local processing industries and reduces government revenue, as refiners and importers benefit from reduced processing costs while avoiding substantial duties.

Gambia and Senegal Agree on E-Tracking System and Trade Terms

According to All Africa, Gambia and Senegal have reached a five-hour agreement to continue using the e-tracking system for Senegalese trucks, with new terms for entry and transit fees. Trucks will avoid exit fees and will pay the existing charge of $105 for security stops. The Gambia will provide a list of duty-exempt goods, and vehicle pass validity has been extended. Additionally, ferry crossing fees have been adjusted, and a previous charge on goods from Senegal has been removed. Both countries aim to improve trade efficiency and reduce costs through these measures.

Appeal Clouds Future of Kenya's Finance Act 2023

Andrew Mizner, writing for *African Law and Business*, reports that despite a court ruling declaring Kenya's Finance Act 2023 unconstitutional, the Act's fate remains uncertain as an appeal has been filed. The National Treasury is seeking a stay on the ruling, which, if granted, would allow the Act to remain in effect until the Supreme Court's review. The Court of Appeal's decision found that the Act was flawed due to procedural issues and late amendments, but taxes collected under the Act may not be refunded pending the appeal.

Major Stakeholders Shift in Rwanda's Gigawatt Solar Plant

Writing for *African Law and Business*, Dippy Singh reports that the Gigawatt Global Rwanda solar plant, a pioneering project in East Africa, has seen a major change in its ownership as US-based Fortis Green Renewables and AXIAN Energy subsidiary NEA Rwanda replace former Scandinavian investors Norfund and Scatec ASA. Fortis and NEA Rwanda have acquired 51% and 49% stakes respectively, in the 8.5MW plant, which serves nearly 140,000 people and reflects significant progress in Rwanda's electrification. The shift in stakeholders, formalized in July 2024, signals a continued commitment to expanding renewable energy solutions in the region.

Lotus Resources Secures Deal to Revive Kayelekera Uranium Mine in Malawi

Writing for *African Law and Business,* Robert Li reports that Lotus Resources has signed a mine-development agreement with the Malawian government to restart production at the suspended Kayelekera uranium mine. The deal, finalized on July 31, ensures a decade of stability in fiscal terms with fixed tax

and royalty rates, aimed at boosting investor confidence. The Kayelekera facility, one of the world's largest uranium mines, has been inactive since 2014 but is poised for revival amid a surge in uranium prices.

Kenya Appoints Dorcas Oduor as First Female Attorney General Natasha

Doris, writing for *African Law and Business*, reports that Kenya has appointed Dorcas Agik Oduor as its first female attorney general, following her approval by Parliament on August 14. Oduor, with over 30 years of legal experience, was nominated by President William Ruto after a cabinet reshuffle triggered by widespread protests over the controversial Finance Act. The previous attorney general, Justin Muturi, was dismissed amid the turmoil, which included riots and legal challenges to the Finance Act's constitutionality.

Critique of Jason K. Stearns' Analysis on the Congo Conflict

Samantha Teta, writing for The New Times, reports that Jason K. Stearns, in his article "The Forgotten War in Congo," criticizes the international community for neglecting the conflict in Eastern Congo but arguably exacerbates the issue by downplaying the threat posed by the FDLR, a group with a genocidal past. Stearns' dismissal of the FDLR and focus on blaming Rwanda for the conflict overlooks the Congolese government's role in perpetuating instability through its alliances with armed groups and its failure to address internal issues. His arguments also fail to consider the broader context of regional security dynamics and the responsibility of the Congolese authorities in the ongoing violence.

Rwanda and Eswatini Forge Stronger Ties with New Agreements

The *New Times'* Alice Kagina reports that on August 13, Rwanda and the Kingdom of Eswatini signed four key agreements focused on defense, police cooperation, correctional services, and visa exemptions for diplomatic and service passports. The Memoranda of Understanding, signed by President Paul Kagame and King Mswati III, aim to bolster bilateral relations and enhance cooperation across various sectors. King Mswati III, who was in Rwanda for official visits and the presidential inauguration, praised Rwanda's development achievements and expressed a desire to deepen collaboration in areas such as

agriculture, technology, and tourism.

Ethiopia Opens Doors to Independent Foreign Exchange Bureaus

The New Times reports that on August 8, the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) announced it is accepting applications for independent foreign exchange (FX) bureaus, following a new directive effective July 29. These bureaus will be authorized to buy and sell foreign currency at freely negotiated rates. The initiative aims to enhance Ethiopia's financial sector by allowing entities owned by Ethiopian nationals, non-resident Ethiopians, or foreign citizens of Ethiopian origin to operate independently, with specific capital and operational requirements outlined by the NBE.

Events – 08/16/2024

"**9th Session of the Technical Committee on PVP (TCPVP)**." ARIPO. *Virtual*. 26-27 August 2024.

"**Technical Training on Trademarks for Examiners and Engagements with IP Agents of ARIPO Member States**." ARIPO. *Harare, Zimbabwe.* 3-5 September 2024.

"**79th UN General Assembly**." UNGA Guide. *New York, USA & Virtual.* 10-30 September 2024.

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