

24<sup>th</sup> -31<sup>st</sup> Mar. 2016

The digest provides highlights of economic issues in the print and electronic media on South Sudan. UNDP's interest is on how the economic issues affects human development and vice-versa.

Media Outlets:

1. Radio Tamazuj
2. Business Day
3. Leadership (Abuja)
4. IOL
5. Juba Monitor
6. The Daily Vision
7. Premium Times
8. Vanguard
9. Daily Post
10. Bloomberg
11. The Nation Mirror
12. The East African
13. Sudan Tribune
14. This Day (Nigeria)
15. Eye Radio South Sudan
16. Gurtong
17. This day
18. The Dawn
19. Reuters
20. The National Today
21. Punch

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## WEEKLY MEDIA ECONOMIC DIGEST SOUTH SUDAN



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### PRICES AND MARKETS

#### Civilians in Dilemma as market prices hike up

Oyet Alfonse- [Juba Monitor- 30 Mar. 2016](#)

The continued shattering economic crisis in the country is leaving the poor population in dilemma due to the unwavering daily increment of the market price of food commodities. Many parliamentarians continue to talk bitterly on the condition of anonymity as discussions on issues of the economy remain unresolved. Despite the fact that South Sudan has free market economy, it can no longer control it due to the currency devaluation leaving price of food commodities increase by over 500%. The majority of the population has now resorted to buying grains and corns as the prices of flour have unexceptionally hiked. A senior civil servant (office manager) who spoke to Juba Monitor on the condition of anonymity said she was depressed when she went to the market to purchase some of her household food items. She said the prices of all sort of essential commodities in the market are high.

#### Soaring prices affect more citizens

Hellen Achayo- [Eye Radio South Sudan- 29 Mar. 2016](#)

The United Nations Refugee agency says it is concerned by the increasing number of South Sudanese fleeing to Sudan because of increased food insecurity. It says some 38,000 people have fled from the former Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Warrap states into East and South Darfur since end of January. UNHCR says food insecurity in South Sudan has been caused by the ongoing conflict and deteriorating economic conditions. It says in its latest report that the Government of Sudan's Humanitarian Aid Commission reported the arrival of 2,328 South Sudanese in El Meiram and 2,520 in Kharasana, in West Kordofan State. UNHCR says the new arrivals, which may be under-counted, have reached Sudan in poor health, many having risked their lives to reach Sudan. However, this week, Sudanese authorities closed the border with South Sudan.

### **Bor residents say dollar scarcity worsening meat prices**

[Sudan Tribune- 29 Mar. 2016](#)

Meat prices in South Sudan's state capital, Bor is on the rise with a kilogram now at SSP 60 from the initial SSP 40 over the last two weeks in markets. Manyon Ayuen, a butcher in Bor, said prices partially increased due to dollar scarcity in the black market coupled with the limited numbers of cattle to be slaughtered. He said Juba traders came to Bor in large numbers and bought all the animals and transported them to Juba. This, Ayuen said, resulted in the auction price increase in Bor. "The traders who come from Juba have destroyed the business because they bought bulls at higher prices so what can we do, we if the owners of cows (bulls) increase the

prices of bulls then we have to increase meat prices so that cover the gap," he stressed. Women in Bor are reportedly finding it hard to purchase meat for meals. As such, many have opted for fresh vegetable available in the open market at certain times of a day. Abraham Majak, who auctions cattle in Bor told Sudan Tribune that his group normally buys an average bull at SSP8, 000 from Duk and sell it at SSP10, 000 in Bor. Prices have doubled to these levels after South Sudan government devalued its currency, he added. [Also reported by This Day- 30 Mar. 2016: Bor residents say dollar scarcity worsening meat prices](#)

### **Vendors panic as prices continue to rise**

[Wani Benson: The Daily Vision – 25 Mar. 2016](#)

As the economic crisis continues to tighten its grip in the country, so are the prices essential food commodities. The Daily Vision newspaper yesterday took a market survey to ascertain the prices of these small but vital ingredients and foods we always eat. In a tour majorly targeting largest markets in Juba, Konyokonyo, Anite Mariam, a vegetable vendor said it was worthless living if even prices of food items; a basic need, rises every hour and daily. Anite, a young mother described the challenges she goes through to

purchase the items and put them on her stall for the public. "Customers complain bitterly, and on a daily basis calling us thieves because of the prices we attach to these commodities," she said. "They say we hike our prices on purpose to get abnormal profits but this is not the case, because when we get these food items from the whole sellers, they charge almost the same price. Consider the transport costs we use to get the goods to the markets, the effort we put in and the time we spend".

## **BUSINESS**

### **MTN South Sudan to lay off staff over dollar shortage**

[Radio Tamazuj- 30 Mar. 2016](#)

The management of MTN South Sudan, a unit of Africa's biggest mobile phone company, announced its plan to cut down activities and lay off staff owing to the shortage of US dollar in the country. In a press conference on Tuesday in Juba, Khumbulani Dhlomo, the company's head of corporate services, said MTN will fire 55% of its

staff amid challenges due to a shortage of US dollars. He said he appreciated the company's national staff members for enduring the current economic crisis in South Sudan, but said the company may be forced to stop its operations completely if inflation of the South Sudanese Pound continues. Dhlomo pointed out that the

company has already halted its expansion plans for this year, including a planned installation of 40 antennae in some parts of South Sudan. He noted that they have observed a decrease in their customer base by 10% since December last year, saying the company also reduced its promotional activities by 50%. MTN has slightly more than 1 million subscribers in South Sudan, according to Dhlomo. [Also reported by Okech Francis in Business Day- 30 Mar. 2016: MTN South Sudan may shut down](#), by Dau Majok John in [The Daily Vision- 30 Mar. 2016: MTN to close](#), by Oyet Alfonse in [Juba Monitor- 30 Mar. 2016: MTN staff to lose jobs](#), in [IOL- 30 Mar. 2016: MTN South Sudan lays off workers](#), by Chuty Anyar Michael

[in The Nation Mirror- 30 Mar. 2016: MTN might be 'forced' to close as economic crisis worsens](#), by Okech Francis in [Bloomberg- 29 Mar. 2016: MTN South Sudan to cut jobs, cancel plans on Economic crisis](#), in [Reuters- 29 Mar. 2016: MTN South Sudan lays off staff as economic crisis bites](#), by Joseph Oduha in [The East African- 29 Mar. 2016: MTN to lay off South Sudan staff](#), by Dennis Elamu & Robert Nyawanda in [The National Today- 30 Mar. 2016: MTN South Sudan scales down operations, warns of closure](#), by Chuty Anyar Michael in [The Nation Mirror- 31 Mar. 2016: Laid off MTN employees foresee tough times ahead](#).

### **Construction of new fish market in Bor expected to boost fish business**

Jacob Achiek: [Gurtong- 26 Mar. 2016](#)

The construction of the market is being funded by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and is being implemented by Humanitarian Development Communiqué (HDC) to support the local community on a small scale project called quick impact project. According to South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission Deputy Director, James Jok Alier the market is meant to support more than 40 women. He said that UNMISS donated about 50,000 US dollars for the construction of the fish market. 40 years old

Achol Ayuen, who has been in the fish business since 2008 says the market will improve her business once completed. She says with the construction of the market there will be better hygiene and the fish will take long before going bad. "People who were not interested to buy fish from this bad place will now be able to as the place will be clean and protected from flies," she said. Being near the river, most of the women say they will be able to access water and buy their fish directly from the fishermen.

### **Women resort to quarrying**

Jongkuch Jo Jongkuch: [The Daily Vision- 25 Mar. 2016](#)

Bor- Women in Jonglei have been forced to quarry stones in an attempt to meet their pressing needs as the country's economic situation worsens. Jonglei was among the several states that were badly hit by the December 2013 chaos that started in Juba and spread like wild fire to other parts of the country. The state in particular was hit earliest and hardest by the fighting, leaving property destroyed and lives

lost. Livelihoods were destroyed and the incessant confrontations between government forces and the rebels, the state's residents either fled to UN camps or became IDPs and others became refugees in other countries. With the reappearance of relative peace and the return of residents to their homes, life has become a living hell. Mary Agok, a resident of Bor town in the newly created Jonglei state had her ordeals to

reveal; in an interview with The Daily Vision Newspaper, she said there is no other way of survival in Bor town, her home village. According

to her, she collects and crushes stones, which she later sells out to earn her some little money for survival.

## ECONOMY AND PUBLIC FINANCE

### **Nigeria: Diversify Your Economy from Oil, Buhari Urges South Sudan**

[Jonathan Ndaisaiah: Leadership \(Abuja\) - 29 Mar. 2016](#)

President Muhammadu Buhari on Monday urged the South Sudanese government to invest more in agriculture and not to be solely dependent on oil revenues to grow the nation's economy. Receiving the outgoing South Sudanese Ambassador to Nigeria, Ambassador Makuet Riak, at the State House in Abuja, President Buhari in a statement by his special adviser, Media, Femi Adesina said South Sudan can avoid the mistake made by Nigeria in her over-reliance on oil revenue. The President told the outgoing envoy that Nigeria's economy, which has been heavily dependent on oil over the years, has been adversely affected by the drop in global oil prices. "Investing in sustainable agriculture is one of the best ways to provide jobs for the people and keep the nation productive. "Food security is important to any country and that is what we are trying to achieve here, years after we 'threw away' agriculture for oil," the President said. President Buhari also praised the excellent relations between Nigeria and South Sudan and reaffirmed his commitment to strengthening

existing bilateral ties. In his remarks, Ambassador Riak described his four-year duty tour as his country's first ambassador to Nigeria as very fruitful. He said South Sudan was blessed with fertile land and would welcome more investments from Nigerian companies. [Also reported in Premium Times- 29 Mar. 2016: Nigeria: Buhari to South Sudan - Look beyond Oil to Grow Economy, by Sylvester Ugwuanyi in Daily Post- 29 Mar. 2016: Learn from Nigeria's mistake, don't rely so much on oil revenue- Buhari tells South Sudan, in Vanguard- 29 Mar. 2016: Avoid Nigeria's mistake look beyond oil, Buhari urges South Sudan, by Tobi Soniyi \(Abuja\) in This Day \(Nigeria\)- 29 Mar. 2016: Avoid Nigeria's mistake, don't depend on oil, Buhari advises South Sudan, by Olalekan Adetayo in Punch- 30 Mar. 2016: Avoid Nigeria's economic mistake, Buhari tells South Sudan, in This Day- 30 Mar. 2016: Learn from Nigeria's mistake, don't rely so much on oil revenue- Buhari to South Sudan](#)

### **Sudan closes its common border with South Sudan**

[Sudan Tribune: 30 Mar. 2016](#)

Sudanese government has again on Tuesday closed its borders with South Sudan, just a week after Khartoum threatened to treat South Sudanese in Sudan as foreigners. On Tuesday, South Sudan's Renk county commissioner in West Nile state, (former Upper Nile state), Stephen Chan Aluong, said his county has officially received a message from the White Nile

state governor of Sudan that the national government has issued a directive ending cross border movement with the neighboring South Sudan. "It is very clear that the closing directives were issued by Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir and given as a directive of action to White Nile governor," Aluong told Sudan Tribune on Tuesday. "Even people who are taking their

relatives to hospitals in Sudan have been stopped from crossing the border by border Sudanese authorities,” he said. Sudan threatened two weeks ago to close the border, stop medical and education incentives South Sudanese enjoys in north and treat them as foreigners over charges that Juba continues to support Sudanese rebels. South Sudan has denied this allegation and insists on dialogue as the way to resolve the

differences. Also reported by Mayen Deng in [Eye Radio South Sudan- 29 Mar. 2016: Sudan closes its border, in The National Today- 30 Mar. 2016: Sudan closes its border, by Joseph Oduha in The Dawn- 31 Mar. 2016: Khartoum- Juba border closed down, by Parach Mach in The National Today- 31 Mar. 2016: Khartoum denies closing S. Sudan border, says option possible](#)

### **Athorbei stops paying hotel bills of Deng Alor and SPLM-FDs**

[Radio Tamazuj- 27 Mar. 2016](#)

South Sudan's Finance Minister David Deng Athorbei says the government will no longer pay for the hotel expenses of the SPLM-Former Detainees, one of three main signatories to the August 2015 peace deal. In a letter dated 19 March, but received by the SPLM-FDs on only Monday last week, the finance minister said there was no progress in implementing the peace deal and therefore no way to continue paying the

hotel expenses. The letter was addressed to Deng Alor, the head of the SPLM-FDs following Pagan Amum's departure to the United States. Deng Alor has been named as SPLM-FDs nominee for foreign minister, after the former detainees were granted the post in talks in January on how to divide up the ministries among the peace deal's signatories.

### **Salary increase greeted with unprecedented hikes in commodity prices**

[Chuty Anyar Michael: The Nation Mirror- 30 Mar. 2016](#)

The price of commodities in the market have continued to rise following the announcement of adjustments in the incomes of the least paid government workers. The government last week announced that it will increase the salary of staff to match the prices in the market in order for the civil servants to afford the prices, however, the announcement sent the commodity prices to unaffordable levels of which citizens blamed traders for exaggerating prices of the

commodities. The nation Mirror Newspaper yesterday conducted an interview with both buyers and sellers at Nyakuron market to find out the extent of the price hikes. According to one Salma Mash, Kenya citizen selling vegetables at the market, the price of goods in Nyakuron market had never reached the prices level that she was selling at. According to her, the price of cabbage she used to buy at 15 pounds and sell at 20 pounds, has doubled last week.

### **Economic crisis pushes over 38, 000 South Sudan to Sudan**

[Aurelious Simon Chopee: The Nation Mirror- 31 Mar. 2016](#)

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has said that there is an increasing number of South Sudanese fleeing into Sudan because of increased food insecurity

caused by the ongoing conflict and deteriorating economic conditions. UNHCR Spokesperson Adrian Edwards told the media recently in Geneva that heightened food insecurity and

growing unrest in parts of South Sudan, especially in the north-western States of Northern Bahr El Ghazal and Warrap, have resulted in the flight of some 38, 000 people into East and South Darfur since the end of January. He expressed fears that the situation could

quickly worsen as the nutrition situation Upper Nile, Warrap and Northern Bahr Ghazal grows increasingly serious. Also reported in The National Today- 31 Mar. 2016: South Sudanese fleeing to Sudan due to increased food insecurity: UN Spokesman

### **SSP 30,000 earmarked to boost women**

**Taban Ayul:** [The Daily Vision- 31 Mar. 2016](#)

The Deputy Governor of Jubek State Francis Lotiu Michael has said SSP 30, 000 will be given to support women federation to fund small scale business especially in agricultural productivity and sale of food commodities. Speaking during the celebration of International Women Day organized by the Daughters of Mary immaculate (DMI) and Abba Fathers mission in Gurei, Gudele

west yesterday, Francis said that with this difficult times women need to be supported. He said this initiative is oing to help the three women self-help groups under DMI in the four Payams in Jubek State namely Mangala, Rajaf, Munuki and Northern Bari so that they can add on what they already have to fight food security and improve the businesses that they already have.

### **Increase oil production- Petroleum Minister**

**Benjamin Takpiny:** [The Dawn- 29 Mar. 2016](#)

The national Minister of Petroleum and Mining, Stephen Dhieu Dau on Saturday urged oil companies to increase oil production in the country. The Minister made the remark in his visit to the oil production site of Paloch, Eastern Nile State. Dhieu says that since the outbreak of the conflict in the country, the production of oil stopped in other places. This reduced output

hence he urged the oil companies to increase the production, promising that the other places in which oil production had stopped will soon be able to resume production. Dhieu said that the Ministry of Petroleum and Mining is working hard to overcome the challenges that face the Ministry in raising the production of oil in the country.