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*News in brief*

**African Union**

The Second High Level Meeting of the Africa-EU Energy Partnership opened in Addis Ababa on Tuesday (February 11) hosted jointly by the Ethiopian government and the African Union Commission (AUC). The three day meeting brought together African and European Ministers, AU and EU Commissioners, and more than 400 participants. **(See article)**

AU Commission's Deputy Chairperson, Erastus Mwencha and the European Commission's Deputy Director General for Development Cooperation, Klaus Rudischhauser, have agreed on the need for the AUC and the EC to develop common positions for the post-2015 development agenda in advance of the forthcoming Africa EU summit in April in Brussels. Critical areas include infrastructure, energy, the green economy, trade, migration, peace and security, investment and the transformation of Africa.

Heads of Missions of the IGAD member states in Brussels have re-launched a joint IGAD Forum at a meeting held on Wednesday (February 12). The meeting was attended by the Ambassadors of Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Uganda and the chargé d'affaires of Djibouti.

The Council of African Cabinet Secretaries was established last week after a workshop held in Addis Ababa (February 3-7). The workshop set up a Cabinet Government Network chaired by Sierra Leone, with Liberia, South Sudan and Zambia holding the vice-presidencies for West Africa, East Africa and Southern Africa respectively.

**Ethiopia**

Briefing the press on Monday (February 10), Prime Minister Hailemariam said Ethiopia's economy would continue to grow at 10-11% this year. He was confident the country would be able to achieve higher rates of growth and have a major impact in reducing poverty. He said dialogue with Egypt for a win-win solution over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam was a necessity **(See article)**

Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros attended the London Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade this week (February 12-13). 46 nations, many from Africa, agreed take urgent action to strengthen

law enforcement and the criminal justice system, reduce demand for illegal wildlife products and support the development of sustainable livelihoods for affected. **(See article)**

Egypt's Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation, Mohamed Abdul Moteleb, visited Addis Ababa at his own request and held talks with Ethiopia's Minister for Water, Irrigation and Energy, Ato Alemayehu on Monday (February 10). **(See article)**

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dewano Kedir held a meeting with a Russian delegation headed by Alexander Saltanov, Vice-President of Russian Railways (RZD) who said RZD was looking forward to working closely with the Ethiopian Railway Corporation.

The Ethiopian Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to the European Union, Ambassador Teshome Toga, presented his letters of credence to Mr. Jose Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission on Monday (February 10).

The U.S Agency for International Development (USAID), in partnership with Ethiopia's Federal Ministry of Health, on Wednesday (February 12) launched the Strengthening Ethiopia's Urban Health Program, to promote greater health access and improved health status for more than 1.6 million households in 49 cities across the country.

The 19<sup>th</sup> Belgo-Ethiopian Association festival was held on Saturday (February 1) at the Espace Senghor Center in Brussels. Over 300 members of the Diaspora, Belgian guests and Embassy staff enjoyed a photo exhibition, a film on Landscapes of Ethiopia, a documentary on the "Merkato" and a musical recital. Ambassador Teshome Toga called on the association to closely work with the Embassy to strengthen cultural and people-to-people relations.

Ethiopia's Honorary Consul to Jamaica, Yodit Getachew-Hylton, won a trophy for the Best Booth award at the Consular Corps of Jamaica's annual International Trade Expo, part of a Diplomatic Week which ended on Friday (February 7) at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel, New Kingston. Ecuador and Mexico took second and third place.

## **Djibouti**

Somali President, Hassan Sheik Mahamud, en route to Turkey, made a two hour stop-over at Ambouli International Airport in Djibouti for a meeting with Djibouti president, Ismail Omar Guelleh.

## **Eritrea**

Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki has reiterated his determination not to allow any other political parties in Eritrea. He said in his latest interview that "we do not want to see any parties exist here other than PFDJ. It is unthinkable." He dismissed recent suggestions as "meaningless" and "childish" **(See article)**

Eritrea's Foreign Minister, Osman Saleh, delivered a message on Wednesday (February 12) from President Isaias Afewerki to President Museveni of Uganda. According to Eritrean sources, the

message focused mainly on regional issues, including South Sudan, and other areas of mutual interest.

The Eritrean Mission in Geneva, responding to the 18<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review last week, criticized "the usual countries which unfortunately opted to completely ignore efforts made, achievements gained and challenges faced" in Eritrea and said the proceedings had underlined the deleterious consequences of Ethiopia's occupation of Eritrean territories as well as "unjust and illegal UN sanctions" on Eritrea's full enjoyment of human rights.

## **Kenya**

The United Nations World Food Program has received of US\$6.9 million and US\$ 1.3 million respectively from Sweden and Finland for support for refugees in the Dadaab and Kakuma camps in Kenya. With 480,000 refugees in Dadaab and Kakuma, Kenya hosts one of the largest refugee populations in the world. Since mid-December last year, Kakuma has received 16,000 new arrivals from South Sudan.

Kenya's Interior Cabinet Secretary Joseph Lenku said on Monday (February 10) that some 100,000 Somali refugees had now voluntarily returned home to Somalia. He said 20,000 Somali refugees, in addition to the 80,000 reported earlier, had returned since the signing of a tripartite agreement between Kenya, Somalia and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in November last year.

A Kenyan court charged 70 people with being members of Somali militant group Al-Shabaab on Wednesday (February 12), after they were arrested during a police raid on a mosque on Sunday (February 2) that sparked days of rioting in Mombasa.

## **Somalia**

The Foreign Minister of the Republic of Burundi, Laurent Kavakure, visited Mogadishu on Saturday (February 8), holding talks with Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. He also met with AMISOM's Burundian Force Commander, Lieutenant General Silas Ntigurirwa.

The Foreign Affairs Minister of Somalia, Dr Abduraham Duale, met the Japanese Ambassador to Kenya, Tatsushi Terada, together with the UN Deputy Special Envoy to Somalia, Atsushi Yonezawa, in Mogadishu on Sunday (February 9). Ambassador Terada stressed the importance of the Japanese role in the development of Somali. Japan has recently funded equipment for the administration offices of the Somalia Police Force.

The newly re-established Navy of Somalia celebrated its 49th anniversary in Mogadishu on Monday (February 10) in the presence of the Minister of Defense, General Mohamed Hamud, the Commander of the National Army and other senior officers attended. The Commander of the Somalia Navy Admiral Madeey Nur Ufurow, said the navy was ready to defend the coasts from illegal fishing and waste dumping as well as piracy..

## **South Sudan**

The second phase of the political talks on South Sudan between the South Sudan Government and the SPLM/A-in-Opposition opened in Addis Ababa on Tuesday (February 11). Seven SPLM leaders, previously detained in Juba, arrived in Addis Ababa on Wednesday evening at the invitation of the IGAD Special Envoys to participate. **(See article)**

South Sudan's President, Salva Kiir, Chairman of the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) on Tuesday (February 11) dismissed Pagan Amum as secretary-general of the SPLM. He had earlier declared the positions of the SPLM deputy chairperson, previously held by Riek Machar and of the Secretary General to be vacant. He also revoked the party membership of Riek Machar, former Unity state governor Taban Deng Gai and former environment minister Alfred Lado Gore.

## **Sudan**

The UN Human Rights Council's Independent Expert and Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Sudan, Mashood Badrein, is on a ten day visit to the Sudan to examine government efforts to promote and protect human rights. He's meeting Sudan's Advisory Council for Human Rights, the Ministers of Justice, Interior and Foreign Affairs and leaders of political parties and civil society organizations.

The African Union-United Nations Joint Special Representative/Joint Chief Mediator, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, met with Darfuri non-signatory movements in Kampala this week including leaders of the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW), the Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minawi (SLA/MM) and the Justice and Equality Movement/Gibril Ibrahim (JEM/Gibril). The meeting was a follow-up of the technical workshop on peace and security in Darfur in Addis Ababa last December.

Sudan's Central Bank Governor Abdel-Rahman Hassan Abdel-Rahman held talks on Thursday last week with a mission from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Sudan's economic policies, Sudan's foreign debt situation and prospects for debt relief. Sudan's external debt is estimated to reach US\$44.7 billion by the end of 2013.

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### ***The second phase of Political Dialogue and National Reconciliation for South Sudan***

The second round of peace talks between the South Sudan's warring parties, the South Sudan Government and the SPLM/A-in-Opposition officially opened on Tuesday (February 11), in Addis Ababa though the talks will be taking place outside the city at Debre Zeit. This second phase is expected to focus on political dialogue and the national reconciliation process.

The opening session was attended by Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam as well as senior officials from the Ethiopian government; the Deputy Chairperson of the AU Commission,

Erastus Mwencha; the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General, Ambassador Haile Menkerios; the IGAD Special Envoys; and Members of the IGAD Partners Forum, the Troika of Norway, UK and US, the European Union Commission and the People's Republic of China.

Prime Minister Hailemariam, current Chair of IGAD explained that IGAD, as the concerned regional organization, had been making every effort to resolve the crisis in South Sudan since the flare-up of violence in mid-December. With the all too real prospect of the violence degenerating into an all-out tribal conflict, he said, it was fitting and appropriate that the regional body should intervene before things spiraled totally out of control. He noted that efforts were made both at the level of leaders and of foreign ministers to find a speedy resolution to the conflict. Equally importantly, however, had been the actions of the Special Envoys who were appointed following the resolution of the 23rd extraordinary Summit of IGAD heads of state and Government held in Nairobi Kenya on December 27. They were entrusted with the responsibility to make maximum efforts to bring the parties in the conflict to the negotiating table. They had managed, after weeks of challenging work and shuttling back and forth, to get the two parties to sign Agreements on the Cessation of Hostilities and on the Question of Detainees. These were important steps, the Prime Minister said, but the more daunting part of the negotiation process still lay ahead. This second phase, he added, will go a long way towards moving us towards the pursuit of lasting peace and stability. He urged both parties to respect and expeditiously implement the Cessation of hostilities Agreement and provide all necessary support to ensure operationalization of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism as soon as possible.

Prime Minister Hailemariam also underlined that IGAD and its member countries as well as their regional and international partners would continue to try and bring pressure to bear on the parties to urgently address the critical humanitarian crisis, to provide protection and assistance, and explore durable solutions to the predicament of refugees and internally displaced persons, in full collaboration and coordination with local and international humanitarian organizations. In order for to happen, he said, both parties must not only follow through the launch of this second phase in earnest but, more importantly, do so with strong resolve and commitment. He mentioned that the Special Envoys were in the process of developing a framework for this phase of negotiations, including specific modalities for its structure, representation, and time frame, in order to ensure that the dialogue was truly inclusive.

Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin, the Chairperson of the IGAD Special Envoys, explained that the meeting was convened in agreement with the two Parties and the decisions of the IGAD Heads of State and Government; and he thanked the Parties for their continuing trust in IGAD as mediator in the challenging role of peacemaker for national reconciliation in South Sudan. Ambassador Seyoum reminded the participants that the people of South Sudan had paid dearly during their struggle for self-determination, and it was deeply distressing to see them facing another devastating internal conflict so soon after achieving independence. Many of us in this region, he said, know the effects of civil war. We cannot sit by as neighbors, he added, while the as the people of South Sudan face this tragic situation. He said “we owe it to ourselves and the people of South Sudan to work together and assist the parties and all the stakeholders in the country to take the steps to achieve sustainable peace and national reconciliation.” Ambassador Seyoum said that while the mission to achieve independence has been accomplished, ensuring that institutions of governance to provide a sense of security and belongingness had proved

challenging, and the gap between the demands of the people on the one hand and what the government was able to deliver had been wide. Disillusionment with corruption and inadequate governance was high, he said. He stressed that the leadership had failed to respond with a coherent policy or visible commitment to address the issues of peace, security and development in a coordinated way. The problem had not been confined to government and governance, he said. The SPLM, the party that had spearheaded the struggle for independence, had failed to adapt sufficiently or effectively to the circumstances of independence. It had made no real effort to implement the changes needed. The result was that South Sudan has been suffering from fragile or even non-existent institutions and the results today should not therefore be a surprise. When institutions are undeveloped or under-developed, he said, there are obvious opportunities for challenges to governance to emerge. This is particularly the case when natural resources such as oil come into the equation. The challenges then threaten to expand beyond internal actors and involve outsiders with more resources and power. This, he added, was a danger that could complicate any crisis, and it was one that the leaders of South Sudan must make every effort to avoid.

Ambassador Seyoum said these political problems, linked to the effects of fragile institutions, were tied to failures of leadership. This had taken the peoples of South Sudan into a disaster area that was not of their own making. That was why there was also a need to investigate the human rights abuses and crimes against innocent civilians. Those responsible must be brought to account. This, he emphasized, must be done by the country itself. South Sudan, he said, could and should take bold measures to put an end to any culture of impunity. IGAD, he added, should provide every support to help South Sudan over that hurdle. Ambassador Seyoum reminded the Parties of the need for a paradigm shift of attitude, and the importance of setting very clear general guidelines that need to be implemented, and urgently. He mentioned the abandonment of a “wartime” frame of mind and the transformation of institutions of conflict into institutions that could serve the democratic and developmental aspirations of the people of South Sudan. He said existing institutions could be reinvigorated but other institutions also needed to be put in place to empower people and to realize the dream of Dr. John Garang to ‘take the towns to the people’. For this to happen, said Ambassador Seyoum, the leaders of South Sudan must endeavor to make the people of South Sudan owners of their own destiny, not confine them to the role of mere onlookers.

Representatives of both sides, Nhial Deng Nhial, leader of the Government delegation, General Taban Deng, leader of the delegation of SPLM/A-in-Opposition, both said the fundamental issue at the heart of the conflict was of a political nature and that it could only be resolved through civilized dialogue based on the principle of give and take and all-inclusivity. General Deng said in his statement that “the release of the four detainees still held in Juba and the withdrawal of the Ugandan forces from South Sudan, as well reform of governance, implementation of the rule of law and humanitarian protection for the population were the most important issues now for a speedy resolution of the crisis.” The chief negotiator for the Government of South Sudan, Nihal Deng Nihal, said that in order to speed up resolution of the crisis and reap the benefits of the first round of negotiations, there was an urgent need for the formation of the Joint Technical Committee along with its key implementing elements including the Monitoring and Verification Team as agreed at the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement.

The Partners welcomed the fact that both parties had signed the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and encouraged them to “keep the momentum up” and engage themselves fully in the second round negotiation in order to find a lasting peace and stability for South Sudan. They expressed their appreciation to the IGAD’s mediation team and reiterated support to IGAD’s mediation. They also expressed the belief that the primary responsibility for solutions do, of course, lie with the Government of South Sudan and the leadership of the SPLM and the Parties. Nevertheless, the region and the international community have no less responsibility to assist in providing a resolution for the crisis. They also expressed their hope and expectation that the peace process will be designed in a such a way that a broader range of South Sudanese stakeholders from government, political parties and civil society actors can be brought on board and in manner that gives due respect to the transitional constitutional arrangements already in place in South Sudan. They looked forward to welcoming the seven recently released detainees joining the negotiations. They also warned that neither party should use side issues as an excuse to prevaricate on the negotiation process. The representative of the delegation of South Sudan’s Council of Churches appreciate the agreements reached Cessation of Hostilities and the modalities for the release of the political detainees which also covered protection of civilians; humanitarian aid; and negative propaganda. He called for full implementation of these in good faith and encouraged urgent and vigilant monitoring by IGAD. He added “we are tired of war!”

On Wednesday, the seven SPLM leaders, previously detained in Juba arrived in Addis Ababa from Kenya at the invitation of the IGAD Special Envoys to participate in the talks. They met with the IGAD Special Envoys and held a press conference on Thursday (February 13). They said they were committed to participate effectively with other parties in finding a peaceful solution to the crisis in South Sudan. They underlined their concern over the humanitarian problems resulting from the conflict, and they called on the Government, the United Nations and the international community to increase humanitarian protection and support. They also called on IGAD and the international community to put the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism for the ceasefire in place urgently. They stressed the need to focus on a political settlement that addressed underlying issues comprehensively. They commended the efforts of IGAD Heads of State and the Special Envoys to secure the release of the remaining four detainees in Juba and called on President Salva Kiir to release the detainees and to allow Dr. Peter Adwok to travel, so that they could also participate in the peace talks.

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### ***Prime Minister Hailemariam briefs journalists***

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn held a press conference with local and foreign journalists on Monday (February 10) answering questions on domestic economic issues, international relations and regional peace.

The Prime Minister noted that Ethiopia had witnessed robust economic development over the last decade, producing double digit growth. Commenting on the projections of World Bank, IMF and other international financial institutions on Ethiopia's economy growth, he said that there was always a difference between their projections and the reality on the ground. However, he stressed that they did agree that the actual performance of the economy had been one of

substantial growth, of over 10%. He said the economy was expected to continue to grow at the same level this year, an average of 10 or 11%. This growth, he said, could be maintained because of the rapid and unprecedented growth in the agriculture sector in which the returns from oil seeds, grain and irrigation were included. He also indicated that the current rapid growth and investment inflow to the industry sector would help the country's economic transformation continue to accelerate. In addition, he added, the expansion of the service sector would make an enormous contribution to translate this year's economic plan into reality and help reduce the number of people suffering from poverty. The Prime Minister said that with the growth in the agriculture, service and industry sectors he was confident the country would continue to be able to achieve high rates of growth and have a major impact in reducing poverty.

Speaking on the issue of energy, the Prime Minister clarified that power generation was open to the private sector but, he said, the government alone would be involved in the process of transmission and distribution. He said investors were welcome to engage in power generation, noting that Ethiopia has enormous potential for renewable energy production. The Prime Minister emphasized that Ethiopia had shown its consideration and determination to work for the mutual benefit of the lower riparian countries within the mindset of the 21st century in its consultations with Egypt and Sudan over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). He said Ethiopia had repeatedly demonstrated its firm belief on the need to promote mutual benefit among Nile riparian countries and eradicate poverty from the region. He pointed out that the International Panel of Experts had conducted studies on the impacts of the GERD on lower riparian countries at Ethiopia's own instigation. Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan had now held three rounds of discussions on implementing the recommendations of the IPoE and Sudan and Ethiopia were agreed that Egypt's request to set up a new International Panel of Experts was unnecessary. (See following story). He added that although the meetings had failed to meet their objectives, he believed that the discussions would resume since dialogue and discussions were a necessity for an acceptable solution. "I do not have any doubts that talks will resume because this is the only way to resolve the differences and to have a win-win solution to this issue." He stressed that the Ethiopian government's stand over the Dam remained the same and that the construction of the GERD would continue as planned. Responding to the suggestion that Egypt might try to take the issue to International Criminal Court or to other international bodies, the Prime Minister pointed out that there was no international court that arbitrates water issues and such a move would have no result. As for Egypt taking the case to the United Nations, he stated that this would be a political issue, and if such a political dispute surfaced, then Ethiopia would come up with a political response.

In response to questions over claims that Ethiopia had signed a new border agreement with Sudan, he said that the Government of Ethiopia had not signed any new border agreement with Sudan. Agreements had been signed, he said, between the Governments of Ethiopia and Sudan during the reign of Emperor Minelik and had been reviewed later by Emperor Haile Selassie. The Derg Regime had sent a team of researchers to the area and had declared those agreements in force. Consequently, the EPRDF regime had also accepted and endorsed them. There was no land that was been given to or taken from Sudan, he said. The Prime Minister explained that the recent Ethiopia-Sudan High Level Joint Commission summit in Khartoum had focused mainly on assessing and strengthening bilateral cooperation and partnership between the two countries



and on political issues. He said this was an issue that was raised every five years when it was one of those questions brought up when elections were approaching.

In answer to questions about Ethiopia's relations with Eritrea, the Prime Minister emphasized that Ethiopia wished for peace to prevail in the region. He recalled that Ethiopia had out a five point peace plan in 2004 designed to normalize the relationship between the two countries. Eritrea, however, had consistently refused to consider this or to participate in any dialogue despite repeated requests. In addition, the Eritrean regime had continued to play a destabilizing role in the region. With reference to Ethiopian forces joining AMISOM, he pointed out that following the request of the Federal Government of Somalia and the help eliminate Al-Shabaab from Somalia and support the Somali government. He added that the bilateral defense agreement signed with the Somali Federal Government recently would create the opportunity for Ethiopia to train Somali national forces and provide them with logistic support.

In fact, the Memorandum of Understanding on Defense Cooperation signed at the beginning of the month by the Defense Minister of Somalia, Mohamed Sheikh Hassan, and the Defense Minister of Ethiopia, Siraj Fegessa, is intended to enhance and deepen bilateral military training cooperation, allow for exchanges of security intelligence and work jointly for peace and security. The MoU will allow for Ethiopia to provide basic military training for new recruits and existing soldiers, including officers and others. It also allows for joint operations against Al-Shabaab and any other armed groups that threaten peace and security and for peace support operations in either country. It reaffirms the principles of mutual respect for sovereign equality, territorial integrity, interdependence and political independence, and also underlines the intent to promote bilateral relations and strengthen friendship between Ethiopia and Somalia. Among the areas of cooperation it also notes working together to support IGAD and the East African Standby Force, as well as detailing other possible areas of cooperation in technical assistance, exchanges of visits and of information.

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### ***Egypt's Water Resources and Irrigation Minister visits Addis Ababa***

Egypt's Water Resources and Irrigation Minister, Dr. Mohamed Abdel-Moteleb, invited himself to Addis Ababa on Monday (February 10) this week, to hold further talks with Ato Alemayehu Tegenu, Ethiopia's Water, Irrigation and Energy Minister on the implementation of the recommendations of the International Panel of Experts (IPoE) on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Project (GERDP).

Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan have now held three rounds of discussions on implementing the recommendations of the IPoE on the GERDP. The three Water Ministers agreed on a number of important points at the first and second rounds of meetings on November 4 and on December 8-9. Differences appeared, however, at the third meeting in January when Egypt proposed setting up of a new International Panel of Experts along with the agreed national committee to oversee the recommendations. Ethiopia and Sudan agreed that this proposal, to establish a new International Panel of Experts in parallel with the proposed national committee drawn from the

three countries, was unnecessary and the agreed national committee could provide adequate clarification and oversight for implementation of the recommendations.

The Egyptian delegation then put forward a new suggestion on principles of confidence building which was outside the agenda of the tripartite meeting. These proposed principles were also opposed to elements of the Cooperative Framework Agreement which Ethiopia has recently ratified and which have been signed by six upper Nile riparian countries. Both the Ethiopian and Sudanese delegations made it clear that the agenda of the tripartite meeting was to set up the necessary mechanisms to follow-up implementation of IPoE report and to settle any contentious issues that had not been agreed at the previous two meetings. These did not include new items of the sort suggested. The major element of the recommendations was for further studies on a water resource system/hydropower model and a trans-boundary environment and socio-economic impact study to be carried out in the context of the Eastern Nile System.

After the end of the third tripartite meeting, the Egyptian delegation said it would not return to the tripartite discussions, though Ethiopia made it clear that although three rounds of discussions had failed to resolve the issue, it still attached great importance to dialogue and further discussions to attain the objectives set by all three countries. In fact, despite its denial of participation in further negotiations with Ethiopia and Sudan, the Egyptian Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation made further requests to visit Addis Ababa at the end of January and early in February to further discuss the recommendations of the IPoE report. The original proposals for January 30 and February 4 were impossible as these coincided with meetings of the Eastern Nile Council of Ministers and ENTRO on those dates. Dr. Mohamed Abdel-Moteleb finally arrived in Addis Ababa on Monday this week and held talks with Ato Alemayehu Tegenu on the GERDP. Reports that he and a ministerial delegation had been invited by Minister Alemayehu for further negotiations on the GERDP were incorrect. Ethiopia has made it clear that it will not hold discussions with Egypt in the absence of the Sudan.

During his meeting with Ato Alemayehu, Dr Mohamed Abdel-Moteleb again presented the proposals over confidence building and other unresolved issues raised at the last tripartite meeting in relation to the establishment of a new international panel of experts. He raised no new suggestion or proposal for implementation of the recommendations of the IPoE report and the suggested additional reports. The Ethiopian side raised concerns over inflammatory and unjustified remarks made by Egyptian authorities, suggesting it was important for the authorities to refrain from such activity. The Ethiopian delegation emphasized that there was no option other than to continue discussions through the tripartite Water Ministers to consider the details of implementation of the recommendations and resolve their differences. The Ethiopian delegation also noted that it would be helpful to refrain from actions that might undermine confidence in each other. It emphasized the technical nature of their differences and the importance of resolving these amicably on a technical level. It also noted the need to participate in Eastern Nile programs within the framework of Nile Basin Initiative to which both were committed. It insisted that discussion and dialogue must be the guiding principles to bridge any difference, and emphasized the significance of cooperation at regional, basin and sub-basin levels in order to encourage mutual understanding and transparency.

The Ethiopian delegation also underlined that the issue of the principles of confidence presented by the Egyptian side had clearly been dealt within the Cooperative Framework Agreement. It had made this point during the three tripartite meetings. In addition, the Ethiopian delegation pointed out that it had accepted that any new international panel of experts could be formed if the national committee found itself in disagreement over the two studies which it would be mandated to oversee. Ethiopia and Sudan said establishing another international panel along with the national committee at the outset would be unjustified, since the need for another international experts' panel would only come after completion of the studies and only if there was total disagreement. In any case, the studies themselves are to be given commissioned from independent international consultants, rendering any additional team irrelevant.

Water Minister Alemayehu also made it clear to Dr Abdel-Moteleb that Ethiopia was not ready to conduct further discussions in the absence of Sudan. It was unacceptable for Ethiopia to hold such talks outside the framework of the tripartite Water Ministers' meeting. He also said that the suggestion that construction of the GERDP until Egypt had conducted further studies was not possible. As Prime Minister Hailemariam has said, construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, a flagship project for the nation, will not be halted for a second. Minister Alemayehu stressed it would be built on schedule. As a project signifying the Renaissance of Ethiopia, GERD will be completed within its project timeline with the full participation of the Ethiopians at home and abroad.

At the same time, from the beginning of the GERD project Ethiopia has exerted every effort to address the concerns of Egypt and Sudan over possible implications of the dam on the lower riparian countries. On the basis that cooperation among Nile Basin countries was a central principle of Ethiopian policy, Ethiopia established the International Panel of Experts to encourage trust and confidence in Egypt and Sudan. The IPoE produced a report showing that the GERD would cause no appreciable harm to downstream countries and that it would provide a wide range of benefits to all three states. The report also suggested some recommendations to allay any still existing fears. Ethiopia, underlining its determination to respond to any concerns, immediately accepted these recommendations and started to implement them unilaterally and without delay. It also moved to implement the further studies suggested by the IPoE immediately, through the tripartite Water Ministers' meetings. It has, in fact, made every effort to take into account the concerns of Sudan and Egypt, and will continue to do so as far as is actually necessary.

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### ***Ethiopia at the London International Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade***

The international trade in illegal wildlife has been steadily growing to the point where some countries are seeing their wildlife decimated as the black market in wild animals, their skins and horns and other products, continues to expand. The profits realized from these illegal operations and the illegal trade in wildlife have started to endanger the environment and indeed the security of nations as criminal and violent gangs as well as terrorists groups around the world have become the main actors exploiting this real and menacing global industry. While threatening the future existence of whole species and the wider environment, it also devastates already

vulnerable communities, encourages corruption, and puts the international rule of law at risk as well as undermining the economies of most African countries and their efforts to cut poverty.

Now, finally, however late in the day, the world community is beginning to taking serious notice, declaring that the illegal trade in wildlife must be addressed at every level of the international community. It also decided that this illegal trade is, in fact, a national security issue. It was on this basis, that the UK Government hosted an international conference on illegal wildlife trade this week (February 12-13), in London. This high level conference was attended by officials from nearly fifty countries, among them Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros Adhanom.

The conference was aimed to agree to a high level political commitment to take urgent action to tackle illegal wildlife trade. It also aimed to tackle three interlinked aspects of the illegal trade in wildlife and animal products: to strengthen law enforcement and the criminal justice system across the world to deal with the issue, to reduce demand for illegal wildlife products; and to support the development of sustainable livelihood for communities affected by the illegal trade.

UK Foreign Secretary, William Hague, in his opening remarks said that the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products was not just an environmental crisis, but has become a global criminal industry, to be ranked alongside drugs, arms and people trafficking. He noted that it was driving corruption and insecurity, and undermining efforts to cut poverty and promote sustainable development, particularly in African countries. It was, he stressed, a global problem that needed deep attention from governments and organizations around the world. He said there was plenty of anecdotal evidence to show that insurgent and terrorist groups benefitted from the trade. The UK Foreign Secretary urged concerted action: tackling it would build growth, enhance the rule of law, increase stability and embed good governance, he said. He emphasized the need to demonstrate political commitment at the highest levels across the world to address the problem before it was too late.

In his remarks to the conference, Dr. Tedros noted that Africa was particularly hard hit by the upsurge in the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products. Tourism industries in many countries in Africa depend on wildlife as the main attraction for large numbers of international tourists, but this wildlife also serves as a basis for a complex network of international criminal activities, he added. Dr. Tedros noted that in Ethiopia, wildlife tourism had become a priority area in Ethiopia's development agenda. Efforts were being undertaken to promote national parks giving them equal emphasis with the country's cultural heritage. Measures were now being taken to prevent poaching, reinforcing the capacities of law enforcement agencies through adoption of appropriate legislation and policies. He emphasized the need to find support for local communities that were negatively affected by the burgeoning phenomenon of illegal wildlife trading, and the protection of wildlife resources. Without local support, he said, efforts to stop illegal trade and expand conservation programs would not yield the desired results. Cooperation, he said, could best be achieved through the creation of a conducive environment in which local communities could generate income from wildlife based activities like tourism or wildlife utilization schemes.

Dr. Tedros also drew particular attention to one of the most worrying dimensions of the trade in the illegal wildlife and one that needed urgent action. This is the fact that much of the trade is run

by well-organized criminal networks and it is also used to finance terrorist activities. Ethiopia, he noted, as a country which neighbors a number of hubs of terrorist activity, has discovered its commitment to combat terrorism has become linked to its efforts to combat and contain illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products. Fighting wildlife crime, Dr. Tedros emphasized, cannot be viewed in isolation from politically motivated terrorism funded by the ivory trade.

The conference adopted a declaration that underlined the political commitment of the 46 countries attending, and called upon the international community to act together to bring the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products to an end. Recognizing the scale and consequences of the illegal trade in wildlife, the declaration urges countries to build on the existing international framework for action. It welcomed the level of attention being given to the issue through the United Nations system as "The Future We Want", adopted at Rio+20 and endorsed by the consensus of the UN General Assembly clearly demonstrated. The General Assembly had impacts of illicit trafficking in wild life, where firm and strengthened action needs to be taken on both the supply and demand sides."

The Governments and Regional Economic Integration Organizations represented in London committed themselves to call upon the international community to provide political leadership and practical support for actions in eradicating the market for illegal wildlife products, ensuring effective legal frameworks and deterrents, strengthening law enforcements and sustainable livelihoods and economic development. Ethiopia particularly expressed its concern that illegal wildlife trade was a major barrier to sustainable, inclusive and balanced economic development. Recognizing that sustainable livelihoods will be best achieved with the engagement of those communities surrounding protected areas, participants called upon the international community to take action, to recognize the negative impact of illegal wild life trade on sustainable livelihoods and economic development, to increase the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities and eradicate poverty, to initiate or strengthen collaborative partnerships among local, regional, national and international development and conservation agencies to enhance support for community led wildlife conservation and to promote retention of benefits by local communities for the conservation and sustainable management of wildlife, including actions to reduce illegal use of fauna and flora. Regarding the strengthening of law enforcement, Ethiopia's position was well supported as the declaration noted that successfully tackling illegal wildlife trade demanded a strong and coordinated enforcement response, at site, national and international levels, and in source, transit and destination countries, using the fullest capacity of institutions and available tools and techniques.

These include; support for continuing the existing international ban on commercial trade in elephant ivory, renouncing the use of products within governments from species threatened with extinction, amending legislation to make poaching and wildlife trafficking "serious crimes" under the terms of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, strengthening cross-border co-ordination and support for regional wildlife law enforcement networks, further analysis to better understand the links between wildlife crime and other organized crime and corruption, and to explore links to terrorism. The 46 governments also pledged for the first time to renounce the use of any products from species threatened by extinction, going further than previous commitments and supporting commercial prohibition on the international trade in elephant ivory until the survival of elephants is no longer threatened by poaching; and to

encourage countries to destroy their illegal stockpiles of wildlife products, such as rhino horn and ivory.

During the conference, the Elephant Protection Initiative, launched by UK government, was signed by "key states," including Botswana, Chad, China, Gabon, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Tanzania, and Vietnam, alongside the United States and Russia. This means countries will put their ivory stockpiles beyond economic use and observe a moratorium on any future international trade for a minimum of 10 years. In return, access to funds to support elephant protection will be facilitated. US\$2 million was put up by the private sector and the UK Government said it would match that amount.

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### ***The AU-EU Energy Partnership meeting in Addis Ababa this week***

The Second High Level Meeting of the Africa-EU Energy Partnership was held in Addis Ababa this week (February 11-13). Hosted jointly by the Ethiopian government and the African Union Commission (AUC), it was co-chaired by Austria, Germany, Mauritius and the African Union Commission. The three day meeting brought together African and European Ministers, AU and EU Commissioners, and more than 400 other high-level participants including representatives from regional institutions, international organizations, banking and finance groups, the private sector, the civil society, and the media. It provided an opportunity to strengthen the visibility of African and European efforts directed at tackling in conjunction the continents' energy challenges. Energy poverty is one of the biggest challenges for sustainable development in Africa. Africa's energy needs are growing substantially but the available resources, when developed, are more than sufficient to meet the continent's demand.

Held under the theme of "Africa and the EU are tackling energy challenges together," it aimed to encourage momentum for continued and enhanced cooperation in energy development under the established framework of the Africa-EU Energy Partnership, and to define the AU-EU partnership's priorities and vision for African-European collaboration on energy affairs, to "ensure a future-ready partnership between Africa and the EU." The Addis Ababa Declaration and the results of the meeting will feed into the Joint Africa-EU Summit in April, positioning the AEEP as a strategic EU-African channel for policy dialogue and catalyst for energy-related initiatives at a continental and global level.

The first AEEP High Level meeting was held in Vienna in 2010 when African and EU Ministers agreed on the 2020 targets for the AEEP and launched the Africa-EU Renewable Energy Cooperation Program (RECP). This second meeting took intercontinental energy affairs to the next level, mapping out the future of Africa and Europe in the energy sector. It highlighted the unique nature and success of Africa-EU Cooperation on energy, and encouraged commitment and action towards meeting future energy challenges facing the two continents. The AEEP 2020 Activity Portfolio presented the actions and programs from all African and European stakeholders towards meeting the AEEP Targets. The meeting held workshops to review progress in the implementation of the RECP and provide input for a draft mini-grid policy toolkit developed by EU Energy Initiative Partnership Dialogue Facility, a Renewable Energy Policy

Network for the 21st Century and the Alliance for Rural Electrification. There were sessions on “The Road from 2010 to 2014: Developments of the Africa-EU Energy Partnership”; “Achieving the AEEP 2020 Targets: Status Report 2013”; as well as thematic panels on “Energy Access”, “Energy Security and Regional Integration” and “Financing Energy Projects”. There was also a Business and Policy Leaders roundtable discussion.

Speakers at the meeting included Ethiopia’s Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy, Alemayehu Tegen, the AU Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, Elham Ibrahim, and AU Commission Chairperson, Dr. Dlamini Zuma. Minister Alemayehu in an introduction to the program said that the AEEP had not only provided a functional platform for dialogue among its partners, but it had also contributed to increasing African and European efforts to secure reliable and sustainable energy services as well as promoting renewable energy in Africa. He said the meeting and the Addis Ababa Declaration would confirm the joint vision and Ministerial commitments for years to come, and generate a clear message for the Fourth Africa-EU Summit in April. It would position the AEEP as the main channel for Africa-EU strategic policy dialogue and a “key catalyzer” for energy-related initiatives such as the Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) and Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All).

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***President Isaias’ latest interview: no democracy, no peace, no change***

In yet another confirmation of his unwillingness to engage in peaceful and meaningful interaction with its neighbors or the larger world, President Isaias Afewerki has once again expressed complete dismissal of any thought of rapprochement with Ethiopia. He was equally scornful of IGAD’s efforts to bring peace to South Sudan or of suggestions that US-Eritrean relations might improve. In another of his lengthy monologue interviews to Eritrea’s State TV, the President unequivocally stated his and Eritrea’s position on topics ranging from the country’s political future under his rule to his views on regional peace and stability.

Eritrea has often drawn comparisons with North Korea not least from its firm determination to remain a one party system with no room whatever for alternative political opinion or dissent. The idea of building a democratic order, with free elections and other necessary institutions, has always been no more than a topic to provide the President and others in his regime with the opportunity to cry out the rhetoric of ‘imperialist fouls’. It was no different in the President’s recent interview, when he said that to think there would be “democracy and a multi-party system in Eritrea” would be a delusion that belongs in outer space and that people who thought there could be an alternative to his Peoples Front for Democracy and Justice were wasting their time. He made it quite clear the PFDJ would remain the only party in Eritrea, saying “we do not want to see any parties exist here other than the PFDJ...they do not exist...it is unthinkable”. He added: “if there are parties who wish to operate in this country, there is no place for them; they can go elsewhere, either in the moon or another planet.”

The President’s trademark style of scorn for his own people was also prominently on display during the interview. Eritrea has been dubbed the largest prison in Africa. Its youth are condemned to serve their national military service for indefinite period. Eritrea has been

repeatedly, and reliably, accused of mal-treating conscripts and forcing them into conditions of work that has often described as nothing less than slavery. According to Sheila Keetharuth, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Eritrea, thousands of Eritreans make every effort, and immense risks, to escape from the harrowing conditions in the country. The Rapporteur has described the obligatory and indefinite national service, increased militarization, arbitrary arrests, and prolonged incommunicado detention as central elements of government policy. It is no secret that the government has instituted a shoot-to-kill policy for those attempting to escape across Eritrea's borders. Despite this, Eritreans from all walks of life consistently choose to risk their lives rather than stay in a country that fulfils their worst night mares. According to UNHCR estimates, 305,723 Eritreans have fled their country, and the number is increasing by 70,000 or more a year. Many have lost their lives in the process; others face appalling conditions in countries far away from their own.

President Isaias' view of those Eritreans who have fled from the misery of their own country to face problems and persecution as refugees elsewhere is that they are no more than "thieves who have not paid their dues to their people and government". As far as he is concerned the country will not suffer from their absence or be affected by their departure. He shows no interest in their fate or their disappearance from Eritrea. They are merely dismissed as "thieves. Astonishing as the President's statement is, it is also typical of the way President Isaias addresses the problems that besiege his people. It is also an indicator of just how repressive and detached the regime has become and indeed of how increasingly disillusioned the people of Eritrea have become with a government that merely treats them as no more than inanimate objects.

Perhaps the most telling sign that President Isaias has not changed his long-held policies in dealing with the outside world in general and the region in particular, were his thoughts on the issue of normalization of relations with Ethiopia. Responding to a question on "current media reports that are hinting on the possibility of normalizing the two countries' relations", the President immediately replied that he was "tired of all the talk about attempts" at normalization of relations. Dismissing Ethiopia's repeated expression of its readiness for dialogue as waste of time, President Isaias clearly stated that such path was not his desire and that there is no change in his government's policy. He dismissed the recent suggestions by Herman Cohen and other former US diplomats to encourage closer Eritrean links with the US or improve relations with Ethiopia. He said "I consider it as a childish peace approach. It is meaningless and a waste of time. We do not give it weight as it is a speculation spread by America and Ethiopia." Ethiopia's own desire, its willingness and indeed its repeated efforts to bring stability and peace to the region have been demonstrated on numerous occasions. Its commitment to dialogue as the only viable means to achieve meaningful solutions to political deadlock has proved fruitful not only in dealing with its own internal problems but also in its much acclaimed role of a peacemaker around the region. The stalemate over relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea continues only because Eritrea's ruling party, and its President, unreasonably and arrogantly persists in refusing to engage in dialogue; and that despite repeated offers from Ethiopia to talk any place, anywhere and anytime. Ethiopia has been quite consistent in its efforts to settle all outstanding issues through dialogue as it demonstrated in its five point peace plan in 2004. The plan, which follows international norms, underlines Ethiopia's acceptance of the Boundary Commission's Decisions and calls for dialogue to work out the details of their implementation on



the ground and of comprehensively normalizing the relations between the two countries. The response from Eritrea has been unyielding and repeated rejection.

The Eritrean government have made a number of recent efforts to paint itself as a party seeking peace, but the President's latest comprehensive dismissal of any efforts to bring the country back from isolation shows that the recent "charm offensive", miniscule as it was, was no more than a tactical maneuver aimed at no more than securing short term effect. What some saw, over-optimistically, as a sign of Eritrea's readiness for engagement was clearly no more than an attempt to fool people into lifting the sanctions that the United Nations has imposed on Eritrea in 2009 and 2011. Similarly, Eritrea has been apparently making gestures to try and find its way back to membership in IGAD, an organization that it willfully withdrew from 2007 when other members wouldn't do what it wanted. Ironically, Eritrea's repeated and continued mockery of IGAD and of IGAD's crucial and important role in achieving regional stability flies full in the face of Eritrea's claims that it wants to be readmitted to the regional bloc.

In fact, Eritrea's continued and unique status as a pariah state in the region can be seen in light of its active and repeated promotion and involvement in destabilization efforts across the Eastern Africa region. Funding, training, arming and extending logistical and intelligence support to terrorists operating in the countries in the Horn has earned the country the response of sanctions and isolation. The hubris and ambition of its leadership has been repeatedly translated into acts of violence that have resulted in serious consequences to the peoples of the region. They have witnessed all too often the dedication of Eritrea's leaders to their belief that aggression, belligerence, violence or the threat of violence can serve as a short cut to their coveted goal of achieving influence in the region. Inexplicably, they disregard the reality of Eritrea's power, resources or influence. It is a policy that is hard for any rational observer to understand.

President Isaias' appears addicted to the belittlement of multi-state cooperation platforms, whether the African Union, the United Nations or IGAD. His equally shamelessly ridicule of other sovereign states and their leaders also found expression in his interview, this time regarding South Sudan and IGAD's efforts at mediation. President Isaias' usual bizarre take on the conflict in South Sudan was that it should have happened earlier and that it was long overdue. IGAD's widely recognized and supported efforts at mediation were, according to the President, a waste of time which could be dismissed as merely unimportant "business". In dismissing the regional bloc's commitment and determined mediation effort which has successfully begun the process of de-escalation of the violence in South Sudan and launched a comprehensive political dialogue, President Isaias underlined the fact that he had absolutely no respect for IGAD or the regional community of states. Indeed, it also emphasizes that the Eritrean regime's continued failure to adhere to even the most basic rules of international conduct make it difficult to take any of its often contradictory declarations and expressions of peace at all seriously. Its long-held and repeated policy of rejection of any rule-based engagement with neighbors or the international community continues to vindicate those who have been dubious about the government's alleged support for peace and stability in the region. Its continued activities, in fact, make it quite clear that it is offering no more than lip-service to the idea of co-operation and peace.

In fact, President Isaias' latest interview on Eritrean State TV only served to reinforce the lack of any real interest in peace from the side of the Eritrean regime. His comments underline his ongoing refusal to abide by the norms of international relations, and emphasize his continued interest in aggression and belligerence. The repeated interest and unremitting support for regional destabilization, for which there is ample evidence even today, continue to demonstrate the regime's adherence to violence. It remains very difficult, indeed impossible, to take any declarations or expressions of peace from the government of Eritrea or its President at face value.