challenges, we are ready to address them in due course," said Getachew Betru, head of *Ethiopia Railways Corporation (ERC)*.

Other African countries with light rail systems include, **Morocco**, **Algeria**, **Egypt** and **Tunisia**. Lagos, **Nigeria**'s largest city has been planning a light rail transit system since 2006; the first phase of the project is expected to start test runs in early 2016 and will cost US$1.6bn.

Morocco has the *Casablanca Light Railway System* that connects the city to the outskirts, covering 31km and costing around $745m. Cairo has more than 80km of light railways with ongoing construction of two more phases that are due to be complete in June 2016 and December 2019. *(© AFP 20/9 2015; The East African 26/9; Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation TV 20/9)*

IN BRIEF

Algeria: Between September 22nd-28th, across the country, there were records of 96 deaths and 991 injuries in 473 separate road accidents, according to reports from that National Gendarmerie on September 30th. The province of M'sila recorded the highest number at 27, followed by Algiers and Setif at 24; according to sources accidents have increased by 12.35% from the previous period. *(Algerie Presse Service 30/9)*

Angola: The *Moçâmedes Railway* reconstruction project, which has been on-going since 2006 by the *China Kyway Group* was completed provisionally on September 11th and handed over to Angolan authorities. The **Chinese** company built 56 stations and over 800km of railway stretching from Namibe to Kuando Kubango, and also the Jamba and Tchamutete branch lines. China Hyway Director-General Wei Ruihai said that the project would promote development in transport and logistics corridors and catalyse economic growth. *(Macauhub 14/9)*

Côte d'Ivoire: A collision between a crowded minibus and a passenger vehicle in the port town of San Pedro on September 11th resulted in the deaths of at least 19 people and 37 more injured, reported police sources. Chief of Police Seydou Ouattara said that the accident had been caused by a "technical problem in the vehicles". *(© AFP 11/9 2015)*

Kenya: County governments are to receive Kenyan Shillings (KSh) 3.3bn toward roads maintenance in 2015-2016 financial year, announced the Kenyan Roads Board. Nairobi County is to receive the highest at KSh 165m, Turkana KSh133m and Kakamega and Mandera KSh 113m. *(Daily Nation 6/10)*

Mozambique: According to **European Commission** representative Sven Kuhn von Burgsdorff, the European Union (**EU**) is seeking to raise €300m to support infrastructure in the country, including bridges, roads and schools destroyed in bad weather earlier in the year. Government estimates have posited a figure of US$500m to repair damage. *(Macauhub 21/9)*

Construction on the road network for the bridge between Maputo and Catembe has begun between Maputo and Ponta do Ouro, reported local weekly newspaper *Domingo*. The work will cost an estimated US$780m, largely financed through grants from **China** and constructed by the *China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC)*. *(Macauhub 14/9)*

Tanzania: The African Development Bank (**AfDB**) Board of Directors agreed to provide two loans totalling US$141.71m on September 30th, towards the second phase of the Dar es Salaam Bus Rapid Transit (DART) System. The loans consist of $97.42m from the AfDB market window and $44.29m from the African Growing Together Fund (AGTF). It is intended to provide enhanced accessibility across the city while ensuring reliable, safe and cost-effective public transport and supporting the economic and social development of the region. *(AfDB website 1/10)*

Zambia: A total of 17 people died when a truck collided with a minibus in Lusaka on September 12th, around 4km from the main financial hub of the capital. Police sources said that "the accident happened after the driver of the Mercedes-Benz truck cut in front of the [minibus]". Zambia's road network is poorly maintained and road accidents are common nationwide. *(© AFP 12/9 2015)*

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Africa

Tower firms scramble for a stake on the continent.

There is a scramble amongst tower management companies for a stake on the continent, as other firms seek to raise funds in an increasingly competitive sector; four companies, *IHS*, *Eaton Towers*, *Helios Towers Africa* and *American Towers Corporation* are competing for masts sold by companies such as *MTN, Vodafone, Etisalat*, and *Airtel*.

Terry Rhodes, Eaton Towers CEO said, "they've all agreed, all the major ones, that sharing their towers is the way to go". While Julius Ngonga, transaction advisory services partner at *Ernst Young*, said "all mobile companies may soon find it necessary to separate infrastructure management from mobile services".

"Network build and operating costs are significantly higher in Africa, yet revenues per customer are falling and regulators are seeking additional rural coverage and improvements in the quality of service," said Rhodes.

Estimates show that sub-Saharan Africa has more than 240,000 towers providing mobile coverage to 70% of the population.

A report by auditing and advisory company *KPMG* titled '*Tower Company Landscape Changes in Africa'* said "Africa still requires at least 50,000 additional towers by 2016, translating into some $7.5bn of capital expenditure".

Another reason telecommunication companies are selling their tower assets is the challenge of power outages and inadequate electricity supply which forces a greater expense on diesel to run the towers.

However, *Safaricom*, **Kenya**'s leading telecommunications firm by subscriber numbers, has turned to solar energy to power some of its towers located in remote off-grid areas. "We have deployed solar or wind energy solutions in 77 sites over the year," said Director of Corporate Affairs Stephen Chege.

According to Issam Darwish, co-founder of IHS Towers; "The continent has not been able to build the kind of infrastructure it requires to satisfy the penetration levels in voice and broadband that it required. In the **US**, the mobile industry was built on the idea of sharing towers and competitors became partners to lower their costs. This wasn't the case in Africa," he said. *(The East African 3/10)*

Africa – Facebook to provide free satellite Internet

Social networking company *Facebook* is to begin beaming free satellite Internet in conjunction with **French** satellite company *Eutelsat*. The two companies will send an AMOS-6 satellite into space, scheduled to enter service in 2016.

"We're going to keep working to connect the entire world – even if that means looking beyond our planet. . .Over the last year Facebook has been exploring ways to use aircraft and satellites to beam internet access down into communities from the sky. . ."to connect people living in remote regions, traditional connectivity infrastructure is often difficult and inefficient, so we need to invent new technologies", Mark Zuckerberg said in a Facebook post.

Several companies already provide internet-by-satellite, but it is a costly option beyond the reach of most people in the developing world. *(BBC news Online 6/10; The Independent 5/10)*

Kenya

The President is praised for his commitment to ICT development.

President Uhuru Kenyatta was awarded the International Telecommunications Union (**ITU**) award for promoting ICT for sustainable development on September 26th, which honours contributions to harness the potential of ICT technologies for sustainable development.

Speaking at the event held at the United Nations (**UN**) Headquarters, President Kenyatta said the government remains committed to supporting innovations to enable growth and development for the country and the whole region.

"Our *National ICT Master Plan* and *National Broadband Strategy* outlines our desired path to a knowledge-based economy where ICTs underpin service delivery, and provide the bedrock of our activities in critical sectors of the economy, especially agriculture, education and health," said the President.

A UN global report entitled *The State of Broadband 2015* has praised Kenya's broadband plan for being consistent with recent developments in the ICT industry. The Kenya National ICT Master Plan, which has targets to be realised by 2017, mentions a 2.5% higher fixed broadband penetration and 7.4% higher mobile phone penetration.

The UN did comment that Kenya should incorporate more performance indicators to ensure transparency and accountability, with a key focus on subscription rates, network resilience and quality. The UN also noted that Kenya was struggling to increase Internet penetration in marginalised areas.

Elsewhere, the last provider of fixed line wireless in Kenya, *Orange*, has ended the service, leading to an instant drop in the number of users by more than half to 87,774.

This is largely due to upward trends in the mobile Internet market, with 34.8m users and a rise in mobile money transfers by 3.5% to 27.7m in the recent quarter. Internet usage has also grown by 5.9% to 19.9m. Mobile broadband subscriptions remain at 99% of the total broadband subscriptions. *(Daily Nation, 27/9; 5/10; PANA, Nairobi 23/9)*

IN BRIEF

Africa: Satellite company *Eutelsat Communications* has announced a multi-year contract with **French** satellite operator *Canal+Overseas* as part of the digital movement on the African continent. The new channels offered will be transmitted by Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) in 10 French-speaking countries, from **Guinea** to the **DR Congo**. Bruno Cattan, Technology and Web Director at Canal+ Overseas said, "Digital switchover is a unique opportunity for Africa and its broadcasting landscape". *(Eutelsat press release 10/9)*

Angola: Global telecommunications equipment company, **France**-based *Alcatel-Lucent Submarine Networks* has received a deal to develop the Sonangol Offshore Optical Cable (**SOOC**). The project is expected to reduce the cost-per-bit of data traffic to Angola, particularly offshore oil and gas facilities. The SOOC undersea network will span around 1,900km and connect to landing points at four points on the Angolan coast, allowing large offshore bandwidth. *(PANA, Dar es Salaam 1/10)*

Botswana: The Botswana government announced on September 24th plans to upgrade Wi-Fi infrastructure across the capital Gaborone, with Communications Manager at *Botswana Fibre Networks (BoFiNet)*, Kungo Mabogo stating that the development is part of a national commitment implement national ICT systems. "The aim of this project is to build and manage a public Wi-Fi infrastructure that would create a platform for service providers to provide connectivity within a large spectrum of locations", he said. *(PANA, Gaborone 24/9)*

Commodities

AGRICULTURAL

FISH

Angola

Spain is funding a fisheries training centre.

The foundation stone for the Centre for Professional Fisheries Training (Cefopesca) of Angola, a project with an estimated cost of US$98m, was laid on September 27th in the town of Belas, Luanda, *Angop* reported.

The Minister of Fisheries, Victoria de Barros Neto said construction would start in 2015 and that the centre would be operational 36 months later.

The Fisheries Training Centre was first established in 1982 with **Swedish** cooperation but heavy rains in 2007 destroyed 85% of it. This new project, funded by a credit line from **Spain,** will provide over 70,000 direct and indirect jobs.

Cefopesca will occupy an area of over 5 hectares, will have capacity to receive 310 boarding students for a period of three years and the central building will have laboratories, libraries, simulator rooms and conference rooms.

The workshops will include shipbuilding, mechanics/engines, metalwork/welding, fish treatment and processing and another area with fish farming tanks. *(Macauhub 30/9)*

Cabo Verde / Guinea Bissau

The European Union approves new fisheries agreements.

The European Parliament on September 10th approved new fisheries agreements with Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau, which in Cabo Verde's case will allow 71 vessels from **Spain, France** and **Portugal** to fish for tuna and other species.

The agreement with Cabo Verde was signed in August 2014, but now with formal approval the country will receive €0.55m in the first two years and €0.5m in each of the following two – €2.1m in the four years of the term of the agreement, €360,000 more than it received under the previous fisheries agreement.

The contract also provides for a monitoring mechanism, strengthening monitoring and surveillance capabilities and support to local fishing communities to promote sustainable fisheries management in the archipelago.

The agreement with Guinea-Bissau provides for fishing by vessels from Spain, **Italy**, Portugal, France and **Greece** for three years. Guinea Bissau will receive €9.2m per year, of which 6.2m is a payment for access to the resources of the economic zone of Guinea-Bissau and 3m to support the development of the Guinean fisheries industry.

Meanwhile, Cabo Verde has approved legislation to combat illegal fishing. Foreign fishing vessels are required to apply for prior authorisation to enter or use Cabo Verde's ports and to land or transfer fishing catches, the spokesman for the Cape Verdean Cabinet said recently.

Démis Lobo said the statute approved by the government, called the National Action Plan to Prevent Illegal Fishing, aims to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable exploration of the living resources and marine ecosystems of Cabo Verde, according to weekly newspaper *A Semana*.

Lobo also said that most of the measures contained in the National Action Plan to Prevent Illegal Fishing were already included and developed in current legislation. *(Macauhub 15, 30/9)*