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*News in Brief:*

**African Union/IGAD**

The Elysee Declaration from the two day Elysee Summit for Peace and Security in Africa last weekend calls for stronger partnership between Africa and France. It hailed the positive results of Africa's engagement in peace and security affairs in Somalia and elsewhere, and recognized African solutions to African problems. France committed itself to supporting the African Union's efforts to reach full operationalization of the African Standby Force and its Rapid Deployment Capability by 2015.

Ethiopian Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros Adhanom participated in the Foreign Minister's meeting of the Elysee Summit on Peace and Security, emphasizing the importance of strengthening the African Union Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and urging more French investment in Africa. He called on France to play a proper role in reaching a fair and binding agreement on climate change in 2015.

On Monday (December 9), IGAD launched its regional Sustainable Tourism Master Plan at a two day meeting held in Nairobi. The meeting, attended by tourism ministers and ministry representatives from across the region, was the result of nearly three years of preparation and followed regional workshops in Addis Ababa in June 2012 and Kampala in October 2012, as well as national consultative workshops and other meetings.

The First African Regional Counter-Terrorism Coordinators Meeting opened in Addis Ababa on Friday (December 6) under the theme: "Enhancing Counter-Terrorism Coordination at the Regional and Continental Levels." It is part of efforts to operationalize the framework to improve regional and continental coordination and complementarity, on the development and implementation of regional strategies for the prevention and combating of terrorism.

## **Ethiopia**

The 8<sup>th</sup> Nations, Nationalities and People's Day was celebrated last weekend in Jigjiga, the capital of the Somali Regional State and round the world by Ethiopians in the Diaspora and in Ethiopian Embassies in the UK, the US and elsewhere.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn met the Foreign Affairs Minister of Kazakhstan, Erlan Iddrissov, on Wednesday (December 11). The Foreign Minister said Kazakhstan is hoping to further enhance political, diplomatic and economic cooperation with Ethiopia, and open an embassy in the coming year. During his visit Mr. Iddrissov also held talks with Foreign Minister Dr Tedros Adhanom.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn held talks on Monday (December 9) with United Nations Secretary General's Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance for Development (UNSGSA), Queen Maxima of the Netherlands, on ways of making financial inclusion possible for all Ethiopians.

Deputy Prime Minister, Demeke Mekonnen, has been given an Honorary Degree at Bradford University in the UK. **(See article)**

On Monday (December 9) the Governments of Ethiopia, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and the Federal Republic of Germany, announced a partnership to improve rural land governance for economic growth and to protect the land rights of local citizens in Ethiopia. Minister of Agriculture, Tefera Derbew, welcomed the agreement as support for the implementation of Ethiopia's Rural Land Administration and Use plan.

Water ministers from Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan met in Khartoum on Monday (December 9). Water Minister, Alemayehu Tegenu, said differences over the makeup of the committee to deal with following up implementation of the recommendations of the international panel of experts had almost been resolved. Remaining issues will be addressed in Khartoum in the first week of January.

A signing ceremony of Sister City Agreement between Addis Ababa and Washington, DC took place on Wednesday (December 11) in Washington when Mayor Diriba Kuma of Addis Ababa and Mayor Vincent Gray of Washington D.C. inked their signatures heralding the coming into effect of an all-round cooperation and partnership between the two Metropolises.

The annual evening of Ethiopian music, dance and cuisine has been organized by Ethiopians in Tokyo, and attended by African ambassadors, diplomats, Ethiopians and Japanese citizens as well as by members of the Ethiopian Cultural Troupe from the National Theater, currently touring Japan. **(See article)**

During its 8<sup>th</sup> conference of intangible cultural heritages, UNESCO has decided to add Ethiopia's Meskel celebrations to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Meskel, celebrated across Ethiopia on 26<sup>th</sup> of September, commemorates the finding of the True Cross by the Empress Helena.

## **Djibouti**

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) at its 34th summit in Kuwait agreed to give Djibouti 200 million USD in the coming five years for development projects

A Djibouti soldier with AMISOM died after an explosion during mine clearing operations in Belet Weyne at the weekend.

## **Eritrea**

The coach of the Eritrean national football team Omer Ahmed and eight of his players have reportedly defected during a visit to Kenya for the Cecafta Cup, following the 'disappearance' of two members of the national team, the Red Sea Camels, last week. Last December, 17 members of the team and the team doctor claimed asylum in Uganda; and previously members of the national team have defected while on visits to Kenya, Tanzania and Angola.

## **Kenya**

Kenyans marked half a century of independence from Britain on Thursday (December 12). Celebrations being attended by regional leaders began at midnight on Wednesday, with the Kenyan flag raised in Nairobi's Uhuru Gardens in a re-enactment of the moment 50 years earlier when Britain's rule ended. President Uhuru Kenyatta addressed the crowds as his father Jomo Kenyatta had done in 1963 as the first President of an independent Kenya.

President Kenyatta has appointed Major General F K Nthenge as Deputy Force Commander of AMISOM. He has also created a new command for the Kenya Defence Forces, the Nairobi Metropolitan Command, tasked to deal with emerging security threats in the country. The Kenya Defence Forces have previously been divided into two commands, East and West.

A Kenyan delegation, composed of economic officials at the Kenyan Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Trade and businessmen, has been visiting Sudan this week to reactivate trade relations between Sudan and Kenya and open wider horizons of cooperation between the two countries.

Following further clashes and violence, in which an estimated thirty people died last week in the northern Moyale area, tens of thousands of people have been displaced, and thousands have fled across the border into Ethiopia. The government has deployed troops in an effort to quell unrest between the Borana and Gabra communities.

## **Somalia**

The President of Somalia, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, named Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed as the country's new prime minister on Thursday (12 December).

The President of Somalia, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, on Monday (December 9) accepted credentials from the newly appointed German Ambassador, Andreas Peschke, and the newly appointed Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Mahmoud M. Auf to Somalia.

Gulf States held a special conference on the reconstruction of Somalia during the GCC summit which opened on Tuesday in Kuwait.

The United Nations will conduct a survey in the Dadaab refugee complex in Kenya to determine how willing Somali refugees are to return to Somalia. All Somali refugees will be asked if they wish to return home, and if so, where. Areas that appear relatively peaceful will be targeted for refugee return including Luuq, Baidoa and Kismayo.

A Danish delegation, headed by the Senior Technical Adviser of the Danish Foreign Ministry and including representatives from the DANIDA Programme Office has been visiting Somaliland

## **South Sudan**

Senior leaders of South Sudan's governing Sudan People's Liberation Movement have announced they plan to hold a public rally on the current state of the party's internal affairs on Saturday (December. 14). The announcement was made by first deputy chairman, Riek Machar, along with Pagan Amum and Deng Alor and other senior party members

## **Sudan**

Sudan will take part at the meeting of the African ministerial council of the African Union, scheduled in Addis Ababa, December 16-17. The Council will hear a report of the African Union delegation which went to UN Security Council to call for a postponement of the Kenyan President trial before the International Criminal Court.

The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) led by Gibril Ibrahim and the Sudan Liberation Movement faction led by Arko Minni Minawi (SLM-MM) concluded on Wednesday (December 11) a workshop with the joint chief mediator on Darfur, Mohamed Ibn Chmbas. In a statement, the two rebel groups reiterated their demand for a "comprehensive, inclusive, just and sustainable negotiated peaceful settlement of the Sudanese conflict."

## ***Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan Water Affairs ministers meeting in Khartoum***

The Water Ministers of Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan met for the second time in Khartoum to discuss the implementation of the recommendations of the International Panel of Experts report on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). The meeting was held on December 8 and 9 in Khartoum. Alemayehu Tegen, Ethiopia's Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy, Ahmed Bahaa Eddin, Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation, and Sudan's newly appointed Minister for Water Resources and Electricity, Moataz Moussa Abdalla Salim, led their respective delegations of experts. In a subsequent press statement jointly issued by the three ministers, the meeting was described as being conducted in a spirit of cooperation and transparency.

At the conclusion of the meeting the Ministers agreed they had been able to address a significant part of the issues for following up on the Panel's recommendations, and remaining issues could be addressed in a third meeting scheduled for January 4 and 5. They agreed to establish a Committee of Experts to follow up the recommendations. At their earlier meeting on November 4, the composition of the joint committee was a point of contention. Ethiopia and Sudan proposed that the composition of the joint committee should be made up of national experts; Egypt wanted to include international experts. At this week's meeting overcoming their difference, they agreed on the proposal of forming committee with only national experts. The Committee of Experts will be made up of four national members to be designated by each Minister. This Tripartite National Experts Committee is now mandated to prepare the Terms of Reference to be presented and approved by the three Ministers of Water Affairs. The Committee is expected to be established within less than a month.

The meeting demonstrates a useful step forward as the composition of the committee was a

contentious element at the November meeting. Ethiopia, of course, originally took the initiative to establish the International Panel of Experts in order to build confidence and trust among the lower riparian countries. The Panel's recommendations, all accepted by Ethiopia, confirmed Ethiopia's own assessment that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam posed no appreciable harm for Egypt and Sudan. Ethiopia has already begun to take steps to implement the recommendations of the Panel which it made for all the countries concerned.

### ***Ethiopia - Sudan bilateral relations: A model for regional integration***

Ethiopia and Sudan recently concluded their third Joint Commission Meeting, signing 13 agreements and an executive program covering numerous areas of cooperation. The signing of the Framework Agreement for Trade and Economic cooperation, in particular, signified a move towards the solid and multifaceted economic integration of the two countries. In the past decade Sudan and Ethiopia have gone a long way towards paving the way for regional integration and producing a model for the sub-region. The commitment by the political leadership of both countries has achieved important gains in economic integration. Nothing exemplifies the growing relationship between the two countries better than the increasing volume of trade which reached \$322 million in 2011 showing a 27% annual growth.

One of the most important steps in this regard is linked to the Preferential Trade Agreement signed between the two sides in 2005. This abolished tariff barriers and had the effect of increasing trade volume significantly. Now the two countries are discussing ways to harmonize customs procedures and ease rules of origin. This again will certainly impact on trade relations, encouraging an increase in the diversity and quantity of commercial products traded. The easing of rules of origin will also increase the exchange of manufactured goods. The MoU covering cooperation in customs also envisages greater cooperation in controlling smuggling, fiscal fraud through joint administration links, capacity building and exchanges of information. The signing is certainly a step forward in controlling the sort of illicit trade which hampers regular trade in many African countries, and will therefore improve regional integration efforts.

The general agreement signed between Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn and President Omar Al-Beshir outlined a framework for further consolidation of economic integration endeavors. In a significant move, the agreement outlined a number of areas to be given special status in the relationship. These included trade, tourism, investment, intellectual property rights, energy and infrastructure, mining, water, agriculture, the environment and forestry. In terms of regional integration, the Framework Agreement stipulates provisions that encourage trade promotion through business-to-business relations, and one-stop border services to ease trade flow and movement of people. In addition, the opening of correspondent banks' offices in both countries, harmonizing the nomenclature of goods, the agreement to operate through the COMESA Regional Payment and settlement system and the harmonization of standardization rules underline the commitment of the two governments for seamless economic integration.

In order to address infrastructural problems, one of the major impediments holding back realization of regional integration, the two countries have been jointly working on road network building projects. The first all-weather road connecting Azezo-Metema-Humera and Port Sudan is now operational. The Ethiopian side of the road connecting Benishagnul Region's Kurmuk to Sudan's Kurmuk-Demazen is complete and the Sudanese side is under construction. Ethiopia is also working on a new road from Gonder-Humera to Lugdi as a new addition to the road network. Fiber optics joining Ethiopia's internet network through Port Sudan is another infrastructural development connecting the two countries. At the Joint Commission meeting a further bilateral agreement for passenger road transport was agreed, the result of the years of work to build all-weather roads. The Agreement envisages commercial road passenger transport to be operated to and from the cities of the two countries. A ground breaking agreement has been signed to study the launch of standard

gauge railway transport. On the Ethiopian side this is expected to commence after 2015, during the second phase of the GTP. The commencement of the railway project will eventually enable Ethiopia to use Sudanese ports specially Port Sudan. The Framework Agreement commits both countries to jointly study ways that Ethiopia can use Port Sudan more effectively.

In relation to energy, the Ethio-Sudan power systems interconnection inaugurated at Gedaref is also part of the area of infrastructural integration. Increasing border trade is pushing the demand for power up and given Ethiopia's huge potential for power development, power integration will be an important part of the integration. The fact that Ethiopia relies on Sudan for its supply of petroleum makes the energy integration a mutual benefit for the two countries. At the same line, the air service agreement which allows the national carriers of the two countries to operate in each other's territory compliments the road transport and railway plans to boost people-to-people relations and the trade and investment relationship. Another MoU was signed to coordinate settlement of foreign currency payment for contracting parties involved in import and export trade in each country. In the areas of tourism, agreement was also reached over joint promotional work and over protection of trans-boundary game reserves. Experience sharing and capacity building was a central element in the agreements over mining and energy. Ethiopia has requested assistance from Sudan in the administration of petroleum contracts and other related areas.

In a testament to this growing bilateral relationship, the communiqué issued after the meeting expressed their deep satisfaction with the progress made in economic, political and social areas. The two leaders firmly reiterated their commitment and determination to consolidate ties and relations between their peoples in all fields. They expressed their satisfaction over the encouraging progress registered so far in the areas of political, economic and social development cooperation, especially in infrastructural interconnection. They welcomed the signing of the framework agreement on Trade, Economic and Technical Cooperation, and further noted with satisfaction the signing of various agreements and MoUs. Both sides also recommitted themselves to the decision of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government to revitalize IGAD to speed up the regional integration process and expressed their determination to coordinate their efforts to this end. Overall, as outlined, there can be no doubt that Ethiopia and Sudan are entering a new era of stronger economic and social ties leading to regional integration. The preferential trade area and the various elements of legal framework and infrastructural integration all point to the emergence of strong bilateral relation which can become a model for the region.

### ***Kenya's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary; Prime Minister Hailemariam attends the celebrations***

The celebrations on Thursday (December 12) were held at the Kasarani Stadium. Heads of State and Government from the region were among the invited guests who came to join Kenyans celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the country's independence from British rule; Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn headed Ethiopia's delegation. The celebrations began at midnight on Wednesday (December 11), with the Kenyan flag being raised in Nairobi's Uhuru Gardens in a re-enactment of the moment 50 years ago when Britain's rule ended, and President Uhuru Kenyatta addressed the crowds as his father, Jomo Kenyatta, had done in 1963 as the first President of an independent Kenya.

President Kenyatta called for Africa to be treated equally on the world stage saying it was important for foreign powers to realize that Africa had "come of age". The President said "we will embrace partnerships based on mutual respect and win-win scenarios. We will not accept partnerships that do not recognize that we also have the intellectual capacity to engage on equal terms." "Africa", he said, "has a voice, and fifty years after independence, Africa demands that its voice must be heard."

The President said Africa was taking greater responsibility for security on the continent, adding that “Africa’s peace building efforts in the Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, are testimony to a new approach that will serve our continent well.” At the same time there was still a real need to promote peace and unity in the continent as this was crucial for any economic growth. President Kenyatta, who stressed that he was determined to provide leadership to end meaningless ethnic tension and rivalry in Kenya, also said the way forward for Kenya was greater integration with other African nations. “Africa has always stood by Kenya as we seek integration and growth, and we, in return, will always stand by Africa which is now the center of our nation’s economic policy,” he said.

During the celebrations President Kenyatta also announced five initiatives to strengthen Kenya's relationships in the region and in Africa, and in support of the ideals of African cooperation and unity. These included new efforts to champion free movement of persons on the continent though these included the principle of reciprocity. Kenya will allow any person who holds an African passport to obtain a visa upon arrival in Kenya, and any African visitor to Kenya will be allowed to stay for up to six months, on condition that they do not compromise security. “Kenya will champion, with our African brothers and sisters, the free movement of persons on the continent,” the President said. He also announced that his government would work towards enhancing cooperation in African air travel policies to increase trade and tourism. He said Kenya was ready to partner with countries in the southern, central, western and northern regions of the continent, to fast-track the implementation of the recently adopted Continental Free Trade Area. “In order to sustain and enhance this momentum,” he said “it is absolutely necessary to accelerate the implementation of the continental integration agenda especially as it relates to infrastructure development, food security, and the free movement of people, goods and services.”

Prime Minister Hailemariam congratulated the people and government of Kenya on their fifty years of independence and urged the gathering to take the time to fully celebrate the heroic resistance of their fathers and mothers who paid with their lives to give the current generation the chance to meet on the day of celebration. It was time, he said, to pay tribute to the gallant sons and daughters of Kenya who had made it possible for Kenya to disentangle itself from the yolk of colonialism and take its rightful place in the community of independent nations. “The huge sacrifice that was made to bring about political independence from colonialism paid off in many parts of Africa in large part because there was a continent-wide resolve towards that goal,” Prime Minister Hailemariam said. He pointed out that Kenya's first President, Jomo Kenyatta, had been at the forefront of the establishment of the Organization of African Unity, the predecessor of the African Union, and an organization that had been instrumental in acting as the midwife to the independence of African States. Kenya was and remained a vibrant member of the continental organization said Prime Minister Hailemariam, the current Chairperson of the African Union, adding that “Kenya has ever since been true to the founding ideals of the OAU/AU.”

Prime Minister Hailemariam also underlined Kenya's role in the region and in Africa. Calling its peace and stability "symbolic", he said the country had been and remained a strategic partner to Ethiopia and to the entire region. He said Kenya was a "home away from home" for many Ethiopians, and pointed out that the leaders of the two countries "had always had the best of bilateral relations"; indeed, it could well be called "a special relation". At the same time he

underlined the way further strengthening of the relationships between Kenya and the region were continuing through the constructive role Kenya was playing in ensuring peace and stability throughout the region including neighboring Somalia. He pointed out that without ensuring lasting peace and stability, achieving aspirations for economic development and prosperity would be an uphill struggle. He said “we have to coordinate our efforts to address our common security challenges and thereby offer our region and the continent at large a very classic example of how two responsible neighbors can make the best out of fraternal and neighborly relations”. He expressed Ethiopia's commitment to be a strong partner for peace, stability, and above all for economic development and prosperity for Kenya as well as for the region and beyond throughout Africa.

### ***Farewell to Nelson Mandela, a universal icon of peace, justice and unity***

The world has been in mourning over the last week on the death of an iconic peacemaker as well as celebrating the life and accomplishments of an African freedom fighter and the continent's greatest statesman. The news of the death of former South African President, Nelson Mandela, on Thursday (December 5), was given by President Jacob Zuma. In a nationally televised address President Zuma said, "Our people have lost a father. Although we knew this day was going to come, nothing can diminish our sense of a profound and enduring loss. His tireless struggle for freedom earned him the respect of the world. His humility, passion and humanity, earned him their love". People around the world responded to the news of Mandela's death with a heartfelt chorus of awed respect and gratitude. Across the world, political and religious leaders, celebrities and others, paid tribute to the world's most famous and most venerated symbol of struggle against injustice and an embodiment of racial reconciliation.

The Ethiopian Government conveyed its messages of condolence to the family of President Mandela and to the People and the Government of the Republic of South Africa, expressing its deepest sorrow over the passing of Nelson Mandela. "President Mandela did not only lead his country's struggle against Apartheid but has also been the torch bearer in the quest for Africa's freedom. He inspired generations of world leaders to stand for justice, human dignity and freedom across the globe," the statement said and added "Indeed, President Mandela leaves behind a great vision from which all Africans should draw inspiration. The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia will continue to value the principles of democracy, freedom, justice, tolerance and reconciliation for which President Mandela dedicated his life".

The House of People's Representatives held a special session on December 7 to commemorate the passing of Nelson Mandela and declared three days of national mourning during which the Ethiopian Flag should fly at half-mast in all Ethiopian Regional States as well as in the two City Administrations, all diplomatic missions abroad, business offices and Ethiopian ships.

In Addis Ababa, the African Union, the South African Embassy and the Ethiopian Government jointly organized a memorial service on Sunday for the late anti-apartheid leader. On the occasion, leaders of the Orthodox, Catholic, Muslim, Protestant and Jewish communities in Addis Ababa, delivered prayers celebrating the life of the departed hero, recalling President Mandela's role in the reconciliation of the communities of South Africa and elsewhere and his calls for mercy and peace. Clips and music celebrating his life were screened during the memorial service in the presence of senior officials from the AU, the Ethiopian Government and the diplomatic community. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the AU Commission, praised Mandela's struggle and his contributions to freedom and humanity, as well as to Africa's peace, development and prosperity. In her statement the Commission Chairperson said, "Madiba, as he was fondly known, symbolizes the spirit of Pan Africanism and solidarity in the struggles of humanity against apartheid, oppression and colonialism and for self-determination, peace and reconciliation."



The Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Chairperson of the African Union, Hailemariam Desalegn said it was “altogether fitting and proper that this memorial for the life of such a giant be held within the premises of the African Union, the cause of which this great man’s journey symbolizes so poignantly”. He added “his life also represented what was promising about the continent’s future: that if we fight injustice tooth and nail, that if we persevere in the face of atrocities, that if we remain committed to the ideals of justice, liberation and above all the sanctity of human dignity - we can ultimately prevail over evil no matter how far the odds are stacked against us.” Prime Minister Hailemariam underlined the lessons we can all learn from the life of Mandela: “As we celebrate his exceptional life today it is incumbent upon us to once again dedicate ourselves to the very ideals this great man stood for; justice, equality, freedom, democracy, unity and diversity and, of course, the Renaissance of our Mother Africa.”

On December 10<sup>th</sup>, tens of thousands of, presidents, prime ministers, royals, celebrities and South Africans, gathered in Johannesburg: united to say farewell to a man universally seen as a global symbol of reconciliation. In what has been billed as the largest gathering of global leaders in recent history, representatives from around the world joined street sweepers, actors and religious figures to pay tribute and celebrate the life of Nelson Mandela. From President Barack Obama to Cuba's Raul Castro, praise came from all sides in a four-hour memorial service at Johannesburg FNB stadium for the world's most revered statesman. It was at this stadium, 23 years earlier, that Nelson Mandela had delivered his first speech after he was released from prison and hailed by his supporters as the hope of a new South Africa.

Nelson Mandela an activist, a politician, a scholar and a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. He fought against apartheid and played a prominent role in the reconciliation process of a fractured nation in the aftermath of decades of minority rule. As a young law student, in 1961, he became the commander of the ANC's armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe. He was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment for his involvement in planning armed action. Imprisoned on the infamous Robben Island Prison, a maximum security facility on a small island off the coast of Cape Town, he was later moved to the Victor Verster Prison near Paarl from where he was eventually released. Incarcerated for 27 years, he became a symbol of freedom and equality amongst opponents of apartheid in South Africa and in the international community. When finally released, Mandela returned to the leadership of the ANC and between 1990 and 1994 led the party in the negotiations that finally resulted in the country's first multi-racial elections.

As the first black President of South Africa (1994 - 1999) he presided over the transition from minority rule and apartheid and won international praise for his leadership and his emphasis on the reconciliation in the nation. Following his retirement as president in 1999, Mandela went on to become an advocate for a variety of social and human-rights organizations. He used his status as a respected elder statesman to give weight to many important issues. The fight against HIV/AIDS was one of his primary concerns and he used his place in the world to raise awareness about the issue on the global stage. His name was used to promote charitable ventures close to his heart. In 2007, he brought together a group of international elder statesmen, peace activists and human rights advocates including Kofi Annan, Jimmy Carter, Ela Bhatt, Gro Harlem Brundtland and Li Zhaoxing under a non-governmental organization dubbed The Elders. This is focused on combining the collective wisdom of the world's wisest elders and using it to solve some of the world's problems. In November 2009, Mandela's contributions to world peace and freedom were underlined by a unique gesture from the United Nations General Assembly when it announced that 18 July, the birthday of Nelson Mandela, recipient of hundreds of awards and honorary recognitions including the Nobel Peace Prize, would in future be known as Mandela Day.

As Prime Minister Hailemariam stressed in his condolence message, Mandela also occupied a special place in Ethiopia and in the hearts of all Ethiopians. As an African liberation fighter, Mandela came to Ethiopia in 1962, following an invitation from Emperor Haile Selassie who had

gained the reputation of a defender of African sovereignty. Ethiopia was an ardent supporter of Africa's decolonization and of African unity. Emperor Haile Selassie strongly condemned colonization in every international forum. At the time, Ethiopia had one of the strongest armed forces on the continent and its troops had participated in the UN peacekeeping operations during the Congo crisis in 1960 and a decade earlier in the Korean War. Colonel Fekadu Wakene, a corporal back in those days, taught the South African political activist some of the tricks of guerrilla warfare. In his best seller "Long Walk to Freedom", Mandela noted that "Ethiopia has always held a special place in my own imagination, and the prospect of visiting Ethiopia attracted me more strongly than a trip to France, England, and America combined. I felt I would be visiting my own genesis, unearthing the roots of what made me an African."

Nelson Mandela was the towering figure of 20th century history, a Nobel Peace Laureate and Africa's greatest son. He showed the world how wisdom and patience can triumph over bigotry and brute force. He was truly the Father of a Nation and a militant for peace, justice and reconciliation and for the unity of all mankind.

### ***WTO progress for Least Developed Countries in Bali trade agreement***

The much anticipated latest round of negotiations in the World Trade Organization (WTO) talks, at the 9<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference in Bali, Indonesia, concluded with a global deal that has infused fresh momentum into the discussions on international trade. The deal reached in Bali is seen as hugely instrumental for safeguarding the global trading system, and maintaining the WTO as the major platform for multilateral trade negotiations. It can also be hoped that with this deal now in place, discussions will now turn to securing consensus on the remaining issues of the more ambitious and comprehensive Doha Development Agenda adopted at the Doha Ministerial Conference in November 2001.

The Bali Package, as the deal is referred to, contains agreements on trade facilitation that aims to cut bureaucratic red tape on trade procedures; on providing developing countries significant policy space for subsidizing food provisions for their poor; and on providing more assistance and preferential treatment for developing countries, especially Least Developed Countries (LDCs), to increase their export trade regime. These agreements, constituting what is arguably the first major international trade deal since the establishment of the WTO in 1995, are expected to boost global trade value by a trillion dollars and create around 20 million jobs.

The agreement on trade facilitation, which is the most important part of the Bali Package, is intended to lower the costs of trade, and make international trade move faster and more easily by streamlining trade bureaucracy, speeding up customs procedures and reducing corruption. It is hoped that the gains from a much simpler trade administration that has clarity and transparency can provide a much needed impetus to a global trading system that hasn't seen much reform in nearly two decades.

The main bone of contention in Bali, however, was the issue of food security and the means some countries have chosen to try to secure this. Some developing countries, notably India, have argued that public subsidies to the poorest and worst affected sections of their society are essential to ensure a more effective and extended reach of food security. They refused to compromise on what they said must be a basic humanitarian issue over and beyond the concerns of trade negotiations. Other countries, mostly drawn from the developed and industrialized world, argued that India's massive program of subsidizing food provision violated WTO rules aimed to prevent trade distortion. In the event, the Bali Package was saved from collapse when an agreement was finally reached allowing India to continue its subsidies for the next four years, but in a manner that will not cause serious impediments to the global trade.

The third major element of the Bali Package concerned the Least Developing Countries (LDCs).

The decisions adopted the LDCs were in part formalization and legalization of political commitments that have been expressed previously in favour of helping the Least Developed Countries achieve a competitive trade regime. Starting with the Doha Declaration, the rich member countries of the WTO have agreed to work towards establishing quota-free and tariff-free market access for member LDCs as well as to establish easier and faster negotiation procedures for LDCs attempting to accede to the WTO and to provide technical assistance that can improve LDC compliance with WTO rules and enhance their overall trade competitiveness. The Bali Package has also included elements which were not adopted previously such as simplified preferential rules of origin for Least Developed Countries and a Services Waiver Agreement that allows LDCs better access to developed countries' service markets. Institutionalizing such measures for preferential treatment for developing countries in the system and rules of the WTO is, indeed, very crucial in the process of making the idea of development central to the issues of global trade. These measures will also give countries like Ethiopia which are in the process of acceding to the WTO greater ability to cope with the initial period of membership.

Since its initial submission of application for negotiation towards membership of the WTO in January 2003, Ethiopia has submitted the required Memorandum on its Foreign Trade Regime, conducted rounds of questions and replies, submitted its initial Goods Offer and is now finalizing its initial Services' Offer document. Its decision to join the WTO stems from a policy conviction that enhanced trade contributes to economic growth and far-reaching development. Ethiopia firmly believes that a balanced and fair global trading system can achieve huge results in sustaining the development efforts of poorer countries. The Ethiopian government's oft repeated policy stance is that unfettered market rules alone cannot ensure the developmental aspirations of countries like Ethiopia. This resonates well with the acknowledgement of the WTO that undeveloped countries need more time to build up their institution and trade capacity.

Ethiopia has particularly noted the attention the WTO gives to the link between trade and development. With two-thirds of its membership coming from developing countries, the multilateral trading organization's adoption of strategies and programs that are heavily influenced by developmental considerations is something that the Ethiopian government finds particularly encouraging. The Aid for Trade initiative, that works to improve the export capabilities of the Least Developed Countries and integrate their trade regime with the global trading system, is an example of the WTO's consideration of the developmental needs of poor countries. The technical assistance and training the WTO provides to officials and stakeholders of developing countries with a view to build capacity in understanding and implementing the complex rules of the WTO system, and to improve countries' ability to negotiate accession processes is another instance of the WTO's commendable efforts in responding to the particular concerns of developing countries in issues of international trade.

Equally, perhaps the more remarkable development-related work of the WTO is the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) program it has established with its partner institutions. Established in 2008, the EIF has the objective of ensuring "coherence between the development/delivery of trade policies and national macro-economic and poverty alleviation strategies" of the Least Developed Countries. The Ethiopian government's priority of poverty alleviation and pro-poor development policies are very much in line with the aims of the EIF. The EIF's support in areas such as export-promotion, capacity building and trade facilitation is also part of the positive efforts of the program.

At a time when the wider trade-related discussion revolves less on issues of relevance or the contribution of trade to social welfare and rather more on matters of trade management and the fairness of global trading arrangement, the Ethiopian government remains committed to gradual integration of its economy into the global economic and trading systems in a way that can minimize the shock and impact that such integration brings. The Ethiopian government also believes in the importance of social programs that support the most vulnerable sections of society. Here, it finds the

Bali Package's decision not to penalize food security schemes commendable.

Ethiopia's on-going negotiations towards membership in the WTO comes at a time when the country's decade-long economic growth can be given the credit for substantial and positive results in multiple areas. The fact that the economic achievements have been able to be translated into wider developmental gains in social, education, health and other areas, can be seen as proof of the effectiveness of the Government's development policies. In this context, the bid to join WTO should be seen as a very desirable opportunity to complement and expand the policies and strategies of the Government in its efforts to maintain and continue the current path of sustainable economic growth. Trade, of course, forms part of the overall economic objectives and should not be regarded as an ideological end in itself.

### ***The Elysees Summit on Peace and Security in Africa***

Delegations from 53 African countries and France as well as representatives from the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the African Development Bank gathered in Paris on 6 and 7 December 2013, to exchange views mainly on issues of peace and security in Africa. Other issues related to economic partnership and development as well as climate change was also discussed.

The Elysee Summit was preceded by a Ministerial Meeting on 5 December 2013, which deliberated on the draft declaration to be adopted by the Summit. A Business Conference attended by representatives of public and private sectors from France and Africa was also held on 4 December 2013, with a view to facilitating business interaction and enhancing economic partnership between France and Africa. In his address at the business conference, President Francois Hollande recognized the tremendous opportunity available for investment in the energy sector in Africa and he cited Ethiopia as a good example. It should be recalled that the recently inaugurated Ashegoda Wind Farm, one of the largest wind energy projects in Africa, was implemented with the combined support of the French Government, Banks and industries.

The Elysee Summit was overshadowed by the news of Nelson Mandela's death. The leaders seized the occasion to pay homage to this iconic world figure and his life long struggle for freedom, peace and reconciliation by observing a minute of silence. The situation in Central Africa Republic, Mali and the Great Lakes Region dominated the discussion on peace and security during the Summit.

In his remarks at the opening ceremony, H.E. Mr. Hailemariam Dessalegn, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Chairperson of the African Union appreciated President Hollande's readiness to support Africa's efforts in ensuring peace and security on the continent taking due cognizance of Africa's leadership and based on respect for the principle of ownership and partnership.

Prime Minister Hailemariam pointed out that the security dynamics in the continent has changed with increasing threats of terrorism, drug trafficking, piracy and the emergence of new conflicts. This, he said, necessitates the need for Africa to work closely with other international partners including France to address these challenges, which pose serious threat to peace and security not only for Africa but also the whole world.

Prime Minister Hailemariam, particularly, mentioned the situation in the Central African Republic as a cause for concern and said that the security and humanitarian situation requires an urgent response on the part of the African Union and the rest of the international community. He, therefore, welcomed the adoption of resolution 2127 (2013) by the United Nations Security Council on 5 December 2013, authorizing the deployment of the African led support mission as well as the French troops which would support it.

A special meeting on the Central African Republic was held after the end of the Elysees Summit where it was agreed that the number of troops to be deployed in the country as part of AFISMA-CAR should be increased from its current authorized strength of 3600 to 6000. France also decided to increase its military presence to 1600.

The Elysee Summit concluded with the adoption of a Declaration. France committed itself to enhance Africa's capacity to resolve conflicts on the continent. In this regard, President Hollande announced France's plan to provide training to 20 thousand African soldiers every year. On economic partnership, France made a very important pledge of 20 billion Euros worth of aid and loan to support Africa's development. On the issue of climate change, the Summit highlighted the need for a balanced climate agreement in Paris in 2015, focusing both on mitigation and adaptation, and including the means of implementation, in particular strengthening technology transfer, capacity building measures for the most vulnerable countries, and the provision of financial resources for Africa in accordance with the Convention.

### ***Celebration of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Day in the UK***

Members of the Ethiopian Diaspora residing in the UK marked the Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and People's Day in London, reflecting on the significant gains made to the political, economic, social and civil rights of people. The day's celebrations at the Ethiopian Embassy in London were organised by the Ethiopian Somali community in the UK, in collaboration with various development associations. The equality of the country's nations and nationalities is the linchpin for unity in diversity and underlies all relationships among the regional states, the building blocks of the federal government. Ethiopians across the nation are engaged in intensive development programmes that have significantly improved the livelihoods of the people through the changes effected in various sectors, including agriculture, manufacturing, education, health, infrastructure and communications.

Ambassador Berhanu Kebede, Ethiopian Ambassador to the UK, congratulated fellow compatriots on the successes they had achieved and called for robust engagement in the implementation of the major development projects including the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, railway networks, roads, educational and health facilities and telecommunications. He said the Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples have to remain fully engaged to deepen gains in the political, social and economic sectors to ensure better opportunities and living conditions. He underlined the key role the Diaspora could play in boosting investment and knowledge transfer, as well as trade and business promotion. The Ethiopian Constitution, he said, provided for the respect and promotion of indigenous traditions, cultures, and languages and guaranteed nations and nationalities as stakeholders an equal say in the political, economic and social life of the nation of Ethiopia. Entrenching democratic institutions, capacity building and good governance would remain the government's priority, he said, and urged participants to use every opportunity for the realization of Ethiopia's renaissance. Ambassador Berhanu called on fellow citizens to stand united, to mobilize resources, and intensify involvement in nation building endeavours with heightened commitment and resilience, to complete the aims of the five-year Growth and Transformation Plan.

In speeches they gave at the event, representatives of the Tigray Development Association (TDA), the Amhara Development Association (ADA), the South Ethiopia People Association (SEPA), the Ethiopian Somali Diaspora Forum (ESDF) and the Ethiopian National Consensus Forum (ENCF), noted the importance of the Day, reflecting the constitutional guarantees for the quality and sovereignty of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia. The Chairman of the Ethiopian Somali Diaspora Forum, Mr. Nuur Hussein, thanked all members of the community for their contribution to the organization of the event and urged compatriots to support development efforts

in the Somali region and beyond for the realization of a developed and prosperous Ethiopia. Ethiopians from all walks of life should stand in unison to carry out the on-going development projects, dedicate their knowledge and resources to bring about national economic and social transformation.

*... and an honorary degree for the Deputy Prime Minister*

Meanwhile the UK's Bradford University has conferred an Honorary Doctorate Degree of Education on Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen. The Deputy Prime Minister took a post-graduate degree in Peace Studies at Bradford where he also read philosophy, history, sociology and politics. These have informed his career in various capacities and portfolios including his present post, his previous position as Minister for Education and, prior to that, as Deputy Head of the Amhara Regional State. His time at the Ministry of Education was marked by expansion of educational facilities, quality improvement and popularizing science and technology at all levels. In Ethiopia today, a quarter of the population, about 24 million students; and hundreds of thousands of young men and women are in numerous newly established public universities and colleges.

In introducing the Bradford Honorary Graduated of 2013, the Head of the Peace Studies Department, Professor David Francis, described the Deputy Prime Minister as a diligent and outstanding student, focused on his research and his studies. This he suggested had greatly contributed to his success in the subsequent high responsibilities he assumed in his country. He said "the honorary Graduated has worked tirelessly to put education at the heart of Ethiopia's post-war economic growth, development and socio-political transformation, adding that "We are...delighted and privileged that our Honorary Graduated is the first, in the history of Peace Studies, to hold such a high profile public office, serving as Deputy Prime Minister in one of Africa's most populous and strategically important players in continental and global affairs." University Vice-Chancellor Professor Brian Cantor said the Bradford University community were delighted to host and confer an honorary Doctorate degree on Deputy Prime Minister Demeke whose role in the expansion of education and bringing peace and stability to his country had won him respect from his own people and colleagues. The Deputy Prime Minister addressing government officials, the University community and invited guests, underlined the critical role education played in the fight against poverty, stressing that he had been part of a leadership that had brought about "a paradigm shift which gave prominence and emphasis to science and technology, with the sole aim of enhancing our capacity to achieve progress and improvements in the livelihoods of our citizens." He pointed out that Ethiopia was no longer defined by her problems but by her achievements and the opportunities offered, adding that he certainly hoped that "our vision of Ethiopia, fully transformed into a democratically mature, stable and peaceful nation with freedom and opportunity for all, will become a reality".

During his visit to the UK, the Deputy Prime Minister gave a public lecture on the theme of "Building Peace after War: the Growth and Transformation of Ethiopia", underlining that the pro-poor economic policies of the government had focused on infrastructure and human capital development, major expansion of social services in the health and education sectors, as well as the consolidation of peace and stability, to ensure economic growth from which the people could benefit at all levels. This had made it possible to lift millions out of poverty, reducing the numbers from 54 to 29.6 per cent over the past two decades with per capita income doubling in the same period. The Deputy Prime Minister also visited Nottingham University, where he met and encouraged Ethiopian students to pursue their studies keenly, enhance their expertise and live up to the responsibilities to serve the people of Ethiopia. He held talks with the Vice-Chancellor of the University, Professor Martyn Poliakoff, who is the Foreign Secretary of the Royal Society, and promised to promote dialogue and experience-sharing in the spirit of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Ministry of Education. Exchange of academicians and technical

support will be the focus of future engagements between the parties. While in the UK the Deputy Prime Minister held talks with senior officials of the British Council on ways to further enhance existing cooperation and on how Britain could share its experience on the university-industry nexus.

### ***Ethiopian evenings celebrated across Japan for a week***

Ethiopian evenings were celebrated last week in Tokyo and other cities across Japan during the week of November 2 to December 6. A series of different events, including cultural music shows by the National Theater dance group, cultural cuisine demonstrations and tastings and investment promotion seminars were organized by the Ethiopian Embassy in Tokyo in collaboration with the Ethiopian Association in Japan, Ethiopian Airlines and Japan companies. The objective of the occasion was to attract Japanese business people towards investing and trading with Ethiopia as well as promoting tourism through cultural exchange and promote Ethiopian Airlines flights to Japan.

The celebrations were attended by representatives of Japan Foreign Affairs Ministry, African Ambassadors, diplomats, the Director-General of the Asia and Oceania directorate of Ethiopia's Foreign Ministry, members of the Ethiopian Diaspora in Japan, invited guests from Government offices and private companies and more than 200 business people. At the opening ceremony, Ambassador Markos Tekle, Ethiopian Ambassador to Japan, noted the importance of this annual event to celebrate the strong relationship between Ethiopia and Japan. This year the occasion was enlivened by the National Theater Dance Group providing an impressive example of Ethiopia's exciting cultural music in Tokyo and six other major cultural and industrial cities. It was an excellent example of the kind of cultural promotion that contributes largely to people-to-people relations and image building as well as encouraging the flow of tourists. In addition, successful investment seminars were held with hundreds of business people in Nagoya and Osaka.

Ambassador Markos noted that a flight agreement for Ethiopian Airlines to fly to Narita (Tokyo) was in the pipe line and was expected to be signed in Addis Ababa soon, on the occasion of a forthcoming high level Japanese delegation's visit to Ethiopia. Thorough and constructive discussions were held between Ethiopian Airlines and Japanese officials in Tokyo and the Airline was able to carry out promotions during the week. A representative of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, H.E Misi Yoshiko Kajina, emphasized the long standing friendship of the two countries; and said cultural exchanges were of vital importance to enhance bilateral relationships in the area of economic and social cooperation. He promised to assist in next year's celebration of Abebe Bikila and of the fiftieth anniversary of the Tokyo Olympics.

Director General for Asia and Oceania Directorate General, Mr. Genet Teshome, said that this kind of sizable celebration to promote Ethiopian Airlines as well as cultural exchanges was indispensable to further the strong existing ties between Ethiopia and Japan. Zimbabwe's Ambassador, the Dean of African Diplomats in Tokyo, expressed his delight at the efforts and commitment of the Ethiopian Embassy in Japan in organizing such exemplary events. Other African Embassies, he said, should learn from this to promote their own countries.

### ***The Lamu Port, South Sudan, Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET) development***

LAPSSET, the Lamu Port, South Sudan, Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET) is a flagship project of Kenya's Vision 2030, the Kenyan government's national development plan which, like Ethiopia's Vision 2025, aims to transform Kenya into a mid-level economy with 10% annual growth. The corridor will link Lamu on Kenya's coast to Juba, South Sudan, 1,700 km away, and it

aims to combine the development of a new port at Lamu, 2,240 kms of oil pipeline from Lamu to South Sudan and road and railway links to the west of Kenya, then into South Sudan as well as plans for road and rail links to Addis Ababa via Moyale. It also involves plans for the construction of an oil refinery, three international airports at Lamu, Isiolo and Lokichoggio, and three 'resort cities' along the line of the railway at Lamu, Isiolo and Lake Turkana.

Any of these elements would have a significant impact on Kenyan development; in combination they could transform the whole region. There are further long-term ideas and as the UN Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) reports, the project is eventually intended "to transform regional economies through increased trade, integration and interconnectivity spanning South Sudan and Ethiopia with a first time land bridge across the middle of Africa from Lamu, all the way to Doula, Cameroon, on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean".

LAPSSET was launched on 2 March 2012 by the governments of Kenya, South Sudan and Ethiopia, with Presidents Mwai Kibaki and Salva Kiir and the late Prime Minister Meles at a formal ground-breaking ceremony for the new Lamu port. MoU's for the proposed railway and pipeline were signed between the three governments, and the World Bank funded the feasibility study and design of the transport corridor linking Kenya to Southern Sudan. In April 2013, Kenya established the LAPSSET Development Authority (LDA), to manage implementation of the various project components, and appointed Silvester Kasuku, former Infrastructure Secretary, chief executive officer. Uganda has subsequently become associated with the project.

Progress has been varied with some aspects on schedule, but construction of Lamu Port, the railway, the oil pipeline and oil refinery all delayed. A Chinese company tender has been accepted for the construction of three berths at the new Lamu Port, crucial for importing construction material for other projects, and these are expected to be completed by 2017. The port is eventually planned to have thirty two berths and to be three times the size of Mombasa, and be deep enough to accommodate post-"Panamax" vessels

Road links are on schedule. The Lamu - Isiolo - Lokichar - Lodwar - Nadapal section to the South Sudan border measures 1,256kms; and the link to Ethiopia from Isiolo (470kms) is under construction; Ethiopia is constructing the road on its side of the border. Work has started on the international airport at Isiolo which has also been identified as a 'resort city'. Isiolo is also intended, under Vision 2030, to become an export processing zone, with livestock and related food processing plants, an oil refinery and become an international tourist center. Suitable sites have been identified at both Isiolo and Lake Turkana for 'resort centers'. The railway, 1500 kms standard gauge from Lamu to Isiolo (530kms), Isiolo to Moyale (450kms) and Isiolo to Nakodok (420km), has yet to start.

The oil pipeline depends upon decisions of the South Sudan government. It commissioned a US\$3million feasibility study to study possible route. This looked at two options, comparing merged pipelines from the oilfields in Unity State and Upper Nile State at Juba or elsewhere and then taking these to either Djibouti or Lamu. The results have not been made public, but reportedly, the study found both technically viable, so now South Sudan has to make a decision on the basis of cost, terrain and other aspects. The route to Djibouti would be 1,600km, and to Lamu 2,100 km. The longer distance requires more pumping for the oil to reach the export terminal and also more oil to fill the pipeline. Economically, the pipeline to Djibouti through Ethiopia would be cheaper, but both Kenya and Uganda now want a pipeline following the discovery of commercial oil deposits around Lake Albert in Uganda and the discovery of oil in Turkana County in north-western Kenya. Shared petroleum infrastructure makes sense for Kenya and Uganda. At their summit in Mombasa in August this year, the Presidents of Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda directed officials to integrate plans for a South Sudan, Lokichar, Hoima pipeline into the LAPSSET Corridor plans by the end of



the year. LAPSSET expects a tender for a pipeline to be issued by the end of the year.

The issue of a refinery remains open with possible options for Isiolo, Lamu, or in Uganda. No agreement has yet been reached.

Another area of uncertainty remains funding. The costs are currently budgeted at up to US\$30 billion but are expected to rise. The Kenyan government is funding 25%, and public-private partnerships are expected to provide the back-bone of this. The government will invest approximately six per cent of its annual Gross Domestic Product during the first five or more years of development, and then three and four per cent of annual GDP. There are reports that China has offered low-cost loans to finance Lamu and speculation that foreign government agencies and international development banks will be prepared to invest in infrastructure as a humanitarian or development project. There has been international interest from Japan as well as China, and other possibilities for investment and funding include South Korea, Qatar, Brazil and South Africa. USAID and the Grow Africa Investment Forum have been active in supporting agriculture and livestock growth along the corridor.

Concerns have been raised over potential environmental degradation and destruction of ecosystems, and over the possible impact on local populations. The Kenyan government has made it clear that historical sites and fragile ecosystems at Lamu will not be affected by construction. LAPSSET's CEO, Silvester Kasuku, says firmly that environmental issues have been taken into consideration, and notes that government has allocated funds for capacity development, compensation and setting up community steering committees. "Nothing really meaningful will happen unless people agree; there will be continued engagement with communities and dialogue with local leaders."

In sum, LAPSSET aims to integrate regional transport infrastructure, covering Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan and Ethiopia, and Kenya's maritime shipping industry. It will relieve Mombasa, one of the most congested ports in Africa. It will provide massive development opportunities for Kenya, employment creation, investment, and economic growth, as well as help to tap resources, introduce high-value investments, new technologies, create stronger domestic labor capacity, reducing unemployment rates and poverty levels. South Sudan and Uganda would also benefit significantly as would Ethiopia. With Ethiopia's rapidly growing economy, LAPSSET offers access to another major port to handle its increasing transportation demands. The corridor would provide access to Ethiopia's planned sugarcane developments in the south west

LAPSSET is a highly ambitious project requiring considerable foreign investment but it is now attracting substantial interest from multinational companies as oil discoveries are made in the region. The opportunities presented by LAPSSET promise new trade routes with international partners in the Middle East and Asia, greater regional stability arising from a secure export corridor for South Sudan, and the very real potential to lift millions from poverty through jobs and economic infrastructure development.