HOLLANDE’S LAST AFRICA-FRANCE SUMMIT

The 27th Africa-France Summit was held on 13-14 January 2017 in Bamako. The summit’s two main themes were: “Peace and Security” and “Emergence, Economy and Development.” François Hollande’s choice to hold the summit in Mali allowed recalling some of his greatest foreign policy achievements. Indeed, it is in Mali that President Hollande launched Operation Serval on 11 January 2013 to counter the jihadist insurgency in the northern part of the country. By organising the summit in Bamako, it was a way of showing that Operation Serval was a success, even though security situation in the area remains fragile and there was a terrorist attack in the capital a little over a year ago; the attack on the Radisson Blu hotel killed about 20 people. In this context, the visit of some 60 official delegations, including heads of state and business leaders, could be considered reckless. But by returning to Mali, François Hollande took the opportunity to present the results of his Africa policy a few months before the end of his five-year term. This record is marked by military interventions, particularly in Mali and the Central African Republic, and a reorientation of French diplomacy on the continent, which has sought to change the practices associated with the so-called “Francafrique” policy, in favour of more balanced economic and security partnerships. In terms of the economy and development, French financing is increasing: France spends more than EUR 4 billion per year, and foresees a total of EUR 23 billion in financing for the 2014-18 period. EUR 2 billion per year are scheduled to help develop renewable energy in Africa from 2016 to 2020; France also plans to create a Franco-African investment fund for SMEs with EUR 76 million. Other projects will support vocational trainings for young people, mobilisation of the diaspora and digital development. “Beyond Francophone Africa, France aims to expand its collaboration with the whole African continent”, President Hollande declared. However, even though France is a key actor in the promotion of peace and stability in the region, it has had difficulty establishing itself in the anglophone markets of countries like Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa. The political choice to organise the summit in Bamako undoubtedly did not help increase the visibility of French companies in anglophone countries.

- Watch the opening statement of François Hollande (French): http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x58i423_discours-d-inauguration-du-sommet-afrique-france_news#
- Read the press kit: http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/12_01_16_-_dossier_de_presse_-_deplacement_du_president_de_la_republique_au_mali_cle07369c.pdf
- Read the article: https://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/hollandes-swansong-in-africa?utm_source=BenchmarkEmail&utm_campaign=ISS+Weekly&utm_medium=email
UNOWAS BRIEFING ON **WEST AFRICA’S POLITICAL CHALLENGES**

On 13 January 2017 in New York, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), briefed the UN Security Council on West Africa’s status. Even though Ibn Chambas welcomes the region’s progress on democracy, where most of the recent elections have taken place without irregularities, he expressed concern about the political crisis in The Gambia. In that country, the outgoing President Yahya Jammeh rejected the results of the December presidential election after having initially accepting his defeat. In this regard, Ibn Chambas welcomed the ECOWAS’s attempts to mediate and solve the country’s crisis. The special representative then presented the state of affairs of several countries in the region, noting in particular the humanitarian crisis in northern Nigeria, and he called for increased support for emergency programmes. He also reminded them about UNOWAS’s determination to implement at the regional level the Resolution on Sustaining Peace, which was adopted in 2016 by the UN General Assembly and the Security Council.


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**THE FIRST AFRICA RESILIENCE FORUM**

On 10 and 11 January 2017 in Abidjan, the African Development Bank (AfDB) hosted the first edition of the Africa Resilience Forum. The event was organised in partnership with several institutions including the African Union, UNDP, the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Bank, the G7 + Secretariat and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and was attended by more than 150 participants. This first forum focused on “Operationalising the High 5 for a Resilient Africa,” with reference to the five priorities defined by AfDB President Akinwumi Adesina. In his inaugural speech, he stressed the need to understand the stakes of and the factors contributing to fragility, especially at a time when the continent is undergoing profound socio-economic, demographic, environmental and political changes. Institutional strengthening appears to be a primary tool of resilience, and its promotion requires a co-ordinated approach from the various partners and it requires actions at the national and regional levels, which the forum intends to help put in place. For its part, the AfDB will focus on several essential domains in order for countries to emerge from the cycle of fragility - namely energy, agriculture, private sector development, regional integration, quality of life, especially for young people.

**SENEGAL: CHEAPER ELECTRICITY PRICES**

In his New Year’s Eve address to the nation, Senegalese President Macky Sall announced a 10% drop in the price of electricity for 2017. This measure will allow Senegalese consumers to save FCFA 30 billion, and it was made possible by an increase in the country’s energy-producing capability following the recent opening of solar power plants and by the restructuring of the national electricity company, which, since 2014, has become profitable. Senegal is showing a strong performance in this sector and the average annual time of power outages has decreased from 912 hours in 2011 to 73 hours in 2016. The president assured the people that Senegal will keep working to become energy independent, and it constructing six other solar and wind power plants that will come online by 2018. The exploitation of recently discovered oil and gas deposits in the country should also contribute to this objective.

► Read the article (French): http://www.slateafrique.com/709661/senegal-baisse-de-10-du-prix-de-lelectricite-en-2017

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**UNITED STATES: IT SUPPORT FOR ECOWAS EARLY WARNING SYSTEM**

At a ceremony held on 11 January 2017 in Abuja, the Government of the United States presented the ECOWAS Commission with a container of Information and Communication Technology equipment. This donation is intended to strengthen the regional organisation’s early warning systems. Halima Ahmed, the ECOWAS Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security warmly thanked the United States for contributing these materials, which should make it possible to improve the functioning and co-ordination of member states’ national co-ordination centres for early warning and response systems, as well as the collection of data within the region. The United States government was represented by Derell Kennedo who spoke about his government’s interest in promoting peace and security in West Africa.

► Read the press release: http://www.ecowas.int/us-boosts-ecowas-early-warning-mechanism-with-it-equipment/

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**OPINION: AFRICA AND FRANCE NEED TO UPDATE THEIR CO-OPERATION MODEL**

Séga Diarrah, president of the “Bi-Ton” Collective, which brings together some 60 associations to promote democracy and employment in Mali, recognises that the 27th Africa-France Summit, which was held in Bamako on 13-14 January 2017, was a success for Mali. The country was able to demonstrate that it could overcome its security problems, and the meeting provided an opportunity for the private sector in Mali to forge partnerships. Relations between France and Africa are nevertheless questionable. According to Diarrah, France continues to benefit from Africa, especially through its large companies that are active on the continent, without addressing Africans’ real concerns about co-operation. France remains focused on the macro-economic and security dimension of African countries, whereas the countries would rather strengthen the practical and symbolic links when it comes to immigration, training and cultural co-operation, for example. This divergence of opinion shows that the relationship between Africa and France should be overhauled so that Africans can take ownership of the objectives and of the pace of co-operation with its more privileged partner.

► Read the interview (French): http://www.sahelien.com/viewer?id=587a502987ee7cc57000247
This report provides an understanding of West Africa’s potential for participation in global value chains. It identifies a number of high-potential sectors for which the region has sufficient production capacity. They are also sectors that could rapidly lead countries to upgrade to more value-added activities that are higher on the value chain, and could maximise the benefits of industrialisation, employment and development.

The paper examines the phenomenon of “environmental crime” in West Africa. It draws up an inventory of the main trafficking activities taking place in the region and analyses the specific challenges related to logging and illegal fishing. It also presents the various mechanisms that the region has in order to fight against environmental crimes and abuses.

On 10 January 2017, President Alassane Ouattara of Côte d’Ivoire appointed Daniel Kablan Duncan as his vice-president. The former Prime Minister became the first political leader to occupy the post, which was created by the new constitution in 2016. Born in 1943 in Ouellé, a town in east-central Côte d’Ivoire, Daniel Kablan Duncan has been a prominent figure in Ivorian politics since 1990. A former preparatory class student at the Lycée Montaigne in Bordeaux, he also studied commerce at the École des Hautes études commerciales in the north of Lille and the École supérieure de commerce in Bordeaux, and he holds a degree in business engineering from the Commercial Institute of Nancy. Upon his return to Côte d’Ivoire, he began a career in 1970 as a high-ranking civil servant in the Ministry of Economy and Finance and then worked at the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO) in 1974, after a short period with the IMF. In 1990, under the presidency of Félix Houphouët-Boigny, he left the BCEAO and entered the Ivorian government for the first time as Minister of Finance and then worked at the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO) in 1974, after a short period with the IMF. In 1990, under the presidency of Félix Houphouët-Boigny, he left the BCEAO and entered the Ivorian government for the first time as Minister of Finance and then, in the same year, he was appointed as Deputy Minister in charge of the economy and finance, reporting to Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara. At the same time, he became a member the politburo of the Democratic Party of Côte d’Ivoire (PDCI) and joined the party leadership. In 1993, President Henri Konan Bedié appointed him Prime Minister. He remained in that position until General Robert Gueï’s military coup in 1999. He was then forced into exile in France, but returned to Côte d’Ivoire the following year. He went back into public service when the new president, Alassane Ouattara, appointed him as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2011, and as Prime Minister in 2012.