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News in Brief

African Union

Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang delivered a policy statement on China's Africa policy at the African Union on Monday (May 5), reaffirming Beijing's commitment to expanding the partnership between China and Africa on the basis of sincerity and equality, solidarity, mutual trust, inclusive development and practical bilateral cooperation. He said China supported solving African problems in an African way and would work with Africa in poverty reduction and modernization, and he pledged further loans and development funding. **(See article)**

Attending the World Economic Forum in Nigeria this week, **(See article)** the Presidents of Kenya and Rwanda and the President of the African Development Bank, launched a call for “Visa free travel in Africa” aimed to promote cross-continental travel and encourage regional integration by easing visa requirements.

On Thursday (May 8), the US House of Representatives passed the “Electrify Africa Act of 2014”: Congress member Karen Bass, Ranking Member of the House Subcommittee on Africa, said it provided a long-term strategy for increasing access to electricity through small, renewable projects and allow 50 million Africans to get access to electricity by 2020. It would also increase African government accountability and transparency and improve regulatory environments.

Ethiopia

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and his wife, Cheng Hong, started a tour of Africa, his first, with a three day visit to Ethiopia on Sunday (May 4). Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, described the visit, during which 16 agreements covering aviation, infrastructure, rail links, tourism, culture and other areas, were signed, as highly successful. **(See article)**

Prime Minister Hailemariam and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang inaugurated Ethiopia’s first expressway on Monday this week (May 5). The 85 kms road is the first toll road in the country and connects Addis Ababa to the city of Adama in Oromia region. It was constructed by the China Communications and Constructions Company with Beijing Expressway as consultants.

Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros Adhanom and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway, Børge Brende, met for discussions on regional security issues and the conflict in South Sudan on Wednesday (May 7).

Ethiopian Patriots' Victory Day was celebrated for the 73rd time across the country on Monday (May 5). The day marks the occasion of Emperor Haile Selassie's triumphal return to Addis Ababa, on May 5, 1941, ending five years of Italian occupation. President Dr. Mulatu Teshome led the celebrations at the Victory Square monument at Arat Kilo.

On Wednesday (May 7), the Upper Nile Times said the Gambella Regional State authorities had arrested three Egyptian nationals coming from South Sudan without documentation. They were believed to have been on a spying mission to collect information about the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

The World Bank has provided a 7 billion birr (US\$380 million) financial credit for Ethiopia to finance another round of urban development projects, to provide capacity building, infrastructure development and improvement of services for 44 cities.

Djibouti

President Barack Obama received President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti on Monday at the White House as the Obama administration finalized a new 10-year agreement with Djibouti for the use of the U.S. military base at Camp Lemonnier. **(See article)**

President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti told the members of the Corporate Council on Africa in Washington that "Djibouti is open for business". He said relations with the U.S. were robust and growing. Djibouti had a strategic position, excellent port infrastructure and an improving business environment, and welcomed US private investment particularly in energy generation.

Eritrea

Ambassador Ismail Chergui, the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security visited Eritrea and held talks with President Isaias Afewerki on Tuesday (May 6).

The Eritrean president, Isaias Afewerki, accompanied by several ministers and advisors, arrived in Khartoum on Thursday (May 8) for talks with Sudan President Omer Al-Bashir on economic cooperation and border controls.

Eritrea's Minister of Health, Amina Nur-Hussein, and visiting Sudanese Minister of Health, Bahar Idris Abu Garda, on Sunday (May 4) signed an agreement for cooperation in health programs as well as exchange of information, expertise and technology.

On Saturday (May 3) 154 Yemeni fishermen arrived back in Yemen after spending 20 months in detention in Eritrea. They said there were still hundreds of others detained and subject to hard labor in Eritrea. In January, Eritrea released 135 fishermen after holding them for two years.

Kenya

Addressing a business forum, hosted by President Goodluck Jonathan in Abuja, President Uhuru Kenyatta on a State Visit to Nigeria, urged Nigerian business organizations to double the volume of trade between the two countries. A Kenya-Nigeria Trade and Investment Council has been launched; and Kenya Airways is to start direct flights to Abuja from June 30.

Kenya's President Kenyatta, speaking after the bombings that killed seven people in four attacks in Nairobi and Mombasa at the weekend, promised that "attackers will not derail us; we will continue and we shall fight this battle and we shall win this battle."

Deputy President William Ruto on Monday (May 5) said categorically that Kenya would not withdraw its troops from Somalia, until the war against the Al-Shabaab militia was won: "We will not relent and we will not withdraw from Somalia. We will not be cowed or intimidated until Somalia has a free and stable government free from terror."

Somalia

Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud visited Ethiopia on Saturday (May 3) for a two day visit before heading to United Arab Emirates for an official visit. He held talks on security issues with Prime Minister Hailemariam who pledged more support to Somalia.

The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Judy Cheng-Hopkins, on Thursday (May 8) concluded a five-day visit to Somalia, announcing an additional US\$7 million under the UN Peacebuilding Fund's (PBF) Immediate Response Facility," to add to an earlier allocation of US\$3 million from the PBF to support stabilization efforts in newly recovered areas.

Puntland President Abdiweli Mohamed Ali Gaas, on an official visit to Yemen, met Yemen President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi to discuss bilateral ties as well as cooperation in trade and economic, investments. Yemen agreed to open a consulate in Puntland.

South Sudan

Dr. Riek Machar and President Salva Kiir arrived in Addis Ababa on Thursday and Friday respectively for direct talks under the auspices of IGAD at the invitation of Prime Minister Hailemariam, Chair of IGAD. **(See article)**

The US on Tuesday (May 6) imposed sanctions on rebel commander General Peter Gadet and Major-General Marial Chanuog Mangok, South Sudan presidential guard commander.

On Tuesday (May 6), the UNHCR said 11,000 people, mostly women and children, had crossed into Gambella Regional State from South Sudan's Upper Nile state in the previous 72 hours. More than 110,000 refugees have fled to Ethiopia since last December, with 205,000 going to Uganda, Sudan and Kenya and 923,000 being internally displaced.

Sudan

President Omer Hassan al-Bashir on Wednesday (May 7) after a meeting with Speaker of the Central African Republic Transitional Council, Alexandre Ferdinand Nguendet, expressed Sudan's readiness to support the national reconciliation and dialogue process that the transitional government plans to hold in the Central African Republic.

The visit of Chinese Premier Li Keqiang to Ethiopia

Prime Minister Li Keqiang of the People's Republic of China arrived in Addis Ababa on Sunday (May 4) at the first leg of a tour taking him to Ethiopia, Angola, Nigeria and Kenya. He is leading a high-powered 129-member delegation and his visit to Africa emphasizes that China wants to continue to invest in Africa, that it is a long-term and predictable partner and offers 'win-win' partnerships without conditionality. Premier Li was greeted on arrival by Prime Minister Hailemariam and the two leaders held separate discussions before attending a bilateral session with ministers from both countries and business leaders from a number of Chinese companies.

Prime Minister Hailemariam noted that the relationship between Ethiopia and China had been steadily expanding since its official start in the 1970's but more particularly during the last decade. It was now going from strength to strength at every level, government-to-government, party-to-party, business-to-business and people-to-people. He cited the finalization of preparation of the Comprehensive Framework Agreement which maps out a ten year strategic framework of cooperation as an important leap in their cooperation. He thanked the Government and people of China for supporting Ethiopia's development in finance, technology transfer, investment and capacity building. He added that China's support to Ethiopia was critical as the country was working to meet goals of the Growth and Transformation Plan, and he expressed the hope to see more Chinese investment in manufacturing, extractive industries, in large scale agriculture where, he said, there was great deal of land ready for commercial farming, noting the importance of participation in agricultural research..

The Prime Minister also described the relationship between China-Africa in general as strategic and all-rounded with the main links being in agriculture and agro processing, ICT, Special Economic Zones, industrial parks, manufacturing, mining, renewable energy development including power generation and railway development. The Prime Minister said that Ethiopia particularly wanted to get support from China in building the institutional and legal framework for economic zones. He emphasized that China was the biggest trade partner of Africa and its support to continental infrastructure development through concessional and preferential loans had brought about significant change. He appreciated China's role in assisting the peace and security of the continent as evinced in its peace keeping missions in Darfur, DRC, Liberia and Mali, but also stressed the need to strengthen political consultation further between China and Africa on regional, continental and global issues.

Prime Minister Li referred to the relationship between China and Ethiopia as deep, traditional and dynamic in its smooth growth, adding that it should be further augmented through high level visits on both sides. He said China desired to expand its relations with Ethiopia in various areas, in particular citing its interest in the development of potash, oil and gas exploration and the development and management of special economic zones. He said China was interested to increase scholarship offers and step up academic cooperation with Africa. He also emphasized the importance of holding consultations and coordinating positions between China and Africa to promote and safeguard the interests of developing countries in a manner that reflected the current multi-polar world order.

The two Prime Ministers witnessed the signing of sixteen agreements by respective heads of ministries of the two governments and business leaders, covering various aspects of infrastructure and economic cooperation. They included a Comprehensive Framework Agreement for the years 2015-2024; a loan release for the Addis Ababa – Djibouti Railway project, whose construction is over 34% complete; a Credit Loan Agreement for the Dire Dawa-Dewelle Road Project; an Individual Facility Agreement for Welkait Sugar Factory Project; as well as a 150 million Remnibi interest free loan and a grant of the same amount.. There was an agreement for the Implementation Program (2014-2017) for the Cultural Cooperation Agreement, a Treaty for Mutual Legal Assistance in Civil and Commercial Matters, a Comprehensive Framework Agreement (2015-2024) between the Ethiopian Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and China’s Ministry of Commerce; and an Agreement on China–Ethiopia Economic and Trade Cooperation Zones. In the manufacturing sector, four Chinese companies including China Communications Corporation Company (CCCC), China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC), CGC Overseas Construction (CGCOC) and China Railway Engineering Corporation (CREC), have agreed to set up industrial parks in Ethiopia, and the two sides expressed satisfaction in the ongoing feasibility study of Dire Dawa Economic Zone. An agreement was reached on technology transfer for high level technology to suit the demands of Ethiopia, and the two sides agreed to share experience in trade logistics with the establishment of an institutional support system. The deals signed were not limited to infrastructure developments and economic cooperation and also included diplomatic visa exemption agreements.

The two Prime Ministers gave a press briefing to local and foreign journalists following their bilateral discussions. Premier Li said China appreciated the complementarity of the needs of the two countries and the fact that Ethiopia had a comparative advantage in cheap labor and low energy supplies. He said his government was committed to encourage more Chinese investment to Ethiopia: "The right track in the relationship between us has been laid. I am sure it will lead us to stronger growth in our ties." He said “we have enjoyed a smooth relationship and practical cooperation with Ethiopia,” adding “we have now reached a consensus to continue to work on infrastructure development, technology transfer, and people to people relations”. Prime Minister Li also underlined that China-Africa relations were on the right track. He said China and Africa has always treated each other as equals throughout their history and noted China’s history of safeguarding the interest of developing countries and promoting inclusive dialogue on global issues.

Prime Minister Hailemariam noted the involvement of Chinese companies in such major projects as mobile telephone expansion, the introduction of a high-speed 4G broadband network in Addis Ababa and a 3G service throughout the country, the Addis Ababa Light Railway, the Adama Wind Farm and the Addis-Adama Expressway, all crucial elements of meeting the targets of the Growth and Transformation Plan. He stressed the value Ethiopia attached to its cooperation with China in its efforts to realize its vision of becoming a manufacturing power house in Africa. He underlined that the Ethio-China relations were based on mutual respect and benefit and highlighted the potential of China as the biggest developing nation on the globe to unleash the growth potential of Ethiopia in particular and Africa in general.

The Chinese Prime Minister also delivered a policy statement on China's Africa policy at African Union Headquarters, reaffirming Beijing's commitment to deepening the China-Africa comprehensive cooperative partnership further on the basis of four principles: treating each other sincerely and equally; consolidating solidarity and mutual trust; jointly pursuing inclusive development; and promoting innovation in practical bilateral cooperation in six areas of cooperation - industry, finance, poverty reduction, ecological protection, people-to-people exchanges, and peace and security. He unveiled extra aid for Africa totaling at least \$12 billion, and offered to share advance technology with the continent to help with development of high-speed rail. He said China would increase credit lines to Africa by \$10 billion and boost the China-Africa Development Fund by \$2 billion, bringing it to a total of \$5 billion. The new \$10 billion credit line would be on top of the existing \$20 billion already offered. Premier Li "depicted a dream that all African capitals are connected with high-speed rail, so as to boost pan-African communication and development," and as China has advanced technologies in this area, he said it was ready to work with Africa "to make this dream come true". To assist in poverty reduction, China will train 2,000 agricultural technicians and management personnel for Africa over the next five years and increase assistance toward such public-welfare areas as provision of drinking water and prevention and control of epidemics. Stressing that ecological protection is a shared responsibility of all humanity, Prime Minister Li said the Chinese government will provide Africa with US\$100 million of free aid for wildlife preservation and promote joint research in protecting biological diversity, prevention and control of desertification and promotion of modern agriculture methods. He said China would also carry out its African 'talent plan' in an all-round manner and provide African countries with 18,000 government scholarships and help train 30,000 professionals in various areas as scheduled.

With regard to industrial cooperation, Prime Minister Li noted the rapid growth of bilateral trade over recent years and urged the two sides to raise the volume to US\$400 billion by 2020. China-Africa trade reached 210.2 billion dollars in 2013. He said China hoped to extend its cumulative direct investment in Africa to US\$100 billion up from the US\$25 billion so far. The Premier said China was ready to expand cooperation with Africa in building road, rail, telecommunications, power and other infrastructure areas to help the continent realize regional interconnection. He added that Beijing would also like to see Chinese enterprises form joint ventures with African counterparts in a bid to improve Africa's regional aviation industry. He also noted that China supported Africa in its efforts to solve African problems in an African way and stood ready to assist Africa's capacity-building in peace-keeping, counter-terrorism and anti-piracy. Pointing out that the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation served as an important platform for deepening

bilateral relations, the Premier called for joint efforts to improve this mechanism and make it more pragmatic and efficient.

The Chairperson of the AU Commission, Dr. Dlamini-Zuma said that Africa and China had a shared commitment to their common destiny, and Africa was ready to work with China not only in poverty reduction but also in modernization. Hailing Li's visit as a milestone, African leaders at the meeting agreed that the China-Africa interaction was a classic model of 'win-win' cooperation, and that the strategic partnership between them would continue to grow ever stronger. Prime Minister Hailemariam in his opening remarks said that Sino-African relations have grown from strength to strength to the mutual benefit and satisfaction of both sides, adding "the all rounded and practical cooperation that we have established within the framework of FOCAC has also yielded remarkable results over the past decades." He said the "implementation of the various commitments made in this context have significantly boosted our relations in many aspects and fields."

During his visit, Prime Minister Li Keqiang also met with President Mulatu who recalled the visit to Ethiopia by late Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai 50 years ago. Premier Li had also chosen Ethiopia as the first leg of his African tour showing the importance China attached to its relations with Ethiopia. President Mulatu expressed Ethiopia's desire to learn from China's experience and welcomed more Chinese investment to help promote Ethiopia's economic growth and reforms. Premier Li described China's cooperation with Ethiopia as a model for other African nations and said the two countries had reached multi-level cooperation on the pillars of inter-governmental, inter-party and people-to-people exchanges. President Mulatu accompanied Premier Li on a visit to the Alert Hospital in Addis Ababa, where patients are treated by China's "Bright Journey" program giving free treatment for cataracts. The Premier said China would send its best doctors to Ethiopia and other African countries to help more people.

Prime Minister Hailemariam and Chinese Premier Li also inaugurated Ethiopia's first expressway on Monday (May 5). This, the first toll road in the country, connects Addis Ababa to the city of Adama in Oromia region. The road was built by the China Communications and Constructions Company under the consultancy of Beijing Expressway, at a cost of 11.2 billion birr and was completed in four years. 57% of the funding came from the EXIM bank of China as a loan. Prime Minister Hailemariam told journalists that this was a real and practical example of the strong foundation of China-Ethiopia relations, adding at the departure of the Chinese Premier, that the visit of the Chinese Premier had been highly successful and was an excellent example of the depth and strength of the relationship between the two countries.

The South Sudan peace talks witness "encouraging developments"

The Third Session of Phase II of the South Sudan peace process to stop the ongoing conflict and killing of civilian populations in South Sudan started April 28, in Addis Ababa. In a press statement on Tuesday this week (May 6), the IGAD Special Envoys noted on that the talks have now witnessed "encouraging developments" as the representatives of the Government of South Sudan and of the SPLM/A-in-Opposition have committed themselves to the indispensability of a sustainable, negotiated political settlement to bolster efforts for national reconciliation and

healing as well as end the crisis in the country. Both sides have agreed to the special importance of the ongoing peace talks to save the people of South Sudan from the dangers of major humanitarian catastrophe and in restoring lasting peace and stability in South Sudan.

In their Tuesday statement, the Special Envoys indicated that both the Government and the SPLM/A-in-Opposition the previous day had signed an agreement on humanitarian matters, to allow for the opening of humanitarian corridors within South Sudan and from neighboring countries, facilitate safe humanitarian access and assist all humanitarian support and guarantee inclusive humanitarian coordination. They agreed to honor “one month of tranquility” (May 7- June 7) in order to provide food supplies and other basic supplies as well as work for the protection of civilian populations from attacks, human rights violations and other atrocities. The agreement was signed by Nhial Deng Nhial, Chief Negotiator for the Government, and General Taban Deng Gai, Chief Negotiator of the SPLM/A-in-Opposition. The IGAD statement said the agreement would support international efforts to respond to urgently needed humanitarian assistance, prevent problems on major supply routes, provide basic services to populations affected by the ongoing fighting, address the basic needs of various communities residing in hard-to-reach areas, and help avoid further humanitarian disaster.

The IGAD Special Envoys also noted that both sides had agreed to discuss other major issues including the implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and Permanent Ceasefire, the Transitional Governance and Interim Arrangements, and a Permanent Constitution. This, the Envoys underlined, would help the two sides define the main causes of the conflict and help end the crisis. The Envoys also said that Prime Minister Hailemariam, current Chairperson of IGAD, had extended invitations to President Salva Kiir of South Sudan and Dr. Riek Machar, former Vice President and leader of the SPLM/A-in-Opposition to come to Addis Ababa on Friday (May 9) and hold direct talks. Both leaders accepted and the talks are due to start today. The Special Envoys stated that the meeting between the two leaders of the conflicting parties would encourage the ongoing IGAD-led mediation efforts, and help to find an inclusive and lasting political solution to the violence, advancing the cause of peace, stability, unity and national reconciliation in the country. Welcoming the continued support and assistance of the international community, the IGAD Special Envoys also urged both parties to fast-track activities to contribute to the end of the conflict.

UN Secretary-General, Ban ki-Moon, made a one day visit to the capital of South Sudan, Juba, on Tuesday, May 6, to hold discussions with President Salva Kiir and former Vice President, Dr. Riek Machar, on the situation, as well as visit the people sheltering at the UNMISS bases in Juba. The UN Secretary-General reminded South Sudan’s leaders that only three years earlier at their independence ceremony, the people of South Sudan and international community were looking forward to a promising trajectory for the future with fervent hope for a unified, democratic and prosperous South Sudan. He expressed his sadness at the present situation of the country and the suffering of the people as a result of their continuing in-fighting. During his visit to the UN bases, he said he had seen the repercussion and hardship of the continued insecurity and fighting on displaced people. He emphasized that the UN would promote and enhance humanitarian assistance and involve itself in all efforts to bring lasting peace and stability to help end the suffering of the civilian population.

The UN Secretary-General said President Salva Kiir and Dr. Machar had given commitment and readiness to attend direct peace talks and to resolve the conflict. He reaffirmed that dialogue was an imperative necessity to provide a peaceful and prompt resolution of the conflict. He said the UN would extend its strong support to sustainable dialogue to rebuild the lives of the people of South Sudan. He said that both leaders might have some different political views but added “there is nothing which they cannot overcome” because “they are same people, same country – this is their country.” The Secretary-General promised that the United Nations and the international community would provide basic humanitarian assistance and other relief services to the displaced civilian populations. He expressed his hope that peace would replace conflict in the near future, urging all the leaders and commanders of military units to comply with the principles of international human rights, respect human dignity and commit themselves to the protection of civilian population in the country. He also said that those who committed crimes against international humanitarian law and human rights law would be responsible for their acts and be brought to justice.

Following its recommitment to the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, the Government of South Sudan on Wednesday (May 7) announced in Addis Ababa that it had ordered its forces to respect a one-month suspension of attacks on opposition forces. Michael Makuei Lueth, Information Minister of South Sudan, told a press conference that the Government was dedicating its efforts to comply with a “month of tranquility” in accordance with the agreement signed on May 5. He said the Government had ordered the army to halt all attacks against the SPLM/A-in-Opposition. The European Union declared on Wednesday (May 7) that it was providing 4.5 million Euros to UNICEF to avert a humanitarian crisis, chronic food insecurity and other problems in South Sudan. It noted that more than a million people of the country had been displaced by the ongoing fighting and urgently needed humanitarian assistance to survive. UNICEF welcomed the EU support for displaced population and refugees, and , Jonathan Veitch, UNICEF Representative to South Sudan, said this would support UNICEF’s efforts to deliver basic humanitarian services to people in remote areas as well as save the lives of many in UN refugee camps. It would also provide food, water, sanitation and other basic services to vulnerable children affected by the crisis. Since the outbreak of the war, the EU has committed 130 million Euros to South Sudanese populations affected by the ongoing violence.

On Tuesday this week, following US Secretary of State Kerry’s visit to Juba on Friday (May 2), the US Treasury Department imposed sanctions on two high level military officers in response to the ongoing violence and human rights violations in South Sudan. Those affected were Peter Gadet, a commander of the SPLM/A-in-Opposition, and Marial Chanuong Mangok, the commander of the South Sudan presidential guard. Ambassador Samantha Power, US Permanent Representative to the UN, said “The measures taken against Marial Chanuong and Peter Gadet are only a first step and should serve as a clear warning to those in the Government of South Sudan and those who have taken up arms against it: the United States is determined to hold accountable those who choose violence.” The decision freezes any assets the two men may have in US financial institutions and bans them from traveling to the US.

Ethiopia presents its National Report to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva

The National Report of Ethiopia was reviewed by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group at its 19th Session on May 6, and the Report of the Working Group was adopted on Thursday (May 8). The Ethiopian delegation to the Working Group was led by Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos, State Minister of Foreign Affairs, and included the State Ministers of Justice, Federal Affairs, Women's, Children and Youth Affairs and the Office for Government Communication Affairs as well as other senior Government officials and experts.

In presenting Ethiopia's National Report, Ambassador Berhane underlined the progress made in Ethiopia in the promotion and protection of human rights including the measures taken to ensure civil and political rights including the freedom of expression and assembly. He informed the Working Group of the progress Ethiopia had registered in the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development and the country's achievements in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. He elaborated on the measures taken to encourage a broad based, participatory and sustainable economic growth, including the ongoing Growth and Transformation Plan (2010-20150). He highlighted the adoption of the first National Human Rights' Plan of Action, the ratification of the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of Child on Children in Armed Conflict and on Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. He detailed the contribution of the Charities and Societies Proclamation to the growth of member-driven civil society organizations in Ethiopia; and dispelled misconceptions about the objectives of the country's Anti-Terrorism Proclamation.

During the interactive dialogue with the Working Group, Leul Kahssay, State Minister of Justice, highlighted the measures taken by the Government to ensure the full implementation of the newly adopted National Human Rights' Plan of Action, including the mechanisms for its monitoring and evaluation. He also outlined the measures taken to ensure the independence and integrity of the judiciary. Frenesh Mekuria, State Minister of Women, Youth and Children Affairs, detailed the measures taken by the Government to ensure the rights and welfare of the child and the rights of women. She stressed the political commitment of the Government to empower women, ensure their participation in the decision-making process, and eradicate violence against women and other harmful traditional practices. Mulugeta Wuletaw, the State Minister of Federal Affairs, emphasized that the Charities and Societies Proclamation had created conducive conditions for the establishment of the charities and societies that were now flourishing in the country. He explained the policy objectives of the regulations on administration costs which were to ensure that funds allocated to advance the objectives of any civil society organization actually reached the intended beneficiaries. He underlined the encouraging results that had been achieved and detailed the positive impact of the law in helping ensure good governance and human development with direct participation of the people involved. He also detailed the coexistence of the different religions in the country and the constitutional protection provided to religion and faith, and emphasized the strong commitment of all religious leaders and the public to resist religious extremism and their determination to work for peace and tolerance.

SHEMELES Kemal, State Minister of the Government Communications Affairs Office, highlighted the policy reforms introduced by the Government to ensure access to information and the mass media and the progress made in facilitating the growth and flourishing of free and independent media following their introduction. He explained the process which had been started as a protection mechanism for whistle blowers. SHEMELES also reflected on the rationale behind the promulgation of the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation. He noted that the Proclamation was similar to anti-terrorism legislation in a number of developed countries, and reiterated that the Proclamation and its implementation were consistently in line with the international and regional human rights obligations of the country.

A total of 112 delegations took the floor during the dialogue. Many commended Ethiopia for the progress made in the protection and promotion of human rights in the country as well as for its leadership role in Africa, its open door policy for refugees, its progress in economic development and for its contribution to integration in Africa and its hosting of the African Union. They applauded the Government for the adoption of the first National Human Rights' Plan of Action, stressing the need for its effective implementation with the involvement of relevant stakeholders. They also commended the ratification of various international human rights' instruments since the first cycle of the UPR and the introduction of other policy, legislative, administrative and institutional measures. In this regard, recommendations were made that Ethiopia should ratify some regional and international human rights' instruments. One of these was the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrants and their Families which is currently under consideration by the House of Peoples' Representatives. Ethiopia was also commended for its role in the fight against terrorism in the country and in the region, and there were recommendations that the country should strengthen these efforts. In relation to freedom of association and assembly, a number of recommendations were made that Ethiopia should strengthen member-based and member-driven civil society organizations by further facilitating existing mechanisms to generate funds from local sources.

The expertise and composition of the delegation demonstrated Ethiopia's clear indication of commitment to engage constructively with the international community, including the Human Rights Council, to further enhance the promotion and protection of human rights within the country. It also enabled it to respond clearly and effectively to the questions raised during the interactive dialogue with the Working Group. In a clear demonstration of the great importance Ethiopia attaches to the Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights Council, it accepted 170 recommendations out of the 252 made by different delegations during the interactive dialogue. It agreed to report back to the Human Rights Council on 18 of these recommendations.

During his stay in Geneva, the State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Berhane also held discussions with the Geneva IGAD Ambassadors' Forum, briefing the ambassadors on the progress the region had made in peace and security, and in economic integration. He also outlined the activities the ambassadors should undertake in Geneva to promote IGAD's objectives. The ambassadors expressed their support to these efforts and briefed Ambassador Berhane on their activities in support of the region. Ambassador Berhane also met the African Group of Ambassadors in Geneva, and expressed Ethiopia's thanks for the overwhelming support they had given during the Universal Periodic Review. He said the solidarity and support Ethiopia received was gratifying and it had made him proud. He briefed the Group on developments in

Ethiopia and the IGAD region and underlined the need for Africa to stand together in advancing the interests of the continent. Ambassador Berhane also held fruitful discussions with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the Director General of the IOM.

“Africans are shaping their future for themselves”, said US Secretary Kerry

During his official visit to Ethiopia last week, U.S. Secretary of State, John Kerry, delivered a speech on Saturday (May 3) outlining U.S. policy toward Africa. The Global Environmental Governance Project collaborator and African environmental leader, the Horn of Africa Regional Environmental Center and Network, hosted US Secretary of State John Kerry at their headquarters in the Gulele Botanic Gardens. Their building, an entirely ‘green’, building made from locally sourced natural materials, was constructed using local labor; and in his speech, Secretary Kerry congratulated the University of Addis Ababa on having this first ‘green’ building as well as noting the beauty of the gardens themselves. The Secretary’s audience included members of the Diplomatic Corps, Government officials, Addis Ababa University representatives, and members of President Obama’s Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI).

The Secretary of State’s speech covered a range of topics including Africa’s impressive economic rise, the persistence of conflict on the continent, the risk of climate change in the world and the potential of African youth, and he commenced by expressing his appreciation to the government for his welcome. He also hailed the Ethiopian government’s support in the search for peace and security in South Sudan and Somalia and in the challenges of leadership on the continent and beyond.

Secretary Kerry said that Africa currently was increasingly a destination for American investment and tourism, and that African institutions were increasingly leading the efforts to solve African problems. This, he said, underscored the way that dramatic transformations were possible, and underlined that prosperity could replace poverty and that cooperation could indeed actually triumph over conflict. “This is clearly a moment of real opportunity for all Africans,” he said. “Africa’s potential comes from the ability of its citizens to make a full contribution, no matter their ethnicity, no matter who they love, or what faith they practice,” he added. Secretary Kerry explained that Africa had the natural resources, the capacity and the know-how for economic development. He said in this the United States was the “natural partner” for the continent. “There is no limit to what we can accomplish by working together, and cooperating, and setting out a strategy, and agreeing to have a vision, and join it in common purpose”, he said.

Secretary Kerry praised the African Union for the emphasis it put on “good governance, democracy and the right to development.” He said it had done much to fight corruption in the public and private sectors in Africa. He added that the United States was working closely with African leaders to tackle corruption and illicit financial transactions. As he pointed out, transparency and accountability attract greater investment and create a more competitive and effective marketplace. He noted that over the next three years, 37 of the 54 states in Africa would be holding national elections, with millions of voters going to the polls. He called on all Africans to work to combat the corruption that the African Union has said costs the people of Africa tens

of billions of dollars. "That money could build new schools and hospitals, new roads and bridges, new pipes and power lines," Secretary Kerry told his audience. Combating corruption, he said, "lifts more than a government's balance sheet."

At the same time, however, he warned that "a new Africa" cannot emerge without becoming "a more secure Africa." Secretary Kerry said the Obama administration was committed to helping African leaders resolve all the conflicts that threaten economic growth and social development. In too much of the continent, he said, the threat of violence remained and all-out war could "prevent even the first shoots of prosperity from emerging." He shared his concerns regarding conflicts in South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria, which he said are "preventing millions of Africans from realizing their full potential, and in some places plunging the continent back into the turmoil of the past". He also highlighted the crises in South Sudan and Somalia. Nevertheless, today, he said, Africans have an opportunity to "bend the arc of history towards reform, not retribution; towards peace and prosperity, not revenge and resentment." Secretary Kerry commended the African Union's commitment "to silence the guns of Africa by 2020," and reiterated United States' commitments to continue to provide financial and logistical support to AU-led peace keeping efforts across the continent.

In backing African Union efforts, Secretary Kerry said the US would continue to support the fight against Al-Shabaab in Somalia, to track down the Lord's Resistance Army, and to strengthen Nigeria's fight against Boko Haram. He specified that the United States would support Nigeria's government as it worked to free the hundreds of girls kidnapped by Boko Haram. He described the kidnapping of hundreds of children by Boko Haram as "an unconscionable crime, and we will do everything possible to support the Nigerian government to return these young women to their homes." He also added that Washington would continue to back French and African forces in the Central African Republic as well as regional efforts to resolve the root causes of conflict in the Great Lakes. He noted that overall the United States supported "wholeheartedly the framework peace process" for the Great Lakes region under the leadership of Angola. He went on to say that during his visit to South Sudan, he had pressed both President Salva Kiir and former vice president Riek Machar to come to talks on the formation of a transitional government and to implement urgently the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement that both had signed. He said he had expressed his "grave concerns" about the deliberate killing of civilians to President Kiir and made it clear that "If both sides do not take bold steps to end the violence, they risk plunging South Sudan into greater desperation and even famine" or worse.

Secretary Kerry also warned of the dangers of climate change. "Climate change is a global challenge and it is going to threaten this continent and all the continents in profound ways if it is not matched by global cooperative action," he said. He said that according to a recent United Nations' report, parts of Mombasa, Dakar, Monrovia and dozens of African coastal cities could be under water by the middle of the century. He emphasized the Obama administration's willingness to support Africa's efforts to develop more sustainably, noting its effort to help combat climate change with US\$1 billion in private-sector financing for an African clean energy initiative. Secretary Kerry also took the opportunity to call for an expansion of American investment in Africa. He pointed out that U.S. companies such as IBM, Microsoft and Google already have spent more than US\$100 million on projects across the continent, but at the same

time, he wanted to see more: “We want more American companies to be here, to invest, both to unleash the power of the private sector in Africa, and, yes, to create jobs in America at the same time.”

Secretary Kerry concluded his speech by praising Africa’s youth, including those selected to be part of the President Obama’s Young African Leaders Initiative, saying that it was their spirit and qualities, and their appetite that he guaranteed would “propel the next generation of Africans to tackle today’s greatest challenges.”

Ethiopia at the Abu Dhabi Ascent: a high-level meeting on Climate Change

An Ethiopian delegation, led by Ambassador Negash Kebret, Director General for International Originations, participated in the Abu-Dhabi Ascent, a special two-day high-level meeting on climate change, held May4-5. The aim of the meeting was to encourage world leaders to announce greater action and aims before the 2014 Climate Summit which is due to take place on September 23 at the United Nation Headquarters in New York, the day before the UN General Assembly begins its annual General Debate. The meeting was at the initiative of the United Arab Emirates in support of the UN Secretary General’s September Summit and addressed action areas that offered significant impact in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions as well as creating strategies for resilience. More than one hundred ministers and high government officials from member countries of the United Nations, including leaders from business and civil society participated.

The Ethiopian government delegation took part in two of the five break-out sessions on key action areas, covering the issues of combating desertification and climate finance, to detail relevant experiences and the contributions made so far to the global efforts to address climate change. In its presentation on accelerating forest restoration, the delegation focused on key aspects of the government’s efforts in restoring deeply degraded land in the Tigray Regional State, and highlighted the fact that more than a million hectares of heavily degraded land has been restored through treatments covering a range of soil conservation and water harvesting techniques. It focused on key areas of actions, including fighting deforestation and implementing reforestation projects, that have helped millions of small-holder farmers begin to adapt to climate change. These efforts have produced encouraging results in providing increased vegetation cover over large areas, making the region greener than it has been at any stage during the last 145 years. They have also improved the management of rainfall and, combined with other restoration measures, contributed to ensuring household food security in drought areas. In addition these measures have increased biodiversity, reduced soil erosion and run-off from degraded land and restored ecosystem services.

The presentation underlined that the government has a clear policy to support and encourage villagers to invest in the restoration of forests by providing voluntary labor, and it has also set a series of ambitious targets to restore 15 million hectares of degraded land and to plant a 100 million trees.

In its second presentation on climate finance, the delegation underlined Ethiopia's activities in deploying diversified sources of financing mechanisms ranging from public sources to bilateral and multilateral donors, as well as the UN system and international financial institutions. It emphasized that the country was making all possible efforts to use a mix of hydro, wind and geothermal power to support a 'green' economy and use sustainable energy resources. The delegation noted that Ethiopia had started constructing a network of railway lines to be powered by electricity from the national grid.

The Ethiopian delegation called on developed countries to keep to the commitments to increase climate change finance to reach US\$100 billion per year by 2020. It strongly underlined the salient features of the Ethiopian Climate Resilient Green Economic Strategy as well as its responsibility in representing the unified voice of Africa on climate change and promoting the green path of economic development in the continent.

The United States and Djibouti sign a new agreement for Camp Lemonnier

On Monday this week (May 5), the United States finalized a new 10-year agreement with Djibouti for the use of the U.S. military base at Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti. The base, the only US base in sub-Saharan Africa, houses conventional forces, as well as Special Forces and aerial drones. The base has more than 3,000 U.S. civilian and military personnel. The new lease agreement will allow the U.S. to keep personnel and equipment at the camp for 10 more years and it also includes an option to extend the lease for an additional 10 years without renegotiation as well as a provision to extend for an additional 10 years at a renegotiated rate. According to reports the current agreement allows for a substantial increase of US\$63 million a year for the use of the base.

President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti who has been on a visit to Washington this week had a meeting with President Barack Obama at the White House on Monday. Discussions covered a range of security and development issues, but centered on the critical role played by Camp Lemonnier and its place as a hub for counterterrorism operations and training. President Obama described Camp Lemonnier as "extraordinarily important not only to our work throughout the Horn of Africa but throughout the region." He said the base was "a critical facility" and it could not be maintained without President Guelleh's cooperation, adding "we're grateful for him agreeing to a long-term presence there." The major role of Camp Lemonnier as an operational headquarters for regional security was underlined as was its importance for protecting Americans and Djiboutians alike from violent extremist individuals and organizations. President Obama commended Djibouti's important contributions to peace and security in Somalia, in AMISOM, through organizing of reconciliation conferences in support of peacemaking efforts and its support for multinational efforts to counter piracy. The US is now going to provide enhanced security assistance and equipment to Djiboutian security forces including material for Djiboutian forces deployed with AMISOM.

The Presidents discussed ways that the U.S. presence at Camp Lemonnier could help further expand economic opportunities, and the Administration's efforts to work with the U.S. Congress

on the proposed "Djibouti First" legislation to allow preference to Djiboutian products and services in Department of Defense procurements in support of U.S. requirements in Djibouti. President Obama also said the US would continue to assist the government of Djibouti around issues related to human rights in the region, and find ways it could help Djibouti's action plan for dealing with human trafficking. He said he looked forward to deepening cooperation that benefited the people of Djibouti. He underlined US support for Djibouti's efforts to achieve its ambitious reform goals, its commitment to lowering unemployment, reducing poverty, and improving reliable access to energy, potable water, and health care. The US has pledged to increase technical and financial assistance and to invest in Djibouti's development priorities. It will expand U.S.-sponsored workforce education and training, provide technical assistance to support Djibouti's energy sector and work to catalyze private financing to develop renewable energy there. President Obama welcomed Djibouti's commitment to empowering women and girls and promoting increased access to education and health services.

President Guelleh stressed his desire to achieve reinforced relations between Djibouti and the United States. He praised President Obama's vision for the development of Africa and in general, and for the region in particular. He said Djibouti's welcome for U.S. showed its support for international peace and for peace in the region, noting that in its work for peace in Africa, Djibouti was not only taking part in AMISOM, but was also present in Darfur, the Cote d'Ivoire, Western Sahara, and soon in the Central African Republic. He described the new agreement over Camp Lemonnier as a clear sign of Djibouti's "support for international peace and for peace in our region"

The two presidents pledged to work closely together to advance their shared vision for a secure, stable, and prosperous Horn of Africa and to strengthen and deepen the strategic partnership between their two countries. Their meeting concluded with a shared commitment to a "special and longstanding relationship" and a pledge to continue to work to strengthen this strategic partnership. They agreed to establish a U.S.-Djibouti Bi-national Forum and designate senior officials to lead this to encourage implementation of the commitment to build a Strategic Partnership grounded "in friendship, mutual trust, and common security."

The World Economic Forum in Africa meets in Abuja this week

The World Economic Forum on Africa took place this week in Nigeria for the first time (May 7-9) under the theme "Forging Inclusive Growth, Creating Jobs." Among those participating were the Presidents of Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania and Togo as well as the Prime Minister of China, on his first visit to Africa, the Prime Ministers of Côte d'Ivoire and Madagascar and other leaders. More than 900 leaders from business, government, civil society and academia have been attending the Forum.

The meeting convenes against a backdrop of significant economic growth in Africa and some real progress in reducing poverty in most parts of sub-Saharan Africa. The program this year has three pillars: Accelerating Society's Transformation; Deepening Investment Partnerships; and Redesigning Growth Models. Director Elsie Kanza, Head of Africa, World Economic Forum,

says “Africa’s continued progress depends fundamentally on the ability of its leaders to take the bold decisions necessary to transform the region’s economy and society. By bringing together leaders from politics, business and civil society, we hope the meeting will offer an environment where such decisions can be catalysed, and where commitment and creativity can be drawn on to build a future fit for all Africans.”

As usual, in addition to the two-day official program, a number of other meetings are being held in parallel in Abuja during the Forum. Shape Africa, the annual meeting of Africa’s Global Shapers community, was held May 5-6. This brings together young, engaged people from across Africa to share ideas on how they can improve life in their home cities and countries.

The Grow Africa Investment Forum was held on Wednesday (May 7) and was attended by several heads of state. The Grow Africa partnership is an African-owned and country-led platform to provide and encourage increased and inclusive investment and multi-stakeholder partnership in the agriculture sector, in line with African countries’ Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program plans. It is a joint initiative of the African Union Commission, the NEPAD Agency and the World Economic Forum, and currently operates in nine Partner Countries in Africa: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda and Tanzania. Côte d'Ivoire has now announced it will join the partnership as the 10th member.

At the Forum meeting on Wednesday, Grow Africa and IDH, the Sustainable Trade Initiative, signed a cooperation agreement to implement projects on the ground with the aim of doubling incomes of at least 25,000 smallholder families. In just two years Grow Africa has persuaded the private sector to invest over \$7 billion dollars in smallholder farming, half of this in Nigeria. Across Africa, this investment has already helped to buy more from small farmers. Elsie Kanza says Grow Africa is an example of what can be achieved when everybody is pulling in the same direction: none of its progress would have been possible without government support for businesses and, most importantly, the support of the farmers themselves.

The Presidents of Nigeria, Tanzania and Rwanda agreed that increased private sector investment in agriculture was a key to delivering economic opportunity and food security within their countries. President Jonathan said “There are huge opportunities in agriculture. This will create jobs and achieve food security. The key is not just producing enough food for local consumption, but also creating jobs along the value chain.” In 2013, Grow Africa partners doubled their commitments for agriculture and food security to \$7.2 billion. Of this, \$970 million is already invested, which has led to the creation of 33,000 new jobs and assistance to 2.6 million smallholder farmers throughout the continent. President Kagame said the progress on the ground was largely due to investments in land management, seed quality, technology, water management and other factors, including the important role of smallholder farmers.

It is not the only such example. It has been estimated that Africa needs to spend \$100 billion a year on its transport networks, power generation and water supply. These major infrastructure projects usually require the cooperation of more than one government and long term financing. At the World Economic Forum in Africa meeting in 2012, the African Strategic Infrastructure Initiative was launched and has been working with considerable success to remove those

roadblocks and allow financing to be freed up for projects that will have the most impact on people's lives.

Another initiative launched during the Abuja meeting was "Visa free travel in Africa" intended to promote travel across the continent by easing visa constraints. It was launched by Rwanda's President Kagame, Kenya's President Kenyatta, Nigerian businessman Aliko Dangote, and the president of the African Development Bank, Dr Kaberuka. President Kenyatta said: "Lack of political will and negative perception should not be allowed to undermine Africa's integration and economic growth." Dr. Kaberuka said the African Development Bank strongly supported the initiative, as a key component of the commitment to enhance regional integration across Africa. He said easing visa constraints and removing other unnecessary barriers would contribute to boosting economies by expanding regional trade, adding that "true integration will take place only if people are able to move freely across the continent and leaders need to take action to make this happen." Dr. Kaberuka added.

The role of the media in diplomacy: a Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Workshop

A one day workshop focusing on the role of the media in diplomacy was organized last week by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here in Addis Ababa. Representatives of the federal and regional media as well as of the public and private media participated in the workshop which covered in detail a series of thematic issues including the role of journalists in promoting national interest, disseminating accurate and balanced reports related to the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and participation of the media in public diplomacy activities.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Yinager Desse, opened the workshop, noting that while the Foreign Ministry was now registering various achievements in the sphere of diplomacy, the role of both the government and the private media was the key to taking these achievements to a higher level and allowing them to be publicized. The State Minister said the media had made commendable efforts to provide accurate information on the GERD and its potential role in promoting the use of equitable shares in the Nile waters. At the same time, Dr. Yinager called on journalists and the media to make every effort to provide balanced reports of the Dam and promote a win-win outcome in relation to the use of the Nile waters for all countries in the Nile basin, and to underline the scientific fact and the benefits the GERD will provide for the whole region. He indicated that it was now even more imperative for the Ministry and for the print and electronic media to closely work together than ever before. The media, he stressed, had a role as an important tool in the conduct of the country's "New Diplomacy".

The workshop was given a briefing on various aspects of policy including Ethiopia's Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy and on elements connected with issue of the Nile including the Comprehensive Framework Agreement, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam itself, the International Panel of Experts' report and the subsequent tripartite meetings between Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan. The briefing also provided an account of Ethiopia's commitments and its efforts to realize a win-win approach for development of the Nile for all the

riparian states. It also covered the possible role that the media could play in this area of diplomacy.

Ambassador Fisseha Yimer, Special Advisor to the Minister; Ambassador Ibrahim Idris, Director-General for the Boundary and Transboundary Resources Directorate-General; and Ambassador Ababi Demissie, Acting Director-General for the Public Diplomacy and Communications Directorate-General briefed the media representatives and responded to the questions and queries raised. Ato Zerihun Abebe, a lecturer from Dilla University also evaluated the narration of the media on various national issues including the GERD and the Comprehensive Framework Agreement. Ato Zerihun stressed the need for journalists and the media to do more to research their stories, provide adequate documentation and engage with the relevant personalities to provide the basis for accurate and balanced reports and stories.

Ministry representatives underlined the fact that Ethiopia was continuing to work with all riparian countries for the benefit of all the peoples of the region. They pointed out that this was something that was important for the media to reflect. During discussions, there was general agreement on Ethiopia's paramount role in changing the landscape of the discussion on the use of the Nule waters from one of conflict to a matter of cooperation and regional development. Ambassador Fisseha Yimer also spoke about the concept of "New Diplomacy" in a presentation on "Public Diplomacy and the role of Media". He noted that today the media had an important role to play in all areas of public diplomacy. This applied as much in Ethiopia as in other countries around the world. He emphasized the importance, indeed the need, of both public and private media to work hard in this context to promote the national interests of their country.

During the discussions during the afternoon sessions, media representatives welcomed the opportunity to have consultations with the Ministry on how to deal with such issues as GERD and other areas of national interest. They also made it clear they appreciated being briefed and being able to hear the views of veteran diplomats and officials, and getting explanations of various diplomatic activities which could have an impact on the way they carried out their job. They requested the Ministry to organize such workshops and fora on a more regular basis. They were important and useful in helping the media, both public and private, to produce the sort of accurate and balanced reporting that both the media and its audience would see.