

News in Brief

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News in Brief

African Union

The three day 26th Session of the African Caribbean, Pacific and European Union Joint Parliamentary Assembly (ACP-EU) opened on Monday (November 25). Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn made a key-note speech urged the ACP member states to be at the forefront of forging a new partnership and speaking with a united voice to Europe. **(See article)**

The 2013 conference of The Pan African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PACCI) opened in Addis Ababa on Thursday (November 28). The two day conference is on the theme of trade integration: “The continental free trade area matters for Africa”, and aims to provide the private sector with a better understanding of policies and mechanisms of a Continental Free Trade Area.

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conference in Warsaw (COP19) narrowly avoided collapse at the weekend after marathon talks finally produced a compromise deal on Saturday (November 23). This included agreements for an international mechanism to provide better protection against extreme weather events and on REDD+, but not on mid-term targets for the agreed provision of US \$100 billion per year in climate aid after 2020.

Ethiopia

A high-level Chinese delegation led by the Vice Premier of the State Council, Liu Yandong arrived in Addis Ababa on Sunday (November 24) for a three-day working visit. Madam Yandong held talks with President Dr. Mulatu, Prime Minister Hailemariam and Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonen and signed eight agreements and Memoranda of Understanding during her visit. **(See article)**

Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros Adhanom met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla on Monday (November 25) to discuss bilateral and regional issues.

Foreign Minister Dr Tedros met with private sector representatives on Monday (November 25) to discuss the process of rehabilitation of returnees from Saudi Arabia. He also met with members of the Ethiopian Inter-Religious Council on Wednesday (November 27). As of midday Friday, (November 29) a total of 56,537 citizens had been successfully repatriated from Saudi Arabia **(See article)**

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has elected Ambassador Minelik Alemu Getahun, Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland as the 1st Vice-Chairperson of the IOM Council for the year 2013/2014. **(See article)**

A two day workshop began on Tuesday (November 26) on a new power strategy to boost power production as part of Ethiopia's plans to become a regional energy exporter, and on ways to implement a 25-year power master plan. According to the Ethiopian Electric and Power Corporation (EEPCo), the new power policy will enable Ethiopia to generate 37,000mw of energy by 2037 and export over 4,000mw of hydro-power to the East African region.

Ethiopia signed a development grant worth of 212.4 million Euros with the European Union on Monday (November 25) in Addis Ababa to support financing of projects on the areas of road construction, maternal health and drought resilience efforts.

Ambassador Brigitte Collet, French Ambassador to Ethiopia, on behalf of the French Government, and J. O. Moses Okello, UNHCR's representative to Ethiopia, on behalf of UN Refugee agency, signed an agreement on Tuesday (November 25) to provide aid worth 550,000 Euros for Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia. There are currently around 80,000 Eritrean refugees in six camps in Ethiopia.

The Federal Micro and Small Enterprise Development Agency said close to 4 million people, 38% of them women, have benefited from the sector in the first three years of the Growth and Transformation Plan. Enterprises engaged in the manufacturing sector had generated over 21 million US dollars from exports last fiscal year.

A Canada-Ethiopia Energy Stakeholders Forum was held in Addis Ababa this week in the presence of representatives of the relevant governments and of Canadian energy companies, industry specialists and financiers. **(See article)**

The technical experts of the Ethio-Russia Joint Commission on Economic, Scientific, Technical and Trade Cooperation held a review meeting this week looking at cooperation in various sector. The meeting reviewed the progress in implementation of past initiatives and agreements, and discussed "the whole spectrum of Ethio- Russian economic and trade relations."

Ms. Yodit Hylton, Ethiopia's honorary consul to Jamaica, said on Tuesday (November 26) that Ethiopia intended to increase trade ties with Jamaica and said she would be promoting investment by bringing Jamaican companies to Ethiopia and other African countries.

Djibouti

Deputy Chief General of Djibouti's Armed Forces Hassan Ali Kamil retired on Sunday (November 24). The Minister of Defense, Hassan Darar Houffaneh, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, General Zakaria Sheikh Ibrahim and Major-General Fathi Ahmed Houssein were present at a ceremony in his honor.

Eritrea

President Isaias led a delegation which included Eritrea's Minister of Tourism, and Major General Humed Karikare, Commander of the Eritrean Navy to the 7th Red Sea Tourism and Shopping Festival in Port-Sudan on Sunday (November 24).

Kenya

The Assembly of State Parties amends the rules of the International Criminal Court. Changes to rule 134 (4) acknowledge that President Kenyatta and Deputy President Ruto have been duly elected and have a mandate to govern even while meeting their obligations to the court. This will allow them to be represented in court by their lawyers.

Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Amina Mohamed, said this week that Kenya had given notice to the UN Secretary General on the question of immunities of heads of state and government at the ICC, under the mandate it had from the AU, following the AU resolution that no sitting heads of state or government, their deputies or people mandated to hold such offices should "appear before the ICC or indeed any other court while they remain in office."

Somalia

The Somali Council of Ministers on Thursday (November 28) approved the appointment of Bashir Isse Ali as interim Central Bank Governor. Mr. Ali had previously served Governor of Central Bank some years earlier. He replaces Ms. Yussur Abrar, who resigned and fled Somalia last month after seven weeks in the job, claiming she had been under pressure from officials to authorize improper deals.

Somalia's Federal Government on Sunday (November 24) unveiled its 2014 budget proposals, covering expenditure of US\$219 million, of which US\$128 million is to be raised from local taxes and US\$91 million from donors. The budget has to be approved by the Cabinet before being presented to Parliament. It is more than double the 2013 budget which was US\$114.3 million of which no more than US\$2.2 million was to come from tax.

Somalia's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Fowzia Yusuf Haji Adam, told a high-level EU Development summit in Brussels this week that the Somali government was putting human rights and development "centre-stage" of its reforming agenda. She also said the

government was giving priority to education and youth employment to wean young Somalis away from extremism.

According to Puntland's Minister for Health, Ali Abdi Warsame, the cyclone which hit on November 8, led to the deaths of at least 140 people, with 300 others missing and massive losses of livestock. There are fears of disease. The storm brought four days of “heavy rainfall, icy winds, flash floods, and mudslides, with roads, houses, mosques, schools and farms destroyed; fishing boats sank; water sources were damaged”

On Thursday (November 28) the Government of Somaliland and its Somaliland Development Fund's development partners, the UK's Department for International Development and Denmark's DANIDA, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to cover improving service delivery, initially focused on roads, livestock, and water supplies.

The European Union, together with its implementing partners, the International Centre for Insect Ecology and Physiology and the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization, launched a 4 million euro milk sector project in Hargeisa this week to support Somaliland's food security and local industry.

South Sudan

The Security Council last week extended the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei. In a unanimous vote, the 15-member Council extended the UN Interim Security Force in Abyei (UNISFA) until the end of next May. The mission's mandate includes overseeing the demilitarization of the area and maintaining security. **(See article)**

President Salva Kiir of South Sudan issued a presidential order this week appointing a new negotiating team and new members of the various committees for the ongoing negotiations with the Sudan. Nhial Deng Nhial, former foreign affairs minister, becomes lead negotiator; the Minister of Defense, Kuol Manyang, heads the Security Committee; Minister of Information Michael Makuei Lueth, the Border Committee; and Minister of Petroleum, Stephen Dhieu Dau, the Economy Committee.

Sudan

A meeting of the Higher Committee for following up implementation of the Joint Cooperation Agreements between Sudan and South Sudan was held on Monday (25 November) in Khartoum. The meeting was chaired by the First Vice-President of the Republic of Sudan, Ali Osman Mohamed Taha. **(See article)**

The Joint Security Committee of Sudan and South Sudan, meeting in Khartoum on Wednesday (November 27) reached an understanding on different complaints and claims related to border violations and renewed their commitment to refrain from support and harboring each other's “negative movements”. **(See article)**

Unknown armed assailants attacked an African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) convoy on Monday, killing a Rwandan peacekeeper. The ambush, the UN said, occurred near Kabkabiya in North Darfur. Over 16,000 UNAMID peacekeepers are currently based in Darfur.

Ethiopia hosts the 26th Session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

The 26th Session of the African, Caribbean and Pacific-European Union Joint Parliamentary Assembly (ACP-EU/JPA) was held in Addis Ababa this week, November 25-27. The joint plenary sessions were preceded by meetings of the three standing committees, the Committee on Political Affairs, the Committee on Social Affairs and the Environment and the Committee on Economic Development, Finance and Trade, on Saturday, (November 23); and by two workshops and a meeting of the Bureau on Sunday (November 24). The meeting brought together elected representatives of the African, Caribbean and Pacific states and the European Union, with MEPs and MPs from the 78 signatory states to the Cotonou Agreement that is the basis for the ACP-EU partnership. The focus of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly was on how to promote the partnership and interdependence of North and South.

The session was opened by Hailemariam Desalegn, Prime Minister of Ethiopia and Chairperson of the African Union; Abadula Gameda, Speaker of House of People's Representatives of Ethiopia; Joyce Laboso, the ACP-EU/JPA Co-President; and Patrice Tirolien, the Vice-President of the JPA. Prime Minister Hailemariam welcomed the guests and stressed that ACP member countries should be guided by the principles of equality and mutual benefit in their engagement with development partners, including Europe and other advanced economies. Since the ACP member states rely on Europe's Foreign Direct Investment and Overseas Development Assistance to help finance their development projects, he urged Europe to work closely with ACP member countries in investment, trade, human development, and capacity building in order to create an environment that is suitable for development, democracy and good governance.

As the EU and its member states are major providers of assistance, financing development is absolutely central to the EU-ACP partnership, he noted. He suggested that financing for development should be based on the principles of 'complementarities,' 'comparative advantages,' 'transparency', and 'accountability' to bring about inclusive and sustainable development. The planet, he noted, faces 'serious' threats that endanger the survival of humanity regardless of economic levels and geographic settings. He therefore urged that partnership in 'green' development should be emphasized in order to collectively tackle global warming. He pointed out that many ACP member countries have made meaningful advancement, committing themselves to democracy, good governance and the rule of law to help improve the lives of their people. He therefore underlined that the partnership between ACP and EU member states "should not in any sense be based on the rather obsolete assumption that one side is the ultimate provider and the other the perennial receiver of resources whether the object of the relationship might be-economic or political."

The Speaker of the House of People's Representatives, Abadula Gemedo, in his remarks to the assembly noted that Ethiopia's Constitution is the foundation for the ability of Ethiopia's nations, nationalities and peoples to live in peace and stability. It helped Ethiopia and Ethiopians grasp the aspiration of a single political and economic society which still had room for diversity, on the basis of equality, democracy and rule of law. He noted that the ACP-EU/JPA had been a mechanism for parliamentarians to work together in order to overcome the impediments to development in member countries as well as advance the universal values of humanity, democracy and human rights. The values, cultures, traditions, and beliefs of member countries must, he said, be recognized and appreciated in order for democracy to blossom and flourish. He emphasized that the ACP-EU partnership, based as it was on the principle of sovereign equality for the sustainable future of humanity, was of critical importance in countering contemporary threats in the world, which he itemized as: "climate change, desertification, agriculture and food security, terrorism, human trafficking, and economic crises".

Dr. Joyce Laboso, Co-President of the ACP-EU/JPA, told the assembled that Addis Ababa had shown a "remarkable" transformation compared to the year 2004, when the 7th JPA had been held there. This underlined the robust economic development and impressive growth rate over recent years. She said an economic boom in some sectors encourages other sectors to grow and also attracts private and public investment from both local and foreign investors. She also emphasized that what was remarkable "about this growth is that it is not being driven by mineral resources." She further pointed out that Ethiopia's positive developments had been encouraged by "institutional, political and social reforms, and are beacons of hope and sources of inspiration" for other member countries. More generally, she noted that instability and conflicts still posed challenges in some areas of Africa, especially in the Democratic Republic of Congo, but even there was a reappearance of peace in the east of the country with the defeat of the M23 rebels and this would help turn the Great Lakes region into a more stable area.

Dr. Laboso said that development cooperation should no longer be considered only in terms of the flow of financial assistance from developed countries of the North to the less developed countries of the South. She said "we know now that there is enormous social, political and indeed economic capital to be shared among less developing countries themselves." She called for new tools and methods of development financing to bolster South-South and Triangular cooperation. Development finance, she said, can flow from people to people and from private companies to various recipients or governments in addition to the traditional methods of government to government. Another new financing tool was the World Bank's program-for-results which would be disbursing a US\$100 million zero-interest credit to Ethiopia to directly bring about positive results in health, particularly in maternal and infant programs. She also noted the progress of ACP states in ensuring strong and impartial judiciary systems under the rule of law and providing protection of human rights, civil and political rights, and property rights. In conclusion, Dr. Laboso called for a concerted effort and integrated action to stop all gender-based violence, including female genital mutilation (FGM) emphasizing that this must be seen as a serious violation of human rights.

In its sessions, the Assembly addressed issues focusing on South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation, the rule of law, institutional cooperation between the African Union and

the European Union, the social and environmental impact of pastoralism on ACP countries, new structures for the financing of development, and green growth economy for ensuring sustainable development in Ethiopia. It adopted decisions covering these and other issues including opportunities and challenges for ACP countries including respect for the rule of law and the role of an impartial and independent judiciary.

Vice-Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China visits Ethiopia

The Vice-Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, Madam Liu Yandong made an official visit to Ethiopia from November 24 to 26. During her visit, Madam Yandong met with the Deputy Prime Minister, Ato Demeke Mekonnen, and also made courtesy calls on Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn and on President Dr. Mulatu Teshome. During her stay in Ethiopia, the Vice-Premier visited, among other places, the Eastern Industrial Zone, the Trunesh-Beijing Hospital, St. George's Cathedral and Addis Ababa University where a Confucius Institute is being set up.

During his meeting with Madam Yandong, Prime Minister Hailemariam said Ethiopia much appreciated China's role as strategic partner in the country's economic development efforts and in bilateral cooperation, which are being steadily deepened through the mutual understanding of the two countries at the levels of government-to-government, party-to-party and people-to-people. The Prime Minister mentioned that the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was a very significant factor for China's engagement in Africa and was very beneficial for Africa. He emphasized that Ethiopia would remain at the center of this cooperation. He also took the opportunity to express his hope that the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway development and other projects to which the country attaches great importance would be implemented speedily.

Madam Liu Yandong told the Prime Minister that she appreciated the impressive economic performance of Ethiopia and the role that the country played in regional and international forums as well as its role in Africa's peace and security. The Vice-Premier noted that the Chinese Government would continue to encourage Chinese companies and financial institutions to continue with cooperation and partnership in infrastructure, energy and in other sectors. She mentioned that China would continue to work with Ethiopia to ensure the completion of the country's major development projects, and that it was ready to find new areas of cooperation. She announced that China would provide a 100 million RMB grant and 1.5 billion RMB in concessional loans. These are to be used for expansion of the International Airport and other projects. She also said that China had pledged 50 Million RMB in the form of military equipment for the African Union, to support the peace and security of Somalia.

In his meeting with the Chinese Vice-Premier, Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen underlined the excellent relations the two countries enjoyed at all levels of government and business. He expressed Ethiopia's desire to learn from the Chinese experience of fast and sustainable economic growth. The Deputy Prime Minister requested the Vice-Premier to encourage more Chinese companies to come and invest in Ethiopia. He said Ethiopia would like

to have Chinese support and cooperation in improving bilateral trade through efforts which could increase value addition at source and before export. He therefore underlined the importance of the study and development of Economic Zones. He also raised the importance of Chinese support to improve the capacity of the country's universities and research centers and provide for the building up of human resource capacities. He said cultural exchange was essential and that the establishment of a Chinese Cultural Centre in Ethiopia was of great importance. It would make a significant contribution to development, enabling Ethiopia to learn from Chinese culture.

The Deputy Prime Minister noted that existing cooperation between the two countries was not limited to bilateral areas and welcomed the fact that China and Ethiopia cooperated on various regional and continental issues. He said China had been working with Africa in a most constructive manner and Ethiopia hoped this engagement with Africa would continue. In this connection, he pointed out that some of the major Ethiopian development projects now under construction would facilitate regional integration within the continent. Chinese support for these projects would therefore contribute to the development of Africa.

Vice-Premier Madam Yandong said that the 43 years-old bilateral relationship of Ethiopia and China was continuing to move forward in all areas. The three meetings of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia and the President of China within a year were an indication of the growing friendship of the two countries, adding that the exchange of high-level official visits was essential to keep up momentum and enhance bilateral relations. The Vice-Premier also pointed to the growing levels of trade and investment cooperation between the two countries. She mentioned her visit to the Eastern Industrial Zone in Ethiopia where she had met Chinese investors and witnessed that they were doing well. She said they would stay a long time in Ethiopia. She said China was keen to build a Chinese Cultural Centre in Ethiopia to strengthen people-to-people relations between the two countries.

Madam Yandong expressed the readiness of China to support the success of the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) program in Ethiopia and noted the decision of the Government of China to double the scholarship program, from 40 to 80 a year, starting next year. She also mentioned the interest of China to work with Ethiopia in science and technology. China, she said, wanted to establish a China-Ethiopia joint laboratory for leather technology. It also wanted to send a technical task force to Ethiopia which could contribute to Chinese technology transfer to Ethiopia. She expressed her government's interest in establishing a China-Ethiopia Technical Park. In addition, China would like to work with Ethiopia in the agricultural sector in order to help protect the eco-system and support wildlife preservation.

Following the bilateral discussions, eight agreements and Memoranda of Understanding were signed between China and Ethiopia. These covered various aspects of cooperation in the fields of education, culture and development.

UN Security Council renews the mandate of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei

On Monday this week (November 25) the United Nations Security Council renewed the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) until 31 May 2014. It also underscored that the Force's mandate included taking necessary actions to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence, irrespective of the source. In resolution 2126 (2013), adopted unanimously, the Council also decided that UNISFA support for the operational activities of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism should include support to the Ad Hoc Committees, when requested by their consensual decisions, within the Force's operational area and existing capabilities. It called on the two governments to make effective use of the JBVMM, JPSM, and other agreed joint mechanisms to ensure the security and transparency of the SDBZ, including the "14 Mile Area". It therefore welcomed the creation of the AU Border Programme Technical Team to determine conclusively the SDBZ centreline on the ground, reiterating that this would in no way prejudice the current or future legal status of the border.

The resolution welcomed the redeployment of the Sudanese and South Sudanese military and police from the Abyei area, but the Council also demanded that Sudan redeploy the oil police in Diffra, immediately and without preconditions. The Security Council reiterated previous demands that the two sides urgently start to set up the Abyei Area Administration and Council, resolve the deadlock over the composition of the Council, and constitute the Abyei Police Service, as agreed under the 20 June 2011 Agreement. It also urged the two parties to resume the work of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC) immediately, to ensure steady progress on the implementation of the 20 June 2011 Agreement including effective disarmament of the area to ensure that Abyei is effectively demilitarized. It requested UNISFA to continue its dialogue with the AJOC and with the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities to organize the region's status as a weapons-free area. It also requested that UNISFA should observe, document and report on the movement of weapons into Abyei and the presence of weapons within Abyei as part of the Secretary-Generals' regular reporting cycle. It also urged the two Governments to take immediate steps to implement confidence-building measures among the respective communities in Abyei Area, including reconciliation processes at the grass-roots level, and called on all Abyei communities to exercise maximum restraint and "desist from inflammatory acts, or statements that may lead to violent clashes or any further unilateral activities". The resolution stressed that continued cooperation between the Government of Sudan and Government of South Sudan was critical for peace, security and stability and the future relations between them.

The resolution expressed its full support for the efforts of the African Union to ease the current tension and welcomed the visit of the AU Peace and Security Council to Abyei early this month and its continued engagement in seeking a lasting solution for the communities in Abyei to coexist peacefully. It also welcomed the efforts by the Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan to demilitarize the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ), including the "14 Mile Area," and to implement the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM), and underlined the importance of effective JBVMM monitoring of the SDBZ. It welcomed the recent meetings between President Bashir and President Kiir and, recalling earlier Security Council demands that the parties must immediately resume negotiations

to reach agreement on Abyei's final status under the auspices of the AUHIP, called on all parties to engage constructively in the process mediated by the AUHIP. It stressed they must implement pending aspects of the 20 June 2011 Agreement, to resolve the dispute over the Abyei Area Council and immediately establish the Abyei Area Administration and Abyei Police Service.

It commended the roles of the AUHIP, of Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Sudan and South Sudan, Haile Menkerios, and the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) under the leadership of Major General Yohannes Tesfamariam, and commended the efforts of UNISFA to carry out its mandate. It expressed its determination that the future status of Abyei should be resolved by negotiations between the parties in a manner consistent with the CPA, not by the unilateral actions of either party, and emphasized the importance that all parties refrain from any unilateral action to aggravate intercommunal relations within Abyei Area. It also expressed concern over "the decision by the Ngok Dinka to conduct a unilateral referendum", in contravention of the agreements signed between the two sides.

Representatives of South Sudan and Sudan spoke after the resolution was adopted. Both welcomed the resolution but from rather different perspectives. Ambassador Francis Mading Deng (South Sudan) said Abyei remained a source of tension between the two countries, putting to risk their efforts to cooperate in other areas. Referring to AUHIP proposal for the Abyei referendum be held in October 2013 he said this had been accepted by South Sudan but rejected by Sudan. It was then, in "despair and desperation", he said, that the people of Abyei had decided to organize their own referendum. He said the referendum had been conducted in an "impressively efficient, orderly, professional and peaceful manner." Whatever the international opinion on the referendum, he added, the residents must be protected against northern reprisals. UNISFA, he said, was able to provide a degree of protection but much more would be required in the event of a possible assault by the Misseriya and the Armed Forces of the Sudan.

Ambassador Daffa-Alla Elhag Ali Osman (Sudan) said the UNISFA mission had done an excellent job to maintain security in the region. Criticising the South Sudan's representative's remarks as reflecting a culture of war, he said the region of Abyei, as per the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was not open to argument. It was part of Sudan and would remain so until its final status was decided. He repeated Sudan's commitment to the Abyei Protocol to hold a referendum in the region but stressed it was unacceptable for this to be conducted in a unilateral manner. Sudan was, he said, ready to agree to the formation of temporary administrative mechanisms. "We need wisdom and self-restraint. We do not need to add fuel to the fire," he concluded.

Progress in implementing Sudan and South Sudan co-operation

A meeting of the Higher Committee for following up on the implementation of the Joint Cooperation Agreements between Sudan and South Sudan was held on Monday (25 November) in Khartoum. The meeting was chaired by the First Vice-President of the Republic of Sudan, Ali

Osman Mohamed Taha. Sudan and South Sudan signed the series of Cooperation Agreements in Addis Ababa in September 2012. The Agreements covered a number of issues including oil, citizenship rights, security issues, banking, and border trade. The two countries also signed an Implementation Matrix for these Cooperation Agreements in March this year.

At this week's meeting the Higher Committee was briefed on the progress made in the implementation of the Cooperation Agreements through the joint panels, concerned ministries, and the parallel bodies in both countries. The meeting also reviewed detailed reports from the heads of the subcommittees on various aspects of the agreements covering military, security, economic, trade, banking, transportation, services, labor, training, and capacity building issues. The meeting also discussed joint diplomatic efforts to cancel the Sudan's foreign debts and lift economic sanctions imposed on the Sudan. Reports presented by the subcommittees were approved, and a number of recommendations made to further improve cooperation between the two countries in the political, diplomatic, security, and economic spheres. The meeting also welcomed the political, economic, and social contacts being made between the two countries in previous months called to both countries to enhance bilateral contacts. It also urged civil society organizations to exert more efforts in this regard.

Last week, Sudanese President, Omer Hassan Al-Bashir, and South Sudan's President, Silva Kiir Mayardit, met on the sidelines of the 3rd Arab-African summit in Kuwait and pledged to speed up the implementation of the Cooperation Agreements. South Sudan's Minister for Information, Michael Makuei Lueth, recently noted that the recent exchange of presidential visits between the two countries had a strong impact on boosting relations. Equally, the cancellation of visas for diplomatic and special passport holders had contributed to the increased movement of individuals between the two countries.

Another positive development was the report that preparations had been finalized for the resumption of railway transportation between Sudan and South Sudan through the Babanousa-Wau line. This was part of the agreements concluded earlier between the two countries. There have been reports that the cross-border trade relationship between the two states is once again increasing, and is expected to reach to 14,000 tons compared with 7,000 tons prior to the independence of South Sudan. South Sudan's Minister for Information, commenting on the resumption of trade between Khartoum and Juba noted that the re-opening of the border is a vital step since importing goods from Khartoum was in Juba's interest, providing improved terms of quality and price, adding that the benefit was mutual as merchants from Khartoum benefitted. In general, he noted, the reopening of the borders and the cross-border trade corridors will ease the movement of both people and goods.

Meanwhile, the Joint Security Committee of Sudan and South Sudan met in Khartoum on Wednesday (November 27) and reached an understanding on the different complaints and claims each side has been making in relation to border violations and renewed their commitment to refrain from supporting or harboring each other's "negative movements" or rebels. The agreement was announced by Chief of Sudan Armed Forces Intelligence, General Siddiq Amer Hassan at the end of the fifth meeting of the Joint Committee. General Hassan, who co-chaired the meeting with Major General Mac Paul from South Sudan, said the meeting had agreed to call

for an urgent meeting of the Joint Security and Political Committee to review issues of the joint border and the interim zero line. General Hassan said the two parties affirmed their commitment to release any prisoners of war shortly though he added that the number of captives was small and they were already being visited by the Military Attaches of the two countries. He emphasized that the talks had been characterized by transparency and clarity. It was agreed that the next meeting of the Joint Security Committee should be held in mid-January in Juba.

Repatriation and rehabilitation from Saudi Arabia – the role of the private sector.....

As of Friday, midday, (November 29) a total of 56, 537 Ethiopian citizens have been flown back to Addis Ababa from Saudi Arabia in an airlift that has been bringing people back at the rate of up to 7,000 a day. There are still more to come and it is expected that that more than 80,000 who have been living illegally in Saudi Arabia will have to be repatriated. On arrival, the returnees are taken to the temporary shelters prepared by the International Office for Migration and the Government. After staying a day or two in the shelters, the returnees are given transport money and assisted to return to their families and relatives. To better coordinate the assistance being provided by different institutions, private and government, as well as individuals residing in Ethiopia and abroad, as well as other agencies, the Government has opened a Special Fund at the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia with the Current Account Number: 1000067881951. The Government is also planning to offer training and create employment opportunities for the returnees.

On Monday this week (November 25), Foreign Minister, Dr Tedros Adhanom, met with private sector representatives to brief them on the repatriation proceedings and discuss the process of rehabilitation and integration for those arriving from Saudi Arabia, many of whom are destitute because of the way the Saudi Arabian government has organized their expulsion. He briefed the meeting on details of the activities of the Government through the Ethiopian Embassy in Riyadh and the Consulate in Jeddah, and through the Command Post, to organize the repatriation process and the integration of citizens in their respective regions. At the same time, the Government had demanded explanations from the Saudi Arabian government over the reported killing of Ethiopian migrant workers and the mistreatment of others. Dr. Tedros said the Saudi Arabian government had promised to investigate and bring those responsible to justice. He noted that earlier, the Government had managed to get the original registration deadline extended by four months and during that time, Embassy officials had managed to help legalize 38,000 citizens. After the deadline had expired, they have been working overtime to issue laissez passer for all those citizens held in Saudi Arabian holding and detention centers, and organizing their flights to Addis Ababa as fast as possible.

The Minister also detailed the government's recent efforts to tackle the escalating number of Ethiopians who had fallen victim of illegal human trafficking networks. He noted that these had included the setting up of a National Taskforce with representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the National Intelligence and Security Service and the Federal Police to urgently explore ways to stop illegal migration and safeguard the

interests and rights of Ethiopians working abroad. The Taskforce had suggested, and the government accepted, a ban on Ethiopian workers travelling abroad until fully satisfactory legal frameworks that guaranteed the safety and protection of citizens and their interests could be provided in countries abroad. Earlier, he himself had led a high level delegation to Saudi Arabia in July to seek ways of providing protection for Ethiopian workers living there.

The Minister emphasized the need for coordinated efforts from the private sector to assist in the repatriation and rehabilitation of citizens from Saudi Arabia, describing this as crucial but he also asked for the help of the private sector in working to eradicate the root causes of illegal human trafficking. This, he pointed out, was both vital and necessary to resolve the issue in the longer term.

The Private Sector representatives at the meeting immediately agreed to form a committee to facilitate fundraising to help rehabilitate returnees as quickly as possible. Once set up, the rehabilitation committee raised over seven million Ethiopian Birr within half an hour. They also pledged to provide different materials in kind. These included assistance for the basic requirement of food and shelter, among them 300 blankets and 5,000 shirts, 17,000 packs of biscuit, 60,000 bottles of water. The committee also made immediate offers of job opportunities for 500 people and the provision of nine vehicles to facilitate transport. The Private Sector representatives called upon all members of the community to work hand-in-hand with the Government to help returnees and to assist them when they get back to their home areas.

.....religious leaders and Dr Tedros visit the arrivals from Saudi Arabia

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Tedros and State Minister Dewano Kedir, together with religious leaders from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, the Ethiopian Catholic Church, the Ethiopian Adventist Church, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus and the Evangelical Churches' Fellowship of Ethiopia, on Thursday (November 28) visited the arrivals from Saudi Arabia at Bole International Airport. The religious leaders said they would pray for the returnees and provide them spiritual counsel as well as offer all possible assistance. The religious fathers expressed their appreciation of the Government's efforts and said they themselves were totally committed to help and support the rehabilitation process of the repatriates. The returnees welcomed the visit of the religious leaders and appreciated the government's efforts to repatriate and rehabilitate them. They also expressed their thanks to the community members who have volunteered to work day and night to help arrivals register as well as coordinate their needs for water, food and shelter. The volunteers called upon all members of the community to help assist the returnees in any possible way, whether in Addis Ababa or in their home areas.

Earlier, Dr. Tedros Adhanom met with the members of the Ethiopian Inter-Religious Council at their request to discuss the situation of Ethiopians in Saudi Arabia and briefed them on the process of repatriation. The Minister welcomed the initiative of religious leaders to discuss the situation and come up with ways of contributing to the national effort for assistance. During the meeting, Dr. Tedros also briefed the Council members on the situation facing Ethiopians in Saudi Arabia and on the work done by the Government before the implementation of the Saudi

Arabian decision to expel undocumented foreigners, and events leading up to the current repatriation operation. He underlined the Government's total commitment to bring back all Ethiopian citizens willing to return and detailed the Government's policy towards the repatriated citizens for both the medium and long term. The members of the Ethiopian Inter-Religious Council expressed their appreciation of the Government's efforts and underlined their readiness to participate and contribute towards the repatriation effort and towards helping the returnees integrate with their communities. They noted the suffering and abuse that Ethiopians faced and were still facing in Saudi Arabia and in the process of deportation, and noted that religious institutions could also contribute to provide spiritual and psychological counseling for the returnees, many of whom were traumatized by their recent experiences in Saudi Arabia.

Ethiopia elected 1st Vice-Chair, Council of the International Organization for Migration

The 103rd Session of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has elected Ambassador Minelik Alemu Getahun, Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland as the 1st Vice-Chairperson of the IOM Council for the year 2013/2014. The Council elected the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Peru as the Chairperson, the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Belgium as 2nd Vice-Chairperson and Ms. Kate O'Malley of Australia as Rapporteur of the Council.

Ambassador Minelik, who thanked the Council and the African Group for his election, took the opportunity to express Ethiopia's deep concern about the deteriorating situation of migrant workers in some countries. He said that this had seriously affected many people from developing countries, including Ethiopian nationals. He said "We strongly condemn the grave human rights violations committed against migrant workers." He noted that many migrant workers suffered abuse and multiple forms of discrimination at the hands of human traffickers and smugglers "in their places of work, in public places and at times from those responsible for law enforcement." He said the dedication and sacrifice of these migrant workers in accepting menial jobs which were no longer attractive to local workers was seldom appreciated. These workers deserve gratitude and respect", he said, "Instead, they are often treated with unprecedented cruelty, becoming local media targets of xenophobic and irresponsible campaigns."

Ambassador Minelik emphasized that it was high time that perpetrators of such outrageous violations are held accountable. It was also crucial that countries of origin, of transit and of destination collaborated properly to ensure protection of migrants and prevent abuse. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and relevant organs of the UN, he said, should discharge their proper responsibilities for safeguarding the life and dignity of migrants. The obligation to ensure respect for the human rights of migrants in difficult and complex situations requires care, understanding and a strong commitment for human rights and human dignity, regardless of the status of the migrants. Migrants, as victims of different forms of abuse and mistreatment, should not be denied access to services or redress in host countries. It was, said Ambassador Minelik, crucial that the IOM intensified its advocacy and efforts to obtain better

protection for migrants around the world. He added that he was grateful to the Director General of the IOM for giving this matter attention in his presentation to the Council. The IOM, he noted, has been instrumental in shaping the global discourse on migration and development, and the organization should continue to play a leading role in the High–Level Dialogue on Migration and Development and contribute to the inclusion of migration as a crosscutting theme in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Ambassador Minelik said the Government of Ethiopia was actively working with host countries and organizations such as IOM to repatriate its nationals in difficult situations and reintegrate them in society. He said he would like to express Ethiopia’s gratitude to the IOM for the support it has been providing in the repatriation and reception of Ethiopian migrant workers during the current crisis involving migrants expelled from Saudi Arabia. The Ambassador said the Government of Ethiopia had now established the National Council, led by the Deputy Prime Minister, to combat and halt human trafficking. The Council is composed of Ministers, Presidents of National Regional State, Heads of City Administrations, religious leaders, youth and other relevant associations. Its objectives includes combating human trafficking, coordinating efforts to prosecute and bring human traffickers and their accomplices to justice, protecting and promoting the rights of Ethiopian migrants and victims of trafficking, and creating conditions conducive for migrants to participate in the development opportunities in their country, helping to encourage them to stay in their own countries.

Ambassador Minelik also reported to the Council that Ethiopia had embraced migration as an important element in its development strategy and had therefore adopted policies aimed at improving the Government’s capacity to manage migration in line with the country’s development priorities. This included a new Diaspora policy which is intended to provide a comprehensive framework for engagement with the Ethiopian Diaspora. In this connection, he congratulated the IOM for the rich exchange of views and experiences at the June 2013 Diaspora Ministerial Conference of the International Dialogue on Migration. Ethiopia, he noted, had also enhanced its participation in the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) Summits through active contribution to roundtable thematic issues. Ambassador Minelik said it looks forward to participating in the 2014 GFMD Summit under the Chairmanship of Sweden.

A Canada-Ethiopia Energy stakeholders Forum held in Addis Ababa

The Canada-Ethiopia Energy Stakeholders Forum was held in Addis Ababa this week in the presence of representatives of the relevant governments and of Canadian energy companies, industry specialists and financiers. Those attending included the State Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy, Wondimu Tekle; the CEO of the Ethiopian Electric Corporation, Mihret Debebe; Canada’s Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ambassador David Usher and the Director General of the Americas in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Taye Atskeselassie.

Opening the Forum, the State Minister for Water, Irrigation and Energy, highlighted Ethiopia’s commitment to the development of the energy sector to meet the targets set in the five year

Growth and Transformation Plan. He noted the necessity of a sustainable energy sector development to maintain the country's rapid socio-economic development. State Minister Wondimu also underlined the government's aim to diversify sources of energy, introducing renewable solar, biomass, wind, waste and geothermal sources. He said the private sector was encouraged to engage in engineering, financing and generating energy development of Ethiopia. He urged Canadian companies to invest in the sector development.

Ambassador Taye Atskeselassie, who hailed the long standing and warm relationship between Canada and Ethiopia centered on development cooperation to help alleviate poverty, said this cooperation was based on the development priorities set out in the GTP. He cited support to women entrepreneurs, improving the investment climate and other areas of cooperation as evidence of the growing relationships between the two countries. Ambassador David Usher noted energy was a strategic sector in which the two countries could work closely: Ethiopia had rich energy resources and Canadian companies had the right capabilities.

The Forum included two panel discussions. The title of the first was "Policies and Strategies and Direction of the energy sector in Ethiopia and the role of the Private sector in Power Generation and Procurement Procedures." Ethiopia's energy potential was detailed: 45,000mw of hydropower; 5000-7000 of geothermal power; 113 billion cubic meters of natural gas. In addition, due to Ethiopia's proximity to the equator there were huge untapped resources of wind and solar energy. With 10% economic growth per annum for over a decade, the demand for energy had been growing at 13% a year, and had now reached 25%. The country was now developing the introduction of railway transportation, with initial construction of 2500 kilometers of line, and the development of heavy industries.

The government's energy policy prioritizes hydropower and the development of other renewable sources. It notes bio-fuels should be used for local production and the transport sector. The ten sugar factories under construction are expected to boost ethanol production, currently used in a mixture with petrol for cars. The government's Climate Resilient Green Strategy aims to build an environmentally responsible and carbon neutral energy sector with zero emissions by 2025, identifying details of energy generation, appliance manufacturing, including solar panels, and engineering procurement and construction of energy-generating plants. The private sector is to be involved mini-grid energy development in areas where access for electric energy from the grid operator is difficult. The recent US\$4 billion deal between the Reykjavik and EEPCO to develop geothermal power in Korbeti is hailed as a trial blazer.

The panelists also noted the emphasis that is to be given to energy development from various other renewable sources and reduction of energy wastage. Ethiopia's 25 year master plan for energy development aims to achieve 95% electrification by 2037. The US\$156 billion plan is drawn up in line with the East African Power Master Plan which aims to connect grids of all the countries of the region. Underlining the growing demand of power from Ethiopia, Ato Mihret Debebe noted that EEPCO will soon be signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Tanzania to export power there. Overall, the panelists emphasized that Ethiopia's energy sector offered substantial and lucrative opportunities for Canadian energy companies.

The second panel discussion covered “Evaluation Procedures to Financing Ethiopia’s Energy Sector and Access to Finance”, with panelists drawn from the International Finance Cooperation (IFC), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED). MOFED explained that much of Ethiopia’s energy finance currently comes from government funds, though off-budget resources coming from donors, development partners and international financiers were second tier financial sources. The IFC explained various financial services provided to private investors interested in infrastructure development and said the IFC had facilitated a US\$1.8 billion loan for infrastructure development in Africa. He detailed the IFC’s standards and requirements in financing energy development in geothermal and mini-grid projects. The AfDB, which financed the first phase of Ethiopia’s rural electrification program with US\$180 million and had continued to support the second and third phases, shared the Bank’s commitment to support private firms in energy development. The AfDB also offers advisory services and assistance in mobilization of resources. The AfDB is currently co-financing the US\$1.4 billion Ethio-Kenya transmission line as part of the East African power project.

Canadian companies briefed Forum participants regarding their services and their interest in Ethiopian markets. Among the challenges for engagement in Ethiopian energy development, they identified the low feed price for private generation and the absence of multiple grid operators. Government representatives noted the promulgation of the new energy law which gives more space to the private sector as well as the successful negotiation of feed-in prices in the case of the Korbeti project. These, they stressed, underlined the very real opportunities of successful, and profitable, energy development in Ethiopia.

Misrepresenting the Renaissance Dam and Ethiopia’s development endeavors

Developments in the Nile Basin has been getting a tremendous amount of attention from the international media following the signing of the Cooperative Framework Agreement signed by the Nile Basin states in Uganda in 2010. The cornerstone of the Agreement was the principle of equitable and reasonable utilization of the Nile waters for all the riparian states. It was this that led to the launch of the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), a major hydropower development which is being financed entirely by the people and Government of Ethiopia. GERD has seen a spate of misleading articles which all-too-often misrepresent its benefits of the Dam both for Ethiopia and for downstream countries. A recent piece by Nader Nouredine, a Professor of Water Resources, in Ahram Weekly had the title “Tough Talk”; inflammatory in tone, it was a typical example, filled with misrepresentation and bellicose statements.

The writer claims Ethiopia has found it difficult to finance GERD which does not appeal to international financiers. In fact, the Government has made no effort to obtain outside finance. It made it clear from the outset that the Dam would be built with Ethiopia’s own resources. He claims Ethiopia raised the planned capacity of the Renaissance Dam from an original 14 billion m³ to 74 billion m³, after the January 2011 Revolution in Egypt. This, he says, is an increase

which does not lead to higher production of electricity or more land reclamation. This is simply inaccurate. The only change in GERD plans was the upgrade in generation capacity from 5200 to 6000mw. The writer also accuses Ethiopia of ignoring the International Panel of Experts' recommendations for further studies on socio economic impact and other "repercussions". In fact, as Ethiopia has repeatedly made clear, it has accepted all of the recommendations. It is already implementing those suggested for Ethiopia and is actively involved in establishing the technical committee for further studies, which as the Panel made clear, are to be carried out as construction proceeds. Far from going against the Panels' recommendations, Ethiopia is implementing them fully. It might also be underlined that Ethiopia established the Panel in order to build up confidence between Ethiopia and the downstream riparian states.

The article is apparently intended to be a critique of the trilateral meeting of the Water Ministers of Sudan, Egypt, and Ethiopia, in Khartoum earlier this month. The meeting was held to discuss setting up a joint mechanism for implementing the recommendations of the International Panel of Experts. The Panel's report, produced in May, said the design of GERD met international standards and the Dam posed no significant harm to the flow of water downstream, adding that Egypt and Sudan would benefit from clean energy generated by the project which would also reduce the accumulation of sedimentation in the lower riparian countries. The report also recommended further studies on some socio-economic and environmental aspects. At the Khartoum meeting, there was a difference of opinion on the establishment of the technical committee to oversee the implementation of the Panel's recommendations. Egypt proposed the committee should include international experts while Ethiopia and Sudan suggested it should be made up of national experts. The International Panel was made up of 10 members, two each from Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan with four international experts. The ministers agreed to meet again on December 8 to discuss the establishment of the committee. An Egyptian request to jointly finance and for joint ownership of the Dam was rejected by Ethiopia. Egyptian President Adli Mansour made the same suggestion to Prime Minister Hailemariam at the recent Afro-Arab Summit in Kuwait. The Prime Minister made the same answer. GERD is a national flagship project being financed by the Ethiopian people and Government. The national committee mobilizing public support has collected 5 billion birr and another 10 billion has been pledged so far.

The Ethiopian Government has made repeated efforts to detail the purpose and aims of the construction of the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. It is disappointing that people still deliberately persist in their misperceptions and misconceptions and some publications are prepared to disseminate these inaccuracies. There is a danger that the alleged critiques will affect people-to-people relations and foster animosity. Ethiopia's policy towards the Nile has consistently been based on the principle of "reasonable and equitable utilization of the Nile waters". This remains the case. Ethiopia is fully committed to the concept of causing no significant harm to other users of the Nile, and has no intention of posing any threat to the legitimate interest of any riparian state.