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News in Brief

African Union

The “African Regional Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014”, organized by the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, was held in Addis Ababa this week on the theme “Harnessing the Demographic Dividend: The Future We Want for Africa.” It was attended by ministers responsible for population and development issues, representatives of youth, civil societies, UN agencies, research institutions, the Pan African parliament, and other stakeholders.

The Nile Basin Initiative organized a tour for Permanent Secretaries of Ministries in charge of Water Affairs from NBI Member States of the Eastern Nile Basin from September 29 to October 4. It included visits to the NBI's Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO) and NBI projects, including the Transmission Interconnection between Sudan and Ethiopia; the Flood Prevention and Early Warning Project, the Eastern Nile Watershed Management Project and the Tana-Beles Integrated Watershed Management Project.

The third India-Africa Trade Ministers meeting and the India-Africa Business Council (IABC) meeting was held in Johannesburg, South Africa on Tuesday October 1. The major issues under discussion were food security, steps to enhance trade and increase cooperation in infrastructure and other sectors. India-Africa trade reached US\$ 70 billion in 2012 and is expected to reach US\$100 billion by 2015.

Ethiopia

On the margins of the 68th United Nations General Assembly, Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros held a series of bilateral meetings with Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov , Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation; Albert Dolrosorio, Foreign Minister of the Philippines; Jan Kohout, Foreign Minister of the Czech Republic; Dr. Surapong Tovichakchaiku; Foreign Minister of Thailand; Alfredo Moreno Charme, Foreign Minister of Chile; Nabil Fahmy, Foreign Minister of Egypt; Emma Bonino, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy; Dr. El Othmani, Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Morocco; and others.

Ambassador Berhane Gebre-christos, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, leading a delegation on a visit to Sweden this week had discussions with Sweden's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Carl Bildt and with the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Frank Belfrage and the State Secretary for Trade, Mr. Gunnar Oom.

The second Regional Consultative Meeting of the African Union Human Rights Memorial Project was held in Addis Ababa on September 28 and 29. The meeting was organized by Justice Africa and the Inter-Africa group in collaboration with the African Union Human Rights Memorial. **(See article)**

On Thursday last week (September 26), the 2013 African Economic Outlook was launched. The report is jointly published by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, the Development Center of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the United Nations Development Program. Its synopsis of country case studies recognizes Ethiopia's economic achievement among others. **(See article)**

A delegation representing seven American universities arrived in Addis on Friday (October 4) for a ten day visit. The delegation is led by Ambassador Tibor Nagy , former US Ambassador to Ethiopia; and the purpose of the visit is to create linkages between universities in Ethiopia and the US.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Spokesperson, Ambassador Dina Mufti, said Tuesday (October 1) that the International Criminal Court charges against African leaders were politically motivated rather than legally motivated and run contrary to the African Union's goals that African problems should be solved by Africans.

The Ethiopian Railways Corporation said on Tuesday (October 1) that 756 kilometer-long electrification between Djibouti and Ethiopia should be finalized by the end of the Growth and Transformation Plan in mid 2015. Construction is being undertaken by two Chinese companies.

The first phase of power generation from the Gilgel Gibe III dam on the Omo River is expected to be launched within a year. The electric transmission line has already been completed and the power house concrete work is underway. The Gilgel Gibe III project will have an installed capacity of 1870 MW when fully operational.

The Sugar Corporation has announced that 80 percent of first phase of the Tendaho Sugar Factory has been finalized. 14,000 hectares are under sugarcane plantation and 23,000 of the total 25,000 hectares are being developed. The Project Manager says construction of the Factory has created jobs for 35,000 people. In the first phase, the factory will crush 13,000 tons of sugarcane and a year.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesperson, Ambassador Dina Mufti, said on Thursday (October 3) that Al-Shabaab's murderous attack in Nairobi would not change Ethiopia's approach to Somalia. He stressed that Ethiopia did not underestimate threats to its own security.

Djibouti

President Ismail Omar Guelleh on Sunday (September 29) sent a message of goodwill to President Xi Jinping to mark the 64th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

The first round of voting for the position of Director-General of UNESCO takes place on Friday (October 4) with Rachad Farah from Djibouti and Joseph Maila of Lebanon trying to replace incumbent Director-General, Irina Bokova. Ambassador Rachad has been endorsed by the African Union, the Organization of Islamic States and by the Arab League.

Eritrea

Foreign Minister, Osman Saleh Mohammed, told the 68th General Assembly on Monday (September 30) that the United Nations was debilitated by chronic weaknesses and shortcomings and must be reformed, and demanded that “unlawful’ UN sanctions against Eritrea be lifted. **(See article)**

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, Catherine Ashton, issued a statement last month on the 12th anniversary of the arrests of prominent government officials and journalists in Eritrea. She Criticized Eritrea's continued violations of its human rights obligations and the treatment of the prisoners. **(See article)**

At least 130 people died and hundreds more are missing after a boat carrying migrants from Libya to Italy sank off the southern Italian island of Lampedusa. Most of those on board were apparently from Eritrea and Somalia. The boat was believed to have been carrying up to 500 people at the time and 200 are unaccounted for. The Italian government declared Friday (October 4) a day of national mourning.

President Isaias presented a working paper to ministers at a two day meeting (October 1-2) with his proposed national development programs for the year 2014, details of implementation and budget proposals. He mentioned “necessary adjustments in connection with revising mining proclamations” next year, and also gave directives on annual work programs.

Kenya

Kenyan President Kenyatta has said Kenya will keep its troops in Somalia to help Somalia's battle against the extremist group Al-Shabaab, which slaughtered over sixty innocent civilians and injured another 200 in the attack on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi on September 2. They would not be withdrawn until order was restored to Somalia.

The International Criminal Court resumed the trial of Kenyan Deputy President William Ruto on Wednesday (October 2) after permitting him return to Kenya to help deal with last week's deadly terrorist attack on a Nairobi shopping mall.

The Head of the Kenyan Parliamentary Defense Committee plans to call for the closure of the country's Somali refugee camps over concerns that the facilities are being used as terrorist "training grounds". The Dadaab refugee complex, the largest refugee camp in the world, has well over 500,000 inhabitants, most refugees from Somalia.

Kenya's implementation of Value Added Tax Act 2013 on September 2 pushed up inflation in September to 8.29 %, a rise from the August level of 6.67%. This increase in living costs is the highest in over a year and was above the government's newly revised inflation target of 7.5%.

Somalia

IGAD Partners Forum on Somalia held a day-long consultative meeting in New York on the sidelines of the 68th UN General Assembly. The forum is co-chaired by Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros Adhanom, and his Italian counterpart, Emma Bonino. **(See article)**

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of Somalia addressed the UN General Assembly on last week and also spoke at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington during a visit to the United States. **(See article)**

The Prime Minister of Somalia, Abdi Farah Shirdon, returned to Mogadishu on Tuesday (October 1) after a visit to Switzerland to attend a conference on human rights and a working visit to Turkey where he met with government officials and members of the Somali community.

Barclays Bank has extended its deadline for closing remittance accounts from the UK to Somalia and eastern Africa, following the opening of launching of legal proceedings at the High Court in London on Monday (September 30). The extension, however, is only from October 1 to October 16 until a final judgment is made.

Somaliland President, Ahmed Mohamed Silanyo has been on an official visit to Turkey this week, He discussed "issues of shared interest" and "the exploration of minerals" with Turkish officials and met with Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Wednesday (October 2).

Somaliland's Minister of Finance, Abdiaziz Samaale presented the 2014 budget to parliament on Monday (September 30). The budget, the largest in Somaliland's history, is expected to total more than US\$220 million', 37% higher than the previous year.

The Somali Government announced on Thursday (October 3) that the reconciliation conference for the clans in Jubba region had been postponed. The Leader of the Interim Jubba Administration, Ahmed Madobe had earlier announced that his administration would not be attending conference in Mogadishu this week. The Addis Ababa agreement on August 28 recommended the Federal Government to organize and convene a reconciliation conference in Mogadishu and a follow-up peace building conference in Kismayo.

South Sudan

The Ministers of the Sudan-South Sudan Consultative Forum held their sixth meeting in New York at the UN headquarters on the sidelines of the General Assembly, on Friday (September 27). **(See article)**

South Sudan President Salva Kiir said on Tuesday (October 1) that "time is running out" for peace efforts over Abyei. He affirmed the commitment of his administration to negotiating with Sudan in good faith, but said Sudan's position on the issue of Abyei was "disappointing and obstinate."

South Sudan said on Wednesday (October 2) it had started direct talks with Jonglei-based militia leader, David Yau Yau, in a bid to end an almost two-year conflict which is said to have claimed tens of thousands of lives and driven thousands people from their homes. The peace initiative is being spearheaded by Murle community and religious elders.

Sudan

Representatives of the Sudanese government, African Union and the United Nations held the 16th meeting of the Tripartite Coordination Mechanism on UNAMID in New York (September 28) on the margins of the UN General Assembly. The next meeting of the tripartite mechanism will be held in January in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on the margins of the African Union summit.

President Omar Al-Bashir of the Sudan said on Tuesday (October 1) that cutting fuel subsidies the previous week was one of a series of measures to stabilize an economy seriously affected by inflation and a weakening currency. The authorities said 34 people died in the demonstration last week. International human rights groups claimed the figure was much higher.

On Tuesday (October 1), officials in the Sudan states of Blue Nile and South Kordofan announced that they had embarked on arrangements for opening border crossings with South Sudan. Officials in both states said that the opening of the crossings were important for economic, social and security reasons.

The African Union Human Rights Memorial Project meeting

The second Regional Consultative Meeting of the African Union Human Rights Memorial Project was held in Addis Ababa on September 28 and 29. The meeting was organized by Justice Africa and the Inter-Africa group in collaboration with the African Union Human Rights Memorial. The first Regional Consultative Meeting was held in Rwanda in July this year.

The major topics of discussion during this second Consultative Meeting included international consultation on the mass atrocities committed by the Italian occupation forces in Ethiopia under Rodolfo Graziani on and after February 20, 1937 and the atrocities of the Military Dictatorship,

the Derg, in its Red Terror campaign in Ethiopia in the period of 1977-1979. The meeting, which revealed the stories of mass slaughter in Ethiopia, also provided inputs for the establishment of the African Union Human Rights Memorial at AU Headquarters.

The memorial project was prompted by the fact that the new African Union Headquarters, its offices and conference center, was built in the grounds of the former Addis Ababa Central Prison (Kerchele) and its infamous torture center “Alem Bekagn” –“farewell to the world”. This prison was built by Fascist Italy in the 1930’s and it was the site of numerous and various types of most serious human rights abuses, including unjust detention, torture, execution and mass burial, from the 1930s until the end of the Derg regime in 1991.

In 2004, on the tenth anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda, a resolution was passed by the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the AU to commemorate the genocide in Rwanda annually and to provide a memorial to the Ethiopian Red Terror. Besides suggesting a site of remembrance for those who went through horrifying ordeals and perished during the Fascist Italian occupation of Ethiopia and the regime of the Derg, the resolution committed the African Union to the establishment of a memorial for all victims of mass atrocities in Africa, including the victims of the Rwandan genocide, of slavery and the slave trade, and of apartheid. Accordingly, at the inauguration of the AU Headquarters in 2012, a foundation stone was laid for the memorial in the presence of Presidents Paul Kagame of Rwanda, Jacob Zuma of South Africa and Dr. Yayi Boni of Benin.

At the opening of the Consultative Meeting, Professor Andreas Eshete, Chairperson of the Interim Board of the African Union Human Rights Memorial and former president of Addis Ababa University, described the aims and ethos of the project. To provide a site to serve with solemn remembrance, he said, the African Union Memorial must be a symbol of the collective commitment of African citizens and states to renounce complicity or indifference in the face of threats to fundamental human rights anywhere on African soil. He also emphasized that the memorial must demonstrate the African Union’s ethical role as a crusader for the protection of the human rights of all Africans, at present and in the future.

A representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia reiterated Ethiopia’s commitment to fully support the work of the African Union Human Rights Memorial. He recalled the remark made by Dr. Tedros Adhanom, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, during the Commemoration of the 19th Anniversary of the Genocide in Rwanda on April 7 this year. The Minister, the representative said, highlighted the significance of African Union Human Rights Memorial as something not only to preserve the memory of mass atrocities committed in Ethiopia and elsewhere in the continent but also above all to prevent any future recurrence of such crimes. The Minister stressed the need to spare no effort to enable the Memorial achieve its central objective and to become a permanent center where people from all over the world could meet to reflect on the sanctity of life as well as serve as a place where policy makers can renew their collective commitment to prevent such atrocious crimes as genocide from happening ever again in Africa. It is in this spirit, he added, that we support the African Union Human Rights Memorial.

The two days Consultation Meeting in Addis Ababa which involved the various stakeholders, was infused with the belief that the establishment and operation of the memorial should be a continent-wide endeavor, and that it should be inclusive, transparent and participatory with wide-ranging civic society involvement. The discussions included recollection of memories and of the history of the site and on ways to collect information. Prominent historians, academics, scholars, professors, victims, survivors and young people from different sections of the society took part in the technical meeting including the public forum that followed. The consultations allowed an opportunity and a platform for challenge and debate on the historical narratives that exist regarding the Graziani and Derg regimes and on the massacres that occurred under them. Participants discussed how the memorial should be set up and the narratives that need to be included. The meeting was further enriched by active participation of experts from Rwanda and South Africa who shared their own long and rich experiences in memorializing past atrocities and informing future generations. The form of construction for the memorial center was also considered.

At the conclusion of the consultation a clear consensus was reached on the need to remember and learn from the past and on the importance of using the memorial as a site that would serve as an educational center to help prevent the recurrence of such atrocities in the future. Further continental meetings will be held in Senegal, Libya, South Africa and South Sudan, before a consolidated report and recommendations on the memorial are submitted to the African Union Commission in early 2014.

The Sudan-South Sudan Consultative Forum meets in New York

The Sudan-South Sudan Consultative Forum held its sixth meeting in New York at the UN headquarters on the sidelines of the General Assembly. The meeting came exactly a year after the historic Cooperation Agreements were signed between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan in Addis Ababa on September 27, 2012. Those agreements covered security, trade, the border and other economy related issues and marked the beginning of consolidation of the long peace process between the two countries after the formal independence of South Sudan. The Consultative Forum was convened to examine the state of implementation of the agreements and endorse international support to the work of the African Union high level Implementation Panel to advance the peace negotiations between the two countries.

The African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) was established with a mandate that covers all Sudanese affairs, but chief among these is implementation of the comprehensive agreement between Sudan and South Sudan. In its report prior to the Forum meeting, AUHIP noted that there had been significant normalization of relations between the two states during the past year, reaching a high point at the summit of September 3 when the two presidents agreed on multiple areas. The prevailing political will among the two leaders and the resultant political progress was instrumental in the latest subsequent agreements regarding border trade and free movement of people between the two countries.

The Forum acknowledged the breakthrough in the peace process between the two countries but it also admitted there were outstanding matters that were still cause for anxiety. While issues relating to economic cooperation and trade, in particular oil flows and their payments, have been dealt with satisfactorily, participants at the meeting raised concerns over security and humanitarian areas that were still unresolved. Among these the political situation in the Abyei area and the ‘unilateral actions by Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities’ were singled out as providing the risk of security threats. The meeting, therefore, urged the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC) to continue to play a leadership role. This would be essential for the “rapid and safe return of refugees and displaced persons, a peaceful 2013-2014 Misseriya migration, and to maintain Abyei as a weapons free area”. In addition, the meeting called on the two countries to continue their discussions promptly with the view to reach a resolution regarding the final status of Abyei. It noted that Abyei residents reserve the political right to determine their own future.

Another still-outstanding issue concerns clear demarcation of a line to delimit the border between them. To address this, the AU established an AU Border Program Technical Team (AUHIP- TT), welcomed by both countries. This has set out to define a clear centerline for the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SD–BZ). The Forum called up on the two countries to implement the agreed border security arrangements and withdraw fully from the SD–BZ as well as urgently reach a final agreement regarding the co-ordinates for the centerline and proceed with the demarcation of their common border.

Participants at the meeting also addressed the issue of the ongoing humanitarian challenge posed by the unresolved security problems in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan in the Sudan, and in Jonglei State in South Sudan. The Forum called a cessation of armed hostilities between the governments and the armed groups and of all acts of violence against civilians in these regions, to allow facilitation of delivery of humanitarian assistance urgently, in line with the requirements of international humanitarian laws and UN guiding principles for humanitarian assistance. The communique of the sixth ministerial meeting of the Forum explicitly emphasized the consensus among participants regarding the necessity of holding accountable those who violate international humanitarian and human rights.

The Forum also placed a high premium on the need for sustainable development in order to consolidate lasting peace between the Sudan and South Sudan. It pointed out that provision of basic services, poverty reduction and economic integration were essential for stability and urged full cooperation by the international community and the development partners of the two nations. Participants agreed that debt relief, the lifting of economic sanctions, and the provision of development assistance were areas on which international partners could work most effectively to advance the peace process between the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan.

IGAD Partners' Ministerial Consultative Forum on Somalia....

The IGAD Partners Forum held a day-long consultative meeting in New York on the sidelines of the 68th UN General Assembly. The forum is co-chaired by Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros Adhanom, and his Italian counterpart, Emma Bonino. The meeting was attended by Uganda's Foreign Minister, Sam Kutesa, and United Nations Secretary General, Ban KI-moon, Somalia's President Sheikh Hassan Mahmud, and FAO Director General, Jose Graziano da Silva addressed the forum along with representatives from AMISOM troop-contributing members.

Secretary-General, Ban KI-Moon, expressed his admiration for the resilience and commitment shown by Somalia's Federal Government in rebuilding Somalia and in its efforts to close the "dark chapters of nation's history". He said he welcomed the President's initiative to open a new national dialogue, "Vision 2016" and the agreement to form the Interim Jubba Administration. Urging the importance of making the dialogue properly inclusive, he said these were important steps towards stabilization. The Secretary General also noted that Somalia continued to face a serious security challenge. He praised the partnership among Somalis, regional partners, and international supporters, noting that "men and women of the African Union and its Member States have laid down their lives to help stabilize Somalia. The European Union, United States and other partners have contributed generously over many years to support AMISOM and the Somali forces." He added that "we need to ensure additional support to AMISOM and the Somali National Forces to combat Al-Shabaab." The Secretary-General also called on all partners to commit fully to the New Deal Compact and to work together to realize its goals. He concluded "I am optimistic about Somalia's prospects."

Ethiopia's Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros Adhanom, emphasized that the progress achieved in Somalia as well as in other peace and security issues in the region could not have been achieved without the catalytic role played by IGAD. He added this was also the result of an evolving partnership with the African Union, the United Nations and other partners. Condemning the horrific attack on the Westgate Shopping mall in Nairobi, Dr. Tedros said "This cowardly attack once again makes it imperative for us to work closer together to address the menace of terrorism and extremism in our region and the world at large." Dr. Tedros credited the political and security gains made Somalia to the "focused and coordinated national, sub-regional, continental and global partnership". He noted the "growing consensus within the international community on Somalia, as reflected in the London conference as well as the New Deal conference recently held in Brussels, have created the necessary momentum for the people of Somalia to seize the unique opportunity so as to usher in a new era of peace and stability." At the same time, he underlined that it was the people and leaders of Somalia who matter the most "for achieving lasting peace and reconciliation in their country." He commended "the spirit of wisdom and compromise shown by the leadership of the Federal Government and the Juba Interim Administration in solving the problem in that part of the country," and hoped the same spirit of statesmanship would be demonstrated in implementation of the agreement. He called for continued and increased support from the international community.

Ugandan Foreign Minister Sam Kutesa said the meeting was an opportunity to assess the successes, the challenges and the future of AMISOM. He emphasized that existing cooperation

between the Somali Government, international partners and troop-contributing countries had been critical to the recent security gains. It was, he said, “essential that this support continues and is carried out by all in a well-coordinated manner, in order to consolidate the security gains made against Al-Shabaab.” He added: “as troop contributing countries it is also essential that we remain steadfast in our resolve and determination so that the sacrifices we have made are not in vain.”

Emma Bonino pointed out that this was a delicate time in the history of the “new Somalia”, stressing that the new Somali state must be based on “inclusiveness and on reconciliation between the principal groups in the country”. Another element of the foundation must be “a federal framework that, with a balanced division of competences between state and local government, seems to be the solution that most closely corresponds to the history and needs of Somalia”. President Sheikh Mahmud himself urged donors to honor their commitments to his country. He said “the worsening of other international crises should not draw the world’s attention and resources away from Somalia.”

FAO Director General, Jose Graziano da Silva in his speech focused on the link between, food security and peace. He pointed out three key issues needed to prevent recurrence of the kind of devastating famine that claimed 250,000 lives in Somalia in 2012: peace, political stability and sustainable development, with food security providing an important foundation for. He said that FAO had aligned its support to the Horn of Africa with IGAD, its member countries, and local development partners, pointing out that it was working together with the World Bank and African Development Bank to prepare resilience and sustainable programs worth over 300 million dollars.

In general, in addition to reaffirming their support for the Somali Federal Government, the IGAD partners’ ministerial forum praised the recent Addis Ababa Agreement over the Interim Jubba Administration and urged international stakeholders to cooperate with Somalia in keeping with the provisions of the “New Deal Compact,” as a broad development roadmap endorsed by the EU conference on Somalia in Brussels. The IGAD Partners Forum agreed to hold an annual meeting in New York on the margins of the UN General Assembly.

...and President Mohamud outlines his priorities at the UN and in Washington

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of Somalia addressed the UN General Assembly on Thursday last week. Emphasizing that one of the main purposes of the United Nations was to maintain international peace and security, he strongly condemned “the cruel and terrible attack in Nairobi’s Westgate Mall” and pointed out it demonstrated a number of important points: the battle against al Qaeda and its offshoots like Al-Shabaab was far from over, Al-Shabaab remained a national threat but its consequences affected the region and the entire world. It was a fight on many fronts: military, economic, political and ideological. Certainly Al-Shabaab in Somalia was down, but it was not dead. “We now need the tools to finish the job”, he said, “and we call on our friends to remain resolute and help us to end this situation. Our brave Somali forces, AMISOM, and Ethiopia, need help to fight our enemies.” AMISOM, he insisted must be reinforced and expanded. The investment required paled into insignificance compared with the

expense that would be needed later if the international community did not help to finish the job now. He said “We have defeated [Al-Shabaab] on the battlefield and we must now defeat their poisonous ideology with innovative strategies, cutting-edge technologies, comprehensive education and vigorous communications,” adding “we must remain focused in weakening and uprooting the terrorist basis, militarily and ideologically.”

The President said cornerstones of a new Somalia had been successfully and peacefully laid, with achievements in security, public finance management, reconciliation, political outreach and in laying foundations of good governance with appropriate legislation. He said the New Deal Compact signed in Brussels earlier in September represented a paradigm shift in how the international community engages with Somalia. He claimed it would help Somalia preserve unity and sovereignty, lay a strong foundation for building reliable, transparent, and accountable functioning state institutions, respectful of the fundamental rights and freedoms and equality of its citizens. He underlined that the New Deal must also deliver on the ground. The Government had started a campaign to revitalize service delivery in districts and regions, provide healthcare, and enable access to clean water. It had launched an initiative called “Go to School” under which the government planned to enroll 100,000 students in schools this year and one million students in the next three years.

The President referred to his Vision 2016 Initiative: “a concerted effort under my leadership, to complete the Constitution, establish the federal system and prepare the ground for elections. We will need direction, determination, discipline, as well as the requisite human and financial resources if we are to succeed.” He said the Government had begun to lay the foundations for the return of effective, stable and representative governance in Somalia. This needed a Constitution to reflect a broad national consensus on government. So, the Government must complete the establishment of our federal system, and advance the process of democratization through development of a multiparty electoral system. The Parliament has passed legislation establishing an independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission, as required by the Provisional Constitution. Other statutory bodies must be set up, including a Boundaries and Federation Commission and a National Independent Electoral Commission “whose tasks will be to guide our thinking and inform our actions and decisions in order to complete Somalia’s journey to unity, stability and democracy.”

He made it clear these were the parameters which underlay discussions with other administrative “authorities” in Somalia. He noted that the Government had signed an agreement with the authorities in Puntland in March, framing what he called “our shared commitment to implement a federal system of governance;” in August, it had signed an accord that established an Interim Juba Administration. He said the Government had begun similar processes elsewhere in Somalia, establishing interim administrations in the remaining regions to pursue the twin goals of peace building and state building across southern Somalia.

He also spoke of the continued dialogue “with the authorities in Somaliland” for which he thanked the good offices of the Government of Turkey. This, he said, underscored “our determination to preserve the unity of the country, not by force and coercion, but through dialogue, mutual respect and understanding. Somali unity must be more than a rhetorical device:

it must preserve and promote the dignity, equality and legitimate aspirations of all Somali citizens. By adhering to such principles, we are confident that our dialogue with Somaliland will not only continue, but will eventually bear fruit.”

He had made a similar point speaking a week earlier at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington. He had spoken of the government’s relations with other “administrations” and “authorities”, and had elaborated his views on a federal system and the Government’s relations with possible federal states at greater length. He noted that the government had to move urgently to establish the Boundaries and Federation Commission that would propose the demarcation of Federal Member States on the basis of political, economic and social considerations. He said the government had laid some of the foundations, signing the agreement with the authorities in Puntland. This now had to be translated into reality, with integration of security forces, establishing modalities for resource and revenue sharing, and coordinating policies and programs. More recently, of course, the Puntland Administration has suggested it was seriously concerned over the Federal Government’s interpretation of the Constitution and its view of federalism. In speaking about the agreement over the Interim Jubba Administration, the President said this “aspires to become a Federal Member State in line with the Constitution. “He noted that “under that agreement, critical national assets will be restored to Federal Government control, our forces will be integrated, and we will work together to develop an inclusive, representative and permanent authority for the people of that region.”

The President also pointed out that as he was speaking in Washington, Federal Government officials including the Speaker of Parliament and elders from Bay and Bakool regions were meeting in Baidoa to promote reconciliation and to discuss plans for a merger that would potentially lead to another regional administration. He said the government welcomed such initiatives as long as they were approached “in a spirit of reconciliation, compromise and respect both for one another, and for the communities of neighboring regions who might be affected.” He said the Government had begun similar processes elsewhere in Somalia, establishing interim administrations in Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle, Hiiraan and Galgaduud regions. It had engaged the authorities in Galmudug and Himan iyo Heeb, as well as Ahlu Sunna wal Jama’a, to solicit their views and commitment as it expanded the processes of peace building and state building across southern Somalia. He emphasized that the process of federation could only succeed if it reflected and respected the will of the local people, not if it was imposed from Mogadishu.

The African Economic Outlook view of the Ethiopian Economy

Ethiopia has registered fast and impressive growth for the last decade and this has provided momentum for accelerated economic development. The country's economic growth has been driven by well-chosen policies and rapid expansion of public infrastructure and basic services. The increase in exports, remittances and Foreign Direct Investment has provided impetus to growth. Furthermore, a significant paradigm shift in economic policy and the importance given to integrated agricultural development, the emphasis on small enterprises and encouragement of

added value and massive infrastructure development in road links and power supplies have helped Ethiopia to sustain double digit growth.

Ethiopia's economic achievement has been well recognized in the 2013 African Economic Outlook, launched on September 26 at the Sheraton Hotel in Addis Ababa. This annual report is jointly published by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, the Development Center of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the United Nations Development Program. The theme of this year's report was "structural transformation and natural resources", and in its synopsis of country case studies, it portrayed Ethiopia as one of Africa's best performing economies. Unlike other fast-growing Sub-Saharan economies with growth supported by minerals, Ethiopia's robust growth has been driven by the service sector and by agriculture. The report says agriculture, with a share of about 44% of GDP, accounts for about 70% of export earnings, and its potential remains enormous. Looking at the Government efforts to enhance agricultural production and productivity, the report notes promotion of the use of modern technology, commercialization of agriculture and production of high-value crops, encouragement of micro-irrigation schemes and improved marketing and infrastructure.

The report also notes that the Growth and Transformation Plan aims to overhaul the economy by radically altering the agricultural sector and boosting industrial development through expanded investment. It suggests the growth of the service sector has been driven mainly by rapid growth of hotels and restaurants, financial intermediaries, real estate, public administration and retail businesses. The service sector has recently outstripped agriculture in terms of the share of GDP, but agriculture remains critical for broad-based growth and the Government continues to give it priority. The industry sector has been marked by a construction boom and expansion in mining and manufacturing. These helped the sector to grow by 13.6% in 2011/12. The report predicts good prospects for 2013 and 2014 with the Government giving increased attention to industrial development.

The report indicates that this rapid growth has been accompanied by macro-economic imbalances. The main underlying domestic factor was excessive domestic borrowing to finance the largely public investment programs. This was exacerbated by the recent global food and fuel crises. Inflation emerged as the foremost macro-economic challenge. The Government responded with prudent fiscal and monetary policies and various administrative measures to fight inflation while continuing to maintain high infrastructure investment and increased pro-poor expenditures. Its adjustment efforts paid off and macroeconomic stability has been largely restored and domestic borrowing contained. The report notes that domestic revenue collection has been improving after tax reform, and the government was able to finance most of its expenditure from domestic revenues. The strong measures to improve tax administration and collection reduced the fiscal deficit to an acceptable threshold. The central bank avoided deficit financing along with the introduction of cash budgeting mechanisms and reactivated a treasury bills market in a bid to mop up excess liquidity in the banking system. The Government's determination to hold down prices was further reflected in its cautious monetary policy focusing on bringing inflation down to single digits from the high levels of 2009-2010.

Fighting corruption is a priority of the Government's good governance agenda and the African Economic Outlook report acknowledges that there has been significant progress in public finance management reforms. As part of an official Good Governance Package, efforts are being made to embed accountability and integrity; and the Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission has embarked on a vigorous sensitization campaign. In assessing the social context and human development in Ethiopia, the report recognizes Ethiopia has made significant progress in reducing poverty. It says Ethiopia is on the right track to meet five of the eight Millennium Development Goals: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, reducing child mortality rates, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases and developing a global partnership for development. It could also still meet the targets for gender equality, maternal health and environmental sustainability.

The report highlights the improvement of the Government's poverty-focused spending which has revamped access to basic services. Impressive expansion has been achieved in health services, as evidenced in the steady decline in infant mortality and progress in reducing the incidence of HIV/AIDS as a result of policies and strategies such as the National Task Force on HIV/AIDS. The Government aims to provide universal access to water supply by 2015, and significant progress has been made on the provision of both water and sanitation services. The Government has made noteworthy efforts to roll back malaria through dissemination of information and the provision and use of insecticide-treated nets. In 2005, only 2% of households had these, but by 2010, all malaria-prone areas had nets. The Government has also shown strong commitment to the eradication of poverty as reflected in the high level of pro-poor public expenditures. The resultant improvement in basic services has translated into gains in social indicators such as the rate of primary school enrolment (grade 1 to 8) which has increased from 68% in 2004/05 to 85% in 2010/11. The Productive Safety Net program, one of the largest social protection programs in Africa, which targets almost 8 million chronically food-insecure people in rural areas, has contributed strongly to the reduction of poverty rates. The proportion of people living below the poverty line has fallen steadily from 2010, and the Government's target is to reduce this to 22.2% by 2015.

The Government's Growth and Transformation Plan recognizes the nexus between poverty and the environment and it has sought to bring environment issues in the mainstream development process. It has established appropriate legal, policy and institutional frameworks, including drawing up an Environmental Policy and Bio-Diversity Strategy. It has also launched a Climate Resilient Green Economy to address climate change adaptation and mitigation, while pursuing the goals of economic growth, aiming for zero net carbon emissions by 2025, when Ethiopia hopes to become a middle income country.

In its thematic analysis of structural transformation and natural resources, the report considers Ethiopia's basic natural resources to be its people and its agriculture. It noted the country's young population, great biodiversity and distinctive ecosystems. The number of livestock, including cattle, is one of the highest in Africa. Ethiopia's diversified natural resources also range from gemstones to industrial minerals including potash. Development of these resources is a cornerstone of the Government's export-oriented growth strategy. Ethiopia, of course, also has

significant sustainable energy resources, including biomass, hydropower, natural gas and other fossil fuels, as well as geothermal and solar energy potential.

The report notes that the Government has now launched a strategy to change the source of growth and lay the foundation for a structural transformation, with the industrial sector, supported by modern technology, playing a leading role. Expanding industry would help other sectors, particularly agriculture. A comprehensive industrial development policy has been launched with incentive packages, and the Government projects that by 2015 the share of the industrial sector should be 19% of GDP, up from the current 13%.

The report indicates some factors that it considers as an impediment to Ethiopia's development. One is the financial sector which has a "limited range of services, limited foreign participation and no capital markets". Another problem is the limited regional economic integration. The report also notes that the private sector remains weak with the Government imposing restrictions on foreign equity ownership in many areas, particularly service industries. The Government argues that closing the financial sector to foreigners, as it is at the moment, will build and strengthen the capacities of local institutions and give them a competitive edge in extending services to rural areas. The Government envisages a comprehensive growth which benefits all, not just urban areas. It also believes the financial regulatory mechanism is not strong enough to accommodate large foreign financial institutions. The transition from a command economy to a market economy is sufficiently recent to explain the restricted development of the financial sector. At the same time, the Government does recognize the role of the banking sector in development and this is why it is paying special attention to the growth of the sector. It is planning to expand financial sector reform and produce financial innovations including venture capital, capital markets and investment banking.

Ethiopia's private sector has still along way to go but opportunities for private sector investment have increased in recent years. This is shown by the surge in Foreign Direct Investment, in particular from the emerging economies of Asia. The private sector is also expected to play a major role in implementation of the Growth and Transformation Plan. The Government, indeed, is committed to improve the business climate by enabling the private sector to contribute to growth and employment. In accordance with the Plan, higher agricultural productivity is expected to spur industrialization and export growth, with the manufacturing and industrial sectors also conceived as employment opportunities. So priority is accorded to the agricultural, manufacturing and industrial sectors.

The report suggests the limited integration with regional and global markets is caused by lack of infrastructure demonstrated in the poor state of transport corridors and weak trade facilitation. It does also note the Government's recent emphasis on linking infrastructure regionally as a reflection of a keen interest in regional economic integration.

Eritrea's Foreign Minister urges United Nations reform.....

In an address to the UN General Assembly on Monday (September 30), Eritrea's Foreign Minister, Osman Saleh Mohammed, said the United Nations was debilitated by chronic weaknesses and shortcomings and must be reformed. He told the Assembly that "The 21st century requires a revitalized United Nations that transcends a bipolar or uni-polar world order and that is firmly rooted in the supremacy of, and respect for, international law and order." His call for UN reform, however, was specifically attached to the issue of the sanctions imposed on Eritrea in 2009. He urged the Assembly to bring an end to what he called the invasion of Eritrea, to lift the sanctions imposed on Eritrea and to terminate interventions that jeopardize the peace and stability of the Horn of Africa.

Mr. Osman claimed the current conditions the Eritrean people suffered from were the result of the way that the United Nations had ignored the pleas of the Eritrean people over two generations, and of the effect of a world order driven by the rivalry of domineering super-powers which used Eritrea as a pawn in the wider Horn of Africa/Middle East chessboard. The "transgressions that have been perpetrated against the people of Eritrea and other peoples in the past 20 years speak to the persistence of an unfair and unjust global order and the absence of a strong and representative United Nations." High among these transgressions were the "unlawful sanctions" imposed by the Security Council in 2009 as a result of the reports of the UN Monitoring Group on Eritrea and Somalia. The mandate of the monitoring group which investigates compliance with sanctions against Somalia and Eritrea was extended earlier this year to November 2014.

Mr. Osman's list of the "unjust and distorted policies from which Eritrea has suffered for the last twenty years," included border conflicts which had no political or legal justifications as well as the problem over Badme on the border with Ethiopia, which "continued to simmer for 11 years due to obstructive violations by the US Administration." He made, of course, no reference to the fact that Eritrea's border conflicts with Yemen, Djibouti and Ethiopia were all launched by Eritrea itself, nor that all were indeed without any political or legal justification; nor did he mention Eritrea's persistent efforts at regional destabilization, or more specifically, its efforts to destabilize Ethiopia, over the last decade; nor did he refer to the fact that Ethiopia has been trying unsuccessfully to persuade Eritrea to talk about the implementation of the Boundary Commission's Decisions of 2002 for nearly ten years. Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam said earlier this year he was prepared to talk to President Isaias anywhere, anytime, even in Asmara. Eritrea, as always, ignored the suggestion.

Mr. Osman claimed the Eritrean people were subjected to a sustained human trafficking campaign. Again unsurprisingly, he made no mention of the fact that Monitoring Group reports have provided incontrovertible and detailed evidence of official Eritrean involvement in cross-border human trafficking operations. He unconvincingly dismissed Monitoring Group's reports as "widely discredited" and claimed it was on the basis of these that US officials had imposed "unlawful sanctions against Eritrea through the UN Security Council." Members of the Security Council do not agree nor have others who have looked at the evidence.

.....while the EU criticizes Eritrea's continued violation of human rights obligations

In the third week of September 2001, twelve years ago, eleven of the most prominent members of the Eritrean government and the single ruling People's Front for Democracy and Justice, and a number of independent journalists were abruptly detained. All have been held for the last twelve years without charge or trial, incommunicado and in appalling conditions.

Last month, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, Catherine Ashton, said in a statement that she remained “deeply concerned that the Government of the State of Eritrea continues to violate its human rights obligations, under both domestic and international law.” She said she was referring in particular to the “continued detention without charge, trial or legal counsel, since 18 September 2001, of eleven prominent members of Parliament and of the People's Front for Democracy and Justice, and of ten independent journalists.” She pointed out that despite repeated appeals by the international community, including the UN Human Rights Council and the European Union, “these people have been detained for the last twelve years without any contact with the outside world, and with all their rights suspended.” The statement said that the High Representative was “very concerned about the reported deaths of some of the political prisoners and the deterioration of the medical situation of others. The continued lack of information on the whereabouts and the access to health care of the detainees is in clear violation of several human rights obligations, such as the prohibition of arbitrary detention and the right of anyone deprived of his or her liberty to be treated with human dignity.”

The statement called on the Government of Eritrea to release these prisoners immediately and unconditionally, to make public all information on the whereabouts of these prisoners and to allow them access to their families and lawyers, not least on humanitarian grounds. The statement stressed that: “The Government of the State of Eritrea must honor its international human rights obligations and co-operate fully with the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Eritrea.” Eritrea should also take the opportunity of the upcoming second cycle of the UN Universal Periodic Review to engage with the international community on the situation of human rights in Eritrea. The statement called for the release of other persons detained for their political views. It is widely believed there may be 10,000 or more political prisoners in Eritrea.

In September, two organizations, Christian Solidarity Worldwide and an Eritrean human rights organization, Human Rights Concern Eritrea, in yet another effort to try to secure the release of these politicians and journalists, and others none of whom have ever been charged or tried, called for the imposition of targeted sanctions on key Eritrean officials. Government officials have frequently denied all knowledge of these prisoners, nevertheless it is now known that they are being held in a remote, specially built, prison at Era'Ero. Former guards have given details of the appalling and life-threatening conditions under which they are held. Human Rights Concern Eritrea, says “Their hands are reportedly cuffed in front of their bodies during the day and behind their backs at night. They are held in indefinite solitary confinement, have not been allowed to see other prisoners, have no access to family or legal representatives, are referred to by a number, and receive no form of mental stimulation, since guards are ordered not to converse

with them. They are also subjected to torture. At least 15 prisoners are reported to have died as a result of the harsh conditions, while nine are said to be suffering severe health challenges.” Indeed, some recent reports suggest that these nine are “close to death,” or may even have died.

Human Rights Concern Eritrea said “The treatment meted out to the innocent prisoners in Era’Ero is barbaric and inhumane. No government should be allowed to subject its people to treatment that amounts to a crime against humanity. Twelve years is too long. Given the severity of the situation and Eritrea’s continued flouting of the African Commission rulings, it is time for the international community to seriously consider imposing targeted sanctions on the President and his close political allies as pressure for the release of these detainees.” Their crime: to criticize President Isaias and to call for the implementation of the Eritrean Constitution, drawn up and accepted by the National Assembly in 1997, but never implemented.

September is, of course, remembered by many Eritreans as the month which marked the start of Eritrea’s long struggle for independence. For the Association of Eritrean Journalists in Exile, however, it is also particularly the month when all Eritrea’s thriving private newspapers were shut down, on September 18, 2001 and their editorial board members “vanished in the wilderness of Era’Ero prison”. In a statement which named thirteen of their former colleagues in prison, the Association said that it was inexcusable and intolerable that fellow human beings were being treated in such an inhuman way. It described this as something “beyond any sane person’s comprehension.” In a statement, it called upon “the United Nations Human Rights Council, the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights and the European Union Foreign Affairs Commission, to intervene and pressurize the regime through all possible means. It is time to say ‘no more business as usual, enough is enough.’ We also call upon the UN Special Rapporteur office to investigate the deaths and disappearances of Eritrean journalists.”

In 2003, an African Commission ruling on the cases of eleven of the detained politicians found Eritrea to be in violation of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights. It urged the government to free the individuals immediately and pay them compensation. In 2007, the African Commission called for the detained journalists to be released or brought “to a speedy and fair trial,” and urged Eritrea to lift its press ban, to grant the detainees immediate access to their families and legal representatives, and to ensure they received compensation. The Eritrean Government has totally ignored these decisions and all other calls on human rights in Eritrea.