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News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

The logistics center of the East African Stand-by Force (EASF) was inaugurated in Addis Ababa by Ethiopia's Minister of Defense, Siraj Fegessa, on Monday (September 29). The 5,000 strong EASF, the AU regional peacekeeping force for East Africa, is due to become fully operational by the end of the year. (See **article**).

Ethiopia

President Dr. Mulatu Teshome left for Dubai on Tuesday (September 30) to attend the African Global Business Forum being held there this week (October 1-2). The theme of the Forum was "Africa Rising - Leading the Continent towards Change" and its aim was to encourage international revenue flows into Africa.

Britain's Princess Anne, President of Save the Children UK, who was on a visit to Ethiopia to see the extensive work of Save the Children UK in Ethiopia, met with President Mulatu at the National Palace on Monday (September 30).

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn on Tuesday (September 30) opened the Africa Hotel Investment Forum 2014 in Addis Ababa. The Forum was attended by over 500 delegates from the hotel and tourism industry. The Wyndham Hotel Group, the largest hotel company in the world, announced it was going to open its first property in Ethiopia in January 2015.

Dr. Tedros met with Jeffrey D. Feltman United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, on Tuesday (September, 30) in New York and briefed him on progress in Somalia and South Sudan as well as the situation in Eritrea. He also met the Foreign Ministers of Egypt, Ecuador and Turkey and the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy. (See **article**)

Ethiopia and Uruguay have signed an agreement to foster co-operation in trade, industry, agriculture, science and other social development sectors following a meeting between State Minister Berhane and Ambassador Fernando Lugris, Special Envoy of the Uruguay Minister of Foreign Relations on Thursday (October 2).

State Minister Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos held talks on Tuesday (September 30) with Ambassador Ukur Yatani Kanacho, Governor of Kenya's Marsabit County and a delegation from Kenya. The visit was to explore trade and investment opportunities as well as look at the livestock value chain and livestock policies, wind and solar energy development and tourism.

State Minister Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos met with Mr. Mohammed Hashid Abdi, Minister of Civil Aviation and Air Transport of Somaliland on Tuesday (September 30). Discussions covered Ethiopian Airlines cooperation with Somaliland, development cooperation in the Berbera corridor and working together to deal with terrorism.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dewano Kedir, met on Monday (September 29) Kasem Jarusawatd, President of the Tanzania branch of the Thai company Charoen Pokphand Foods Tanzania Limited which plans to set up in Ethiopia. State Minister Dewano was in Thailand two weeks earlier (**See article**)

A business delegation representing 12 major Swiss companies, led by the Swiss Ambassador in Ethiopia, Andrea Semadeni, was on a five day visit to Ethiopia this week to look at investment opportunities. The delegation met with State Minister Dewano. (**See article**)

The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors on Tuesday (September 30) approved a US\$600 million credit to fund the latest phase of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program. The new PSNP4 project will be implemented in 411 districts in Ethiopia, reaching up to 10 million food insecure people per year.

The Ministry of Agriculture says over 30 million people have benefited from the Sustainable Land Management Program, aimed to transform degraded landscapes in rural areas, in the Regional States of Oromia, Tigray, Amhara and Gambella as well as in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples and in Benishangul Gumuz.

The Ambassador of Ethiopia to France who is also accredited to the Republic of Portugal, Ambassador Nega Tsegaye, presented his credentials to the President of the Republic of Portugal, Mr. Anibal Cavaco Silva, on Thursday last week (September 25).

Djibouti

Foreign Minister Mahmoud Ali Youssouf and the Chinese Ambassador to Djibouti Fu Huaqiang on Monday (September 29) signed a 150 million Renminbi (US\$24 million) agreement for economic and technical cooperation, for infrastructure development in the areas of education, health, water and energy.

A three month course for 150 officers from the Somali police force started last week in Djibouti. The training by Italian Carabinieri will cover human rights, crowd and riot control, police operations in urban areas and other areas. The units being trained come from different areas of Somalia to help develop a truly national police force.

Eritrea

On Friday last week (September 26) the UN Human Rights Council established a Commission of Inquiry to investigate cases of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and torture in Eritrea. Special Rapporteur Ms. Keetharuth said the human rights situation in Eritrea continued to remain “dire”. **(See article)**

Kenya

The International Criminal Court (ICC) on Tuesday (September 30) rejected a request by Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta's lawyers to excuse him from a hearing next week. The Court earlier dropped the October 7 start date for the trial of President Kenyatta after prosecutors asked for an indefinite delay but judges scheduled a status conference for October 8 and summoned the President to be present.

The International Crisis Group released a report on Friday last week (September 26) suggesting that Al-Shabaab and other local terror networks in Kenya were taking advantage of what it called “historical injustices of marginalization” to advance their agenda. **(See article)**

Somalia

The Foreign Ministry of Denmark has announced that Denmark will host a Ministerial Meeting on Somalia (November 19-20) in Copenhagen. The meeting, co-chaired by Somalia and the United Nations, will follow up on the Somali Compact endorsed in Brussels last year and will include up to 60 delegations and 300 international participants.

The National Security Ministry on Thursday (October 2) unveiled new security measures including extra checkpoints in and out of Mogadishu to avoid Al Shabaab attacks during the festival of Eid al Adha which starts on Saturday. A spokesman said young men under 40 would be denied access to the city unless they had guarantors.

Puntland security forces launched a major assault, seizing Al-Shabaab bases in the Galgala area near the Golis Mountains this week. Officials said troops had captured the Galgala region in an early morning offensive. In June a leading Al-Shabaab ally in the area, Sheikh Mohamed Said Atom, defected to the Federal government in Mogadishu after Al-Shabaab had replaced him as a commander.

South Sudan

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, opened a conference on South Sudan on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York on Friday (September 26). **(See article)**

Reports from the IGAD-mediated South Sudan talks in Bahr Dar, suggest there has been some progress this week on agreement for a federal system of governance, one of the key demands of the SPLM-in-Opposition rebels. The Government may also agree that a prime minister for the transitional government would also be allowed to run subsequently. **(See article)**

Sudan

Sudan President Omer Al-Bashir, in Saudi Arabia to perform the annual hajj pilgrimage, held talks with the Crown Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Premier and Minister of Defense, on Tuesday (September 30). The Sudanese Foreign Ministry said the meeting had put relations between the two countries on a new path leading to strengthening ties between the two countries.

President Omar Al-Bashir told the General Convention of Sudan's ruling National Congress Party on Saturday (September 27), that the National Dialogue initiative targeted all political forces and armed movements without exclusion. He said the Government would not accept any alternative to the 2011 Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. Negotiations with the Darfur rebel movements are scheduled by the AUHIP team to commence on 15 October.

Prime Minister Hailemariam addressed a peacekeeping summit in New York

Ethiopia has a long history of participating in United Nations peacekeeping operations dating back to the 1950s. The country's first major participation in the UN-authorized operation was as part of the UN Multinational Force in the Korean War (1950-53). Ethiopian forces were first deployed in a UN-led, 'blue helmet' peacekeeping operation from July 1960 to June 1964 as part of the UN operations in the Congo. Since then, apart from the period of the Derg military era, Ethiopia has actively participated in many similar peacekeeping operations.

Last week (September 26) the United States organized a summit in New York on the sideline of the 69th Session of the UN General Assembly on the issue of peacekeeping. Ethiopia as the largest African troop-contributing country for United Nations Peacekeeping Missions participated and Prime Minister Hailemariam addressed the Summit. He stressed Ethiopia's strong conviction that peacekeeping was a critical instrument in the promotion of international peace and security. In line with this, he also expressed Ethiopia's firm support for continuation of the principles of impartiality and neutrality as a cornerstone of peacekeeping endeavors.

The Prime Minister said that because of the sophisticated nature of peacekeeping processes today, parties who participate are often exposed to multifaceted challenges over how to keep their impartiality and neutrality. He mentioned the specific problems of fighting terrorists in Somalia and in Mali, opposing negative forces in DRC, protecting civilians in the Central African Republic and South Sudan, or assisting the two communities in Abyei to coexist in harmony. These were all cases in which peacekeepers were obliged to shoulder responsibilities beyond the traditional role of peacekeeping operations.

The Prime Minister said the relatively improving situation in the DRC and in Mali disproved arguments that had called into question the appropriateness of deploying 'blue helmets' as peace-enforcers and the use of force beyond self-defense. He noted that developments on the ground in DRC and Mali demonstrated the necessity of using force over and above the required so-called self-defense level. At the same time, he underlined that this should only happen in instances

where the situation had been properly understood and where agreed principles and doctrines were followed. It was difficult to think of abandoning the principles that had been the basis for classic peacekeeping operations in the past, but thought should now be given to their interpretation in the different circumstances that might now apply. There could be problems of interpretation of these principles, but at times of disagreement, these principles could be applied in ways to rectify a situation on the basis of the principles of impartiality. This should be balanced between claims which are manifestly unjust and unfair on one hand or those demands in line with the protection of universally recognized rights on the other. The principle of consent of parties could be interpreted in such a way as to make it lose meaning but the idea of non-use of force except in self-defense could also lead to peacekeepers to focus more on their own safety even in the face of mass atrocities and killing of civilians. This, indeed, had happened in some cases.

The Prime Minister also raised the issue of increasing the role of regional mechanisms for peacekeeping. He emphasized the need to further strengthen cooperation between United Nations and regional organizations, such as the African Union, in the areas of policy formulation, capacity building and burden sharing. Because of the level of peace and security in Africa, he pointed out, the continent continues to host more than 70% of UN peacekeeping forces. The success of peacekeeping efforts in Africa, he said, would significantly determine the overall effectiveness of the peacekeeping effort. He noted that Africa's readiness to address this challenge was expressed in its efforts to build the African Peace and Security Architecture, which includes the African Standby force and its rapid deployment capacity. The Prime Minister acknowledged the US initiative of the Rapid-Reaction Force for Africa to augment the process that Africa has embarked on. He shared his view that supporting the African Union and its institutional capacity should be considered as a critical aspect for the overall objective of maintenance of international peace and security.

The relevant section of the African Standby Force for the Horn of Africa and East Africa is the East African Stand-by Force (EASF), and on Monday (September 29) the EASF inaugurated its logistics center in Addis Ababa. Ethiopia's Minister of Defense, Siraj Fegessa, said during the inauguration ceremony that the building of such a multilateral standby force would play a pivotal role towards achieving the AU's goal of the "silencing of the guns by 2020". The East African Standby Force Director, Ambassador Ismail Chanfi, said Ethiopia had contributed enormously to the realization of the force and the inauguration of the logistic training center, he said, was a major step towards full operation of the EASF.

The East African Standby Force (EASF) is one of the five regional multidimensional forces established under the African Standby Force. It comprises 10 active member states, signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of the EASF. It will be the regional African Union crisis response force with powers to intervene in regional conflicts, to protect civilians, prevent loss of life and contain regional armed insurgencies. According to the EASF protocol, all member states are required to contribute to a fund which will be used to set up and equip a regional force with the capacity to deploy to conflict and crisis areas within 14 days. Last August, a resolution providing for the establishment of the regional rapid reaction force was adopted by the regional heads of state, ministers of defense and military chiefs at a meeting held

in Rwanda's capital Kigali. Following that decision, ten member states in East Africa pledged to contribute a total of three motorized battalions, one mechanized battalion, one light infantry battalion and three squadrons/companies for the Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF). The EASF is now set to be fully operational, with a total 5,000 strong military element as well as police and civilian components, by the end of 2014.

Dr. Tedros' meetings in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly

Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros has been continuing to hold bilateral discussions and attend other meetings being held on the sidelines of the 69th Session of the UN General Assembly in New York. He addressed the Group of 77 and China, and held meetings with the Foreign Ministers of Egypt, Ecuador, Turkey and Italy's Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, as well as the UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

Dr. Tedros met with Jeffrey D. Feltman, UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, on Tuesday (September, 30). Their discussions covered regional and global matters of common interest. Dr. Tedros briefed Mr. Feltman on current political and security developments in Somalia. AMISOM and the Somali National Army, he said, were working well together in the fight against Al-Shabaab and now held more than two-thirds of the country, but the need for consolidation remained significant. Dr. Tedros noted that considerable progress had been made in encouraging the full participation of all stakeholders to establish civilian administrations to deliver services and undertake development activities in liberated areas, though there was still more to be done. He said implementation of the Jubba agreement was going smoothly. Overall, the situation in Somalia was positive and changing for the better though he also underlined that the drought that affects more than a million people needed to be addressed immediately.

With reference to South Sudan, Dr. Tedros said IGAD was working hard to resolve the crisis, but until recently the two warring parties were not living up to their pledges. Now, however, it seemed the negotiation process in Bahr Dar was moving in the right direction. He acknowledged the role of United Nations, the international community and partners in trying to bring an end to hostilities and guarantee the protection of civilians. Mr. Feltman thanked the Ethiopian government for its contributions for maintaining peace and stability and for creating an enabling environment for development in Somalia and for its role in finding a political solution in South Sudan.

Eritrea was also discussed and Dr. Tedros expressed his concern over the continuing human rights violations there and over Eritrea's continued interference in the region. He said these efforts to destabilize the region showed there had been no change in Eritrean policy. He said the international community should urge the Government of Eritrea to stop supporting Al-Shabaab, to respect international law and to fully co-operate with the UN, AU and other partners to ensure peace and stability in the Horn of Africa.

In his talks with the Foreign Ministers of Egypt, Ecuador, Turkey and Italy's Vice-Minister of

Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Dr. Tedros discussed regional issues and provided briefings on the progress being made in Somalia and South Sudan. Discussions also covered bilateral relations and ways to enhance these. Ecuador's Foreign Minister, Ricardo Patino said Ecuador would like to enhance relations and noted that opening an Ecuadorian Embassy in Addis Ababa would strengthen relations between the two countries. Dr. Tedros said closer relations would benefit both countries. Dr. Tedros and Mevlut Çavuşoğlu, Foreign Minister of Turkey, agreed the current cooperation in development should be enhanced and promoted to a higher level in trade and investment. Dr. Tedros asked Mr. Çavuşoğlu to encourage the Turkish EXIM Bank, financing the construction of the Awash-Woldia railway, to release the agreed funding for the project. Mr. Çavuşoğlu invited Ethiopia's Prime Minister to the next Turkish-Africa summit to be held in November in Malabo and suggested an IGAD meeting should be held there at the same time. Mr. Pestilli, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Italy, stressed Italy was keen to work with Ethiopia on the problem of immigration. A regional conference on migration for the East Africa region is scheduled to take place next month in Addis Ababa under the auspices of the EU and Italy. Mr. Pestilli said the key to address the problem was creating job opportunities for African youth and this could be done by exploiting the comparative advantages of Africa through increased FDI flow in addition to addressing the problems of human rights abuse in countries like Eritrea, where so many youngsters saw migration as the only way out to escape the hopeless situation at home. Dr. Tedros expressed concern over the continued detention without charge, trial or legal counsel of the eleven prominent politicians in Eritrea. They had been held since September 18, 2001. He also pointed out that Eritrea's continued interference and its efforts to destabilize the region showed there had been no change in Eritrean policy and emphasized that the international community should urge the Government of Eritrea to stop supporting Al-Shabaab, to respect international law and to fully co-operate with the UN, AU and other partners to ensure peace and stability in the Horn of Africa.

Dr. Tedros addressed the 38th Annual Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 and China on Friday last week (September 26). Congratulating Ms. Maite Nkaona-Mashabane of South Africa on her election to the chair of the Group, he welcomed the Republic of South Sudan to the Group of 77. He noted the group was celebrating the 50th year of its establishment just at a time it was engaged in the task of elaborating the new global development goals. This would renew and strengthen solidarity as well advance the common development agenda. He said this was a time to reflect on the progress they had made individually and as a Group in shaping the global development landscape over the last five decades. There had been challenges and opportunities and the economies of some members had achieved sustainable growth and reduction in poverty, becoming growing power houses in their respective regions. These were success stories and provided development partners on for South-South cooperation.

Dr. Tedros underlined that Ethiopia was working to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development should be at the core of the global development agenda. Equally, the implementation of the MDGs is unfinished business. The international community must be tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that efforts are scaled-up and accelerated to fully implement these goals. The Group should voice this concern with vigor. Its concerted efforts should also be bold to call for immediate action to raise the level of ambition to combating the

effects of climate change. Although members of the Group are confronted with various development challenges, they should speak with a common voice in advancing its cause at both Lima and Paris. Dr. Tedros said many were in the process of transforming the structure of their economies through industrialization. Ethiopia, often now referred to as one of the fastest growing economies in the world, had embarked on this road. In its aim to become a middle income country by 2025, it also intended to make its growth ecologically friendly with a minimal carbon foot print. That left no choice but to exploit renewable sources of energy to support development of the planned green economy and to discharge Ethiopia's responsibility of cutting emissions. .

He called on the Group of 77 and China to stand firm to ensure that strong means of implementation are put in place for the implementation of the SDG's and Post-2015 development agenda. He said that Ethiopia would be hosting the Third International Conference on Financing for Development next year, and said it was confident that the conference would thoroughly explore the various options to cement agreement to guarantee strong means of implementation and reach consensus on financing of the Post-2015 development agenda.

A high level meeting on South Sudan in New York underlines international concerns

While the negotiations between South Sudan's warring parties continue to make slow progress in Bahr Dar, the international community has continued to underline its concern and commitment over the urgent need for a negotiated settlement. UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, opened a high level meeting on South Sudan on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly on Friday last week (September 26). The Secretary-General noted that his visit to South Sudan in May had allowed him to see the humanitarian catastrophe that had followed the outbreak of violence and conflict last year. There were a hundred thousand people sheltering in United Nations peacekeeping bases and hundreds of thousands of displaced people living in insecurity and lacking the basics to survive. The conflict, he said, had placed four million people at a greater risk of serious food insecurity and if the world did not act quickly, "some 50,000 children could die before the end of this year." The conflict had made the world's newest nation experience a deteriorating economic, political and humanitarian situation despite its endowment of fertile land and valuable reserves of oil. He emphasized that he had told the warring parties that the military option was not something that could fix the manmade crisis. He called on the international community to be prepared to take punitive measures against those responsible for spreading violence and for obstructing a negotiated political settlement.

The Secretary-General urged the leadership of the conflicting parties to look for ways to devise "an inclusive and mutually agreed power sharing arrangement to start a transitional phase of governance." The peace agreement, he said, should be forged within the spirit of inclusivity with the view to address the underlying causes of the conflict and deliver a durable peace. Those who were responsible for killings and atrocities would be held accountable. He reiterated that the leaderships must commit themselves to the protection and safety of civilians as well as allow unimpeded humanitarian assistance and relief services. The Secretary-General called on the international community to expedite its support for South Sudan. He praised the role played by

donors and commended troop-contributing countries. He stressed the UN was committed to support the people of South Sudan and the IGAD peace process, and noted that another 5,000 peacekeepers were in the process of being deployed. The Secretary-General concluded his opening remarks by saying: “I have a message for the leaders of South Sudan: You opened the wounds that have caused so much suffering. Now heal them. The parties owe this to their people and to future generations.”

Dr. Tedros Adhanom, current Chair of the IGAD's Council of Ministers, told the meeting that the ongoing conflict in South Sudan posed risks to the peace and security of the region and the world. Together with the African Union, the United Nations, IGAD and international development partners, Ethiopia, he said, in a spirit of good neighborliness had been a driving force in encouraging the warring parties to narrow their differences through the IGAD-led mediation process. This effort had produced an encouraging result in the signing of the January Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities. Unfortunately, the discrepancy between the pledges made for resolution of the conflict and the failure to live up to their practical implementation, coupled with the intransigence of the parties had rendered the IGAD-led mediation process difficult. This disappointing mismatch between rhetoric and reality had prolonged the suffering and set the course for the deteriorating humanitarian situation. He said the Extraordinary Summit of IGAD Heads of State and Government on August 25 had underlined the region's disappointment over the slow pace of the negotiations to reach an agreement on a Transitional Government of National Unity within the original deadline. He said the IGAD leaders had insisted on the conflicting parties to provide practical implementation of the agreement within 45 days, and expressed his hope that the parties would now set up a Transitional Unity Government in accordance with the signed agreement within the agreed timescale.

Dr. Tedros reiterated that inclusivity held the key to the crisis. Exclusive engagement of the principal parties could produce a sustainable peace or a just solution to the crisis. He called on the parties to uphold this principle and abide by their commitments to provide the people with a new era of “just and durable peace.” He said Ethiopia firmly believed that the crisis necessitated a negotiated political settlement to cement national reconciliation and enduring peace in the heart of the nation as well as bringing the continuing conflict to a stop. He emphasized that Ethiopia, as Chair of IGAD, in association with other partners, was committed to support the peace talks with the aim of bringing a lasting political solution, and he called on the international community to help pull back the people of South Sudan from further suffering and the looming danger of famine.

In advance of the UN meeting, the US Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, Ambassador Donald Booth, gave a briefing on the conflict, the political and humanitarian situation in South Sudan and the IGAD-led mediation process at the New York Foreign Press Centre. Stressing the seriousness of the humanitarian situation, he said 3.9 million people were in serious need of food assistance, and 1.7 million people had been displaced with 500,000 of them now living in neighboring countries as refugees. He said that the IGAD-led mediation process had provided for the signing of a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and paved the way for recommitment to the signed agreements, and negotiation for a transitional government as well as the establishment of a monitoring and verification mechanism. To the dismay of the people of South Sudan, the

warring parties' had shown no more than a feeble interest in the implementation of these agreements, preferring to push for a military option to score political points at the expense of the country's society.

Ambassador Booth said IGAD, the AU, the Troika, China, the EU, and the international community remained committed to help support the IGAD mediation process. He noted that IGAD's multi-stakeholder peace negotiations now underway in Bahr Dar was bringing "more voices from South Sudan into the peace process so that any eventual peace process arrangement for a transitional government would have a broader basis and a broader buy-in." Asked whether IGAD had lost credibility by not imposing sanctions, Ambassador Booth said the region had reiterated its intention to take punitive measures if the parties did not live up to their pledges to end the conflict. He acknowledged that this threat had not yet been translated into reality, pointing out that the region wanted to "use both the threat and actual measures to try to leverage the negotiations forward." IGAD, he said, was trying to provide a pragmatic and enduring regional approach with room for cooperation as well as find ways to "bring pressure to bear on the parties" in order to present a strong basis for durable joint action for the creation of a united South Sudan. Premature imposition of sanctions would preclude other meaningful options and could derail moves towards peace. It was important "to leverage the negotiations and to do so in a way that is credible." He said the region was working on ways "to maximize the pressure and influence the negotiations." Ambassador Booth said the US would continue to engage with IGAD and the region on how to best engineer measures, including sanctioning people, and send the message that pressures would increase as necessary. He said US actions, including its US\$636 million to help address the humanitarian crisis, increasing pressure on the parties for meaningful peace talks, holding consultations with the IGAD Special Envoys, and providing support to the establishment and operationalization of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, as well as continuing engagement with all the actors, were designed so the US could be "a force multiplier" for the IGAD-led mediation effort.

There is general agreement in the region and within the international community that the IGAD-led mediation is the only acceptable way forward for a political solution. The warring parties' reluctance to practical implementation of their previously signed agreements offers a bleak scenario for the people of South Sudan and for the humanitarian, political and security situation in the country. Any further prolongation of conflict will contribute to heightened insecurity, drain the culture of common coexistence and tolerance among South Sudan's communities, and push the nation into the category of a failed state. The fallout will endanger regional peace and security, provide a basis for further destabilization of the region and have long-term implications for neighboring countries. It is high time to engineer a negotiated political settlement, in the interest of the people of South Sudan and, indeed, of the warring parties. The people of South Sudan, its friends, the region and the international community will not sit idly by if the warring parties continue their reluctance to reach agreement.

The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative is optimistic about Somalia's progress

Nicholas Kay, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Somalia, last week expressed his optimism about the progress being made in Somalia. As human suffering escalates in Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Gaza, Libya, South Sudan and the Central African Republic, he said Somalia looks increasingly stable and hopeful but he also asked whether this is just a mirage or were there genuine grounds for optimism and lessons that could be drawn. He answered his own question with an emphatic “yes”, adding that later in the week, in New York, the UN Secretary-General would convene leaders from a growing band of countries, whose collective efforts over the last years meant that millions of Somalis could now dare to dream that more than two decades of hopeless conflict were over.

Mr. Kay said first and foremost Somalis themselves were writing this new chapter in their nation's troubled history. Their solution, he said, was political and very Somali, combining modernity and tradition. Equally, the international community had a significant role in the emerging success with African Union forces continue to expand security and government authority across Somalia. In joint operations with Somali forces, he noted, AMISOM was depriving Al-Shabaab, of key towns. It is now possible, said Mr. Kay, to see a day coming when the terrorists will be reduced to a beleaguered group of insurgents, running out of hiding places and increasingly riven with internal disputes. At the same time, he added, we should not be under any illusions. Terrorism will not disappear overnight. Nor will military action ever deliver a lasting peace. Peace and security in Somalia will depend ultimately on political solutions. Mr. Kay said that Somalis were rising to this challenge and undertaking what he called “a breathtaking feat of political engineering.” This was the building of an entirely new political construct: a federal, not unitary, state with democratic, not autocratic, governance. This was because the political reality in Somalia today is that political, military and economic power has been dispersed to the point where a formalized agreement on sharing and devolving power is the only practicable way forward.

Mr. Kay emphasized that federalism was not an abstract concept. It was about bringing government closer to the people but, he added, creating Federal States with their own governments was not an automatic panacea. There were risks, and reaching inclusive political settlements with all the clans and interest groups in a particular area was a long and bumpy road. He said competition for power and resources was fierce. It was not a zero sum game, and the Federal Government must be helped to build up its capacity and take charge of its national responsibilities. Certainly, he said, the intensity and complexity of political negotiation as the new federal map of Somalia emerges, with proto-federal member states taking shape in south, south-west and central Somalia, is impressive. However, trust between actors remains low. After so many years of state failure, the clan has become a dominant feature of people's political and security universe, and the voice of traditional elders, rightly, carries great weight, helping people understand that any settlement must benefit everyone and that winners cannot and should not “take all”.

Mr. Kay said the UN and other international partners, notably the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) were

doing two things: giving direct support to the Somali-led political process and working collectively to create conditions for successful elections in 2016. Forming a federal Somalia, finalizing the Constitution, approving it in a referendum and then holding national elections in 2016 would not happen unless security continues to improve, women play a bigger role, institutions grow, the rule of law and respect for human rights take hold, and people's daily lives and economic prospects revive. Enormous challenges, but also noteworthy progress. He pointed out that Somalia in reality was no longer a dangerous no-go area for international workers. People, he said, are often surprised to hear that every day the UN has about 1,300 staff working across Somalia, of whom at least 200 are international staff working in Mogadishu. The UN was there to help and to stay for as long as needed. It was not alone. There were others from the European Union, IGAD, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Conference, the UK, China, Turkey, UAE, US, and Ethiopia.

Mr. Kay said the Federal Government and President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud were determined to hold elections in a truly federal Somalia in 2016. He called their vision "compelling" and said the United Nations would do its utmost to help. At the same time, the key to success ultimately lies in Somali hands and, increasingly, in the hands of the members of parliament. Resuming work in September, they have key legislation to pass to enable the country to move forward and enjoy a more stable future. Without the laws to establish the National Independent Election Commission and the Boundaries and Federation Commission, there can be no federalism, no referendum and no election. This is a time to display the necessary discipline and unity. Somalis, and their international partners, have high expectations, he said. This was the clear message given by the members of the UN Security Council when they made their historic visit to Mogadishu in August. That message, said Mr. Kay, must not fall on deaf ears. "Somalis will only enjoy peace when it comes from a political solution; Somalia's politicians must now be its peace-builders," he concluded.

State Minister Dewano Kedir heads a delegation to Thailand

A delegation led by State Minister, Dewano Kedir paid a five-day visit to the Kingdom of Thailand, from September 14–20. The visit, at the invitation of the Thai Government, was on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relationship between the two countries. It was also intended to strengthen bilateral relations. The delegation included Dr. Genet Zewde, Ambassador of Ethiopia to India who is accredited to the Kingdom of Thailand, the Ambassador of Thailand from Kenya accredited to Ethiopia, the Vice President of the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectorial Associations, and representatives of the Ethiopian Investment Commission, Addis Ababa University and the private sector .

During the visit, State Minister Dewano held talks with the Deputy Foreign Minister of Thailand, Don Pramudwinai, on ways to strengthen bilateral relations and expanding business ties between the two countries. Mr. Dewano briefed the Deputy Minister about Ethiopia's recent economic growth, its conducive policy environment, the attractive incentives available, the extensive domestic market opportunities and proximity of the country to major international markets. He also noted the prevailing peace and security in the country and its active role in encouraging

peace and stability in the region. He requested the Thai Government to encourage investors to invest in the country's priority sectors, including textile and garment production, leather products, food processing and pharmaceutical and manufacturing sectors. Mr. Dewano also requested the Deputy Minister to consider the re-opening of Royal Thai Embassy in Addis Ababa. Deputy Minister Pramudwinai promised the government would consider re-opening its embassy in Addis Ababa and said it would encourage Thai investors to explore investment opportunities in Ethiopia. He expressed his hope that they would look to Ethiopia as a proper destination for investment. In addition to bilateral issues, Mr. Pramudwinai suggested that Thailand and Ethiopia should strengthen their cooperation in international fora.

During their visit, the delegation held a business seminar organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, the Board of Investment of Thailand and the Honorary Consulate of Ethiopia in Thailand. Potential investors from various priority sectors were briefed about the investment potential of the country, attractive incentive packages available and the overall policy environment. During the seminar, the Board of Investment of Thailand announced it would be leading a delegation to visit Ethiopia in January next year. The delegation was briefed by the Board of Investment and the Industrial Estate Authority of Thailand about their experience in attracting foreign direct investment and the support they provide to investors.

The delegation visited a number of private enterprises including the Charoen Pokphand Foods Public Company Limited (CPF) a major poultry farm and chicken processing business, operating in many countries across the world, and Amata Corporation CPL which is engaged in industrial estate development in Thailand and Vietnam. CPF has already started exploring opportunities in the poultry sub sector in Ethiopia; the Chairman of Amata Corporation is to visit Ethiopia before the end of the year. The delegation also visited Chulalongkorn University and Bangkok Hospital and encouraged both institutions to collaborate with similar institutions in Ethiopia. Chulalongkorn University has agreed to collaborate with various universities in the areas of geoscience, mining, pharmaceutical, generic drug, food science and veterinary medicine with especial focus on industry support.

A Swiss business delegation visits Ethiopia

Ethiopia and Switzerland share similarities including a federal form of government and natural topography as well as hosting some of the largest numbers of diplomatic representations and international organizations. Ethio-Swiss cooperation, in social, economic and humanitarian areas, is in fact of long standing and covers a wide range. In previous decades the major sectors of cooperation have included food security and rural development, health, good governance, state and peace building, and migration.

This week, as one of a large number of groups of investors and business delegations to Ethiopia from various parts of the world in recent years, a Swiss business delegation made a five day visit (September 29–October 3) to Addis Ababa, during which it held a business forum, explored investment opportunities and visited industrial zones. The business forum was organized in collaboration by the Permanent Mission of Ethiopia in Geneva, the Swiss–African Business

Circle and Switzerland Global Enterprise. The forum is expected to lead to an increase in Swiss investment in Ethiopia and boost existing relations between the two countries as well as enhance new economic cooperation between the two countries.

Ambassador Andrea Semadeni, Swiss Ambassador to Ethiopia, led the delegation, made up of twelve representatives from ten major Swiss companies and two media organizations including BSI SA, Handelszeitung/ Axel Springer Schweiz AG, Hoffman- La Roche, Metter Toledo Sales International GmbH, Motivation Africa, Swiss African business circle (SABC) and Switzerland Global Enterprise.

On Monday (September 29), the delegation was briefed on “Doing Business in Ethiopia/Exporting to Ethiopia” at the business forum. The forum was attended by a number of senior government officials from the Ministries of Foreign affairs, Trade, Industry, Mining, Urban Development and Construction as well as representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, the Ministry of Agriculture, railways and other bodies. Presentations at the forum gave participants the opportunity to discuss Ethiopia’s investment environment, the legal frameworks and hear the experiences of some companies that have already invested in Ethiopia. The delegation later in the day met with Foreign Affairs State Minister, Dewano Kedir, and discussed the investment environment further as well as the priority investment sectors and market opportunities in Ethiopia. The discussion also considered ways to expand Swiss investments in Ethiopia.

State Minister Dewano emphasized that economic diplomacy was central to Ethiopia’s foreign policy and Ethiopia would like to see the economic ties between Switzerland and Ethiopia strengthened further. He explained the important place that European investment has in Ethiopia, adding that European investment, including Turkey, was larger than that from any other continent. The State Minister also noted the country’s peace and stability and detailed the investment and market opportunities available, pointing out the huge market potential of the country’s growing economy.

In addition to participating in the business forum, and meeting State Minister Dewano, the delegation carried out a number of other programs, meeting with government officials to discuss Ethiopia’s investment opportunities and explored the possibility of new partnerships. The delegation was particularly interested in looking at the opportunities in agro-processing, infrastructure and railway technologies, mining, pharmaceuticals and finance development. It visited various investment possibilities and witnessed developments in the investment and industry sectors. Members had the opportunity to establish business partnerships with Ethiopian businesses through one-on-one meetings, organized in cooperation with different local partners. They visited a number of companies, both Ethiopian and Swiss, such as Cobra Impact Manufacturing, ADC Research and Development and Central Printing Press as well as industrial and manufacturing sites like the Turkish AYKA manufacturing and garment company, which uses Reter–Swiss manufacturing machinery. They also visited the offices of the Ministries of Industry, Health and Agriculture, as well as the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange, the Ethiopian Railways Authority and the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectorial Associations.

During their visit, the Swiss delegation showed a keen interest increasing economic and business cooperation between Ethiopia and Switzerland and underlined their commitment to increase Swiss investment in Ethiopia. The members expressed their appreciations for the ongoing infrastructure and other development activities in Ethiopia and said they hoped to cooperate and build partnerships in trade, investment and other business sectors. Ambassador Semadeni said he would encourage Swiss investors to come to Ethiopia to follow in the footsteps of this delegation.

UN Commission of Inquiry to investigate rights abuses in Eritrea

The Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea, Sheila B. Keetharuth, said on Monday (September 29) that with forced conscription, extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances, the human rights situation in Eritrea continues to remain “dire”. She said that the new Commission of Inquiry would help “pave the way” to accountability. Last Friday, the UN Human Rights Council appointed Mike Smith of Australia and Victor Dankwa of Ghana to join Ms. Keetharuth on a Commission of Inquiry to investigate all reports of human rights abuses in Eritrea in what the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights described as a “historic moment” for the thousands of possible victims. As part of its mandate, the Commission will investigate “the most egregious human rights violations,” including cases of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and incommunicado detention, torture, and lack of freedom of expression and opinion, assembly, association, religious belief and movement.

The Special Rapporteur urged the Government of Eritrea, as well as the international community, to cooperate with the Commission of Inquiry. “I hope the Commission of Inquiry will pave the way to establish accountability for these violations,” said Ms. Keetharuth, “especially in view of the continued non-cooperation of Eritrea with my mandate and other UN mechanisms.” Ms. Keetharuth has been unable to visit Eritrea to investigate human rights abuses in the country. She said the creation of her Special Rapporteur’s mandate had increased international awareness about the large-scale violations of human rights in Eritrea, but she added “concrete steps are urgently needed to address such violations.” Ms. Keetharuth’ comments followed a five-day mission to Italy last week, when she visited Eritrean refugees and migrants and collected first-hand accounts of human rights’ violations.

Ms. Keetharuth pointed out that “Eritreans are escaping systematic and widespread human rights violations,” and cited indefinite forced conscription, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture and inhuman prison conditions, as well as political repression. Thousands of migrants, many youngsters, have fled Eritrea in search of asylum in Europe. According to the latest estimates produced by Italian authorities, Eritreans make up the largest number of those rescued by Italy’s Mare Nostrum search and rescue operations.

This year there has been an alarming rise in the number of asylum seekers and migrants from Africa trying to reach Europe. According to UN estimates, 2014 has seen more than 130,000

migrants and asylum-seekers land on Europe's shores compared with 80,000 last year. It says a record 3,072 migrants have drowned trying to cross the Mediterranean so far this year, compared to some 2,360 in 2013. This includes some 500 people feared drowned in a single incident off Malta in mid-September when smugglers deliberately rammed their boat

In its first comprehensive report on such deaths, the International Organization of Migration said 40,000 migrants worldwide are believed to have perished since 2000, 22,000 of them seeking a better life in Europe. The IOM's Director General William Lacy Swing said that the limited opportunities for safe migration force would-be migrants into the hands of smugglers, "feeding an unscrupulous trade that threatens the lives of desperate people." The IOM's study "Fatal Journeys: Tracking Lives Lost During Migration", was launched in the wake of the Lampedusa disaster just a year ago on October 3 when over 365 migrants, almost all Eritreans, died off the island of Lampedusa when a boat with over 500 passengers being smuggled into Europe caught fire and sank. Yesterday, some 50 of the survivors travelled to Lampedusa to mark the anniversary of the tragedy. They also met with Pope Francis at the Vatican in Rome. Members of the Eritrean Diaspora and of the Diaspora-based Arbi Harnet (Freedom Friday) Project have also been marking the anniversary. They have noted that little has been done either at the source in Eritrea or to ensure refugees are adequately protected on their passage to Europe.

The IOM report, which calls for more concerted investigation and prosecution of human smugglers, also notes that responsibility for the migrants' deaths is shared by their destination countries and the countries from which they originate as well as the countries through which they transit. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, François Crépeau, said this week that sealing international borders was impossible, and urged EU Member States to assist the frontline countries, such as Italy, Malta, Greece and Spain, to manage search and rescue missions.
