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News in Brief:

African Union

The African Union Peace and Security Council was briefed this week by Ambassador Mahamat Saleh Anadif, the Special Representative for Somalia of the AU Chairperson. It welcomed the impressive security and political gains, expressed support for the negotiations over Jubaland, condemned recent Al-Shabaab terrorist activities, commended AMISOM, called for further coordinated action by the international community and welcomed the planned High-Level Conference on A New Deal for Somalia on September 16 in Brussels.

Ethiopia

A three day conference on Religious Tolerance and Coexistence was held this week (August 27-29) in Addis Ababa, organized by the Ministry of Federal Affairs in collaboration with the Ethiopia Inter-Religious Council on the theme “We shall strive to realize Ethiopia's Renaissance through strengthening the value of religious coexistence and respecting constitutional provisions”. (See article)

Ethiopian Airlines, the largest air cargo operator in Africa has announced it will be opening a second cargo hub in September, in partnership with the Lome-based ASKY Airlines of Togo, 40% owned by Ethiopian Airlines. This will allow easy and convenient air transport of high value and perishable goods to and from West and Central Africa. Ethiopian Cargo currently serves 25 cargo destinations globally using six freighter aircraft.

State Minister Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos held talks with Mr. Erlig Olstad, Honorary Consul of Ethiopia in Norway, on Tuesday (August 27).

Djibouti

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Djibouti this week, holding talks with President Ismail Omar Guelleh and meeting members of the Japanese defense forces stationed in Djibouti. Japan has two escort vessels and two P-3C patrol aircraft deployed in Djibouti. Prime Minister Abe said Japan would provide support to Djibouti to develop geothermal power generation and secure stable electricity supplies.

Eritrea

The Red Sea Afar Relief Association, an externally-based Eritrean aid NGO, has called for an international investigation into the reported massacre of over 100 members of the Eritrean navy, all from the Afar nationality, by Eritrean border security forces, as they tried to flee the country.

Kenya

Elements of the elite General Service Unit have been deployed in Marsabit, Mandera and Moyale counties following clashes and fighting in Moyale town on Wednesday (August 28). Local authorities say political rivalry has fueled inter-clan conflict between the Borana and Gabbra clans over water and pasture. Up to twenty or more have been reported killed in the clashes over the last two weeks.

A three day Climate Outlook Forum meeting in Eldoret held under the auspices of the IGAD Climate Predictions and Applications Center has predicted parts of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan and eastern and north eastern Kenya will have near normal to below normal rainfall during the short rains season, September through December; Burundi, the western parts of Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda and Western Tanzania will receive near normal to above normal rainfall.

More than 160,000 Somali refugees at the Dabaab camps in northeast Kenya voted to elect just over 1,000 local leaders to represent them as camp leaders, section leaders and block leaders. The election was organized by Kenya's Department of Refugee Affairs, with the UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations.

Somalia

The talks between representatives of the Somali Federal Government and Interim Juba Administration finally concluded on Tuesday (August 27) and the two sides formally signed an agreement on Wednesday afternoon in the presence of Dr. Tedros Adhanom, Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, the Chair of the IGAD Council of Ministers. (**See article**)

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud met the newly appointed US ambassador for Somalia, James P. McNulty, in Mogadishu on Monday (August 26). Discussions covered bilateral relations and security, and the ambassador said the United States was willing to re-open its embassy in Mogadishu.

Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has created a new National Security Council. Tasked with defining policy and strategy for Somalia's national security, it will be headed by the president and its members will include Prime Minister Shirdon as well as the Ministers of Defense, Interior, Foreign Affairs and Finance.

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, accompanied by Defense Minister, Abdihakim Haji Fiqi, and leading military officers on Wednesday (August 28) toured several defense establishments in Mogadishu including the Defense Ministry, the Central Command and several bases. He pledged the government's full support for rebuilding the national army at a national level and its willingness to pay regular salaries.

China promised cooperation with Somalia in economy and trade and to actively participate in its national reconstruction in talks between China's Foreign Minister and Somalia's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Fowzia Yusuf who has been visiting China on a week-long official visit. The Somali government has donated land for China to build its embassy in Mogadishu; China has pledged reconstruction of a mother and child hospital, the national theatre and the Mogadishu stadium.

A three day consultative meeting on Somalia took place in Addis Ababa this week, co-organized by the Horn Economic and Social Policy Institute and the Economic Commission for Africa. It aimed to encourage a Somali centered approach to increase awareness and understanding of the issues and challenges of Somalia, bringing Somali professionals and academicians along with international experts on post-conflict reconstruction.

AMISOM has handed over a Vocational Training School built with support from the Government of Denmark at a cost of US\$150,000 to the Somali Federal Government.

South Sudan

South Sudan's new Vice-President, James Wani Igga, was sworn into office by Chief Justice Chan Reec Madut on Sunday (August 25) at a ceremony attended by President Salva Kiir and senior members of government.

A new report on the Abyei region "Stabilizing Abyei: Trauma and the Economic Challenges to Peace" by Kush Inc says the conflict will not be resolved politically without paying attention to the local conditions of the population on the ground. It calls for any intervention to move beyond humanitarian relief and focus on transitions that would result in long-term stability.

South Sudan has discovered at least 11,000 ghost police officers and an additional 16,000 names remain to be investigated, says the Minister of Interior, Aleu Ayieny Aleu . If all 27,000 turn out to be fake, the discovery will save the government millions of dollars.

Sudan

The first anniversary of the death of the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi was commemorated in Khartoum on Saturday (August 24). The occasion was organized under the auspices of Field Marshal Omer Hassan Al-Bashir, President of the Republic of Sudan and the Ethiopian Embassy in cooperation with the Sudanese-Ethiopian Friendship Association. **(See article)**

The Joint Peace Mediator for Darfur, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Head of the African Union–United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) briefed Amin Hassan Omer, head of Sudan’s Darfur peace follow-up office in Khartoum on his consultation meeting in Tanzania last week with two of the Darfur rebel groups, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudan Liberation Movement led by Minni Minnawi (SLM-MM). **(See article)**

Ambassador Donald Booth, US Ambassador to Ethiopia from 2010 until last month, is appointed US Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan. **(See article)**

Somali Federal Government and Interim Juba Administration negotiations....

The talks between representatives of the Jubaland administration and the Federal Government of Somalia in Addis Ababa finally reached an end on Tuesday night, and culminated on Wednesday (August 28) with the formal signing of an agreement in the presence of Dr. Tedros Adhanom, Ethiopia’s Foreign Minister, Chair of the IGAD Council of Ministers which signed as Guarantor of the Agreement; Engineer Mahboub Maalim, the Executive Secretary of IGAD; Dr. Aisha Abdullahi, the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs; Mr. Nicholas Kay, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Somalia and Head of the UN Office for Somalia (UNSOM) and representatives of the European Union, the IGAD Partners Forum and of the IGAD states. The original round of talks in June in Addis Ababa was followed by this second round which started on August 20 and ended after nine days of long and protracted negotiations several times going long past midnight. They needed the direct involvement of the Ethiopian Foreign Minister, the Executive Secretary of IGAD and the UN Special Representative.

Farah Sheikh Abdulkadir, State Minister of the Presidency of the Somali Federal Government signed on behalf of the Somali Federal Government and Sheikh Ahmed Mohamed Islam “Madobe” signed for the Juba Interim Administration. Farah Sheikh Abdulkadir said afterwards that “We agreed that we are not two parties in building the state of Somalia, we are only one party in building the federal state of Somalia,” adding that “this deal is the beginning of a long journey for peace building, reconciliation, and for building a viable permanent administrations in these regions.” He thanked the Ethiopian government for brokering the talks and especially Dr. Tedros Adhanom for the tenacity he has shown bringing the two sides to reach such an important agreement. He said “whenever I thought the negotiation has reached a sticking point, that it would not go further Dr. Tedros was the one who said no and gave life to a dying momentum.” He added that “the agreement starts a new journey to peace” and said although “this journey to peace will be bumpy” with the support of the partners of Somalia it will be successful.

Sheikh Madobe said “We are hopeful that this process will be a starting point for Somalia to be a federal state; there will be people who won't be happy, but the fundamental issue is the interest of the Somali people.” He said he was committed to implementing the accord. “I want to assure you I have not stood up here to say something and then we don't implement,” he said after the talks. “I hope this will be something that will be implemented practically and will be good... for the rest of Somalia.” Sheikh Madobe described the agreement as important in establishing the

basis for a robust federal structure in Somalia and emphasized that both sides would now be able to cooperate against the real enemy, Al-Shabaab. He also thanked the Ethiopian government and Dr. Tedros Adhanom for their efforts. He said “now we have made an agreement, and in the coming weeks I can assure you that you would see me in Mogadishu working out the details with the federal government of Somalia.” Further details of the accord remain to be finalized at a reconciliation conference to take place in Mogadishu, and the issue of federalism remains problematic. Puntland broke off ties with the Federal Government this month, accusing it of failing to respect the federal structure. The Government says building such a structure needs time. "Federation requires a legal framework that is not existing and we did not inherit one. It also needs institutional capacity that is not yet available," said Farah Sheikh Abdulkadir.

At the signing ceremony, Dr. Tedros said “I know you will agree with me that all of us here today are motivated by a simple belief: Somalis deserve reconciliation, they deserve peace, they deserve development in all aspects. Ethiopia has been motivated by this simple belief. Speaking about the importance of the agreement, he said “Today, Somalia takes a vital step towards normality. This agreement opens the door to establishment of a federal state in Somalia. We applaud the courage of two leaders. They have risen above factional interests to offer an example of political reconciliation among Somalis.” Dr. Tedros said there was a strong belief in all sides that Somalis deserved peace after undergoing all sorts of ordeal for over two decades. Speaking about the negotiation process, he said the negotiations, despite the long and late evenings, resulted in a positive sense of energy and brotherhood among the negotiators than fatigue and desperation. He called it a great day for Somalia.

Others agreed. Nicholas Kay, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General to Somalia to assured the negotiators of the two sides that UNSOM will provide support to the implementation of the Agreement in Kismayo. He said” This is a significant step towards restoring peace in Somalia, building a strong Federal Somalia and contributing to regional and international security”. He said “This agreement unlocks the door to a better future for Somalia,” adding that “All parties gain from this agreement. I urge all to implement it in good faith. Any action to undermine it will have a negative impact on the people of Somalia and on the international community’s efforts to support peace and stability. I shall follow closely the implementation of the agreement.” Mr. Kay congratulated Sheikh Madobe on becoming the Leader of the Interim Juba Administration, underlining that “the people of Juba and of all Somalia will be looking to the new interim administration to deliver peace, security and public services.” “This”, he said, “is an interim agreement and gives the administration an opportunity to govern in the interests of all, including creating the conditions for the safe return of those displaced by the recent fighting in Kismayo and ending the illegal export on charcoal.” Mr. Kay added that UNSOM, mandated to support peace-building and state-building as well as the Federal Government's peace and reconciliation process, would now establish a presence in Kismayo to support the new administration. Mr. Kay also added a caution “We have to have high hopes, but we also have to keep our eyes wide open. Somalia is complex and has a chequered history, so we'll follow this through.”

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission welcomed the signing of the agreement, commending the parties for reaching “an historic Agreement, which is a further illustration of the

capacity of the Somalis to triumph over their differences.” The Chairperson thanked Ethiopia for its untiring efforts, the resources committed and for its dedication in facilitating the negotiations, and expressed the AU’s gratitude to the IGAD member states and Secretariat for their continued commitment to peace, security and reconciliation in Somalia, and their determination to sustain the current momentum in Somalia. She also called on Somalia’s partners to extend increased support to the FGS and the Somali people in their efforts. She looked forward to a successful High-Level Conference on a New Deal for Somalia, scheduled to take place in Brussels on September 16, and assured the Somali authorities and other stakeholders of the AU’s continued commitment, notably through AMISOM, to assist in consolidating the progress made.

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission also welcomed the agreement, describing it as important not only for Somalia but also for the stability of the entire Horn of Africa region. The High Representative hoped that “this will pave the way for the constitutional review to achieve a consensus on the establishment of the federal system.” She recognized that both parties made a major political effort to achieve this agreement, and that they would need to sustain that effort to ensure that it is implemented. She commended the efforts of all those who worked for this outcome, in particular IGAD’s chair, Prime Minister Hailemariam and Ethiopia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Tedros as well as the Kenyan authorities, the UN and others.

....the agreement signed

The Agreement laid down five principles. These were the leadership of the Government of the Republic of Somalia in the process; respect of the Provisional Constitution of the Federal Republic of Somalia; an all inclusive consultative process with the peoples' of Somalia; the supportive role of IGAD based on the priorities of the Somali Government; and fighting Al-Shabaab as the primary focus of the Somali Federal Government; regional and international partners. It also referred to the decisions contained in the communiqué of the meeting of the Heads of State and Government of Troop Contributing Countries to AMISOM, on August 4, in Kampala; and reiterated the need for all processes, particularly the efforts in setting up Somali Regional Administrations and stabilization efforts, to be anchored with the Principles of Federalism in the Provisional Constitution, the National Stabilization Plan and the Local Government Act. It recognized the supremacy of the Provisional Constitution of the Federal Republic of Somalia; that the Federal Government of Somalia shall be the sole representative of sovereign Somalia; and in full respect for the Unity, Sovereignty and the Territorial Integrity of the Federal Republic of Somalia agreed on 23 points under four articles.

The first article covered the Establishment of an Interim Administration for Juba, consisting of Gedo, Lower Juba and Middle Juba Regions, to be called the Interim Juba Administration. This will last for not more than 2 years, during which a permanent Federal Member State will be established. The parties to the agreement will work to complete the remaining part of the administration through a consultative process. The Interim Juba Administration will include an Executive Council and a Regional Assembly, and the Leader of the Administration will also chair the Executive Council and will be accountable to the Federal Government. There will be three deputies appointed by the Leader in consultation with Somali Federal Government.

Members of the Executive Council, the executive body of the Interim Administration, will be appointed by the Leader with consultation and coordination with the Federal Government. The Federal Government shall have responsibility to assure inclusivity. The Regional Assembly will be an all inclusive and representative body of all clans and constituencies, selected by traditional elders with seats distributed proportionally among the districts of the three regions. Until the Local Government Act takes effect, the Governors of Lower Juba and Middle Juba Regions will be appointed by the Leader; the current Gedo administration will remain in place.

The second article is on Management of Federal Institutions and Infrastructure and lays down that the Federal Institutions and Infrastructure, including Kismayo Airport and Kismayo Seaport shall be recognized as the assets of the people of Somalia. Kismayo Airport and Kismayo Seaport shall be utilized in a manner that is beneficial to the peace and prosperity of the people under the leadership and management of the Federal Government of Somalia. Their management will be handed-over to the Federal Government within 6 months. Revenues and other resources from them will be managed in a prudent, transparent and accountable manner, and will be exclusively utilized and disbursed on the priorities of security, service delivery and institutional building of the Jubas. This interim arrangement will continue until there is final agreement on revenue sharing in the country.

The third article covers the Management of Security Forces and Militias Integration and lays down that all security elements, including the RasKanboni Brigade, the Darwish and any other militias will be integrated into the central command of the Somalia National Army. The regional police will be under the command of the Interim Juba Administration. The Federal Government of Somalia and the Interim Juba Administration will jointly establish a Technical Security Committee to agree on the modalities and timetable for the integration of all security elements within in an agreed timeline and in close coordination with AMISOM. The Federal Government will give priority to the Juba Administration so that combatants, particularly lower-level Al-Shabaab fighters in the regions can disengage from combat and return to civilian life.

The final article covers Reconciliation and Confidence-Building, and says the Federal Government of Somalia will organize and convene, within two weeks a Reconciliation Conference in Mogadishu; and a follow-up peace building conference will also be held in Kismayo. The Mogadishu Reconciliation Conference will be a consultation mechanism for the process of completing the formation of the interim administration and peace building. It will also agree on the modalities of development for the roadmap for the establishment of federal member states. The final point is that the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia as the Chair of IGAD will be the guarantor of this agreement.

Both sides have compromised on a number of issues and made concessions. The Federal Government intends to consider the issue of federalism in its proposed constitutional review conference. This is why the Federal Government insisted that Jubaland must be an interim regional administration not a federal state. Similarly, Sheikh “Madobe” is to be the Leader not the President and the administration is to last for no more than two years. Equally important, the next Jubaland reconciliation conference will be organized in Mogadishu under the auspices of the Federal Government within two weeks, a timetable which appears to be short. In return, the

Federal Government accepted the current leadership of Jubaland, a region which now includes Gedo region as well as Middle and Lower Juba. One of the most contentious issues was control of Kismayo Port and Airport. The Federal Government saw this as a sovereignty issue; the Jubaland administration insisted these should be seen as facilities for the regional community. The final result was a compromise with the Jubaland administration controlling the assets for six months and after that the Federal Government using them on behalf of the region.

Everyone in fact wanted an agreement, if for different reasons. For the Federal Government it was necessary as the EU saw it as a necessary precursor for the conference in Brussels next month. The Government also wanted to ensure its control of the activities of international partners in the region, to show that it is in charge of the establishment of regional administrations in Somalia and to use Jubaland as a framework to extend its claim to other areas. The Jubaland administration wanted to engage directly with the international community. IGAD was determined that the Federal Government should concentrate its focus on the struggle against Al-Shabaab together with the other regional administrations. It wants to ensure that all concerned will be partners in this as well as in building institutions for a viable federal state in Somalia. Nobody wanted the situation to get out of control, and IGAD is still concerned that the situation needs to be handled with care.

National Conference on Religious Tolerance and Coexistence

A three day national conference under the theme “We shall strive to realize Ethiopia's Renaissance through strengthening the value of religious coexistence and respecting constitutional provisions” opened Tuesday (August 27) in Addis Ababa at the African Union Conference Hall. The National Conference was organized by the Ministry of Federal Affairs in collaboration with the Ethiopia Inter-Religious Council. The Minister of Federal Affairs, Dr. Shiferaw Teklemariam, introducing the objectives of the conference said that it would help to promote a culture of peaceful coexistence, enhance knowledge of the Constitution’s religious provisions, improve understanding of the current global, regional and national perspectives on radicalism and extremism, help define the role of youth and women in sustaining tolerance and peaceful coexistence, and finally provide for deeper understanding of universal values and principles among religious institutions and followers and exploit the age-old religious respect and tolerance in Ethiopia for consolidation of peace, democracy and development. Dr. Shiferaw said the more than 2,000 participants who attended from all the regional states and constituencies would help provide a national consensus on state-religion relations. The conference was also addressed by the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, Abune Mathias, and by the President of the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Council, Sheikh Kiyar Mohamed, both of whom emphasized that peaceful coexistence and tolerance were the basic tenets of all faiths.

The opening session was addressed by Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn who thanked the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia for their efforts in combating fundamentalism and terrorism. He stressed that sovereign power now resides in them, following their protracted struggle and sacrifice, and that the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia,

the supreme law of the land, was an expression of their sovereignty. This is expressed through their representatives elected in accordance with the Constitution and through their direct democratic participation. So, the Prime Minister said, all citizens, organs of state, political organizations, other associations and institutions as well as their officials have the duty to ensure observance of the Constitution and obedience to it. Ethiopia's Constitution, he went on, clearly shows the separation of state and religion: the state does not interfere in religious matters and religion does not interfere in state affairs. The Constitution allows the full implementation of both individual and peoples' fundamental freedoms and rights, and provides for their ability to live together on the basis of equality and without discrimination of gender, religion or culture. It was, the Prime Minister said, successful implementation of this that had helped the country to achieve double digit economic growth for the last decade, benefitting all equally, and that had led to the tremendous achievements of the current Growth and Transformation Plan in realizing the Ethiopian renaissance.

The Prime Minister also reminded participants that state power could only be assumed as defined in the Constitution, which on the one hand embraced the country's diversity, ensuring a lasting peace and guaranteeing a democratic order. It also enabled the people to live together on the basis of equality, without any discrimination, and as one political and economic community advancing economic and social development to realize Ethiopia's Renaissance by rectifying historically unjust relationships and by further promoting the shared interests of all people. Equally, on the other hand, the Constitution leaves no room for radicalism or extremisms. It warns those who try to carry out hidden and undercover operations to gain political power under a religious mask that this is against the constitution and will never be allowed. The Prime Minister called upon all citizens, associations and religious institutions and their followers to maintain and to strengthen their collaborative efforts to denounce and unmask any undercover operations of religious radicalism and extremism. He warned those operating to promote intolerance under the guise of religion to refrain from any such activity. He confirmed the government would continue to take all legal measures against such attempts by religious fundamentalists.

Dr. Aisha Abdullah, the African Union's Commissioner of Political Affairs, speaking on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, expressed her thanks to the Ministry of Federal Affairs and the Ethiopian Inter Religious Council for this important conference. She noted that historically speaking religion had been one of the most progressive agents of peace, and peaceful co-existence among the world's various ethnic and social groups. Religions might differ in approach and methodologies, but one thing remained common to all, particularly in Africa today, and that was the campaign for, and the preaching of love and peaceful co-existence among people. Dr. Aisha praised the Federal Government of Ethiopia and its Constitution for the provision for equality of religions and beliefs, as well as the adequate provisions and effective implementation of these in the Constitution. She noted that the Constitution also guaranteed non-interference of the Government in religious activities. Dr. Aisha pointed out that Chapter Three of the AU Charter on Democracy, Election and Governance also provided for democratic principles that recognized and respected human and religious rights. She said her department had been working across the continent, campaigning for the signing, ratification and implementation of the Charter to promote peaceful co-existence and tolerance among the various religious and

ethnic groups in Africa, and working to ensure effective operationalization of this provision. Her office had also developed a Human Rights Strategy to promote and protect religious rights and tolerance throughout the continent. Effective implementation of these Instruments would not only promote the National Renaissance in Ethiopia, she said, it would also contribute to the actualization of Pan Africanism and the African Renaissance. She hoped that the Conference would provide an opportunity to help implement the progressive provisions on religious matters laid down in the Constitution.

During the next two days, the conference heard and discussed papers on various subjects, including details of the internal and external sources for radicalism and extremism. There was agreement that root causes for the problem were largely internal, including poverty, backwardness and diseases, and the prime solutions for the problem were therefore identified as the realization of rapid socio-economic development, provision of employment opportunities, good governance and the deepening and strengthening of democratic processes. Participants agreed radicalism and extremism had no basic relationships with religious issues. They asserted their readiness to strengthen cooperation among themselves and their member institutions and to work closely with the government to build upon the existing traditions of peaceful coexistence and contribute to national development. They agreed that it was essential to uproot the fundamentalist tendencies observed in the last couple of years. The conference confirmed that religion was a real agent of peace and peaceful co-existence, particularly among the various nations and nationalities and social groups in Ethiopia. It acknowledged the importance of the preaching of love and peaceful co-existence among citizens that is common to all religions. It agreed that the mere fact of the conference was timely and historic and the presence of all stakeholders together was a reminder of how immensely important was the nation's long-standing culture of tolerance. While the government pledged to do all in its power to control the situation in a way that enriches the tolerance the nation has nurtured for so long, the conference asked it not to take any trend of radicalism and extremism lightly, stressing the need to take firm action to control it.

In his concluding remarks, Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonen called on religious institutions and their followers, schools and their students, different associations and their members and the media to deepen and strengthen efforts to demonstrate that the dangers of fundamentalism to national development, peace and harmony cannot be overemphasized. Innocent lives can be lost, the social fiber threatened, national development stunted and foreign investments discouraged, he said. The Government cannot afford to treat religious intolerance with levity. He said it would take stern measures to manage and remove such radicalism and extremist tendencies in order to keep the culture of tolerance as strong as ever and maintain rapid socio-economic development. The Constitution is a formal national framework that promotes peaceful co-existence and inclusivity among the various religions and peoples of Ethiopia. The Deputy Prime Minister warned those trying to promote intolerance under the disguise of religion to refrain. The Government would, he said, continue to take legal measures against such attempts. He emphasized that the principles of tolerance, empathy, sharing and dialogue, to mention but a few, were fundamental to peaceful co-existence and development in any country. These, he said, were principles recognized by the Federal Democratic Government of Ethiopia's Constitution which had the overall objective to promote good governance, peaceful coexistence

and human rights throughout the country. The Constitution provided that everybody in Ethiopia should have the duty to respect and consider his fellow beings without discrimination, whether religious, ethnic or cultural, and to promote and safeguard mutual respect and tolerance. Effective implementation of this would promote the national renaissance. The Government, he stressed, was committed to religious tolerance, peaceful co-existence and mutual respect among the various religious groups, to promote national unity and sustainable peace and development. The conference concluded by adopting seven resolutions. These called for the strengthening of the value of religious diversity, peaceful coexistence and respect for the provisions of the Constitution which guaranteed the equality all faiths , and respect for other democratic and human rights; for raising the awareness of citizens to play their own role in society; and for encouraging the need to build a national consensus. The conference agreed there was no cause for radicalism or terrorism in Ethiopia, and it called on people, and in particular women and the youth, to remain vigilant and avoid becoming instruments of undercover fundamentalist or extremist operations; and to maintain and strengthen the values of religious coexistence and tolerance. It called for all stakeholders to discharge their responsibilities to curb the threat of extremism and fundamentalism; asked the Government to organize further conferences to support this; and underlined the importance of putting in place effective follow up mechanisms to continue support for religious tolerance and for control of extremism and fundamentalism.

Sudan: Minimal progress over Darfur negotiations....

The Joint Peace Mediator for Darfur, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Head of the African Union–United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) held a consultation meeting in Tanzania last week with two of the Darfur rebel groups, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudan Liberation Movement led by Minni Minnawi (SLM-MM). A third group, the SLM faction led by Abdel Wahid Al-Nur, refused to participate in the meeting unless all the Sudanese Revolutionary Forces participated. Mr. Chambas was accompanied by the European Union Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, Rosalind Marsden. During their discussions he called on JEM and the SLM-MM to negotiate a peaceful settlement to the Darfur crisis in order to alleviate the suffering of civilians, pointing out that such a deal would pave the way for a comprehensive solution. The Joint Mediator and the rebels agreed to meet within two months to resume consultations over ways to organize direct peace negotiations between them and the Sudanese government.

These consultations came two years after the signing of the Doha Declaration for Peace in Darfur between the Sudanese Government and the Liberation and Justice Movement in July 2011. At that time, JEM said it could consider the Doha Document as a basis for additional discussions but Khartoum refused as the group had a separate track in the peace negotiation process. Following the formation of a coalition with the SPLM-North in November 2011, those rebel groups which had refused to participate at Doha have continued to refuse to engage in talks on the basis of the Doha Document claiming they wanted a holistic process to discuss all the regional conflicts in Sudan and the re-establishment of a democratic regime on a secular basis.

On Wednesday (August 28) , Mohamed Ibn Chambas met Amin Hassan Omer, head of Sudan's Darfur peace follow-up office in Khartoum and briefed him on the meeting in Tanzania, pointing out the two groups had reiterated the need for "a holistic and comprehensive approach to resolving the problems facing the country", calling this "both necessary and urgent." They had therefore "stressed the need to harmonize and coordinate the existing mediation mechanisms in order to achieve a coherent and integrated approach".

Amin Hassan Omer told Mohamed Chambas that the Sudan government refused "any talk about creating new platforms". He underlined the Government's commitment to the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur and said after the meeting that there was no indication of any evolution in the position of the non-signatory rebel groups towards the peace process in Darfur. He said the Arusha meeting had provided an opportunity for the Joint Chief Mediator to discover the views of the rebel groups, but it appeared there had been no positive developments that might serve the goals of peace, he said. He reiterated the government's refusal to establish one platform for the conflicts in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan as demanded by the rebel Sudanese Revolutionary Front coalition which included rebel movements in Darfur as well as the SPLM-North. He pointed out however, that the government welcomed the participation of all the rebel groups in a comprehensive constitutional dialogue together with the other political forces. He noted the Government was in continuous contact with the Qatari officials who facilitated the Darfur peace process to encourage rebel groups to join the Doha forum. He repeated that the "Doha Document for Peace in Darfur remained "the fundamental basis of all peace agreements that safeguard the rights of Darfur people", adding it was open to anyone who wants to join the peace process.

The leadership of a JEM break-away group, the Justice and Equality Movement-Bashar (JEM-Bashar) will be arriving in Khartoum within three weeks to inaugurate the implementation of their peace agreement signed with the government last April. The group negotiated an agreement with the Sudanese government on the basis of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur in April. An advance delegation of the former rebels, led by their deputy chairman, has arrived in Khartoum and in a press conference on Tuesday (August 27) reiterated their commitment to fully implement the signed agreements, thanking the Chadian government and Qatar for facilitating the negotiations. In line with the power-sharing agreement they have signed, the former rebels will be allocated two national ministerial portfolios, five Darfur Regional Administration ministries and commissions, a deputy speaker of the DRA legislative council, five state ministers and five commissioners, as well as some seats in the DRA legislative body.

...a new US Special Envoy for Sudan and a UN Security Council statement

On Wednesday this week, US President Obama appointed Ambassador Donald Booth as the US Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan. A White House statement said supporting peace between and within Sudan and South Sudan remained a priority for this administration and emphasized that Ambassador Booth had "extensive experience promoting peace and prosperity across the African continent". Ambassador Booth will now work with the African Union and the international community to facilitate the resolution of pending issues between the two countries, including Abyei referendum and the disputed border zones. He will also seek to aid efforts aimed

at ending the ongoing conflicts in Darfur, Southern Kordofan, and Blue Nile “as part of a holistic solution to Sudan’s human rights, humanitarian, and governance crises,” as well as “urge South Sudan to stay focused on protecting its people, meeting their needs, and realizing their aspirations for a more peaceful, prosperous, and democratic future”.

Ambassador Booth who has just finished serving as the US Ambassador to Ethiopia and who previously served in Zambia and Liberia, succeeds Ambassador Princeton Lyman who resigned late last year for health reasons. There has been criticism in Congress over the delay in picking a new envoy, but the appointment of Ambassador Booth has been welcomed. Congresswoman Karen Bass, Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Ranking Member of the Africa Subcommittee said she was pleased at the appointment of Ambassador Booth. She described him a seasoned, well-regarded and thoughtful diplomat whose appointment could not be more timely. The Sudan activist group, Enough, said the appointment would enhance U.S efforts to promote peace within Sudan and between Sudan and South Sudan. “It urged the envoy to push for a comprehensive, internationally-backed peace process in Sudan which does not segment the conflicts across border regions of Darfur, Abyei, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile State and include greater engagement with opposition groups working toward democratic transformation in Sudan.”

Meanwhile, on Friday last week (August 23), the United Nations Security Council urged Sudan and South Sudan to immediately implement the series of security and economic agreements and to cooperate with the African Union to advance towards normalizing the relations between the two countries. The Council expressed grave concern over the continuing challenges to the implementation of the September 27, 2012 Addis Ababa Agreements signed under the auspices of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel. These included provisions on security, the common border and economic relations aimed at enabling the two nations to fulfill their obligations under the roadmap for easing tensions and facilitating the resumption of negotiations on post-secession relations. The Council recalled resolution 2046 (2012) prohibited both States from supporting any rebel groups operating against the other State, and welcomed the establishment and the commencement of work of the Ad Hoc Investigative Mechanism (AIM) to look into such allegations. It also urged both Governments to maintain dialogue to ensure continued transportation of oil from South Sudan, and called on the Sudanese Government to suspend any actions that would halt this. The Council expressed support for the African Union Peace and Security Council for cooperation with the Abyei Area Joint Investigation and Inquiry Committee’s investigation into the recent killing of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei peacekeeper and the Ngok Dinka paramount chief. It reiterated its grave concern about the highly volatile situation in the Abyei area, stressing that the parties “must immediately implement pending aspects of the June 20, 2011 Agreement on Temporary Security and Administrative Arrangements for the Abyei Area.” It called for swift action to disarm communities there in accordance with the decision of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee to turn Abyei into a weapons-free zone. Regarding the conflict in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, the Council called for the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North, known as SPLM-N, to cease hostilities and engage in direct talks. Members of the Council urged all parties to refrain from any acts of violence against civilians, expedite safe and unhindered humanitarian access and fully respect international human rights law. It also

emphasized that those responsible for violations and abuses of international human rights law should be held accountable.

During the discussion, the representative of Sudan hailed the extension of the mandate of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel and the establishment of the African Union Border Program Technical Team, whose determination of the centreline of the safe demilitarized border zone would, he said, help resolve several issues between Sudan and South Sudan. He said Sudan would cooperate to ensure aid reached South Kordofan and Blue Nile, noting that failure to do so was due to the rejection by some parties of the Cooperation Agreements. The representative of South Sudan said he was pleased with the progress on implementing the Cooperation Agreements, which would provide fertile ground for advancing bilateral relations. He added that peace was vital to the two nations' economic, political and social coexistence.

Commemoration for the late Prime Minister Meles in Khartoum

The first anniversary of the death of the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi was commemorated in Khartoum on Saturday (August 24). The occasion was organized under the auspices of Field Marshal Omer Hassan Al-Bashir, President of the Republic of Sudan and the Ethiopian Embassy in cooperation with the Sudanese-Ethiopian Friendship Association. Speakers at the opening session included W/ro. Azeb Mesfin, the widow of the late Prime Minister; Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail, Sudan's Minister of Investment; Dr. Nafi Ali Nafi, Senior Presidential Advisor, Ambassador Abadi Zemo, Ethiopian Ambassador to Sudan, and Sadiq Al-Mahdi, former Prime Minister of Sudan.

Following the opening program a symposium was held covering a number of subjects including Meles and Ethiopia's Foreign Relations; Meles and the relationship between Ethiopia and the Sudan; Meles and African issues; Meles and international relations; and Meles and the future of Ethio-Sudan relations. Speakers at the symposium were Ambassador Osman Elsayid, Ambassador Dr. Atallah Hamad Bashir, Ambassador Abdul Mahmud Abdulhalim, H.E. Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail and Ambassador Abadi Zemo who spoke on behalf of Ethiopian Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros Adhanom, all presented papers.

Ambassador Abadi Zemo read a message from Dr. Tedros Adhanom, Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, at the opening of the ceremony in which he expressed his gratitude to the people and government of the Sudan for organizing this commemoration as a tribute to honor the remarkable legacy of one of Africa's finest sons. Dr. Tedros noted that the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, and his dear friend and brother, President Al-Bashir, provided indispensable leadership to elevate the relationship and the cooperation between Ethiopia and Sudan to a new and strategic level. He said Ethiopians were highly appreciative of the outpouring of sympathy from the people and government of the Sudan following the untimely death of the late Prime Minister. This ceremony served as yet another demonstration of the strong solidarity and friendship between the two countries.

Dr. Tedros noted that “the life of Prime Minister Meles was one of extraordinary service to Ethiopia and to Africa as a whole” adding that “he dedicated his life towards promoting peace, justice, development and prosperity in Ethiopia and Africa”. Correctly identifying poverty as the prime enemy, the late Prime Minister worked “with energy and determination to fight this single most important source of our national shame and humiliation”. Dr. Tedros said Ethiopia is now implementing the right mix of policies and strategies to turn the corner against poverty and realize the vision of becoming a middle income country and a carbon neutral green economy within the next decade or so. “It gives us enormous satisfaction”, he said, “to note today that Ethiopia has come a long way, transforming itself from a poster child of poverty and conflict to a peaceful and stable country registering impressive economic growth that has lifted millions out of abject poverty.” He said the late Prime Minister had laid a strong foundation for the political and socio-economic transformation of Ethiopia. He would be remembered as a great statesman with the rare gifts of world class intellect and capable leadership qualities, and the Meles Zenawi Foundation would now support and keep his memory alive for coming generations.

W/ro Azeb, the President of the Meles Zenawi Foundation, also expressed heartfelt gratitude to the people of Sudan for their support and solidarity when Ethiopia was grieving for the death of Prime Minister Meles, and Sudan, she said, had a special place in the hearts of Ethiopians. She emphasized Meles’ selfless commitment to the betterment of the people of Ethiopia and of Africa, his outstanding leadership in building the new Ethiopia when so many had lost hope, and his key role in transforming Ethiopia’s economy and in the advancement of democracy.

The representative of the Sudanese Armed Forces described Meles as an exceptional figure with immense regional influence, a unique model who had made great efforts for the cause of his people and country, promulgating a most progressive constitution, and building excellent bilateral relations between Sudan and Ethiopia. He also emphasized that Meles’ contributions in resolving issues between Sudan and South Sudan was of the greatest importance. Representing the government of Sudan, Dr. Nafi Ali Nafi noted that the special relationship between Sudan and Ethiopia was embodied in the principles laid down by the late Prime Minister, a man who had steadfastly followed the principles he had held since the time of struggle.

Sadiq Al-Mahdi, the former Prime Minister of Sudan and now leader of the opposition National Umma Party, said the late Prime Minister was a pillar and an advocate of a strong relationship between Sudan and Ethiopia. Al-Mahdi described Meles as a liberator who had transformed himself into a statesman after a revolution. He had understood early that he had to decentralize power and federalize the country in order to achieve the development which had been such a real success. Al-Mahdi added that Meles was someone with a wide understanding, the ability to be a good listener and a man of deep reflection.

During the presentations at the symposium, the late Prime Minister was described as a highly disciplined leader who strictly discharged his official functions during his life time. Deeply convinced that poverty was the prime enemy for Ethiopia, Meles had started by placing the house in order through his unrelenting efforts in combating poverty. He was portrayed by all presenters as a man who believed that working together on regional and international levels could alleviate the various problems Ethiopia and Africa are facing. Speakers noted Meles’ strong conviction that there was a strong relationship between peace and development and

highlighted the fact that Meles had worked to realize his vision both through African Union and through various international fora. The symposium agreed that he had excellent ability in reading the dynamics of international power relations and this had helped him to form alliances with the great powers as well as friends with neighbors. He provided a voice for the voiceless of Africa and was always ready to shoulder African issues which, in many cases, he strongly believed were not created by Africans.

On the bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and Sudan, the symposium noted that Meles had strongly advocated closer ties and done much to encourage this by forming a personal relationship with the leadership in Sudan. Indeed, he had turned it into a form of institutional relationship. Ethiopia and Sudan are, of course, endowed with a lot of resources. These can be incentives for greater cooperation, and presenters recommended that fostering relations among the ethnic groups straddling the border, increasing cross-boundary farming links and opening up borders, were important alongside the maintenance of positive trade balances to further strengthen ties. Dr. Mustafa, a former Foreign Minister of Sudan (1998-2005), in his presentation, “Meles and the future of Ethio-Sudan Relations”, compared the trade balances between Ethiopia and Sudan and between Sudan and Egypt, noting that the later was negative for Sudan. He said that the approximately 2 million Ethiopians living in Sudan, compared to nearly 30,000 Egyptians, was another positive factor bolstering bilateral relations. He also made reference to the Ethiopian peacekeepers in Darfur and Abyei, together with the growing social and economic relationship between the two countries. These he said made positive leverage to foster ties between the two countries, adding that geopolitical factors favored greater cooperation between Ethiopia and Sudan.

A day before the memorial ceremony and the symposium, another commemoration was held on August 23 for Ethiopians residing in Sudan. Over 1,500 attended the first anniversary of the death of the late Prime Minister at the Ethiopian Embassy in Khartoum to hear Ambassador Abadi remember Meles as an outstanding leader whose life-long service brought millions of Ethiopians out of abject poverty. He said Meles’ brilliant leadership in formulating and executing the right policies has turned a country known for repeated famine and drought into a thriving nation of millionaire farmers. He said the people of Ethiopia had vowed to maintain the legacy of Meles and safeguard the achievements through continued strong support to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and other infrastructure projects. He underlined that Meles had worked hard to build a carbon free economy in a bid to achieve his vision of a carbon zero development for Ethiopia by 2020. He had also striven for peace and stability in the Horn, in Africa and in the world in general, and with tangible results. In conclusion, Ambassador Abadi urged Ethiopians to continue their strong support for the grand projects launched by Meles, and he called upon Ethiopians in Sudan to strengthen their fraternal relations and help end the tragic effects of illegal trafficking.

Religious leaders and community representatives who spoke agreed that the late Prime Minister was a visionary and pragmatic leader who had thought all his life that poverty was Ethiopia's main problem. This was a quality, they emphasized, that would remain in the hearts and minds of the people of Ethiopia for ever. They urged all Ethiopians in Sudan to continue to support the GERD and other major development projects and to fully realize the vision of Meles.

