



The First Africa-Focused Political Risk Consultancy Opens its Doors

Austin, TX, Monday, September 28, 2009:

Bello & Manchau, Inc. (B&M), the first and only political risk consultancy focusing exclusively on Africa, announced its launch today in Austin, TX.

B&M helps its clients navigate and manage the risks of doing business in Africa by closely monitoring and analyzing political, economic, security and social developments across the continent and forecasting the impact of these developments on a client's bottom-line. B&M advises corporations (i.e. institutional investors), non-profits, multilateral organizations and governments.

B&M conducts its research on a continental (i.e. the African Union + Morocco), sub-regional (i.e. North, West, East, Central and Southern Africa), national, provincial, municipal, and industry level. B&M's Regional/Geographic and Industry Advisory Groups monitor and assess political, economic, security, and social developments affecting African cities, states, countries, regions and industries, and forecast the impact of these developments on a client's business and investment interests. B&M covers a wide variety of sectors, including Precious Metals (Gold, Platinum Group Metals and Silver), Energy (Oil, Gas and Coal), Mining (18 minerals covered), Agribusiness, Banking & Financial Services, Telecommunications, and Diamonds.

B&M co-founder Remi Bello said Africa's considerable stock of relatively untapped natural resources and its consistent growth over the last decade in the face of the ongoing financial crisis is driving a recent spike in global investor interest in Africa.

"Africa is the fastest-growing continent in the world, and African companies offer the highest rate of return on investment in the world," said Mr. Bello. "However, despite considerable improvements in governance in the last few decades, the political environment in Africa remains relatively unstable and thus intimidating to potential investors. This is where we come in."

Africa holds approximately 30% of global mineral reserves and about 10% of its oil reserves. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), between 2001 and 2008, Africa grew by an average of 5.9% in GDP, improving by 5.2% in 2008 alone. As a result, Africa doubled its intake of foreign direct investments (FDI) from 2003 to 2007, surpassing development aid for the first time in 2006. A recent Oxford University study of 2002-2007 data shows Africa-based publicly traded companies offer the highest rate of return on investment in the world, outperforming, on average, companies in Asia and South America.

"It is often said that the less developed a country is the more politics matters," said B&M co-founder Melvin Manchau. "In no other part of the world is this truer than in Africa, where the transition of one country's leadership to the next, a simple and inconsequential activity in most developed countries, can have profound effects on the stability of markets, terrifying even the most hardened foreign investors."

B&M's variety of pioneering products and services can be tailored to monitor, forecast and manage political, economic, social, and security risks impacting a client's particular set of business and investment goals in Africa.

The B&M AfriRisk Index© is the first comparative country risk index modeled to monitor, measure, and forecast political, economic, social, and security risks unique to Africa, using both quantitative and qualitative data. The AfriRisk Index© tracks up to 25 categories of risks prevalent in Africa, ranging from commodity price fluctuations to coup d'états. It can be adapted to monitor risks prevalent in specific (or any combination of) African cities, states, countries, regions and sectors of interest to a client.

Other B&M Products & Services

B&M Situation Briefings: Helps clients reach a thorough and current understanding of emergency political, economic, social and security risk developments impacting their business and investments in Africa.

B&M Scenario Planning: Helps clients thoroughly research and model the possible alternative paths and outcomes of political, economic, social and security risk developments impacting their business and investments in Africa.

B&M Periodic Publications: B&M also publishes monthly, quarterly and annual reports on a continental, sub-regional, national, provincial, municipal, and industry level.

About Bello & Manchau, Inc. (B&M)

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About the Founders

Remi Bello and Melvin Manchau combine more than 20 years of experience with several top financial institutions, political and economic risk research firms and think tanks, including Bentley Associates, Lazard, Société Générale, Reuters, eStandardsForum and the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). A Nigerian-American, **Mr. Bello** holds a BSC in Communications from the University of Texas at Austin and a Masters in International Economic Policy and African Studies from Columbia University. **Mr. Manchau**, a French citizen, holds a BSC in Computer Science and Information Systems from the Université René Descartes (Paris V) and a Masters in Finance from Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po).

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