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News in brief

Africa and African Union

Major General Charles F. Bolden, the Administrator of the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in Ethiopia this week met with AU Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture Tumusiime Rhoda Peace, and AU Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology, Martial De-Paul Ikounga, to discuss potential cooperation between NASA and the AU on education, disaster mitigation and applications for NASA's Earth science research.

Ethiopia

President Dr. Mulatu Teshome told the 4th International Conference on Pulses, Oilseeds and Spices in Addis Ababa this week that Ethiopia had earned close to US\$1 billion from pulses, oilseeds and spices in the last fiscal year. Revenues from the sector had amounted to US\$920 million USD, over 28% of export earnings.

President Dr. Mulatu visiting the Adama I and II wind power generating projects, in company with the Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia, called upon the country's professionals to work to adapt foreign technology and knowledge. Adama II is over 80% complete and will generate 153mw on completion by the end of the current fiscal year.

Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros Adhanom, met with Major General Charles F. Bolden, the Administrator of the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) who is on a visit to Ethiopia this week. Major General Bolden said NASA's topographic mapping could help forecast drought, malaria outbreaks, flooding and storms. He also met with the Minister of Science and Technology, Demitu Hambisa, to discuss possible applications of NASA's Earth Science research.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos, on a visit to Doha, met with the Prime Minister and Interior Minister of the State of Qatar, Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al- Thani on Tuesday (November 11). The Joint Technical Committee met on Monday (November 10) to review the status of signed agreements and explored areas for further cooperation in trade and investment.

The State Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Dr. Abraham Tekeste, opening the 4th round meeting of the Promoting Basic Services III (PBS) program on Tuesday (November 11) said the country had achieved commendable results in improving the quality of basic services nationwide and changes in some of the basic services like education, health, agriculture, water, sanitation and rural roads have benefited millions of Ethiopians; the head count poverty index of the nation had declined from 38.7% in 2005 to 24% 2014.

The Ministry of Urban Development, Housing and Construction said more than 165 cities are participating in the Cities' Forum which starts in Dire Dawa on Friday (November 14). The Forum is designed to help Ethiopian Cities to share experiences and learn from experiences of cities around the world in matters of green economy, sanitation, housing construction and service delivery. The urban population of Ethiopia now numbers over 18 million people.

Remembrance Sunday at the Gulele War Cemetery in Addis Ababa on Sunday (November 9) commemorated the almost 20 million people killed in the First World War and all those killed in the two World Wars and in all other conflicts. Ambassadors and military officers of Commonwealth countries and all those nations involved in these conflicts, including Ethiopia, laid wreaths on the war memorial in the cemetery. Remembrance Sunday, held on the second Sunday in November, is marked by special services held at war memorials and cemeteries around the world.

Ethiopia participated in the World Travel Market exhibition in London last week (November 3-6). An opening ceremony was held at the Ethiopian stand by Ethiopia's Ambassador to the UK, Ambassador Berhanu Kebede, Director General of the Ethiopian Tourism organization, Solomon Tadesse, and Ethiopian Airlines Area Manager, Michael Yared.

Ambassador Sinkinesh Ejigu, Ethiopia's Ambassador to Brazil and also accredited to Argentina and Chile, presented her credentials to President Dilma Rouseff of Brazil on Monday (November 10). Ambassador Sinkinesh carried a message from President Dr. Mulatu Teshome with best wishes for the wellbeing of the President and the welfare and prosperity of the people of Brazil.

Ms. Asa Skogstrom Feldt, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Hunger Project said this week that Ethiopia, one of eight targeted countries, was on the right track in fighting hunger, and she expected it to attain this Millennium Development Goal before the deadline. She said the Hunger Ethiopia Project had benefited 96,000 people from 22 kebeles.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has presented a Certificate of Recognition to Ato Girma Fisseha, a member of the Ethiopian Diaspora in Germany in recognition of his work in facilitating the twining of Alemketema in Ethiopia and Vaterstetten in Germany as well as work in improving Ethiopian German relations.

Djibouti

Djibouti's Minister of Defense Hassan Darar Houffaneh on Monday (November 10th) met with a visiting military delegation from Saudi Arabia to discuss security co-operation in both military

and naval matters. The two sides emphasized the need to strengthen co-operation further in all areas.

Djibouti's Minister of Economy and Finance Ilyas Moussa Dawaleh on Saturday (November 8) signed a US \$2 million loan agreement with the World Bank Country Director for Egypt, Yemen and Djibouti, Hartwig Schafer, for a "Governance for Private Sector Development" project to speed up economic growth and boost job creation.

Kenya

Kenya's President Kenyatta, opening the Origin of Africa event showcasing Africa's textile industry this week, said he wants his Government to position Kenya as Africa's manufacturing and technology hub. The event attracted nearly 300 investors from 32 African countries including partner states of the East African Community.

Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia have agreed to construct a multipurpose dam and a hydro power station on the River Dawa in Mandera County, Kenya. At a three day meeting in Nairobi organized by IGAD, representatives agreed to cooperate over the management and sustainable use of the river.

The tarmacking of the main road linking Kenya with Ethiopia is expected to be completed by the end of next year, according to the Governor of Kenya's Marsabit County. Governor Ukur Yattani said the 505-kilometre Isiolo-Marsabit-Moyale road was now 60% complete and by the end of next year, Addis Ababa will be connected to Nairobi by a tarmac road.

The British High Commissioner to Kenya, Dr Christian Turner, called this week for the travel advisories on Kenya issued by some European countries to be reviewed with a view to having them lifted altogether. Deputy President William Ruto who welcomed the comment said tourists to Kenya were guaranteed safety and security. He invited High Commissioners to see the improved security for themselves.

Somalia

The UN Security Council on Wednesday (November 12), unanimously adopting resolution 2184 (2014), reaffirmed its condemnation of all acts of piracy and robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia and reiterated its calls for the international community to intensify their efforts in fighting the continued threat to the stability of Somalia. **(See article)**

The Speaker of the Somali National Assembly, Mohamed Osman Jawari, called on members of Parliament to use dialogue to end the political tension in the country arising from the disagreement of the President and the Prime Minister over a proposed reshuffle. On Tuesday (November 11), he adjourned a rowdy debate in Parliament as MPs attempted to debate a no-confidence motion on the Prime Minister.

A US State Department statement said on Monday (November 10) that U.S. was "deeply concerned" over the political turmoil, and said it would not be sending a delegation to the High

Level Partnership Forum on Somalia, which will meet next week in Copenhagen to review progress under the New Deal Compact on Somalia.

The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, Nicholas Kay, speaking at a meeting of the Steering Committee of the High-Level Partnership Forum of the Somali Development and Reconstruction Facility on Tuesday (November 11) urged political leaders to resolve their differences or risk undermining the progress achieved.

Egypt's Foreign Minister, Sameh Shoukry called on Sunday (November 9) for the Arab League to discuss the current crisis between President Mahmud and Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed.

The two-week conference in Baidoa to ratify the creation of the South Western State, composed of three regions, Bay, Bakool and Lower Shebelle, ended on Friday (November 7). It joins the other potential federal states of Puntland, Jubaland and Galmudug. The 370 delegates from the three regions unanimously agreed that the capital of the new state should be Barawa a port liberated from Al-Shabaab only last month.

A high level Ethiopian government delegation led by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Sufian Ahmed is visiting Hargeisa, Somaliland, The delegation includes the Minister of Transport, Workneh Gebeyenu, the State Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Ahmed Shide, the Director of Maritime and Logistic Services, Ahmed Tusa and other officials.

A high level delegation from the African Union Peace Support Operations Division was in Somalia last week, looking at the different activities being undertaken by AMISOM. The delegation, led by the Head of the Peace Support Division, Sivuyile Bam Bam, held meetings in Mogadishu and also visited Baidoa and Belet Weyne.

The Credible Voices Conference held in Istanbul, (November 10-13) was attended by religious scholars, women, academics, and representatives of all sections of Somali society. The Conference concluded that violent religious ideology had no basis in Islam and called for programs to rehabilitate young people forced to join extremist groups. It concluded tribalism had been responsible for the instability of Somalia and hindered development.

An estimated 21,000 people have been displaced by floods in Belet Weyne, in the Hiiraan region north of Mogadishu. Seasonal torrential rains over the last two weeks have caused the River Shebelle to break its banks, leaving hundreds of families displaced and in need of urgent assistance.

South Sudan

IGAD held its 28th Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government on Thursday and Friday last week (November 6-7) and bluntly told President Kiir and Dr. Machar to "come to their senses". (See article)

Following the IGAD Summit, South Sudan's warring parties finally signed the implementation matrix agreement on Sunday (November 10). IGAD Special Envoys called on the parties to swiftly and earnestly take all measures to implement the agreed timetable, without delay. **(See article)**

Sudan

Negotiations between the Sudan Government and Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) on the conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile resumed in Addis Ababa on Wednesday (November 12) under the mediation of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) headed by Thabo Mbeki.

The Ethio-Sudan Friendship Association held its General Assembly last week in Khartoum (November 4) with the cooperation of the Council for Internal People's Friendship and the Ethiopian Embassy in the Sudan. Ethiopia's Ambassador to the Sudan, Ambassador Abadi Zemo, attended the meeting.

IGAD Heads of State take a tough line with South Sudan's warring leaders

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) held its 28th Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa on Thursday and Friday last week (November 6-7). The Summit, called to discuss ways to resolve the ongoing crisis in South Sudan, was attended by President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda; President Omar Hassan al-Bashir of Sudan; President Ismaïl Omar Guelleh of Djibouti; President Salva Kiir Mayardit of South Sudan; President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of Somalia; and President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya and Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia, the Chair of IGAD. . Also present were Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission; Ambassador Mahboub Maalim, Executive Secretary of IGAD; the IGAD Special Envoys for South Sudan, Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin of Ethiopia, General Lazaro Sumbeiywo of Kenya and General Mohammed Ahmed Mustafa El Dabi of Sudan; and representatives of the United Nations, the People's Republic of China, Denmark, Japan, the European Union, the Troika (Norway, the United States and the United Kingdom) and the IGAD Partners Forum (IPF) as well as Dr. Riek Machar, the rebel leader.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn in his opening speech made clear that IGAD had lost patience with the prevarications of the South Sudan leaders and their failures to implement their previous agreements. He deplored the poor progress in the negotiation between the two warring parties in South Sudan. He pointed out that "Despite agreement after agreement to end hostilities and to set in motion a transitional process that will lay the groundwork for sustainable political solution to the conflict in south Sudan, their promises have been observed more in the breach." He denounced the lack of political will on both sides to end the conflict and thereby continue the sufferings of the people of South Sudan. He said that the warring sides appear to have tried to use IGAD summits "primarily as welcome intervals in which to prepare for a contest over military preeminence, not as genuine forums to seek political solutions to the conflict."

Detailing the grim consequences of the conflict which has lasted nearly a year, Prime Minister Halemariam said “Apart from the tens of thousands so far killed, hundreds of thousands are rendered refugees while famine and starvation are staring millions more in the eye. The status quo is indeed unsustainable.” He noted that IGAD had a principled position to try and avoid internationalization of the negotiation process to avoid complicating matters, but he also reminded the two sides that unless a breakthrough was achieved, IGAD would hand the issue over to the AU and the UN Security Council in order for “meaningful strong action to be taken” He said that the IGAD countries would do their best to impress the futility of war on the warring sides and would leave no stone unturned to bring agreement over the sticking points and move the peace process forward. The Chairperson of the African Union, Dr. Dlamini Zuma, commended IGAD for its tireless efforts to resolve the problem and called on both parties to end the bloodshed. Ambassador Donald Booth, the US Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan, also underlined need to resolve the impasse in South Sudan and urged the two leaders to rise to the challenges that they faced. He warned that if not resolved the ongoing conflict would become a tragedy not just for South Sudan but for the whole region.

At the conclusion of the Summit, the IGAD leaders bluntly told President Salva Kiir and Dr. Riek Machar to “come to their senses”. They said the warring parties must finalize a transitional power-sharing accord, and communiqué on Friday said the two warring parties had committed themselves “to an unconditional, complete and immediate end to all hostilities, and to bring the war to an end, as of the date of this Resolution.” They had also both committed themselves to an immediate cessation of recruitment and mobilization of civilians. The Summit allowed the warring parties additional time to conduct consultations with their respective constituencies on the agreed agenda, that is 15 days to complete consultations with their supporters, but stated firmly that “any violation of the cessation of the hostilities by any party will lead to collective action by the IGAD region including but not limited to the enactment of asset freezes, the enactment of travel bans within the region and a denial of the supply of arms and ammunition, and any other material that could be used in war.” The Summit also made it clear that IGAD would “take the necessary measures to directly intervene in South Sudan to protect life and restore peace and stability”, without further reference to the warring Parties. It added that should it be necessary to implement these measures, the IGAD region will call upon the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, the Security Council of the United Nations, and the entire international community, to render all possible assistance for their implementation.

Speaking after the talks, President Kiir said the government forces would only fight in self-defense: “From this hour, they won’t be found outside their barracks to make an attack from any direction. They should fight only in self defense.” Dr. Machar also said he had ordered all rebel fighters “to cease the hostilities and remain in their locations and only act in self-defense”, adding “we do not want any soldier or any civilian to die again after this progress in Addis Ababa.”

Following the Summit, the warring sides, the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and the SPLM/A (In Opposition) finally signed the implementation matrix agreement on Sunday (November 10). IGAD issued a statement welcoming the agreement over the implementation matrix and the detailed timetable for implementing the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. The IGAD Special Envoys called on the parties to swiftly and earnestly take all measures to

implement the agreed timetable, without delay. IGAD's Chief Envoy, Ambassador Seyoum, said the two sides have now agreed to a step-by-step implementation of the accord reached in January. The detailed timetable commits the parties to specific measures including withdrawing from flash-point areas, reporting troop positions, and allowing truce-monitoring and aid agencies to operate freely. Ambassador Seyoum said it was "a landmark in the process of implementation of the agreement and commitments pledged" by the two leaders. He said he was "genuinely convinced that they will honor this commitment this time because the consequences are so big and they cannot afford to violate the cessation of hostilities agreement."

The roadmap agreement, which includes the implementation matrix with attached addenda, was signed by the two chief negotiators. Among other item, it calls for withdrawal of all foreign forces. These are to begin within seven days after the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities implementation matrix from areas where protection forces and units of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVM) are present. A partial withdrawal is to be completed within 30 days "and a complete withdrawal from the Republic of South Sudan upon the signing of a Permanent Ceasefire Agreement." The two warring parties also agreed to reveal the location and details of their forces, particularly in the greater Upper Nile region where most of the fighting has taken place. They agreed to stop all negative propaganda against each other and provide unhindered access to humanitarian interventions and organizations, respect human rights and stop mobilizing civilians to join their forces. The power-sharing agreement provides for the two principals to command their respective armies during the transitional period until an integration process is completed. This will include deployment of joint presidential guards of the same size from the two factions in Juba.

UN Security Council renews authorization for anti-piracy activity off the Somali coast

The UN Security Council on Wednesday (November 12) unanimously adopted resolution 2184 (2014) under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, stressing the need for "a comprehensive response" by the international community to repress piracy and tackle its underlying causes and extending the mandate for states and regional bodies to fight piracy off the Somali coast for another year. The resolution renews the Security Council authorizations granted to states and regional bodies cooperating with Somalia in the fight against piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia.

The Security Council reaffirmed its respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence, and unity of Somalia, including Somalia's sovereign rights in accordance with international law, with respect to offshore natural resources, including fisheries. It noted that the joint counter-piracy efforts of States, regions, organizations, the maritime industry, the private sector, think tanks, and civil society had resulted in a sharp decline in pirate attacks as well as hijackings since 2011. At the same time it said it continued to be gravely concerned by the on-going threat that piracy and armed robbery at sea posed to the prompt, safe, and effective delivery of humanitarian aid to Somalia and the region, to the safety of shipping, to international navigation and the safety of commercial maritime routes, and to fishing activities. It was also gravely concerned by the extended range of the piracy threat into the western Indian Ocean and

adjacent sea areas and by increased pirate capacities. The Security Council also expressed concerns about the reported involvement of children in piracy off the coast of Somalia as well as reported sexual exploitation of women and girls in areas controlled by pirates and their reported coercion in participation in activities that supported piracy.

The resolution condemned and deplored all acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia and recognized that the on-going instability in Somalia was one of the underlying causes of the problem of piracy while piracy, in turn, exacerbated instability by introducing large amounts of illicit cash that fueled additional crime and corruption in Somalia. It stressed the need for a comprehensive response to repress piracy and tackle its underlying causes by the international community. It underlined the primary responsibility of the Somali authorities in the fight against piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia and urgently requested the Somali authorities to pass a comprehensive set of anti-piracy and maritime laws and establish security forces with clear roles and jurisdictions to enforce these. It requested the Somali authorities to continue to develop, with international support, the capacity of courts to investigate and prosecute persons responsible for acts of piracy and armed robbery, including those involved in networks which plan, organize, facilitate, or illicitly finance or profit from pirate activity. It called upon the Somali authorities to put in place mechanisms to safely return effects seized by pirates, investigate and prosecute pirates and to patrol the territorial waters off the coast of Somalia; and to make all efforts to bring to justice those who are using Somali territory to plan, facilitate, or undertake criminal acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea. It called on Member States to assist Somalia to strengthen its maritime capacity and on other States to adopt legislation to facilitate prosecution of suspected pirates.

It renewed its requests for States and regional organizations that are able to do so to take part in the fight against piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia, by deploying naval vessels, arms, and military aircraft, by providing basing and logistical support for counter-piracy forces, and by seizing and disposing of boats, vessels, arms, and other related equipment used in the commission of piracy and armed robbery or for which there are reasonable grounds for suspecting such use. The resolution authorized anti-piracy patrols for another year by foreign ships including vessels from the European Union, NATO, South Korea, New Zealand, the United States, China, India, Iran, Japan and Russia. It noted the importance of securing the safe delivery of World Food Program assistance by sea, and welcomed the work by WFP, EU operation ATALANTA, and other states for Vessel Protection Detachments.

It highlighted the importance of coordination among States and international organizations and encouraged Member States to continue to cooperate with Somali authorities. It renewed for another twelve months the authorizations granted to States and regional organizations cooperating with Somali authorities in the fight against piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia and decided that the arms embargo should not apply to supplies of weapons and military equipment or the provision of assistance destined for the sole use of Member States and others involved in anti-piracy operations.

In addition, the resolution called for the immediate and unconditional release of all seafarers held hostage by Somali pirates, and on the Somali authorities and all relevant stakeholders to redouble their efforts to secure their safe and immediate release. It recognized the need for States, international and regional organizations, and others to exchange evidence and information for anti-piracy law enforcement purposes and for all States to cooperate fully with the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group, including on information-sharing regarding possible violations of the arms embargo or charcoal ban.

It called on all states to cooperate in the investigation and prosecution of all persons responsible for acts of piracy and armed robbery, and to criminalize piracy under their domestic law as well as consider the prosecution of pirates and their facilitators and financiers ashore. It urged all States to take appropriate actions under existing domestic law to prevent the illicit financing of acts of piracy and the laundering of its proceeds and in cooperation with INTERPOL and Europol, to further investigate international criminal networks, including those responsible for illicit financing and facilitation.

In conclusion, it requested the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council within eleven months on the implementation of the resolution and the situation with respect to piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia.

The Third International Ethiopian Coffee Conference in Addis Ababa

The place of coffee in the international economy cannot be overemphasized. Coffee is the world's most widely-traded tropical agricultural commodity and its export value accounted for more than US\$24 billion in 2012. In many years it is second in value only to oil as a source of foreign exchange to producing countries and it is the second most traded commodity in the international market after crude oil. Its cultivation, processing, trading, transportation and marketing provide employment for hundreds of millions of people worldwide. Coffee is crucial to the economies and politics of many developing countries; for many of the world's Least Developed Countries, exports of coffee account for more than 50 percent of their foreign exchange earnings. Coffee is a traded commodity on major futures and commodity exchanges, most importantly in London and New York. Coffee provides a significant part of the international commodities' market and provides a significant element in the trade of specific countries as well as boosting their GDP and creating jobs for millions. In addition, the specialty coffee market has continued to evolve at a constant rate internationally, and consumption of coffee throughout the world has continued to grow.

Ethiopia is not only the home of the origin of mankind but is also the origin and birthplace of Arabica coffee, the more aromatic of coffee species. It is home to some two thousand indigenous varieties of coffee and has the most genetically diverse wild coffee varieties in the world. Although a major crop in Ethiopia, there is still huge potential for investment in the industry, through farming, processing or trading. Ninety five percent of Ethiopia's coffee produced naturally; and seventy percent of its coffee is exported to only 7 countries, Germany, Saudi Arabia, the United States, Belgium, Japan, Georgia and France.

Ethiopia's coffee sector has shown considerable growth over a number of years in both the international and the domestic market. According to the International Coffee Organization (ICO) World Coffee trade statistics, for example, Ethiopia ranked third with a 6.2% export growth in 2014 after Vietnam which registered 13.9% and Nicaragua at 7.3%. The sector still has a huge capacity and significant potential to expand.

One major contributory factor for the growth of Ethiopia's coffee production and export has been the establishment of the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX). This has provided a number of advantages for the farmers and traders, all contributing substantially to the growth of the sector. These included trading advancement, payment system improvements and communication technologies as well as encouraging producers to improve the quality and standard of coffee. The establishment of the Exchange benefitted countless farmers and producers, traders, cooperatives, processors, and exporters by implementing a T + 1 (trade plus one day) settlement system and abolishing the long existing system of payment by default. Another advance was the creation of local capability and talent to replace the open-outcry traditional communication and bargaining system with an online trading system together with its related office operations. During the last six years, the ECX has moved over 1.2 million metric tons of coffee with a total value of US\$3.2 billion dollars. The ECX has not limited itself to coffee, of course, but coffee has made up 50% of the volume and 67% of the value of the commodities traded by the ECX. In addition, the ECX, with support from USAID, has recently upgraded its coffee laboratories to provide 'state of the art' coffee-cupping equipment to sustain its position as a world class laboratory, operating in accordance with international best practice and quality standards.

On Thursday and Friday last week (November 6-7), the Third International Ethiopian Coffee Conference was held. It had the theme of "Towards Quality and Traceability". Over 200 global and national coffee companies participated in the conference and in the active discussions among the various companies engaged in the global coffee industry. Participants included the Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA); the US agro industrial corporation, ECOM; the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX); Horizon coffee plantation, Tracon Coffee, BNT Industry and Trading, and many others. The discussions covered various elements of the industry and ways to enlarge and advance the sector and boost production and productivity of the industry. Various sessions concentrated on Ethiopia's growth in the global market, the international market context, the Ethiopian coffee market and the approach to production, the role of cooperatives and the growth of coffee plantations, as well the unique value of Ethiopia's coffee and its benefits. There was also a panel discussion on Ethiopian and international quality requirements and on the traceability of specialist coffees. The conference was generally considered productive and is expected to contribute to the future development of the coffee industry and its contribution to the country's economic growth. It will certainly have been of major benefit to coffee farmers, traders, cooperatives, exporters and to the export trade.

Delegates at the conference were also able to meet with officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss future cooperation on investment in the coffee sector. Representatives of ECOM, a coffee trading company from the US, for example, met with State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dewano Kedir, a day before the conference opened. ECOM, the second largest coffee and commodities' trading company globally, discussed ways to enhance the mechanisms of

coffee trading, coffee farming and agricultural investment. The State Minister explained the Government's readiness to help and work with investors from various sectors, detailing the positive investment atmosphere in the country and the priority sectors for foreign investors. He advised the ECOM agro industrial corporation representatives to work with the national association of coffee exporters and farmer cooperatives as strategic partners for investment in the coffee market. The State Minister noted Ethiopia's duty free, quota free market access to the European and US markets, underlining the Government's readiness to help ECOM and other similar investors who wish to invest in Ethiopia, and emphasized the Government's willingness to cooperate in resolving any outstanding issues that the corporation might face during its operations.

Mr. Vazques, the strategic public relations' director of ECOM, underlined his appreciation of the huge potential of Ethiopia's coffee. He said ECOM had assessed the country as "the universal center of coffee". Emphasizing the large amounts of coffee that his company traded globally, he noted the increasing attractiveness of the investment atmosphere in Ethiopia. He said ECOM was keen to work with stakeholders in Ethiopia to increase output yields, and was working to help the coffee farmers in Ethiopia further and to build infrastructure in the area in which the company operated. ECOM's country director, Mr. Thomas, also welcomed the support of the government and said he had noted the potential of the country's coffee production and the way it fitted with the international market during the two seasons he had spent in Ethiopia.

Forum on Diaspora Policy and Investment Opportunities in New York

A Forum on Investment Opportunities and Diaspora Policy concluded this week in New York. The Forum featured presentations on Ethiopia's Diaspora Policy, investment opportunities in Ethiopia, the Health and Energy Sectors as well as overall transformational activities across the country. The meeting explored areas of investment opportunity, exchanged views on the experience of some members of the Diaspora already engaged in development projects and deliberated on how to make the Diaspora a real driving force for the attainment of the Ethiopian Renaissance. The Forum was attended by Dr. Yinager Dessie, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, with a high-level government delegation, panelists from Ethiopia and from the Diaspora, as well as members of the Ethiopian Diaspora residing in the Tristate area of New York, New Jersey and Delaware. The Ethiopian Renaissance Council organized the meeting in association with the Permanent Mission of Ethiopia to the UN and the Ethiopian Business Forum.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Yinager Dessie expressed his gratitude to Ethiopian Renaissance Council, the Permanent Mission of Ethiopia to the UN and the Ethiopian Business Forum for organizing the meeting with a view to encourage the Diaspora inject impetus to the existing national renewal activities. He emphasized that the Government attached special importance to the role of the Diaspora in the nation's economic, social and political development efforts. He pointed out that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in association with Ethiopian Missions abroad, has embarked on new moves to help members of the Diaspora access meaningful information on national development activities. He added that the Ministry has charted a new course in setting up key enabling conditions for innovative and forward-looking engagement with the Diaspora.

Dr. Yinager stressed the Government's appreciation of the engagement of members of the Diaspora in various investment areas and of their contribution towards the creation of a poverty-free country. He appealed to the participants to increase their involvement in such kinds of activity to help raise national renewal activities to a new level. He also went on to commend the Diaspora for its assistance for the financing of the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, for its promotion of the nation's tourism sector, and for its efforts to project the true image of Ethiopia overseas. Dr. Yinager said the Diaspora could be a bridge for Ethiopia to gain know-how, resources, expertise, and markets for its development. Ethiopia, he pointed out, had moved a long way from the dark chapters of civil war, and its past suffering from inequality, ignorance, and famine. It was now an embodiment of the African Renaissance, he said, adding that all the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia were marching towards the building of one political and economic union.

Mr. Abraham Engida and Mr. Abate Madebo of the Permanent Mission in New York gave a detailed and impressive account of the country's investment and business opportunities as well as the Government's Diaspora Policy. Other speakers included Professor Solomon Negash, an information systems professor and Executive Director of a mobile outsourcing business and an ICT center; Dr. Senait Fisseha, MD, who spoke on her practical experience in expediting the capacity of the Ethiopian Health Sector and her networking with other Ethiopian health professionals in the development of health investment; and Mr. Behailu Assefa, an engineer with high level executive experience, presented details of his experience in the Energy Sector, and his work in boosting energy capacity through the development of wind power. Dr. Temesgen Markos, application engineer at COMSOL INC., made a presentation underlining the need for Diaspora involvement in Ethiopia's investment and business fields through the sharing of expertise, knowledge and technology transfer and Ambassador Brook Debebe, General Manager of ELICO leather industry Plc, briefed the participants on the transformation of the Ethiopian leather and footwear industry. Panelists also responded to a series of questions raised by the participants on various problems in the area of investment and on how to enhance Diaspora participation. They encouraged participants to devote time and energy for the development of the country.

Many countries have recognized the contribution of the migration of human capital and its multiplier effects in spurring development, investment and trade inflows in the country of origin. There is no question of the significance and importance of the contribution that overseas communities can make to the development narrative of their countries of origin. In this respect, Ethiopia's current Diaspora Policy underlines just how important the Government regards the Diaspora communities as drivers for development with their access to know-how, resources, expertise, and markets, all of which can contribute greatly to Ethiopia's development. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is devoting substantial efforts to protect the interests of the Diaspora wherever they are and to engage them in the rejuvenation and renaissance of their country.

“Eritrea at a Crossroads: a narrative of triumph, betrayal and hope”

“Eritrea at a Crossroads: a narrative of triumph, betrayal and hope” the title of a book by Andebrhan Welde Giorghis is a rarity, a book on Eritrea by a genuine insider, and despite its title it is less an account of the “story of heroic triumph in struggle” and concentrates far more on the “betrayal”, the ‘dismal failure in victory.’ It is very much a participant’s view of Eritrea and its recent history. It is also the account of someone deeply committed to Eritrea and to the original aims and ideas of the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front. Andebrhan was a veteran of the war of national liberation and a founding member of the central committee of the EPLF and of its successor as the ruling party of Eritrea, the People’s Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ). After Eritrea’s independence he was at various times President of the University of Asmara; Governor of the Bank of Eritrea; Member of the National Assembly; Ambassador to the EU and other countries including the UK; Permanent Representative to the IMO and UNESCO; and Commissioner for Coordination with UNMEE. He only dissociated himself from the government in 2006.

His book is an account of how, despite the high ideals and hopes of the EPLF, an independent Eritrea, internationally welcomed in 1993, has today reached a position when it is widely regarded as a pariah state, at odds with most of its neighbors, with a collapsing economy and its youth haemorrhaging at more than 7,000 a month. And the author’s conclusion is very clear: responsibility lies largely and firmly with President Isaias. Essentially he claims President Isaias, in effect, subverted the aims and achievements of the EPLF and betrayed its ideals, ideals which Andebrhan still believes offer a way forward for the country. He details the way the EPLF came under the control of Isaias’ Marxist-Leninist Eritrean People’s Revolutionary Party, a party within the party, demanding “unquestioning obedience to authority among its members,” with clandestine cells, meeting at night, controlling the military and social apparatus of the wider movement. He underlines the way the last EPDF Congress dissolved itself into the PFDJ in 1984 emphasizing this was not, as the PFDJ likes to claim, the creation of a mass political movement. It was, in fact, the moment when Isaias was able to remove most of his potential rivals and bring the party fully under control.

He portrays a President surrounded “by mediocre and unscrupulous yes-men and self-seeking eager informants” and as a result gradually losing “touch of the real world around him and dipping into a make-believe world of personal grandeur,” adding “his demeanor of false modesty could no longer conceal his crass arrogance and insatiable hunger for power.” He describes the way the President responded to the criticisms of the G15 in 2001 and the way he acted as “the accuser, judge and executioner without evidence or reference to the law”. Long before he had suspended the PFDJ Central Committee and the Eritrean National Assembly and emasculated the High Court. He describes Isaias ‘dark side’ as thriving on “the pain of those he condemns to freezing, torture or death [giving him] free rein to trample on the basic rights and civil liberties of the people and condemn many Eritrean patriots to extinction.” He notes the President uses state resources without restraint mixing public and private assets, regarding himself as the “rightful ruler of the country and behaving as its owner. He appoints, suspends, or dismisses senior government officials and civil servants at will with the only criteria being “personal loyalty measured by blind obedience, rather than service, competence or merit.” He operates through individuals who hold no formal position or function in the hierarchies of government, army or party.

Andebrhan calls Isaias a “shrewd, street-smart tactician capable of manipulating people” but lacking a “sense of strategy and long-term vision”, a man driven by careerist ambition and an authoritarian disposition which has changed him from a once charismatic leader of the EPLF into a detested despot. He betrayed his former comrades and fellow-fighters in order to monopolize state power and “control the small world around him”. Once there, he displayed extraordinary cruelty: “the tyranny of the regime, the brutality of its suppression of dissent, and the severity of its repressive rule have few parallels, both in scope and intensity, in the annals of the turbulent history of modern Eritrea.” Isaias is described as “ever ungrateful and ungracious”, deeply distrustful and jealous of colleagues, constantly keeping them under surveillance, marginalizing or eliminating potential rivals. He has no compassion and possessed of a delusion of grandeur, he suffers from “a rejection complex verging on identity crisis that occasionally surfaces when under the influence of alcohol or seized of drunken brawls”. In sum, he is “selfish to the core, fixated on his grudges, and vindictive in the extreme”. It is a damning and deeply unpleasant portrait.

Andebrhan notes the regime’s excesses against its own people, using force to suppress internal dissent, subdue domestic opposition or “enforce submission to its political hegemony”. These included the May 1993 veterans protest in Asmara; the killings and imprisonment of disabled fighters at Mai Harbur in 1994; the internment of 2,000 students in the desert camp at Wai in 2001; the arrests and indefinite detention of the G15 members in 2001; and the detention and killings of national service conscripts evaders at Abi Abeto in 2004. He also makes reference, without details, to numerous other cases of disappearance, detention or death of suspected critics. He provides an account of the way the Government operates normally as well. There is the “scourge of indefinite national service” since 1998 which the author notes was adapted from the EPLF’s practice of “forced recruitment” adopted during the liberation struggle after 1979 and lasting until 1991. In effect, this has placed virtually the whole population under military discipline, allowing the army and PFDJ companies the use of ‘forced labor’ or what many call ‘slave labor’. He notes the way the PFDJ companies have presided over the destruction or takeover of almost all private enterprise. He goes into detail of the “coupon economy” which covers most basic products, describing it as “designed to serve an obnoxious control function; the blight of indignity it inflicts on the people is a daily curse that is deliberate.”

Andebrhan says he wrote his book “from a desire to contribute to the existing body of knowledge about Eritrea and the Eritrean people, both historical and contemporary.” He certainly does this with his portrayal of Isaias which is both devastating and convincing. This, however, makes it all the more disappointing that he felt obliged to repeat so many of the myths whose “exaggeration and deception expose the fragility and weakness of the construct [the myth of Eritrea], and indeed threaten the survival of the state.” The account of Eritrea’s history, which fills the first 150 pages, is a disappointing regurgitation of the usual Eritrean version of its pre-colonial history and suffers from very considerable inaccuracies. The attempt to provide a pre-colonial autonomous Eritrean history, an indigenous historic Eritrean culture and a distinct psychological makeup, is neither credible nor convincing, nor is it a necessary contribution to Eritrean nationalism. That was firmly founded in the Italian colonial era.

Similarly, the disappointingly brief account of the struggle for independence suffers from its EPLF bias. He largely ignores the way the EPLF treated other liberation movements and its

internal activities, though he does note that “the officially declared numbers of martyrs [65,000] does not include hundreds of freedom fighters, who were executed or made to disappear under various pretexts or missing in action throughout the duration of the war.” This, however, is almost the only reference to those who died in the internal conflicts and disputes within the EPLF and the conflicts between the liberation movements. It is confined to a footnote.

More detail would have been welcome in many places. The EPLF has always maintained that it never received outside help during the liberation war, that its struggle was one of self-reliance. Indeed, this is now a central element in the Eritrean myth and has become an article of faith. Andebrhan, however, notes: “self-reliance did not preclude the search for external assistance, adding that “the EPLF actively solicited outside material support and military assistance.” Regrettably, he gives no details, merely concluding “international; solidarity, support, and assistance, prudently used as an extension of the self-reliant effort, were instrumental in the successful management of the internal conduct and external politics of the war of national liberation.” He describes Isaias’ efforts to ingratiate himself with the Bush administration while refusing to release detained Eritrean employees of the US Embassy in Asmara, and his subsequent anti-US diatribes after the US refused to take the base he offered. He notes the strains in Eritrea’s relations with other countries, caused by his “often impulsive and irrational decisions that impeded the implementation of agreed deals”.

When it comes to the 1998-2000 war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, Andebrhan explains how, after the first clash, President Isaias ordered retaliation and then left for Saudi Arabia. As a result Prime Minister Meles was unable to reach him to suggest ways to “cool tempers down and contain the crisis.” The war, as presumably Isaias intended, escalated out of control resulting in tens of thousands of deaths over the next two years and a stalemate that has lasted. Andebrhan fails to make clear the 1998 war was instigated by Eritrea, as the UN Claims Commission firmly stated, but he does give the lie to any suggestion that the catastrophic situation of Eritrea today is no more than a legacy of the 1998- 2000. At the same time, his account of the war is one-sided and he refuses to acknowledge Ethiopia’s victory. Nor is there any indication of the way Eritrea later deliberately forced the UN Mission (UNMEE) out of the Temporary Security Zone and so effectively tore up the Algiers Peace Agreement. Indeed, he takes a purely Eritrean Government view of all subsequent events despite all the evidence to the contrary.

Andebrhan agrees that leading members of the EPLF/PFDJ, including himself, failed in their duty to the country, and he admits he bears his “share of the blame, responsibility and pain for Eritrea’s present predicament.” Although he says there was a time he trusted Isaias, he also notes the regime retained key features of the Derg’s administration and the repressive features inherited from the colonial state. At times, he also seems to excuse many of the President’s excesses as a necessity even though he also makes it clear that Isaias’ moves towards autocracy date back to the earliest days of the liberation struggle. It is symptomatic that the only foreigner who looked closely at all three liberation fronts, the EPLF, the ELF and the ELF/PLF in the late 1970s, came to the clear conclusion that the least democratic and most autocratic of the three was the EPLF. Andebrhan, himself, took a long time to see the light. His own problems begin to appear after 1993 but it wasn’t until 2006 that he felt it necessary to stop working for the Isaias government. He doesn’t explain why he stayed so long, five years after many of his closest

friends and colleagues (the G15) were arrested. They, of course, remain detained to this day without charge or trial after criticizing the President. Many are believed to be dead

Andebrhan makes it clear he retains his belief in Eritrea and its future. He still sees the future for Eritrea in the EPLF and its principles of national unity, popular participation, social justice, self-reliance, and a strong relationship between people and leadership. He describes the unimplemented Constitution of 1997 as consistent with the objectives of the National Democratic Program of the EPLF, and argues that it is still possible to implement these if the few “rotten apples” in the Front are removed. He appears that it needs no more than a reform of the EPLF to reconstruct the state in line with the ethos and goals of the armed struggle. This will allow a return to the “promises of freedom, democracy, justice and prosperity, for which the armed struggle was fought and great sacrifices made.”

A worthy aim, perhaps, but not many will share his view that this must be the task of a revitalized EPLF. The idea may resonate with his former EPLF/PFDJ colleagues, in or out of government, who have seen the steady dismantling of all their hopes, but not with the very many others who have never been convinced by EPLF/PFDJ propaganda. It is true that it has been the regime of Isaias which has betrayed the principles which inspired and animated the Eritrean struggle, but it is also clear the EPLF/PFDJ carried within itself the seeds of subsequent problems. Andebrhan has a habit of ignoring or bypassing facts that he does not want to consider, notably in his account of the liberation struggle. He largely ignores the fundamental fault lines in Eritrean society, all apparent in the liberation struggle: the divisions between highland and lowland; Christian and Muslim; Tigrean and non-Tigrean. The EPLF/PFDJ government has made little or no effort to resolve these and they have indeed intensified since 1993, especially in the Diaspora. Indeed, critics of the EPLF/PFDJ have long pointed out that it has never made any serious effort to deal with any of the major religious, social, ethnic or political problems of Eritrean society.

Many now see the party as irreparably contaminated with the President’s single minded authoritarianism; and indeed, Andebrhan appears to admit this himself: “Regrettably, the malignant practice that bedeviled the evolution of the armed struggle has given rise to a political culture of extreme intolerance of pluralism that disparages independent thought, criminalizes divergent opinion and equates dissent with treason and treachery in post-independence Eritrea.” Perhaps the most conclusive comment comes from an Eritrean elder, born under Italian colonialism, addressing a PFDJ official: “Your government, which we considered our own and expected to serve us well, is the worst one that has ruled Eritrea during my long life.”

Short Message Service’ lottery raises 40 million Birr for the GERD

Ethiopia’s nations, nationalities and peoples are demonstrating their determination to be the midwife of the country’s renaissance and rebirth as well act as the dynamo for the national renewal and modernization of the country. The clearest example of this is the way they mobilized themselves for construction of modern energy infrastructure projects, including the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), to be the largest hydroelectric

power plant in Africa when complete. Self-finance is at the heart of this mobilization of resource to turn the GERD into reality.

The Government of Ethiopia has, of course, through a variety of strategies been spearheading efforts to help Ethiopians in the country and abroad finance the entire cost of the project, estimated at US\$4.8 billion. Central have been the works of the Office of the National Council for the Coordination of Public Participation for the Construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. This has shouldered the responsibility of the self-financing mission in raising funds locally and internationally. Since its inception, the Office of the National Council, in association with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Water, Irrigation and Energy and Agriculture together with Ethiopian Institutions of Higher Learning, scholars, local and foreign media, and regional offices for the coordination of public participation for the construction of the GERD, as well as various prominent personalities, has worked to provide full information on the ongoing construction of the GERD.

The Office of the National Council has laid the foundations of the national consensus, underlining the role of the Dam as an example of peaceful development both for Ethiopia and other countries, promoting the reality of cooperative hydro-diplomacy for the Nile Basin. It has encouraged all Ethiopians both inside the country and outside to see themselves as “architects and financiers of the Dam”. It has facilitated environmental conservation and other re-greening programs in and around the Abay Gorge to extend the life span of the Dam and protect the ecosystem. It has also advanced scientific and research cooperative partnerships among the universities of the Nile Basin. Equally important, it has launched numerous fund-raising programs, including the selling of bonds, encouraged savings and the setting up of a Short Message Services’ (SMS) lottery, to mobilize popular support.

The response has been most encouraging. The new ongoing fund-raising program of the Short Message Services’ lottery has so far raised 40 million birr. The sale of bonds to the public has raised 6.1 billion birr. The Office of the National Council is now planning the launch of new fund-raising programs. These will include a Tombola lottery, music albums and talk shows, aiming to build on the momentum of the new spirit of the Ethiopian Renaissance through the development of the concepts of green sustainable energy infrastructure. It is worth noting that this mobilization of resources has manifested itself in a significant improvement in the public’s ‘saving culture’. The Office now plans to promote the public participation in consolidating the achievements made so far to encourage greater development of environmental protection and gain greater political, diplomatic and financial support. Already, in fact, Ethiopians throughout the country are devoting greater financial and technical support, time as well as effort, pledging that, in the words of the late Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, “No matter how poor we are, in the Ethiopian traditions of resolve, the Ethiopian people will pay any sacrifice.” He said he had “no doubt they will, with one voice, say: “Build the Dam!” This will and resolve is also sweeping through the hearts and minds of Ethiopian Diaspora communities across the world. They have been contributing largely and impressively to expediting efforts to complete the GERD.

This demonstration of support for the GERD project underlines the way Ethiopians are determined to move beyond the past eras of suffering, and lift the country out of its past of absolute poverty, indignity and famine. It is a clear signal of the coming of a new era with its

vision of economic, social, political and cultural development, a vision that places human survival, development, democracy, peace and prosperity at its heart. The GERD project is an emblem for all the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia to make the Ethiopian Renaissance a reality, and revitalize the country's past glories on the basis of the celebration of unity in diversity. The responsibility and involvement of all citizens in national developmental projects, including the GERD, underlines national unity in the struggle against poverty and indignity. The past determination of Ethiopians to resist outside aggression has now been turned towards dealing with poverty, and to the creation of a hunger-free society as well as laying a firm foundation for development, peace, security and unity.

One of the most critical driving forces behind the outpouring of public support for GERD and other major projects is the complete rejection of the past culture of reliance and dependency on others. This is coupled with understanding that it is possible to realize people's aspirations and dreams, including the completion of the GERD. Public participation in the construction of the GERD is a most impressive example of African domestic resource mobilization. It emphasizes the possibilities that lie in moving away from aid into self-development through internal resource mobilization. Ethiopia's experience in this developmental journey suggests that African countries can benefit largely from looking to internal resource mobilization as a way forward to find the answer to the challenge of raising finance and resources for the attainment of their development goals. Indeed, the close involvement and engagement of the people in the construction of the GERD underlines the significance of self-financing for the realization of national development goals. The changes in the culture of saving, the purchase of bonds, the successful Short Message Services lottery and other innovative fundraising programs are definitive evidence that self-financing methods can provide for the attainment of sustainable development projects.

The popular support for GERD also emphasizes the indispensability of effective development of the country's renewable energy resources and transformation of the energy sector into realization of green resilient economic and social development. The interest and involvement in the development of such energy resources, including the GERD, arise from the people's experience of the severe effects of climate change during the last decades of the 20th century. Financing this hydropower project is a necessity for people to help reverse the impact of environmental threats and an opportunity to inject a new and strong impetus for improvement of the business and investment environment across the nation. The development of energy infrastructure also provides a force-multiplier for other sectors of the country's economy, including transportation, manufacturing, agri-business and agriculture. Transportation systems, for example, including the Addis Ababa Light Railway Transport system, will be electrified when the GERD project is completed in 2017. Provision of adequate power supplies will also improve domestic conditions for millions who currently have to rely on the use of coal, charcoal, dung, wood, or plant residue for cooking and heating homes. People, in fact, are dedicating time and energy to the completion of the GERD fully aware that this will promote access to clean electricity, improve their livelihoods and indeed save lives.

The effective and large-scale development of clean energy resources, including the construction of the GERD, will not of course be limited to domestic demands. It will also offer the possibility of electrifying the economies of North East African countries as well as more widely. With the

possibility of a win-win outcome for the region and guided by the concept of co-operative hydro diplomacy, Ethiopians are dedicating their efforts to make GERD an engine for national economic transformation as well as for regional economic integration. Ethiopia is already exporting power to Sudan and Djibouti, constructing a transmission line to Kenya and holding discussions with Yemen and South Sudan for possible hydropower trading. Other countries in East Africa are showing interest in power trade deals. Rwanda is intending to import 400mw of electricity from Ethiopia in the medium term with the aim of transforming its economy. When GERD and other hydro power projects are complete, Ethiopia may be able to earn a substantial income from power exports.

The efforts of government bodies and of non-government organizations in mobilizing the people for the financing of the GERD have been remarkably successful. They promise to help the country enter a new historic period of national rejuvenation and renaissance, along with development of the region. Peoples' response to this and their ongoing participation in the realization of this national project and the wider development of the country makes it clear that the GERD will be completed on schedule – 40% per cent of the construction of the Dam has been completed. It also delivers a clear signal that the motto of “we finish what we started” will maintain the necessary momentum to complete the GERD and lead into real prosperity for a rejuvenated Ethiopia.