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23rd Ordinary Summit of the AU Kicks off in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. Hosted by the President of Equatorial Guinea, H.E. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, the Summit is held under the theme “Agriculture and Food Security”, the main topic for the year 2014.

The African Union (AU) strongly condemns the massacre of over 50 people in the town of Mpeketoni, near the Kenyan coastal city of Lamu, on the night of 15 June 2014. The AU reiterates its strong rejection of all forms of terrorism and extremism, and emphasizes that the only way to eliminate this menace is through collective, concrete and coordinated action by all Member States.

IGAD condemns, in the strongest terms, the terrorist attacks carried out in the coastal town of Mpeketoni in Kenya on June 15, 2014, and said "these attacks by terrorist groups that are indiscriminately targeting innocent civilians will not diminish our support to the Government and the people of Kenya in its fight against terrorism."

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 442nd meeting (17 June 2014), decides to lift the suspension of the participation of Egypt in AU's activities and invites Egypt to immediately resume its participation in the activities of the AU.

Ethiopia

Israel's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Avigdor Liberman, as part of his African tour that will have seen him visit five countries, visited Ethiopia and met President Dr. Mulatu Teshome, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn and Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros Adhanom. The Ethio-Israeli Business Summit held (June 17) in Addis Ababa. Ethiopia and Israel agreed to further strengthen their ties through economic, social and security cooperation. **(See article)**

Ethiopian Ministry of Trade said the nation witnessed an increase in export products diversification. The Ministry noted that the variety of products Ethiopia exported in the past 10

months has reached 30 with a revenue of U.S \$ 2.6 Billion, showing an increase of U.S \$ 120 Million revenue compared to last year's same period performance.

Mexico's Ambassador to Ethiopia, Alfredo Miranda, announced his country's foreign minister, Jose Antonio Meade Kuribrena, will visit Ethiopia leading a high level business delegation formed from textile and agriculture sectors in October 2014.

Eritrea

Defying Canada's Foreign Affairs officials repeated warning to end collecting "Diaspora tax", Eritrea the Eritrean consulate in Toronto continues to tell expatriates to hand 2% of their wages to the Asmara regime, it was said. "We have made our position on this matter very clear to the Eritreans, and we expect them to abide by it," said spokesman for Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister. "If the Eritrean consulate is indeed continuing to flout these obligations, there will be repercussions," he warned.

Kenya

Gunmen raided a town, along Kenya's Indian Ocean coast, Mpeketoni, killing at least 48 people. In another attack, at least 12 women abducted and 15 additional people dead. "The attack in Lamu was well-planned, orchestrated, and politically motivated ethnic violence against a Kenyan community, with the intention of profiling and evicting them for political reasons," President Uhuru Kenyatta said in the speech on Tuesday (17 June). "This therefore, was not an al-Shabaab terrorist attack," he noted.

Kenyan Deputy President William Ruto announced that the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) will not leave Somalia until peace is restored in the Horn of Africa nation. "We shall stay engaged under AMISOM to create a peaceful and stable condition for Somalis" he Responded to calls for withdrawal of Kenyan troops due to rampant terror attacks.

Somalia

Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed of the Federal Government of the Republic of Somalia announced (June 14) that he had reached an agreement with Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam that Ethiopian troops would support the Federal Government in the delivery and transportation of aid supplies and emergency services to conflict affected south Somali regions.

Sudan

Sudan has protested ICC Prosecutor's branding of rapid support forces as militias, affirming they belong to Security and Intelligence Services, reiterating non-concern with its proceedings as it is not party to Court. Sudan's response was triggered by ICC Prosecutor report to UNSC requesting the Council to seek ways of arresting some Sudanese officials accused of committing crimes in Darfur.

South Sudan

Multi-stakeholder roundtable negotiation for South Sudan was launched this morning in Addis Ababa with the aim to expedite and complete dialogue on the formation of a transitional government of national unity within sixty days. Talks are expected to finalize the modalities for the implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement bringing delegates from SPLM Leaders (Former Detainees) and representatives of political parties, civil society and faith-based organizations to the negotiation table alongside the Government

The UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, called on (June 17) Salva Kiir, President of the Republic of South Sudan (RSS), and Dr. Riek Machar, former Vice President of the RSS and leader of the SPLM/A-In Opposition to expedite the process of forming a transitional government of national unity.

UN chief Ban Ki-moon Tuesday (June 17) appointed Ethiopian Lt Gen. Yohannes Gebremeskel Tesfamariam, who served as the head of UN force for Abyei, as Force Commander for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

Religious leaders from South Sudan have urged the country's warring factions to renew their negotiations, warning that the boycott of peace talks is costing lives. They said they fear the warring parties may want to resort to war and they "do not agree with that position, rather we encourage them to return to the negotiation table."

South Sudan President Salva Kiir insisted Thursday (19 June) that he is committed to ending more than six months of conflict in the country through dialogue, but said he will only agree to a peace deal if it guarantees that he will lead the transitional government. He said, the transitional government without him as the elected president is "a red line".

Egypt

Rania Badawi, an Egyptian reporter cuts the phone on Ethiopia's Ambassador to Egypt, Mahmoud Dirir. Ambassador Dirir was explaining the Dam's benefits and correcting the reporter's wrong attitude towards the construction of the Dam as she lacks the technical knowledge on the subject.

Ethiopia and Israel keen to foster closer economic relationship

During the past two months, Ethiopia has been host to several investment and trade related seminars, meetings and events. Dozens of prominent business representatives from Turkey, China, South Africa and Italy have visited the country, exploring business opportunities and looking at the potential of the country's investment climate. Ethiopia also hosted the US-Africa Energy Summit, a role that reflected the country's particularly impressive achievements in the energy sector. A number of global brands from the USA and Europe as well as from emerging economies have already chosen to set up in Ethiopia in the past few years, and a number of other companies have also been expressing a strong interest to do the same and engage in business in

Ethiopia. This is hardly a surprise. Ethiopia's impressive economic performance over the past decade has been one of the most impressive success stories of Africa. Equally, there is still huge untapped economic potential together with an abundance of the resources necessary for further robust economic expansion. This makes Ethiopia an exciting, and highly promising, emerging market destination for foreign direct investment.

This week, it was an Israeli business delegation, representing more than fifty business firms, including many of the country's more sizable corporations, which was the latest to show an interest in seeking to invest in a country which was recently hailed as one of a handful of countries set to emerge as possible light-manufacturing powerhouses. The delegation, which included representatives of Israeli firms that have established themselves as key players in their respective industries, was led by Israel's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Avigdor Liberman, as part of an African tour of five countries.

On Tuesday (June 17) the Israeli delegation and their Ethiopian counterparts participated in an Ethio-Israeli business summit. Opening the meeting, Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros Adhanom expressed his hope that the summit would play a crucial role in spearheading improvements in the two countries' economic ties. Dr. Tedros spoke of the long and historic attachment between the peoples of Ethiopia and Israel, adding that the present bilateral trade and investment relationship failed to reflect these deep ties. He said: "despite the strong historic relationship Israel and Ethiopia enjoy, the investment flow from Israel is not as big as one would expect", adding that he expected the visit of Foreign Minister Liberman and the Israeli business contingent would help change the commercial aspect of the relationship positively.

Dr. Tedros praised what he referred to as "Israel's new policy of focus in deepening its relations with Africa". He affirmed the strong commitment and desire of the Ethiopian Government and the Ethiopian business community to expand trade and investment engagement with Israel. He stressed that Ethiopia's business and investment climate was geared towards attracting a greater FDI inflow. The country's macroeconomic stability, Dr. Tedros emphasized, made Ethiopia an ideal destination for foreign investors seeking to expand their market reach and enhance their competitiveness.

Israel's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister on his part said that "Ethiopia and Israel share a unique relationship that dates back to the times of King Solomon". It continued to flourish, he said, due to the close interaction of the two people. Mr. Liberman agreed with Dr. Tedros that there was an apparent lack of development of the economic side of their relationship. He noted that Israel was a world leader in hi-tech industries and agriculture innovation, for example, and expressed his opinion that the two countries could cooperate more in these areas. Mr. Liberman also referred to the similarity of challenges facing both countries, pointing out that they both faced ever-growing terror-related security threats. Their respective sub-regions, the Horn and the Middle East, continued to be beset by terrorist attacks. He, therefore, took the opportunity to urge close cooperation on security matters.

A similar emphasis was made in the discussions when President Dr. Mulatu Teshome received Deputy Prime Minister Liberman at the National Palace. Referring to trade and investment, President Dr. Mulatu said that Ethiopia wished to see more Israeli investors and businessmen

engaged in a number of sectors. Ethiopia, he said, had created a favorable and conducive investment atmosphere. Israeli investors, he added, should seize the opportunities available and play a real role in strengthening the ties between the two countries.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, who also met with Mr. Liberman, said that close cooperation between the two countries in trade, investment and tourism sectors was imperative. Ethiopia would spare no effort to encourage this. The Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister discussed ways to increase the volume of trade between the two countries significantly. It is currently valued at US\$112 million and they suggested it should be the level of US\$2 billion in the next two years. Mr. Liberman stressed that Israeli investors were particularly keen to invest in agriculture, industry, pharmaceuticals and information technology.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Liberman also met Dr. Tedros, and the two foreign ministers emphasized the need to scale-up cooperation in political, economic and security matters. They also stressed the importance of strengthening people-to-people relations, and in this respect Dr. Tedros noted the importance of building Ethio-Jewish Cultural Heritage centers. Minister Liberman supported this. The bilateral meeting also provided the two foreign ministers with the opportunity to sign a General Framework Agreement on Political Consultation as well as economic and security cooperation.

Ethiopia has large tracts of cultivable land which allows for investment in the agriculture and agro-processing sectors. It also has a readily available pool of skilled and unskilled labor that makes investment in manufacturing and service industries competitively advantageous. According to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the government's policy of incentivizing investment in prioritized sectors has resulted in a significant increase in investment in the manufacturing and agriculture sectors. This has allowed the share of investment and export in the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to increase considerably; in the last fiscal year, exports accounted for 12.7%, and rate of investment stood at 33% of total GDP. Ethiopia, in fact, has gone a long way to ensuring food-security through encouraging public investment aiming at increasing agricultural productivity. Currently, it is implementing a five year plan, the Growth and Transformation Plan, with a primary focus to jumpstart an historically quiescent manufacturing sector. As one of the Plan's strategic aims, the Government is working actively to attract foreign investment in various sectors identified as promising and for which it can offer huge comparative advantage. Given the unique cultural and historical bonds that exist between Israel and Ethiopia, it is, therefore, fitting to create closer economic and political cooperation that will benefit both countries. Minister Liberman's visit, and that of the accompanying business delegation, will certainly help achieve that goal.

Ethiopia weakened, not radicalized Al-Shabaab

New African Magazine, in its June edition, gave extensive coverage to the growing threat of terrorism in Africa in series of articles dealing with the problems in different regions of Africa. One article was entitled "How East Africa Lost its Innocence" and dealt with the threat posed by Al-Shabaab to East African Countries and more specifically to the countries which contributed troops to AMISOM. The writer, Wanjohi Kaburuka, suggested that following the attacks in 2011 in Kampala and at the Westgate Mall in Nairobi in 2013 East Africa had lost its innocence. It had

been transformed into a security conscious state where passing through metal detectors had become the norm rather than the exception.

The writer raised some thought-provoking ideas about the causes and drivers of terrorism. He also stressed the economic consequences of terrorism, highlighting the impact on the Kenyan economy in particular. Commendably, he emphasized the imperative of eliminating the threat of terrorism to ensure the continuity of political stability as well as the economic successes of the region while also underlining the challenges to be faced in fighting terrorism. In his analysis of the birth and growth of the threat of the Al-Qaida-affiliated Al-Shabaab, the writer focused on the absence of any robust intelligence-sharing mechanisms among East African countries as one major shortcoming. The article also raises the problem of adequately financing defense and intelligence budgets and issues of corruption among security institutions as serious elements hampering efforts to prevent such incidents as the Westgate Mall terror attack.

The need to further strengthen security cooperation and intelligence sharing is, of course, of paramount importance, but the article might have mentioned efforts being made in that regard. IGAD, for example, has set out a normative and legal infrastructure to tackle terrorism effectively on a regional and wider basis. The signing and ratification of treaties for extradition of terrorist suspects among IGAD countries and Mutual Legal Assistance treaties are examples of cooperation. Numerous capacity building work on counter terrorism has been undertaken by IGAD's Peace and Security Division. Indeed, in October last year, IGAD and the East African Community agreed that security and intelligence chiefs should "meet to set up a regional mechanism to collectively fight terrorism and coordinate their efforts," demonstrating that the movement towards cooperation was strengthening.

All this is sensible, but there are also some aspects of the article that are of greater concern and indeed, of considerable inaccuracy. The author claims that Ethiopia invaded Somalia in December 2006 and "brutally" occupied Somalia for three years, helping the assumption of power by the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia. In the words of the writer, when this "occupation" ended "the seeds of terrorism had been sown!" He went on to say : "It is the US-backed change of government and the Ethiopian brutal occupation that lasted three years that security analysts say led to radicalization of Al-Shabaab."

These allegations are simply rubbish, based in the first place on a series of completely erroneous assumptions and claims about Ethiopia's intervention in Somalia in December 2006. The first and foremost, perhaps, lies in the writer's use of the word "occupation." This is a word that can only refer to forceful seizure of an area of another sovereign state with the aim and end result of subduing it another's will. Ethiopia's involvement in Somalia has no relation to such claims. In the first place, Ethiopia was, in conformity with international law, invited to intervene at the expressed invitation of the internationally recognized and legally constituted Transitional Federal Government of Somalia. The right to invite a friendly country to help avert a threat is, of course, a perfectly legitimate right of any sovereign nation.

Secondly, it must be pointed out that for Ethiopia there were open threats of war made by the then Union of Islamic Courts (UIC). Ethiopia made it clear that these attempts at provocation might oblige her to defend her sovereignty. Leaders of the UIC, however, continued to reiterate their calls for a jihad against Ethiopia, and indeed had the apparent support of the Government of

Eritrea. Despite the threat of war posed by the UIC, Ethiopia, which strongly encouraged the TFG to hold discussions with the UIC, also opted for talks with UIC. It held a total of eight meetings with UIC leaders over several months in the second half of 2006. These failed to produce any positive result as the UIC refused to renounce its agenda of destabilization of Ethiopia and continue to threaten its sovereignty. It also persisted in its efforts to overthrow the legitimate government of Somalia. Ethiopia's decision to support the TFG was, in fact, based on legitimate grounds of self-defense from a clear and present danger posed by the UIC and its backer Eritrea, and of the provision of support to a neighboring government at its request. It might be added that Eritrea promptly gave refuge to the remnants of the leadership of the UIC after its defeat and this group retired to Asmara to form the Alliance for Re-liberation of Somalia in 2007. Ethiopia's involvement in December 2006 was, in fact, an internationally lawful and legitimate use of force in self-defense. The claim of occupation has no relevance or substance.

Another error is the claim that Ethiopia's intervention was US-backed and was indeed no more than an operation carried out in the interests of the US. This allegation shows the author has no knowledge of the relationship between the US and Ethiopia. Ethiopia did not receive any form of assistance from the US during the operations in Somalia or the three years its troops were there. The claim also suffers from a complete lack of understanding of the threat of terrorism in Ethiopia which had and still has an entirely legitimate interest in securing its security against extremists and terrorists. Long before the infamous attacks in New York on September 11, 2001, Ethiopia suffered numerous attacks against hotels and other buildings in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa in the 1990's. It also had to deal with numerous efforts at infiltration by elements of the Somalia-based Al-Itihaad movement which carried out cross-border operations into the Somali Regional State of Ethiopia in the early and mid-1990s. To suggest that Ethiopia had no legitimate interest in security threats emerging from Somalia, who had a dysfunctional government for some two decades, is nonsense.

More importantly, the claim of the writer that Ethiopia's intervention was responsible for radicalizing an element in the UIC and that this led to the creation of Al-Shabaab is totally unsubstantiated. It is a claim that has been made a number of times before but no one has been able to provide any evidence. It is true that Al-Shabaab grew out of the collapse of the UIC but it originated while the UIC was operating in Somalia, and from a group of people who were sent earlier for training in Afghanistan. Its radicalization cannot be attributed to Ethiopia since the affiliation of its members with Al Qaeda and other jihadist elements dated back several years. Al-Shabaab in that context was not, as the writer appears to claim, a political movement; it was rather a body whose leadership from inception was filled with international jihadists. Rather than radicalize Al-Shabaab, Ethiopian forces, during their stay in Somalia on behalf of the TFG, seriously weakened Al-Shabaab. During that time, Ethiopia made a serious contribution to the peace and stability of Somalia, just as its forces fighting under AMISOM have done in the last couple of months in helping the Somali National Force to liberate ten cities and large areas of the countryside from Al-Shabaab.

Overall, Wanjohi Kaburuka has used an outdated and inaccurate stereotype view of Ethio-Somali relations and essentially similar to that propagated by Al-Shabaab. In fact, Ethio-Somalia's relations have grown steadily closer the last few years. A growing level of trust has led the two countries to sign a defense pact that clearly emphasizes that Ethiopia's policy of mutual respect,

non-interference and respect for Somalia's ownership of its own affairs is paying off. Earlier, Ethiopia's continued efforts to hold genuine talks with the extremist UIC equally demonstrated that its policy towards Somalia was firmly based on insistence on dialogue as the way to solve differences even with the more extreme elements in Somalia. Ethiopia's foreign policy is a policy that operates on the basis that Ethiopia's peace and development is inextricably linked with that of its neighbors, all its neighbors. With that in mind, Ethiopia has done its level best over the past twenty three years, both bilaterally and through multilateral channels, to bring about a functional and effective government in Somalia. Any suggestions of "occupation" or of executing foreign agendas are unsubstantiated nonsense in complete contrast to the realities consistently demonstrated by Ethiopia throughout the region over the last two decades.

Ecological arguments for the Gilgel Gibe III Dam

The Gilgel Gibe III hydro power project which will generate 1870mw of clean energy is nearing completion. The project is now more than 85% complete and is scheduled to be commissioned at the Ethiopian New Year which starts in September 2007 (September 2014). Ever since the project was launched in January 2008, there has been a continuous series of allegations criticizing it on various grounds, the environment, claimed socio economic impacts and claims of possible effects on the country's heritage. Despite the detailed and comprehensive responses provided by the Government of Ethiopia, on the basis of its own environmental studies, and by such organizations as the African Development Bank in November 2010, and by the United Nations Environment Program in December 2012, questions have continued to be raised concerning the impact of the Dam. Even the decision of the World Bank to finance the 400 million dollar transmission line between Ethiopia and Kenya and the agreement of China to finance the project didn't stop allegations from those who consider themselves as the sole guardians of the environment.

One of the main allegations has concerned the environmental impact of the Gilgel Gibe III Dam on Lake Turkana and on the ecology of the Omo Valley. As the Omo Valley is a World Heritage site, allegations of damage to the Turkana National Park have also been among the criticisms leveled against the project. Among the allegations of the environmental impact has been the claim that the Dam would cause a drop of at least 10-12 meters in the water levels of Lake Turkana as well as leading to problems following the cessation of flooding of the Omo Delta, affecting fisheries there and the flood plain agriculture of communities living in the Valley. The allegations also include claims that there will be significant devastation of forest biodiversity, that the Dam would allow dangerous amounts of seepage and in sum produce "an environmental disaster" affecting over 200,000 people.

The African Development Bank's study issued in November 2010 clarifies many of these claims. It notes the allegation that the construction would lead to seepage of 50-75% of the water in the reservoir of the Dam was unfounded. It dismissed the allegations made by International Rivers and Friends of Lake Turkana that there would be a significant drop on the volume of the water. The Report says: "The filling of the Gibe III reservoir will cause a two-meter drop in Lake Turkana's level. Thereafter, the dam alone will not alter the annual water volume inflow, except insofar as losses that occur within the Gibe III reservoir. Hence, as long as reservoir losses are

proved minimal, once filled, Gibe III alone will not cause lake levels to fall.” The Gilgel Gibe III project is, of course, a hydropower project, and is a non-consumptive project,. This means any worries of reduction in the volume of water can be dismissed. The fact that 40% of the river basin also stretches below the Dam also means any claim that the Dam will control up to 90 percent of the water reaching Lake Turkana is equally unfounded. .

With reference to the environmental impact, the study conducted by The United Nations Environment Program also stressed that the Omo River would continue to provide some 80% of the inflow into Lake Turkana. The report also noted that, depending upon rainfall scenarios, the median effect would probably produce a 2 meter fall in the lake levels over a seven month period while the reservoir was filling. A fall of two meters is a normal drop in Lake Turkana under normal conditions because of erratic flow of the river. In regard to the issue of World Heritage sites and historical and archeological sites, Ethiopia’s own Environmental Impact Studies have clearly indicated there will be no negative impacts from the Gibe III Dam.

Nor will the construction of the dam affect the flow of water into Lake Turkana, though it will regulate the seasonal flooding of the river, floods which have claimed numerous lives and done major damage to downstream communities. Studies indicate that Gibe III will provide a regulated discharge of a 50 cubic meter minimum standard ecological flow and 10 days of free discharge in the month of September. This, when added to the other nine streams which flow into the river in this area, will maintain the downstream ecology during water harvesting phases. There is no evidence that any fish or aquatic species will be threatened by the dam or by regulation of the flow of the river. EEPSCO’s own studies indicate that due to less migration of fish upstream, there is no proof that the Dam will have an adverse effect on fisheries. Equally, in order to minimize any effects, the Government has developed mitigation plans which are being implemented in the Project areas to dispel even the most minimal impact caused by the Dam.

The Gilgel Gibe III dam will have a critical role in Ethiopia’s rural electrification program which aims to provide electricity for more than 2.8 million people as well as produce enough power to trade within the region. In this regard the 400mw power trade deal that has been signed between Ethiopia and Kenya demonstrates the obvious benefits that the Dam will have for the two countries. It is a point that has been made repeatedly but it can usefully be repeated: the Gilgel Gibe III development project will enable Ethiopia to share clean energy with Kenya and other neighbors and spark a growth trajectory that will benefit the entire region. Ethiopia is already earning US\$32 million from regional power sales. Once Gilgel Gibe III is on stream, this figure will rise and help to keep up Ethiopia’s double digit economic growth. This is complimented by the fact that the project is of course a clean energy project – another of the winning environment, economic integration and development arguments.

The South Sudan peace talks entered a decisive phase

The IGAD-led mediation process that began in December 2013 has entered a new stage of encouraging development. It finally showed some progress as the leaders of the warring parties committed themselves in Addis Ababa on Tuesday (June 10) to finalize an inclusive dialogue on the formation of a transitional government of national unity within sixty days, to stop the fighting

and to provide unimpeded humanitarian support to conflict-affected civilians across South Sudan. Another decisive step that could herald promising development for the path of durable and sustainable peace and stability was the recent convening of a genuinely inclusive roundtable and a multi-stakeholder symposium in Addis Ababa a few days earlier (June 6-7). The aim of the symposium was to promote broad-based solutions for the causes of the crisis, accommodate the conflicting interests of all warring parties and discuss the future of South Sudan as well as help to stop the conflict through a negotiated political settlement. These moves, and in particular the rededication and recommitment to the 9th May Agreement made on June 10 by both principals, creates the basis for a sound situation to pave the road towards sustainable peace.

IGAD, firmly determined to empower all stakeholders to pre-empt and prevent violent conflicts in the sub-region, has spared no effort to play a constructive role encouraging close cooperation and partnership with all parties. The aim has been to overcome difficulties as well as forestall problems to encourage peace and security and preserve economic and political successes in the region. This approach has been the basis of its similar efforts to collaborate with other regional and international organizations, development partners and other actors to push forward comprehensive and inclusive roundtable peace negotiations to provide a political, just, balanced and inclusive solution to the crisis in South Sudan.

IGAD launched its initiatives almost immediately after the conflict broke out in South Sudan. Recognizing the dangers of the situation, an IGAD Ministerial Delegation, headed by Ethiopian Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros Adhanom made an emergency three-day visit to Juba (December 19-21, 2013), seeking for ways to peacefully resolve the crisis. The Delegation also intended to look at the political and security situation of the country, obtain the Government's proposals for ways to resolve the root causes of the conflict and offer a consensual and genuine political settlement to the disputes and differences. After the consultations, President Kiir assured the Ministerial Delegation that he and his Government were committed to unconditional dialogue with former Vice-President, Riek Machar, and other political leaders, as well as to a cessation of hostilities and the protection of the civilian population and of relief workers. The Ministerial Delegation was pleased by President Kiir's agreement to seek an inclusive dialogue with his opponents.

This encouraged IGAD to launch a series of meetings between the two sides, and the IGAD process was strongly supported by all stakeholders in a bid to try and halt the unfolding crisis in Africa's newest state. Ethiopia's Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, Chairperson of IGAD and President Kenyatta of Kenya, paid a visit to Juba on December 26, 2013. As the first stage in shuttle diplomacy, they met with President Kiir and other stakeholders to try to find a peaceful solution. Consultations covered various issues ranging from cessation of hostilities and the need for prompt commencement of political dialogue to the status of political detainees, held on suspicion of trying to organize a coup, and other longer term issues.

The IGAD leaders stressed the need for political dialogue to break the stalemate, and Chairperson Hailemariam underlined IGAD's determination and dedication to resolve the deadlock through the convening of its 23rd Extraordinary Summit, to discuss South Sudan on Friday (December 27). This expressed IGAD's concern over the outbreak of violence and the intensification of widespread atrocities, deaths and displacement among the civilian population.

It denounced “the bankrupt and opportunistic ideology of ethnic and religious sectarianism,” but commended the pledges of both parties to the conflict to be involved in a peaceful dialogue. The Summit urged all parties to remain committed to the search for a political solution, to an immediate cessation of hostilities, the acceptance of a monitoring, verification and stabilization mechanism, a review of the status of detainees in line with the laws of South Sudan, and the provision of an enabling condition for all stakeholders to engage in the peace process. The Summit concluded with the appointment of General Lazaro Sumbeiywo of Kenya and Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin, Ethiopia's Ambassador to China, as IGAD Special Envoys to South Sudan. It directed the IGAD Council of Ministers to follow-up implementation of these IGAD decisions.

Following the Summit, delegations from the two sides accepted the call for political dialogue and held consultations with the IGAD Mediation Team to discuss a cessation of hostilities, the status of the detainees, modalities for a South Sudan Dialogue, rules of procedure, and a structure and terms of reference to guide talks. After a number of discussions and the mediation efforts of the IGAD Special Envoys, the two sides signed a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COH) and an Agreement on the Status of the Detainees on January 23, in Addis Ababa. Although the cessation of hostilities on the ground proved abortive, this was a crucial move in charting the way forward for peace, and a necessary precursor to launch a process of national reconciliation, inclusive dialogue and healing, to resolve the crisis. Progress was boosted by another significant step, taken by both parties in February when they signed Implementation Modalities of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities. This was an important step as it cleared the way for the implementation of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism. During the subsequent few weeks the Envoys made numerous shuttle missions, holding consultations with all parties and the Heads of State and Government of IGAD Member countries as well as other partners. Their efforts were marked on Thursday (April 24) when the remaining political detainees accused of treason were released in order to expedite the ongoing peace negotiations and the efforts towards unity, reconciliation and peace.

Another achievement of the IGAD-led Mediation Process was the new ceasefire agreement signed on May 9 between the two principals when they agreed to cease all hostile activities, recommit to the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, facilitate the full deployment of the IGAD Monitoring and Verification Mechanism and the Monitoring and Verification Teams as well as humanitarian access to affected communities. The two parties, who held meetings with the IGAD Chairperson in Addis Ababa, also agreed to the establishment of a transitional government of national unity and on the urgency of inclusive negotiations for its formation as well as the need for a permanent constitution. This positive result, reflecting the aspirations of all the people of South Sudan, was welcomed by the IGAD Member States and their development partners.

The agreement reached on May 9 enabled the IGAD Mediation Team to define the route for a political settlement of the crisis, mapping a transformation of South Sudan into a unified, stable and peaceful country, and charting a way forward to end the violence. It opened a new window of opportunity to provide an inclusive way to advance the causes of peace, reconciliation and healing through convening of a three day multi-stakeholder symposium, which opened at the weekend of June 7 in Addis Ababa. This aimed to initiate a new inclusive phase of the IGAD-led

peace process based upon “a consensual, round-table, multi-party dialogue.” Reiterating the imperative necessity to end the violence, to address the humanitarian crisis, to respect the May 9 Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and to hasten the deployment of Monitoring and Verification Mechanism team across the country, the symposium was an important platform where all stakeholders could express their views on the elements for the peace negotiations and on the necessary modalities for talks, and hear comparative experiences. The symposium also discussed the need for a permanent constitutional process, transitional government arrangements and possible interim institutions.

IGAD kept up the pressure with both leaders pledging on June 10 at another meeting in Addis Ababa in the presence of IGAD Heads of State and Government to stop the conflict and engage properly in the peace process, as well as speed up and finalize a genuine, multi-stakeholder and inclusive dialogue for the formation of a transitional government of national unity within sixty days as well as provide unimpeded humanitarian support to affected populations. The UN Security Council decision to allow the deployment of a regional protection force as part of a strengthened United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) was an important development to assist in the full implementation of Monitoring and Verification Teams (MVTs) and in the ability of the future peace negotiations to deliver peace. Progress is now being made in the deployment of MVTs to Bentiu, Bor, Malakal, and Nasser, as well as up to twenty sites in all. This will encourage a stop to fighting, and help the causes of peace, reconciliation and healing in the next round of the IGAD-led negotiations. In this context, the continued, and sustained, financial, diplomatic, political and technical support from the international community to IGAD’s mediation efforts are an important element to help the warring parties bridge their differences, accommodate their conflicting interests, and help them enforce control over all their respective fighters.

To consolidate and firm up the results achieved so far and to inhibit any further fragmentation and conflict, the African Union Peace and Security Council met on Monday (June 16) this week. The Council again stressed the need and imperative urgency for both parties to end the fighting, to abide by their signed agreements, demonstrate the will to elevate the political process to a higher level, enlarge cooperation with the AU Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan and abstain from any action that might undermine the quest for inclusive dialogue. Based upon the recommendations of IGAD, the Council affirmed its readiness “to immediately take targeted sanctions and other measures against any party that continues to undermine the search for a solution to the conflict and fails to honor its commitments.” The Council welcomed with satisfaction the signing of May 9 Agreement, the release of the political detainees and their engagement in the peace process, the convening of the multi-stakeholders symposium in Addis Ababa and the steps taken by the AU Commission of Inquiry to begin to scrutinize any human rights violations, abuses and atrocities that have occurred. The Council also applauded Prime Minister Hailemariam and the IGAD Special Envoys for their commitment and dedication in pursuing efforts to find a genuine, inclusive and participatory dialogue to settle disputes and bridge differences between the two parties of the conflict.

The UN Special Rapporteur reports on Human Rights in Eritrea

As we noted last week, the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea, Ms. Sheila B. Keetharuth, was due to formally present her second report on Human Rights in Eritrea to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva this month. She did so on Wednesday this week (June 18), and in her report, the Special Rapporteur called on the international community to address recurrent human rights violations in Eritrea which, she underlined, had spawned a monthly exodus of 2,000 Eritreans to neighboring countries. This, she emphasized, had now doubled more recently to over 4,000 a month. The Special Rapporteur highlighted the lack of cooperation she had from the Government of Eritrea which had ignored her mandate and denied her access to visit the country. She indicated that the Second Cycle Review of Eritrea's Universal Periodic Review Report by the Council had demonstrated Eritrea's poor performance with regard to the implementation of the recommendations forwarded during the First Cycle Review in 2009. It also showed a lack of goodwill and commitment on the part of the Eritrean Government in addressing the serious human rights situation in the country. The Special Rapporteur brought to the attention of the Council the lack of up-to-date data and of independent monitoring to measure progress towards achieving six of the MDGs.

Ms. Keetharuth stressed the sufferings of the people of Eritrea caused by the serious human rights violations and by the absence of institutions and structures that are required in any state for the rule of law to be effective. These included a constitution, free and fair elections, a legislative assembly, an independent judiciary, a free press and an empowered civil society. According to her report, Eritreans flee from their country because of the indefinite national service, the numerous disappearances, the frequent arbitrary arrests and long periods of incommunicado detention under inhuman prison conditions and torture. They have no alternative. The continued arrest and detention of Eritreans, linked to efforts to avoid indefinite national service, the issue of political and religious prisoners as well as imprisoned journalists and returned asylum seekers, members of the G-15 and journalists arrested in 2001 and the poor detention conditions which can lead to death custody were all emphasized in her report. She told the Council that Eritrea would soon be a country without people, and with an ever increasing diaspora spread across the world, if these trends in the number of people fleeing the country continued. Special Rapporteur Keetharuth suggested that the international community should insist on stringent due diligence procedures to ensure Eritrea fully respects international human rights norms and standards before allowing any development cooperation to take place there.

In response to the report, the Eritrean delegate produced the usual narrative associating the gross and systemic violations of human rights detailed by the Special Rapporteur with Eritrea as victim of a geopolitical agenda which was apparent in "the continued occupation of its territories, the unwarranted hostilities and the unjust sanctions imposed on Eritrea." He said he refused to respond directly to the Special Rapporteur's report which he totally rejected but he attacked her for trying "to influence public opinion and act as an activist rather than a mandate holder;" for "selective and biased collection of information", for failing "to accommodate diverse views which compromised her neutrality" and for not including information provided to her by Eritrean officials in her report. He urged the Council not to accept abusive language of the kind, "forced conscriptions", "forced labor", "shoot to kill policy" and "guilty by association" in its

documents. All this was, he said, “totally unacceptable”.

The Eritrean delegate claimed said Eritrea was committed to the UPR process and that it had accepted a broad range of recommendations that touched on the civil and political rights. He said that to further enhance the political process, considering the progress, experience and challenges of the last two decades, President Isaias had just declared that a new constitution drafting process would be launched. He made no mention of the constitution ratified by the National Assembly seventeen years ago but which the President had consistently refused to implement. He accused people of making “vicious attacks to underline the growth of the economy stifle the new mining sector and negate the development successes.” He also defended the National Service system as necessary to consolidate the hard won peace and defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the nation, claiming it was “contributing to the socialization, upbringing and development participation of a new generation.”

Many Countries also took the floor during the interactive dialogue and called on the Eritrean Government to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur and allow her access to the country. They expressed their concern over the widespread and systemic violations of human rights there and even more at the lack of progress in improving the situation. They also expressed their concern at continued indefinite military service, arbitrary arrests and detention, incommunicado detention, the poor conditions for those detained, the continuing sexual and gender based violence and the lack of accountability, as well as the lack of progress since the first Universal Periodic Review. Other issues raised included concern over the trafficking and kidnapping of Eritreans fleeing their country, excessive militarization of the Eritrean society and the collection of diaspora tax by the Government of Eritrea using extortion, threats of violence, fraud and other illicit means. Criticism was also expressed over the shoot-to-kill policy at the border to stop those who try to flee the country and the fining of family members who have fled as well as execution of those who resist conscription, including minors.

NGOs that took the floor also echoed these concerns. Some called for the Council to establish a Commission of Inquiry to investigate human rights violations in Eritrea. They noted that the promises that the Eritrean Government had made during its first UPR remain unimplemented, including the commitment to ratify the Convention against Torture. Eritrea had shown during this second cycle of the UPR that it was still only determined to distort facts and bluntly reject well-documented allegations of rights abuses. The Government demonstrated it had no interest in letting any independent human rights monitor inside Eritrea, whether the Special Rapporteur or anyone else. Nevertheless, the Special Rapporteur had succeeded in documenting the grim human rights situation in Eritrea and in exposing “to the world the dire reality of millions of Eritreans.” This was a clear demonstration of why her mandate was needed and why it should be renewed and strengthened. The Council should therefore call on the Eritrean government to implement the recommendations contained in its previous resolutions and cooperate with the Special Rapporteur.

Fourth Ethio-Canada bilateral consultation

The fourth Ethiopia-Canada bilateral Consultations were held in Addis Ababa this week (June 19-20). Ethiopia was represented by Ambassador TayeAtske Selassie, Director-General of the Americas in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accompanied by representatives from the Ministries of Mines, Finance and Economic Development, Trade, and of Water and Energy. The Canadian delegation was led by Mr. Philip Baker, Director General of the Southern and Eastern Africa Bureau of Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development. The aim of the Consultation Forum was to strengthen bilateral relations between Canada and Ethiopia and also assess ongoing cooperation activities and identify possible new areas of cooperation for the coming year.

The two sides reviewed the status of actions taken since the previous meeting held in July last year in Ottawa, and expressed their satisfaction that necessary follow up activities were being implemented. The Ethiopian side expressed appreciation for Canada's commitment to support Ethiopia's efforts in fighting poverty and in meeting the Millennium Development Goals; and thanked the Canadian government for aligning its development approach with Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan. The Canadian delegation affirmed that the country is pleased with to see results with the development activities undertaken in Ethiopia and stated that "Development works in Ethiopia".

The two sides reviewed the existing bilateral relationship and expressed satisfaction that official diplomatic relations were approaching 50 years. They welcomed the fact that the relations were not solely focused on assistance but also involved the effort to build a strong partnership. The Forum agreed that the relationship could be characterized as rich and broad and both sides expressed their commitment to the continuation of their close collaboration.

The Ethiopian delegation gave a presentation on the progress on Millennium Development Goals, underlining the point that Ethiopia has made significant progress towards achieving these, and pointing out that six out of eight were on track for achievement. Strong efforts were being made to ensure that the remaining two are achievable. The progress so far can be attributed to the strong commitment by the government and its developments partners to the national Growth and Development Plan (2011-2015). Ethiopia has made effective progress in eradicating extreme poverty, reducing child and maternal mortality, and making primary education accessible to children, as well as in controlling malaria, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases and in sustainable environmental protection. The Canadian side noted that Ethiopia was making impressive efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goal targets by the 2015 deadline and reiterated its continuous support to help in this.

One of the main agenda items for discussion covered an assessment of Canada's current development cooperation in Ethiopia. Thus, Ethiopian and Canadian delegations agreed to strengthen the bilateral cooperation relationship through the completion and signature with Ministry of Finance and Economic Development of a mutual accountability framework jointly organizing a portfolio review and field monitoring missions. Ethiopia has been identified as the second largest recipient of Canadian aid and Canada as the third largest donor to Ethiopia.

According to the new Canadian country strategy announced last year, development works are to be focused on food security and agricultural growth through support for the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), as well as encouraging private sector engagement in agriculture. In both areas significant progress has been observed. Canadian delegation noted that working closely is important in order to explore ways of supporting Ethiopia in meeting New Alliance commitments on Food security and nutrition. A new area of focus for Canadian development cooperation has been sustainable economic growth centering on the implementation of programs such as the Investment Climate Improvement program and the Women Entrepreneurship Development program. The Canadian delegates noted that there were signs of an encouraging engagement between the public and private sectors in the different areas.

The Forum also heard a brief overview on Ethiopia's mining sector, highlighting the huge potential of the country in precious minerals, metals, industrial energy and construction minerals. The presentation, which focused on the cooperation activities carried out with Canadian government since 2012, also covered operational and regulatory activities in the sector. Canadian companies are engaged in extractive industries, and the Canadian government has been giving short-term training for mining sector experts from the Ministry of Mines. In this area Canadian side had agreed to continue to work together with the Ethiopian Ministry of Mines to identify the opportunities to support Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the *Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)*.

Another area of cooperation has been maternal, newborn and child health and the Canadian delegation congratulated Ethiopia on meeting the target of the Millennium Development Goal 4, and reducing child mortality. It pointed out that the excellent extension program implemented throughout the country had contributed largely to achieving this goal. In line with this, Canadian Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, announced last month a further US \$3.5 billion funding over five years for his maternal, newborn and child health initiative. In addition the Forum gave consideration to ways to benefit communities in the future and looked at possible options for follow-up programs. Furthermore, the issue of Child Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM) was extensively discussed and Canadian delegation used the opportunity to commend Ethiopia's effort to lead the CEFM in the African Union, reaffirming Canadian government support to Ethiopia in countering CEFM.

With regard to cooperation and trade, Ethiopia had identified leather products, textile, coffee and horticulture (cut flowers) as its competitive advantage to pursue Canadian markets. It has been noted that Ethiopia and Canada with the support of Canadian Trade facilitation office will work to identify possible avenues to increase trade and investment. Besides interests to engage and learn from Canadian expertise was revealed in the energy sector, especially regarding renewable energy. Moreover, the newly announced Canadian- African Power alliance was described during the forum and has been indicated that the potential for Ethiopia needed to be explored.

The Consultation Forum also considered items related to other areas of cooperation including international peacekeeping training and support for counter-terrorism as well as cooperation over human rights, governance, religious freedom, expediting of visa and consular services and a brief overview of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and other regional matters. The 50th

anniversary of Ethio-Canada diplomatic relations falls next year; and the Ambassador of Ethiopia to Canada, Ms. Birtukan Ayano, and her team, via video conference, held a brainstorming session as part of the discussion to celebrate this anniversary.