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ECONOMY

AGRITERRA LOOKING FOR NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The Guernsey registered company Agriterra on Thursday announced that it is looking to expand its operations in Mozambique to meet the growing demand for beef.

According to the company, “with strong demand for beef and an increasing herd carrying capacity, the Group is looking at expansion opportunities in northern and central Mozambique, to take advantage of the resource and extractive industries growth, as well as increasing demand from the local population”.

It pointed out that Mozambique is expected to continue to be “one of the fastest growing economies in sub Saharan Africa, significantly above the average world rates”.

The company has been focussing on its beef operations in the central province of Manica. It has increased irrigation on its 2,350 hectare farm at Mavonde and the 2,500 hectare farm at Inhazonia. This will allow it to increase its herd to 13,800 animals.

The Company's breeding herd now stands at 4,800 with another 1,300 cattle being fattened at the ranches.

Agriterra currently has two breeding ranches (at Mavonde and Dombe) and a grass fattening ranch (at Inhazonia). It is in the process of assessing the possibility of increasing the Inhazonia ranch by 7,000 hectares.

The company provides 600 animals per month to its butcheries in Chimoio, Beira, Tete and Manica. Its retail outlet in the city of Beira is generating revenues in excess of 70,000 US dollars every month. [Read more...](#)

WAGE INCREASE DOES NOT MEET NEEDS - UNIONS

Mozambique's largest trade union federation, the OTM (Organisation of Mozambican Workers), warned on Thursday that the increases in the statutory minimum wages approved by the government earlier in the week do not meet workers' needs.

The wage increases varied from 3.15 to just over 20 per cent, depending on area of activity. The largest percentage increase went to agricultural workers – even so their new minimum wage of 2,857 meticaais (about 93 US dollars) a month remains the lowest in the country.

The unions' concern about the inadequacy of the minimum wage was expressed in Maputo by the OTM executive secretary for Maputo city and province, Ana Timana, during the commemorations of Mayday, International Workers' Day. The OTM held its celebrations under the slogan “we demand the exercise of trade union rights in the public administration”.

Although the right to join unions has been in the Mozambican constitution since 1990, there has never been any legal framework for union activity among public servants. [Read more...](#)

ITALIAN BUSINESS DELEGATION TO VISIT MOZAMBIQUE

An Italian business delegation is to visit Mozambique from 19 to 21 May to explore investment opportunities. The delegation will be composed of two hundred businessmen interested in the agro-industry, infrastructure and energy sectors.

On the Italian side, the trip is being organised by the Confederation of Industries, Association of Foreign Trade, Banking Association, Chamber of Commerce, Business Network and the Alliance of Cooperatives. It is being promoted by the Italian Ministry of Economic Development in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In Mozambique, the trip is being supported by the Confederation of Business Associations (CTA) and the government. The agenda will include meetings with relevant institutions and local companies.

Mozambique's ambassador in Italy, Carla Mucavi, stressed the strategic importance of the relationship between Maputo and Rome. She noted that a meeting was organised by the Embassy in Turin in April entitled "Business and cooperation - opportunities for development in Africa: the case of Mozambique". [Read more...](#)

ZAMBEZIA AGRICULTURAL SECTOR GROWS BY OVER 15 PER CENT

The agricultural sector in the central province of Zambezia has registered an average annual growth of 15.5 per cent over the last eight years. Production has increased from 1.8 million tonnes in 2005 to 5.5 million tonnes in 2013.

A source in the provincial government told AIM that this growth was influenced by the construction of the Thewe II irrigation scheme in Mopeia district which has the capacity to irrigate 227 hectares, and the introduction of new agricultural implements. In addition, five silos have been built in the districts of Alto Molocue and Gurue with the capacity to store five thousand tonnes of grain.

During the period seven district capitals were linked to the electricity grid. This means that all the 17 district capitals (including the provincial capital Quelimane) now have access to electricity. The source added that "solar panels now provide electricity to 61 schools and 68 health units".

Other positive developments include the construction of four petrol stations and the expansion of the mobile phone network which now covers all the district capitals, 28 administrative posts and 69 localities. The road between Mocuba and Alto Benfica has been repaired over an 86 kilometre stretch and bridges have been built over the Zambezi and Lugela rivers. [Read more...](#)

SYRAH RESOURCES SIGNS MOU WITH ASMET

The Australian based mining company Syrah Resources has announced that it has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with British company Asmet for an offtake agreement to supply between 100,000 and 150,000 tonnes of graphite per year from its Balama graphite and vanadium project in the northern Mozambican province of Cabo Delgado.

This is in addition to the MOU that Syrah has signed with the China Aluminum International Engineering Corporation (Chalieco) covering between 80,000 and 100,000 tonnes of graphite per annum.

Syrah will now provide Asmet with between two and three tonnes of sample graphite. If the sample meets expectations, a formal offtake agreement will be adopted whereby Asmet will buy up to 150,000 tonnes per year at a price of a thousand US dollars a tonne over a five year period.

Asmet intends to use the Balama graphite in foundry applications and high quality steel production. According to Syrah, “Balama graphite is considered ideal for use as a recarburiser as it contains low harmful impurities”.

Syrah states that high quality recarburiser sells for between 1,200 and 1,500 dollars a tonne. It therefore believes that it is highly competitive at a price of 1,000 dollars. [Read more...](#)

COOPERATION

EUROPEAN UNION SUPPORTS COMMUNITY RADIOS

The Mozambican Forum of Community Radios (FORCOM) and the European Union signed a cooperation agreement in Maputo on Saturday, under which FORCOM will receive about 350,000 US dollars, for a two year project which, according to a joint press release, is intended “to raise political awareness and expand the spaces for dialogue and the provision of information to citizens in the current electoral and democratic processes”.

The agreement was signed by the European Commission delegate in Mozambique, Paul Malin, and the executive director of FORCOM, Benilde Nhalivilo.

Speaking at the ceremony, Nhalivilo said that the project seeks to strengthen awareness so that citizens can make free and conscious choices in elections. Through the community radios, she added, citizens would have a voice in democratic processes.

With this project, she said, FORCOM would certainly make a contribution to the presidential, parliamentary and provincial elections scheduled for 15 October.

She urged the government to respect the freedom of the press and of expression of the community radios, and to ensure that the process of migration from analogue to digital systems does not limit citizens’ right to information. [Read more...](#)

LAW AND ORDER

PENAL CODE: AMENDMENTS TO AGE OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Legal and Constitutional Affairs Commission of the Mozambican parliament, the Assembly of the Republic, has, in its latest redraft of the country’s Penal Code raised the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 16.

The Penal Code was to have been debated on the floor of the Assembly on Wednesday, and human rights campaigners were dismayed to find that the draft of the code circulated, and dated 23 April, still maintained the age of criminal responsibility as 10. This was inherited from the Portuguese Penal Code of 1886, and is flagrant violation not only of Mozambican family law, but even of later colonial legislation (such as a decree of 1962 on the supervision of minors).

But at the last moment, the Legal Affairs Commission produced an addendum, dated 30 April, specifically to take account of protests not only from civil society, but also from the Attorney-General’s Office and the Ministry of the Interior, none of whom thought that ten year olds should ever be classified as criminals.

Not only has the age of criminal responsibility in the draft code been raised to 16, so has the definition of a minor when it comes to cases of rape. The previous draft said that any sex act with a minor, with or without consent, will be punished with between two and eight years imprisonment – but only if the minor is aged 12 or under. [Read more...](#)

SOCIAL

FIRST LADY LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN AGAINST CERVICAL CANCER

Mozambique's First Lady, Maria da Luz Guebuza, launched on Thursday in the Korean capital of Seoul, a global campaign seeking the resources necessary to eliminate cervical, breast and prostate cancer throughout the world.

With this initiative, launched during the Annual Conference of the Global Academic Programmes, it is intended to involve all currents of society in the efforts to eradicate these cancers through the promotion of universal access to prevention, screening and treatment.

A similar campaign was launched by Maria Guebuza in New York, in 2013, at the United Nations General Assembly, in her capacity of chairperson of the Forum of African First Ladies Against Breast and Cervical Cancer, as part of the challenge to reduce all forms of cancer in Africa.

Speaking at the Seoul ceremony, Guebuza said the act was a renewal of the undertaking given in this global campaign to eliminate cancer. It was urgent, she added, to continue advocacy so that no woman, child or man dies of cancer because of lack of access to information, prevention or treatment.

"We want to see fewer women and men suffering from cancer", she stressed. She hoped that, with the involvement of all of society in this struggle, "in the coming years, we shall avoid millions of deaths through the prevention, screening and treatment of all types of cancer". [Read more...](#)

FOOD FORTIFICATION PROGRAMME EXPANDED

The Mozambican government is expanding the national food fortification programme in line with its commitment to reducing malnutrition.

On Friday, the Ministry of Industry and Trade delivered equipment to two food processing factories in the central city of Beira.

Vitamin A will be added to vegetable oil, and the food processing company MEREK will fortify food with iron, zinc, folic acid and B-complex vitamins.

Speaking during an event to mark the handover of equipment, the Minister of Industry and Trade, Armando Inroga, said that through the national food fortification programme "we will have lower rates of anaemia in pregnant women and healthier children".

He added that the second phase of the programme will be the implementation of a regulation to forbid the consumption of non-fortified products. The government is therefore first creating the conditions for the food industry to be able to fortify their products.

The programme was launched in September 2013 in Maputo with the handover of fortification equipment to the country's largest food processing companies, the Companhia Industrial de Matola (CIM) and MEREK. [Read more...](#)

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