

## Italy Praises Angola's Economic Relations

By Kester Kenn Klomegah

**ASTANA, Kazakhstan, July 24, 2014 (Business Africa)** -- The diplomatic tide has turned as Angola and Italy seek to raise and diversify largely their profiles on economic cooperation during talks between the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti, and the Italian Prime Minister, Matteo Renzi in Luanda.

Matteo Renzi and his delegation arrived for a working visit intended to boost bilateral relations between the two states.

The visit was considered as historic since it was the first time that a head of government of Italy visited the sub-Saharan region and particularly Angola, thus serving to strengthen cooperation between Luanda and Rome.

Italy ensured its support to Angolan candidacy to a non - permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for 2015/2016 period.

"The support is guaranteed and the next phase is aimed to discuss the reform process in the UN, particularly in the attribution of more space to African continent", highlighted the Italian official by clarifying the position of Italy regarding the objectives of Angola in achieving a non-permanent seat at UNSC.

According to Matteo Renzi, the proposal of reformulation of the United Nations was already done at Italian diplomacy level.

Concerning the cooperation between the two countries, both ministers emphasised the need to diversify and strengthen the areas of agriculture, construction, culture and education.

Over four hundred Italian companies are "very much interested" in making business partnerships with Angolan counterparts, according to the Vice President of the Confederation of Italian Industrialists, Licia Mattioli. She explained that several Italian companies are interested in serious business partnership, especially those related to agro-industry, construction, mechanics, energy, aviation, among others.

Earlier, the First Secretary of the Italian Embassy in Angola, Gianluca Battaglia, told the media that a new stage was opened in the relations of cooperation and friendship between the two countries.

Speaking to Angop, the diplomat said that Angola and Italy have a very intense activity in the bilateral relations and the visit of Angolan statesman to this European country is very important, because it will permit the strengthening of the existing relations.

Gianluca Battaglia said that in the last 30 years it was carried out many projects of cooperation and relations between both states that have been intense in political and economic domains.

Regarding the commercial exchanges, the diplomat informed that in 2013, Italy exported more than 400 million Euro to the Angolan market, if compared to the 300 million Euro of imports of the Angolan products. Angola and Italy have a very long relation of cooperation, and Italy was the first western European country to recognise the independence of the Angolan State. Both countries cooperate in political, diplomatic, economic and cultural domain.

Italy was the first western European nation to recognise Angola's independence, on 18 February 1976, before diplomatic relations between the two countries were established on 4 June the same year. Angola and Italy set up bilateral relations in 1977, following the signing of a memorandum that launched a Joint Cooperation Commission.

The Angolan head of State, José Eduardo dos Santos, paid his first official visit to Rome in 1997, where he was welcomed by the then president Oscar Luigi Scalfaro.

**(Source: Business Africa)**