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The 69th UN General Assembly opened this week. Issues to be discussed in the session include Ebola and the ongoing conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Ukraine and South Sudan. Among parallel meetings have been the UN Climate Summit on Tuesday (September 23) and a High Level meeting on Somalia on Wednesday (September 24). **(See articles)**

An AU Peace and Security Council ministerial level meeting on Libya in New York on Wednesday discussed the situation in Libya and considered the AU Commission Chairperson's report as well as the statement of the AU's Special Envoy for Libya, Dileita Mohamed Dileita, former Prime Minister of the Republic of Djibouti and statements by representatives of Egypt and Algeria. Dr. Tedros told the meeting that the African Union, in consultation with the countries of the region, must assume a leadership role in resolving the crisis.

Ethiopia

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn left for the United States of America on Sunday (September 21), to take part in the 69th Regular Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York. The Prime Minister is leading a high level delegation which includes Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros. The Prime Minister met with President Obama on Thursday; and addressed the General Assembly on Thursday. **(See articles)**

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn held talks with President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt on the margins of the General Assembly in New York on Wednesday (September 24). They agreed on the importance of expediting and intensifying all-round cooperation to cement lasting friendship and common prosperity, reaffirming their commitment to the opening of a new era of a comprehensive, friendly and cooperative partnership between Egypt and Ethiopia.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Tedros Adhanom, held bilateral discussions with Mr. Charles Flanagan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Ireland in New York on Wednesday (September 24). He also met with Dr. Maia Panjikidze, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Georgia to discuss the promotion of bilateral relations, and earlier met with Mr. Philip Hammond, UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, **(See article)**

Foreign Affairs Minister, Dr Tedros Adhanom, in a keynote address to the Frontiers in Development Forum held in Washington at the weekend, emphasized that Ethiopia was on track to reduce poverty and become a middle income country by 2025. This second Forum on Frontiers in Development was organized by USAID to address the question of how to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030.

The Governments of Ethiopia and Finland, together with UN Women, organized a High-Level Ministerial Meeting on “Women’s Right to Land-the Development Impact” in New York on Tuesday (September 23). The meeting aimed to analyze and discuss the benefits of more equal land access and tenure and what further steps should be taken to ensure women's equal rights in law and in practice. **(See article)**

State minister for Foreign Affairs, Dewano Kedir had a meeting with the Director of INTERPOL’s National Central Bureau and Regional Police Services Directorate, Elizabeth Kuteesa on Wednesday September 24, 2014. He also met with Mr. Jens Mjaugedal, Norwegian Special Envoy to Somalia to discuss regional and bilateral issues and the need to elevate bilateral ties to a new level.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the International Council for Commercial Arbitration (ICCA) organized a two day work-shop this week (September 23-24) for Members of the House of Peoples’ Representatives, and of the House of Federation, Judges and other stakeholders from different federal offices on the New York Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Arbitral Awards.

Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan held the first meeting of the Tripartite National Committee Saturday (September 20) to Tuesday (September 22). The meeting was also attended by the Water Ministers of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan. **(See article)**

Ethiopian Airlines Enterprise has agreed to buy 20 Boeing 737 Max aircraft, valued at \$2.1 billion. It is the largest single Boeing order by number of aircraft from an African carrier. The order for the single-aisle Max 8 comes with an option for an additional 15 planes. The Boeing Max 8 is due to enter service in 2017.

Eritrea

The EU expressed concern over continued human rights violations in Eritrea in a statement issued on Friday last week (September 19), expressing particular concern over the continued detention without charge, trial or legal counsel of eleven prominent politicians, since September 18, 2001, and the continued detention of ten independent journalists, also held without charge or trial. It urged the Government of Eritrea to fully co-operate with the UN Special Rapporteur.

Kenya

President Uhuru Kenyatta, speaking at the UN Climate Summit, called on the developed world to take the lead in controlling climate change under the principle of common but differentiated

responsibility according to ability and contribution to emissions that lead to climate change. He said Kenya was taking concrete steps to control climate change and the first of these measures increasing production and use of green energy. It was also working to restore Kenya's forest cover to 10 percent.

President Kenyatta told the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Wednesday (September 24) that terrorism was threatening Kenya's efforts to deepen and sustain its democracy. The country, he said, was struggling to balance protection of democratic freedoms with the imperative of stamping out terrorism within its borders. It was President Kenyatta first speech to the UN General Assembly in his capacity as Kenya's Head of State.

Kenya's Interior Ministry is proposing that Somali refugees living at the Dadaab complex in the north of Kenya be moved to a settlement in southern Somalia as part of the United Nations-supported repatriation process. A Ministry spokesman said on Friday last week that Somalia's Interim Jubbaland Administration had offered land on which donors could build schools, hospitals and facilities to cater for relocated refugees.

The first anniversary of the murderous Al-Shabaab attack on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi was remembered last weekend. It was on September 21 last year that terrorists shot dead 67 people and memorials for those who died were held in various parts of the country, including at the Westgate Mall itself.

Somalia

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud co-chaired the High Level meeting on Somalia in New York this week with AU Commission Chairperson, Dr. Dlamini Zuma. The meeting was opened by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. **(See article)**.

In New York, this week President Mohamud met with senior World Bank officials including the Bank's Vice-President for Africa Makhtar Diop; with senior officials from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Head of the International Committee of the Red Cross, as well discussing the latest political and rebuilding developments in Somalia with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon.

Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed Mohamed led a delegation including the Minister of Defence and other senior officials to London last week to attend a UJK organized conference to gather support for the Somali National Army. **(See article)**

Somalia will launch a population census for the first time in more than two decades ahead of the planned referendum on the constitution and the elections expected to take place in 2016. The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation said in a preliminary report on the progress of the census initiative that the process was going well and he was very hopeful the country would soon conduct a census.

Somali government, on Sunday (September 21), outsourced the management of Mogadishu port to a Turkish company, Al-Bayrak. Government Ministers, Port Authority officials and business

people attended the occasion. The Chairman of Somalia's Chamber of Commerce and Industry said Al-Bayrak was expected to modernize the port and its services.

Since the death of Al-Shabaab leader, Ahmed Abdi Godane, in early September from a US airstrike, a significant number of Al-Shabaab fighters have been taking advantage of the 45 day amnesty offered by President Mohamud, with over 300 surrendering last week and another 45 over the weekend.

The Joint Shipping Initiative - made up of Shell, BP, Maersk, Stena and Japanese shipping companies NYK, MOL and "K" Line –announced on Thursday (September 25) it had given US\$1.5 million to the UNDP "Alternative Livelihoods to Piracy in Puntland and Central Regions of Somalia" project to help reduce piracy off the coast of East Africa through local economic development, job creation, training, and business development grants on-shore.

South Sudan

Ethiopia's Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin, Chief Mediator at the latest round of IGAD-sponsored South Sudan's peace talks in Bahr Dar, the capital of Ethiopia's Amhara Regional State on Monday (September 22), told the warring factions to stop stalling over procedural issues: "If you are committed to peace, you will not find it through the barrel of the gun, but around this table." **(See article)**

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) warned this week that thousands of children under the age of five are at risk of dying from malnutrition in South Sudan and 1.5 million people will face emergency food insecurity levels from September through December.

Sudan

The State of Qatar has signed a US\$88.5 million grant agreement with the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund, administered by UNDP, to finance recovery and reconstruction in Darfur. The donation, the single largest donation of Qatar to the United Nations, is aimed to kick-start the implementation of the three pillars of the Darfur Development Strategy: Reconstruction; Governance, Justice and Reconciliation; and Economic Recovery.

The UN Climate Summit in New York

The UN Climate Summit in New York on Tuesday (September 23), taking advantage of the UN General Assembly which opened in this week, brought together more than 100 Heads of State and Government to discuss national plans of action. It was the largest number of world leaders ever to attend a climate conference, though there were some notable absentees including the Presidents of China and the Russian Federation and the Prime Minister of India.

The Summit was not intended as a formal negotiation on climate change and was not part of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. It was an extra-ordinary meeting called by UN

Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon to try to put the issue of climate change back on the political agenda and lay the groundwork for the UN Climate Conferences in Lima, Peru, in December and for the Paris meeting next year where the goal will be the creation of a binding environmental agreement to come into effect after 2020.

Tuesday's Summit was held at a time of unprecedented awareness of climate change, following the report by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that the world is dangerously close to being unable to limit global warming to 2C. Marches at the weekend in cities around the world, including the largest ever march of over 300,000 people in New York, involved hundreds of thousands of people calling for action on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, said in his opening remarks that "Today we must set the world on a new course. Climate change is the defining issue of our age. It is defining our present. Our response will define our future." The meeting was a forum for discussion and for non-binding pledges, and some sharp differences over deforestation, carbon pollution and other issues as well as providing considerable promises and pledges.

US President Barack Obama said climate change was moving faster than efforts to address it, and the US and China had a responsibility to lead other nations. He said an "ambitious" agreement "that reflects economic realities in the next decade and beyond" needed to be reached, because that was what "the scale of this challenge demands." The US, he said, had made ambitious investments in clean energy and ambitious reductions in carbon emissions and he called "on all countries to join us, not next year or the year after that, but right now; because no nation can meet this global threat alone." He pledged that early next year he would publish a post-2020 plan to cut emissions. China's Vice-Premier Zhang Gaoli pledged that China, for the first time, would take firm action to tackle climate change and curb emissions by 2020.

It is clear from most of the four-minute speeches made by world leaders that countries do now realize they are already feeling the effects of climate change in the form of extreme weather. This has provided a basis for action that was missing at Copenhagen in 2009. U.S. President Obama spoke about the impact of extreme weather as a major motivator for action as did others. In China, extreme weather has been taking a huge toll on the economy, and complicated efforts to reduce poverty. China's Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli went further than China has ever gone before in announcing that the country's emissions of manmade greenhouse gases would peak "as early as possible." Xie Zhenhua, vice-chairman of China's National Development and Reform Commission, said China was "on the same page with those countries when it comes to the importance of adaptation."

A number of other pledges and promises were made, though the real issue remains how far these will be implemented. The European Union says it will cut emissions by 40% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels, and aspire to cut them by 80-95% by 2050. It will also provide 14 billion Euros of public climate finance to partners outside the EU over the next 7 years. The United Kingdom says it will cut emissions by 80% by 2050 and will commit 4 billion pounds of climate finance over five years. France will give US\$1 billion to the Green Climate Fund over the "coming years." Finland is phasing out coal in power stations by 2025 and will also contribute to the Green Climate Fund. Luxembourg is committing US\$6.8 million to the Green Climate Fund, 1% of the country's entire GDP. Norway will contribute \$500 million per year through 2020 to combat

climate change through the protection of forests. Mexico says by 2018 more than a third of its electricity-generating capacity will be based on renewable energy sources; and Nicaragua will have 90% of its energy needs met through renewable resources by 2020. By 2025, 45% of Chile's energy will be green; and Uruguay will reduce emissions by 85% by 2030. Korea pledged \$100 million to Green Climate Fund. China will cut its carbon intensity by up to 45% by 2020 over 2005 levels and double its annual financial support for South-South cooperation. India will double the amount of energy from wind and solar sources by 2020. In Africa, Mozambique will promote a low-carbon economy as a national priority and Ethiopia aims to achieve zero net emissions by 2025 with a green and climate resilient economy.

The Green Climate Fund was established at the 2009 Copenhagen Summit. It was one of the few positive outcomes of that meeting. Industrialized nations, including the U.S., set a goal of providing \$100 billion a year to developing countries through 2020 to ease their transition off fossil fuels, and combat climate change impacts. The fund is now raising money for its first three years of operation after 2015. It is, however, nowhere near its goals. While a total of some US\$1.3 billion in new pledges were announced on Tuesday, including a billion dollars from France, there was no financial commitment from the US. The head of climate policy for Oxfam said "the pledges announced here still leave the fund with less than a sixth of the total developed countries should commit to." He added that "All eyes are now on those yet to stump up, including the U.S., UK, Australia, Canada, Japan and New Zealand."

One of the most positive developments at the Summit was the presence of dozens of city mayors to discuss efforts to cut emissions at the local level. Currently about 3.6 billion people live in cities worldwide; this is projected to grow to more than 6 billion by mid-century. In the run-up to the summit, 73 countries and more than 1,000 businesses, signed a World Bank initiative to encourage governments to set a price on carbon and at the summit 25 of those companies committed themselves to pricing carbon internally, and boost their efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Another important development was the non-binding political declaration – the New York Declaration on Forests - which proposes cutting the rate of natural forest loss by 50% by 2020, and eliminating it altogether by 2030. Among the countries endorsing this were Ethiopia, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Liberia and Togo. Ethiopia, DRC, Rep of Congo and Uganda have pledged to restore 30 million hectares of damaged forests by 2020.

Ethiopia's National Statement was delivered by Prime Minister Hailemariam who told the Summit that Ethiopia had set a long-term, national vision of ensuring our renaissance and a medium-term goal of becoming a middle-income country by 2025. It had chosen to follow a green and climate resilient path rather than the conventional business-as-usual path of development. It had determined to build a green climate resilient, middle-income, economy with zero net carbon dioxide emissions by 2025. The Prime Minister said economic growth had historically been associated with increased emissions of greenhouse gases, but Ethiopia had been working for continued double-digit economic growth without increasing emissions, rather indeed reducing them. It had implemented agricultural intensification, rehabilitation of degraded land, investment in water storage and irrigation schemes, improved inputs, practices and marketing systems, improved access to veterinary health services, increased generation of power from renewable energy sources, rural electrification, extensive use of energy efficient technologies

and practices, and investment in railway systems powered by electricity generated from renewable energy. He said the country has put in place the required policy and institutional frameworks for a climate resilient green economy. It had already started implementing some of the measures, investing in the generation of clean and renewable power. By the middle of 2015 or shortly afterwards, it expects to increase power generation capacity from the baseline of 2000 MW to 10,000 MW. The energy regulatory body has been given an expanded mandate and authority to regulate energy efficiency. A series of forestation and soil and water conservation measures are being undertaken across the country.

The first stage of the light-railway system, powered by electricity from renewable energy sources, is set to start operation at the beginning of next year. Efforts are underway to ensure a major modal shift in the transportation of freight through investment in electric-powered railway lines. Ethiopia long ago abolished fossil fuel subsidies; it has started to produce bio-fuel by rehabilitating degraded land. Other sectors are developing strategies of ensuring resilience in the face of current and expected climate changes. Most importantly, Ethiopia, by mainstreaming climate change considerations in planning, has determined that its next generation development plans will be green and climate resilient. Equally, Prime Minister Hailemariam said, Ethiopia alone cannot guarantee success in building a green, climate resilient and middle-income economy. It needs support in finance, technology and capacity. While it was deeply grateful to partner countries for their help, it also believed the solution for such a complex and urgent challenge must be sought, developed and implemented everywhere. It therefore called on those able to do so to devote substantial resources to the development and transfer of adaptation and mitigation technologies.

Prime Minister Hailemariam addresses the 69th UN General Assembly....

The UN 69th General Assembly is now open and from Wednesday (September 24) it has been holding its General Debate, a process which lasts until Tuesday next week (September 30). On Thursday, Prime Minister Hailemariam addressed the General Assembly. After congratulating Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa, the Foreign Minister of Uganda, on his unanimous election to the Presidency of the Assembly, the Prime Minister said the session was being held at an historic point when the world had embarked on a major undertaking to shape the future it wanted for present and future generations. This session could therefore be remembered as one that helped to turn the corner in ensuring effective custodianship of the environment, economic justice and social responsibility. He said what had been agreed more than two years ago in Rio should galvanize the common effort: “poverty eradication is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development”.

The Prime Minister noted that in Africa, robust economic growth had been registered over the last decade and the stereotypical narrative about the continent was slowly changing. It was now a rising continent offering tremendous opportunities for trade and investment. Notable progress, he said, had also been made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, including in Ethiopia. Nevertheless many challenges remained. He said it was necessary to remember when formulating the post 2015 Development Agenda not to forget that the MDGs were still unfinished business. The remaining months before the MDG deadline should be used to

accelerate their implementation, but the Post 2015 Development Agenda needs to make provision for concluding any unfinished elements of the MDGs.

The Prime Minister said there had been encouraging steps in laying the groundwork for the Post-2015 Development Agenda at inter-governmental level and in the Secretariat. He commended the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and expressed appreciation of the work of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and of the invaluable contribution made by the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda. He stressed that a Post-2015 Development Agenda responding to the major challenges the world faces must rest on readiness to foster cooperation based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The world, he said, has the capacity and the resources to effectively respond to its pressing needs, to reduce poverty and ensure sustainable development for all as the report of the Inter-Governmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing affirmed. The Committee didn't offer definitive proposals but recommendations to stimulate discussions. Equally, it expressed hope that progress on development financing might be made at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development to take place in Addis Ababa in July next year. The effectiveness of the Post-2015 Agenda will depend in part on this conference and Ethiopia will do its best to ensure it succeeds. That critical conference succeeds.

The Prime Minister expressed his appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon for convening the Climate Summit two days earlier. He reminded the Assembly that Africa was already facing the brunt of climate change and this was undermining its efforts to meet development aspirations, including the Millennium Development Goals. For Africa, mitigation and adaptation remain priorities and Africa needed urgent international support for its efforts. It had contributed virtually nothing to global warming, but was playing a leading role in terms of mitigation. It was only fair and proper that this be adequately recognized and supported. The challenge of climate change required leadership and political commitment at all levels, but failure, he said, is not an option.

The Prime Minister noted that progress made over the past decade in Africa was being undermined by new cycles of violence and conflicts. The crisis in South Sudan is an example, but he added, progress in peacemaking can hardly be seen when there is lack of sufficient commitment to a peaceful resolution by the parties to the conflict. IGAD, he said, was determined to exert every possible effort to find a lasting solution to the crisis through an all-inclusive political dialogue. Somalia, however, was more promising. Al-Shabaab had not been entirely removed yet, but it had been greatly degraded. Equally, it was important that progress in the political track continued through the establishment of local administrations and the maintenance of law and order in the newly liberated areas. We need, he said, to continue to support Somalia to rebuild itself and make a successful transition by 2016.

He pointed out that conflict was not an exclusively African phenomenon and the global security situation was a source of concern. The threat of terrorism had affected ever greater and wider areas. It was necessary to forge cooperation which brooks no double standards. We need, he said, to be resolute in our determination to work together.

This meant, said Prime Minister Hailemariam, that multilateralism was now immensely critical for the future of the world. Nations are driven by the pursuit of national interest, of course, but in light of the many common challenges all face, commitment to enlightened national interest can be promoted only within the framework of multilateralism. This, he said, should be the sentiment all should share now. No one could be oblivious to the nexus between the sustainable development agenda and global peace and security. Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda, the theme of the session, required a peaceful and stable global environment. The threat of the spread of the Ebola Virus should be seen in this context. It is both a humanitarian and security challenge and containing it must be a matter of utmost priority.

The Prime Minister said that it was critical that the Assembly collectively addressed the myriad of peace and security challenges facing the world in order to facilitate progress in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals over the remaining period and lay a solid foundation for the realization of the transformative agenda in the post-2015 era as well as achieve a meaningful climate agreement. He concluded by stressing Ethiopia's commitment to multilateralism and to its desire to join hands with all like-minded nations to contribute to regional and international peace and security and to the successful realization of the major projects in connection with the Post-2015 Agenda. Ethiopia, he said, attaches the highest priority to cooperation among peoples and countries to address common challenges

... and bilateral and sideline meetings at the General Assembly

This 69th UN General Assembly which opened this week in New York is, of course, an occasion for numerous bilateral meetings and discussions among world leaders attending. It also allows for a wide variety of other meetings on separate topics. Ethiopia's delegation to the General Assembly is led by Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn and includes Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros Adhanom as well as other officials.

Prime Minister Hailemariam had a bilateral meeting with US President Barak Obama on Thursday. In remarks before the meeting, President Obama welcoming Prime Minister Hailemariam said that Ethiopia, one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, demonstrated one of the bright spots and progress that could be seen in Africa. He said "We have seen enormous progress in a country that once had great difficulty feeding itself. It is now not only leading the pack in terms of agricultural production in the region, but will soon be an exporter potentially not just of agriculture, but also of power because of the development that has been taking place there." The President noted that the US and Ethiopia were strong trading partners and that, most recently, Boeing had done a deal with Ethiopia which would result in jobs in the United States. He said that in discussions with Ban Ki-moon on Wednesday "we discussed how critical it is for us to improve our effectiveness when it comes to peacekeeping and conflict resolution. And it turns out that Ethiopia may be one of the most effective fighting forces for peacekeeping when it comes to being placed in some very difficult situations and helping to resolve conflicts." The President said the US was very appreciative of Ethiopia's efforts in reference to security and in trying to resolve some of the region's longstanding conflicts there,

adding “we look forward to partnering with them.” He said this would provide an opportunity to talk about how to enhance “our strategic dialogue around a whole range of issues, from health, the economy, and agriculture” and also consider some hotspot areas like South Sudan, where, he said, Ethiopia had been working very hard trying to bring the parties together. That was, however, a challenge that “we were all going to have to work together as part of an international community.” The President concluded his remarks by thanking the Prime Minister for his good work, adding that he looked forward to an excellent discussion and a very productive relationship in the future.

Prime Minister Hailemariam emphasized that Ethiopia greatly valued its relationship with the United States. He said that Ethiopia was indeed moving forward, transforming its economy, and the support of the US in these efforts had been remarkable. The US, he said, had supported the country in various programs to provide for the most important thing: “the human capability to develop ourselves”. It had supported Ethiopia in treatment of malaria, vital to improving the health of farmers and thus agriculture, the main source of Ethiopia’s growth. Ethiopia also valued the support of the US in terms of engaging the private sector and in particular the Power Africa initiative program. Prime Minister Hailemariam described this as a remarkable and modern approach which he hoped would be expanded and deepened. He also underlined the importance of President’s support for the private-public partnership demonstrated in the Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition. He said Ethiopia now had a number of U.S. investors engaged in agricultural production helping the smallholder farmers, the basis for the country’s agricultural growth. The Prime Minister emphasized that peace and security were essential for any kind of development and Ethiopia’s growth had benefitted from its involvement in working to pacify the Horn of Africa, the region and the continent. Now, he said, we need to deepen cooperation and extend our efforts to pacify the region and the continent; we should cooperate globally, not only in Africa. The Prime Minister reiterated that Ethiopia valued its excellent relationship with the US and stress that “we want to deepen and continue with it.”

In concluding their pre-meeting remarks, President Obama also noted that there had been much recent focus on terrorism and on ISIL, but he added that in Somalia, the cooperation and leadership of Ethiopia in dealing with Al-Shabaab, an affiliate of al Qaeda, was “making a difference as we speak. And we want to thank them for that.” The President said the counterterrorism cooperation and the partnerships with countries like Ethiopia “are going to be critical to our overall efforts to defeat terrorism.” He also noted that elections were coming next year in Ethiopia . He said that this would provide an opportunity to talk about civil society and governance and “how we can make sure that Ethiopia’s progress and example can extend to civil society as well. President Obama said widening and broadening efforts at democracy throughout Africa was good not just for politics but for economics as well.

Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros Adhanom, has been holding a series of bilateral meetings in New York. These included discussions with Philip Hammond, the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on Monday, (September 22) to exchange views on issues of common interest. Mr. Hammond thanked Ethiopia for the role it has been playing to stabilizing the region, particularly, in Somalia and South Sudan and stressed the need to cement bilateral relations to tackle challenges. He appreciated Ethiopia's role model development trajectory and stressed that Ethiopia was Britain's strategic partner in development activities as well as in

ensuring peace and stability and in combating terrorism. Dr. Tedros thanked the UK for its support for Ethiopia's development activities and for the efforts to encourage regional peace and security of the region. He briefed Mr. Hammond on the progress made in Somalia and on the efforts of IGAD to resolve the situation in South Sudan. Dr. Tedros acknowledged the role of international communities and partners in the efforts to get a cessation of hostilities there. He said the negotiations in Bahr Dar were now moving forward. Dr. Tedros also explained Ethiopia's political and democratization processes and underlined the government's readiness to work with legal opposition parties which cooperate peacefully on issues of national concern. He emphasized the need for a minimum code of conduct accepted and signed by the opposition. The Ethiopian Constitution, he said, clearly protects the rights to free speech and expression, but he also noted that ensuring national security and public safety was a central duty for a responsible Government. The Government was, he said, working strenuously to ensure the up-coming elections were free and democratic and he reaffirmed the Government's commitment to further consolidate democratization and the strengthening of democratic institutions in Ethiopia. Mr. Hammond welcomed Ethiopia's efforts to respond to any shortfalls in the implementation of the democratization process and said Ethiopia was a role model for development, peace and stability and the democratization process in the region.

Dr. Tedros held bilateral discussions with Mr. Charles Flanagan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Ireland in New York on Wednesday (September 24). Mr. Flanagan said Ireland now wanted to strengthen its ties with Ethiopia and had identified Ethiopia as a priority country for bilateral development cooperation. It was in the process of working out a 20 year Ethio-Irish bilateral development cooperation framework program. Preparations were also in train for the visit of Irish President Michael Higgins to Ethiopia in November this year. This, the first such visit for decades, should be seen as a milestone in the long -standing friendly relations between the peoples of the two countries. Dr. Tedros, who thanked the Irish government for the scholarship offers given to Ethiopian students at various times, underlined the importance of promoting all round bilateral relations, particularly investment and trade. Dr. Tedros and Mr. Flanagan agreed on the need to expedite the signing of Agreements on Avoidance of Double Taxation and a Development Cooperation Framework. They also exchanged views on peace and security in the Horn of Africa and Ethiopia's role in regional peace efforts.

Dr. Tedros also met with Dr. Maia Panjikidze, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Georgia on Wednesday. He briefed Dr. Maia on Ethiopia's role in assisting peace and security in the sub-region with particular reference to the current situation in Somalia and South Sudan and underlined the importance of their two countries cooperating in regional peace and security. Dr. Maia said that Georgia would like to promote bilateral relations with Ethiopia and hold political consultations at Ministerial level. She noted that a draft memorandum on political consultation had been commented on by both sides; Dr. Tedros said a final draft for signing would be prepared by the Ministry's legal affairs department. Dr. Maia underlined Georgia's keen interest to deepen all round bilateral ties to benefit both nations; Dr. Tedros invited her to visit Ethiopia.

Dr. Tedros has also participated in other meetings in New York this week, including the High-Level Ministerial Meeting on Women's Right to Land-the Development Impact, on Tuesday (September 23).The event, organized by the Governments of Ethiopia and Finland together with UN Women, aimed to analyze and discuss the benefits of more equal land access and tenure and

what further steps should be taken to ensure women's equal rights in law and in practice. In a speech to the meeting, Dr. Tedros said the role of women in fully realizing the Millennium Development Goals was important, and that their active participation in the implementation of the future development goals and the post 2015 development agenda was critical.

Women's rights to land, he stressed, was a fundamental human right. He noted that Article 16 of the Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) called upon state parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations, including ownership and disposition of property. Ethiopia, he said, as one of the state parties to the Convention, had taken legislative measures to implement this. Indeed, the Federal Constitution stipulates (Article 35(6)) that women have the right to inherit, acquire, administer, control, use, and transfer property; they have also equal right with men with respect to use, transfer, administration and control of land. He noted that all of the country's regional states now included similar provisions in the own laws. Dr. Tedros said that since the Ethiopian Rural Land Certification Program started seven years ago an extensive public awareness campaign had been carried out; nearly a fifth of the first level certificates that had been issued had gone to women heads of household, and women had received nearly a quarter of second level certificates that had been issued. Women, he said, were much more aware of their rights than they had been five years ago.

Dr. Tedros emphasized, however, that Ethiopia still believed much more should be done to further promote respect and protection of women's rights of land use. He said this required implementation of government policies and commitments and also enhanced global support. He acknowledged development partners' support and called for their continued cooperation to promote women's right, a critical factor in efforts to achieve sustainable development. In conclusion, he underlined that Ethiopia's experience demonstrated that education was the most important tool to create awareness, change the mind set of society, and provide for implementation of policies addressing the challenges that are linked to traditional practices that negatively affect women's rights.

A high level meeting in New York to assess progress on Somalia's political process

The UN Secretary General opened a high level meeting on Somalia on Wednesday (September 24) in New York. The meeting, co-chaired by the president of Somalia and the AU Commission Chairperson opened Thursday, had been suggested by the leaders of Ethiopia, Italy and the UK; among those who spoke at the meeting were UK Prime Minister, David Cameron; Kenya's President, Uhuru Kenyatta, Dr. Dlamini-Zuma, Chair of the Africa Union Commission and Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros as well as the UN Secretary General and Somali President Mohamud.

The Secretary General saluted the leadership of President Mohamud, Prime Minister Abdiweli and Somalia's Federal Parliament and Federal Government for carrying out an ambitious political process under challenging circumstances. He expressed appreciation to the African Union for its continued support to the Federal Government and paid tribute to AMISOM, the

Somali security forces and the Somali people. He said the meeting was to assess progress in the political process and hear the Federal Government's vision, exchange views on the remaining challenges and risks in 2014, and identify issues requiring international support.

Mr. Ban Ki-Moon said the peace process in Somalia was gathering momentum. Agreements had been reached to forge interim administrations in south, south-west and central Somalia and he welcomed IGAD's support to these developments. But, he added, there was no time to lose if elections were to take place in 2016 as the President had pledged. He welcomed the efforts of the emerging interim regional administrations to convene inclusive reconciliation conferences. Inclusive local administrations were urgently needed in newly recovered areas but political progress also depended on security. He urged the Federal Government to firmly place human rights, especially the protection of women and children, at the centre of its state-building policies. The Secretary General said he remained extremely worried by the humanitarian situation with malnutrition rates again on the rise.

Mr. Ban Ki-Moon said he was pleased to announce that the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund under the Somali Compact was now operational. The UN was also working with the World Bank on an initiative to promote resilience and economic development in the Horn of Africa. He urged the President and the Federal Government to redouble their efforts to deliver on "Vision 2016" and the Somali Compact. He noted, however, that they could not achieve this ambitious agenda alone, and looking forward to the High-Level Partnership Forum in Copenhagen in November, he appealed to the international community to continue its support to Somalia so that its people can reap the dividends of peace.

Somali President Mohamud told the meeting that Somalia had undergone a remarkable transformation over the last two years. He said he was confident "we have a country that is beginning to unite as a nation, behind a vision that will see a federal and united Somalia in 2016: a Somalia that will meet our aspirations for a better future." The foundation for the future has been laid through the joint efforts of the Somali National Army and AMSIOM and more than 70% of south and central Somalia had now been liberated from Al Shabaab and restored to the federal Government. This had been achieved through the dual strategy of securing the country and state- building, both made possible by substantial financial, military and technical international contributions. Equally, "we can't afford to rest." It was still necessary to achieve political reconciliation, reform for long term stability, and an enabling environment for development. Vision 2016 outlined the framework for federalism through reconciliation, adoption of a revised constitution and the path to democratic elections. The review, approval and adoption of the provisional federal constitution were critical for an inclusive political settlement to pave the way for sustainable security and development. The President said that this needed to build trust and confidence, accountability, root out corruption, build transparency and deliver public services. This meant a joined 'bottom- up and top- down' approach to create governance structures, and international intervention priorities should be guided by the Federal Government's own strategy of Vision 2016 and its peace and state building goals and its work plan.

Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros told the meeting that the task of pacifying Somalia had indeed been daunting. Al-Shabaab had indeed been significantly weakened but it still remained a

source of concern for peace and security in Somalia and in the wider region. Equally, many areas liberated were now enjoying a modicum of peace and stability and life is slowly returning to normal with Diaspora Somalis returning. Business and construction was booming. These positive developments would have been unthinkable only a few years ago and Somalia has come a long way from the dark days of anarchy. This gives us all a sense of hope and optimism about the country's future. Over the last two years, the Federal Government had steadily consolidated its authority and laid out a clear vision and roadmap for its peace-building and state building efforts. The implementation of the key strategic priorities and milestones outlined in the Vision 2016 Framework for Action would be indispensable for a successful transition to a new democratic dispensation. The coming two years would be critical in leading Somalia on a path of durable peace, recovery and development. Dr. Tedros said "we cannot afford to lose the window of opportunity to stabilize Somalia". It must be used effectively. The international community had agreed to support Somalia's peace building and state building efforts on the basis of the Somali Compact. The commitments made by international partners during the New Deal Conference in Brussels last year to increase support to Somalia on the basis of the principles of ownership, accountability and partnership, should now, he said, be delivered. This meeting, Dr. Tedros said, could build momentum for the High Level Forum in Denmark where progress made over the past two years could be assessed and the implementation of the Somali Compact reviewed.

...and a London Conference to gather support for the Somali National Army

The United Kingdom hosted a conference to gather support the Somali National Army (SNA) on Thursday last week (September 18), at Lancaster House in London. The meeting was co-chaired by the United Kingdom and the Federal Government of Somalia. It involved representatives from the Federal Government of Somalia, the African Union, AMISOM and its Troop-contributing Countries (Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, Uganda and Burundi), and multilateral organizations already engaged in the Somalia Security Sector (IGAD, AU, the EU and the UN) as well as those donors providing support to the SNA (UK, USA, Italy, UAE and Turkey). In all, there were more than 100 delegates from 25 countries and regional and international organizations. The Somali delegation, which included the Minister of Defence, the National Security Advisor, the Chief of the National Army, the Minister of Information and senior military and security officers, was led by Prime Minister, Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed Mohamed, who also held introductory talks with the Minister for Africa, James Duddridge, during his visit to the UK.

The Somali National Army (SNA) has a key role to play in bringing long term peace and security to the country, and the meeting was convened to debate the strengthening of the Somali National Army over the short- and medium-term, and to ensure that donor support for the Somali National Army was optimized to enable this. A wide range of international donors provide support to the SNA and this meeting was called to ensure that support was being effectively coordinated and targeted to address immediate requirements. In the context of broader security sector development plans and Federal Government priorities, and the realities of the security and political situation on the ground, the main objectives of the meeting were: to agree the path for the development of the SNA, which is critical for the future peace and stability of Somalia and

the region, to commit to focusing donor support on SNA's operational capabilities during the current offensive against Al-Shabaab and to undertake to fully coordinate support and ensure follow-up through the appropriate security working groups; and ultimately to enable supporting the development of AMISOM's exit strategy.

In his introductory statement, Prime Minister Abdiweli reminded representatives of what he called the unique window of opportunity now available for the fight against Al-Shabaab. "Today's meeting", he said, "comes at a time when we have real momentum, militarily and politically. Al Shabaab has been dealt some crushing blows, both through the force of the current joint operations with AMISOM and through the death of Godane." The Prime Minister said the meeting would hear a realistic and pragmatic view of what support was needed, focusing on the UN mandated 10,900 SNA troops, and the related institutions and security sector. He said it was important to prioritize, but not "lose sight of the wider support needed. Partial support is divisive and a source of instability in itself." He also spoke of the need for continued political reconciliation, and the absolute necessity of continued political settlement, though political progress, he said, "can only be made if there is real reconciliation amongst Somalis." He also stressed that the "integration of forces is one of our top priorities and we intend to deliver concrete outcomes over the next twelve months."

The Government's vision for the future development of the SNA included plans for arms embargo and human rights compliance, and fiscal planning as well as integration of regional militias. It briefed the meeting of progress to date and outlined the immediate requirements of its troops and future plans to structure and integrate the army and regional forces. The short-term vision for the SNA, as set out by the FGS, is building an integrated SNA and neutralizing Al-Shabaab, while the medium-term vision will be developing a unified and capable Somali national armed forces with supporting command-and-control mechanisms and preparing the ground for AMISOM departure. Consolidating self-sustaining SNA forces which can contribute to a secured Somalia and a stable region remain the long-term vision and preoccupation of the Federal Government.

The conference deliberated on the needs, support priorities and gaps of the SNA the importance of transparency and accountability as well as monitoring, evaluating and follow up mechanisms in the framework of the Government's immediate, mid- and long-term plans and development aims. It discussed the security sector policy of the FGS, the current campaigns and joint operations of the SNA and AMISOM and the vision, structure, capabilities, priorities and planning for progress on parallel political tracks. It looked at the international support to SNA and addressed gaps to support identified priorities and better donor coordination.

The meeting noted the Somali National Army was key to both Operation Indian Ocean and to the provision of long term security and stability to Somalia. Discussions centered around the Federal Government's vision for an affordable, accountable and professional army, and its capabilities and requirements; the parallel political and fiscal tracks critical to its development; a mutual accountability framework through which to monitor and evaluate progress; and a follow-up mechanism to ensure targeted and coordinated interventions. It agreed to the Ministry of Defense's suggestions for development of the Somali National Army up to 2019, and accepted that its requirements represented a realistic vision, and that efforts to support the army should be

focused, in the immediate term, on those troops currently fighting alongside AMISOM. This focus would be essential to the success of the joint offensive and consolidation of gains in newly recovered areas. The meeting, therefore, agreed to focus assistance, through both new initiatives and a review and adjustment of current support, on the Somali National Army's immediate requirements.

Basic training, by regional countries and other bodies, should be standardized and delivered inside Somalia. The training and biometric registration of troops should be completed as soon as possible. The United Nations Support Office for AMISOM should ensure logistical support was delivered in a timely and coordinated manner. The meeting welcomed the Federal Government's commitment to provide Somali National Army salaries as soon as it was able to do so, adding that, in the meantime, support to assist in this was crucial. The meeting welcomed the announcement of donor commitments, including an additional pledge of US\$5 million to the UNSOA Trust Fund from the US Government, to deal with some of the immediate requirements of the Ministry of Defence and the SNA through provision of training, logistical support and payment of troop stipends. The meeting welcomed the Federal Government's commitment to integrate regional militias, in consultation with regional partners, by 2016, and agreed effective integration was an essential step for development of the army and of state-building goals. It welcomed progress on the Federal Government's roadmap for this and agreed to rapidly develop a concept note and detailed plan setting out the necessary principles. Timely implementation of the roadmap would be critical to efforts to support the immediate development of the army.

The importance of transparency and accountability was underlined, and it was agreed that a Mutual Accountability Framework would help in this. It should focus on parallel political and fiscal tracks critical to the Somali National Army's development. And that, within each pillar, clear and achievable key benchmarks would be identified, against which progress can be measured. The meeting agreed that the integration process would be the key political benchmark against which progress could be measured and it should therefore be the cornerstone of the Mutual Accountability Framework. The three other pillars of the Framework should be arms embargo compliance, fiscal planning and human rights compliance. These would be complemented by a collective donor offer to better coordinate and target support, and to improve time-lines and execution of delivery.

In conclusion, the meeting agreed that fully coordinated efforts were essential to ensure progress for the SNA. It noted that implementation required consensus and a clear and coherent approach from both the Federal Government, through its national security architecture, and from international partners through relevant coordination mechanisms. Monitoring and follow-up mechanisms would be marshaled through the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and the Mogadishu-based Defence Working Group.

South Sudan peace negotiations continue in Bahr Dar

The IGAD-led South Sudan multi-stakeholder peace process continued this week in Bahr Dar, capital of Ethiopia's Amhara Regional State, discussing the implementation mechanisms of the agreed minutes of the Protocol on Transitional Arrangements. This sixth session followed the

continued engagement and consultations undertaken by the IGAD Special Envoys with the delegates of the South Sudan Government, of the SPLM/A-in-Opposition, the SPLM (Former Detainees), faith based organizations and civil societies with the aim of building consensus on the way forward for the peace process as well as making progress in immediate stoppage of war and resolution of the crisis. This session of the second phase of the IGAD-led peace process comes at a time when the participants have accepted the First Draft of the Text Arising from the 25 August Protocol and Stakeholders' Positions. That Text is now a foundation for the peace negotiations and provides the basis for the delegates to negotiate constructively and meaningfully on issues relating to transitional governance arrangements; parameters of a permanent constitution; transitional security arrangements; resource, economic and financial management; and transitional justice, reconciliation and healing.

In his opening remarks at the session on Monday (September 22), Ethiopia's Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin, chief mediator at the IGAD-mediated talks, expressed his disappointment over the renewed fighting in Upper Nile. This threatened to set the course of the war on a new track as well as continue to dispel the hopes and aspirations of the South Sudanese people. He noted that exercising restraint and looking forward could open up new horizons for the parties to get the diagnosis right for making progress in the negotiations. Ambassador Seyoum underlined that the document circulated on 20 September had laid the groundwork for the current round of negotiations to find a way out of the challenges facing the nation and reach a sustainable and comprehensive political settlement. The document was, he said, "a roadmap of principles guiding the South Sudan stakeholders toward a negotiated settlement." He told the participants that the document, comprising the Protocol and the position or official response of all parties to the single negotiating text developed during the fifth session of the peace process, stressed the imperative urgency for further negotiation. He said the crisis demanded "real resolution" and a "practical end," adding "let progress not be impeded any further by rhetorical or procedural issues." He stressed that "if you are looking for fish, do not climb a tree. If you are committed to peace, you will not find it through the barrel of the gun, but around the table." He also emphasized the need to see the bigger picture, to reach a settlement that could take the country forward, and work with each other to achieve that aim. Ambassador Seyoum admitted there had been "shortcomings" in the mediation process, but he stressed, "this should not excuse delay or intransigence on anyone's part." He affirmed that the IGAD Special Envoys were committed to help support the parties to embrace peace not war.

Yalew Abate, Speaker of the Amhara National Regional State Council, told participants that the people and Government of Ethiopia were saddened by the unfortunate challenges facing South Sudan since mid-December last year. He spoke of the historic ties existing between the two countries and stressed the need to elevate the relations to a new high, but this needed peace and stability. "War", he said, "only destroys what we have ...takes us down the drain, further entrenching poverty and backwardness." The Speaker also stressed the need for participants to devote time to dialogue and unleash their will for a negotiated settlement. Representatives of other stakeholders reaffirmed their commitment to the IGAD-led mediation process and expressed their firm resolve to address the root causes of the crisis urgently.

The current round of talks is highlighting the significance of inclusivity based upon a consensual, representative and broad based approach to the peace negotiations. This can be seen as a gateway

for all stakeholders to participate on an equal footing in the IGAD-led mediation with the view to advancing the cause of peace and stability and shaping the future of the country as well as accelerating negotiations on issues related to transitional governance arrangements, the parameters of a permanent constitution, transitional security arrangements, resource, economic and financial management and transitional justice, reconciliation and healing, as laid out in the Protocol endorsed by the IGAD Heads of State and Government on August 25 in Addis Ababa. Discussions will also cover the political, security and humanitarian situation and the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. The consultation carried out by the Mediators have encouraged the warring parties and other stakeholders to address the underlying causes of the conflict and underline the mismatch between their commitments made and their failure to live up to their pledges.

The current session of talks is taking place against a background of continuing fighting in Upper Nile State, with IGAD leaders and the international community becoming increasingly frustrated by the failure of both sides to end the fighting. The failure to implement the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement suggests the warring parties will slip into another round of violence and precipitate the threat of partition and fragmentation as well as further destruction of the social fabric of South Sudan. IGAD's Chair, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, has already noted that if the armed conflict continues to plague South Sudan, it threatens to become a failed state. Continued fighting does not give the opportunity to engineer a stable, united and prosperous South Sudan reflective of its pluralistic character. The political and military leaders of South Sudan need to ask themselves hard questions: Do the people of South Sudan deserve this cycle of violence, displacement, indignity, famine, economic ruin, and killing? Do they really stand ready to create a failed South Sudan? Do they believe the impact of their conflicts can actually contribute to the peace and stability of either South Sudan or the region?

Inability to give negotiations or dialogue the necessary room to resolve crises pave the way for a downward spiral of insecurity and humanitarian, political and economic deterioration, leading to fragmentation and even failure. The failure of some states should be a warning call and a lesson for South Sudan's warring factions. They must realize there is still time for negotiation and a chance for peace. The key to peace is in their hands. They must not pursue personal political interests at the expense of the population of South Sudan and should exercise common sense and participate in dialogue. To look for solutions through the barrel of the gun will have horrendous consequences. The risks of their ongoing conflict has wide reaching implications far beyond the region. Making the current peace talks meaningless will not advance anyone's interest. Indeed, as Ambassador Seyoum said "Let us not get trapped in the past, but be practical enough to work towards real resolution." The war must come to an end. If not, as Prime Minister Hailemariam has pointed out, "IGAD is going to take punitive measures," adding that "As good neighbors and Africans it is necessary to exhaust all possibilities. Taking measures is the last resort....We're giving [the parties] the chance to go for a negotiated settlement." If that doesn't happen, then "the region will not stand idly by as the process continues to kill the people."

The Tripartite National Committee (Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan) meets in Addis Ababa

The first meeting of the Tripartite National Committee (TNC) on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam was held last weekend (September 20-22) in Addis Ababa. The TNC, with four members from each of the three countries will follow up and conduct the studies recommended by the International Panel of Experts which previously made its assessment of the dam. This first Tripartite National Committee meeting was also attended by the Water Ministers of the three countries and their teams of advisors. The Ministers also had the chance to visit the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on Monday (September 21st) and see the ongoing activities there for themselves.

After the visit to the Dam, Mutaz Musa Abdalla Salim, Sudan's Minister of Water Resources and Electricity, said Khartoum strongly believed the dam project would have multiple benefits for his country and for the region. He expressed the hope that the next round of talks would even be more successful. Dr. Hossam Moghazi, Egypt's Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation said the hydropower dam project should not be a source of confrontation but rather a means of regional integration and economic partnership.

In a joint statement issued at the end of the TNC meeting, the three Water Ministers of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan said they had witnessed the successful deliberations and accomplishments of the first meeting. They said the TNC meeting “will forge and strengthen trust and confidence among the three countries.” They stated their belief that the meeting was “a good start and step forward to discharge our responsibilities and the expectations of our people and the region.” The joint statement said the three Ministers believed that the deliberations and successful conclusion of the first TNC meeting would lay “the foundation for professional and responsible cooperation.” The ministers agreed to hold the meetings of the TNC on a rotation basis. The next round of the Tripartite National Technical Committee will be held next month in Cairo, when the three countries are expected to consider which international consultancy firm will be hired to carry out the studies and other relevant issues.

In a press statement, Ethiopia's Water, Irrigation and Energy Minister, Alemayehu Tegenu said “Ethiopia believes the deliberations and successful conclusion of the TNC on the terms of reference and rules of procedure during this three days meeting will lay a foundation to deal with the tasks assigned to it professionally and responsibly.” He added that Ethiopia, from the outset has believed cooperation would strengthen trust and confidence among the people and governments of the three countries, and the Nile basin states at large, in handling Nile issues.

The Tripartite National Committee was set up following the fourth Tripartite Ministerial meeting between the Water Ministers of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan, August 25-26, in Khartoum. This fourth tripartite meeting on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) was attended by Professor Dr. Hossam Moghazi, Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation of Egypt; Alemayehu Tegenu, Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy of Ethiopia; and Ambassador Mutaz Musa Abdella Salim, Minister of Water Resources and Electricity of Sudan. They agreed to establish a committee to conduct the two additional studies recommended by the International Panel of experts (IPoE). A Tripartite National Committee (TNC), of four experts from each country, would conduct the two studies recommended by the IPoE. These covered a Water

Resources/ Hydropower System Simulation Model and a Transboundary Environmental and Socio – Economic Impact Assessment. The TNC will discharge its work according to the time table set by an International Consultancy firm which will be hired and will conclude its studies within six months from September 1st. At that fourth Tripartite Ministerial meeting, the technical teams of Egypt and Ethiopia also held discussions at which the Ethiopian team presented details of the updates of the dam design to address the concerns of downstream countries on ongoing developments. The technical teams agreed to continue consultations on relevant technical matters in the future.

During the meeting the Water Ministers also agreed on the nomination of International Experts who would be able to provide technical opinions in case there should be disagreements among the ministers over the outcome of the two studies that will be done by the TNC. At the end of the Khartoum meeting Minister Alemayehu Tegenu said the meeting had enhanced confidence between the three countries. He confirmed that Ethiopia understood the concerns of the Sudanese and Egyptians. He also extended an invitation to the Egyptian and Sudanese ministers to visit the site of the dam.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, in an interview with the Turkish News Agency, Anadolu News Agency a week ago, summed up the progress being made on the issue of the Nile dam, noting that the relationship between Ethiopia and Egypt was longstanding and adding “we want to continue building on our good relations.” He said there had been difficulties during previous regimes, under Presidents Mubarak and Morsi. They had tried to destabilize Ethiopia using rebel groups that are supported and nurtured by Eritrea. However, the Prime Minister said, his discussions with President El-Sisi showed he was committed to relations between Ethiopia and Egypt, adding that he himself was very much committed to having good relations with Egypt.” He said it was necessary to have win-win relations to utilize the common resource of the Nile. He said “That resource is common to all of us. Ethiopia has to benefit, and Egypt also has to benefit. I think we have no reason to harm Egypt, and Egypt has no reason to deny our right to development.” He added, that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is a dam of great economic significance and “not only for Ethiopia, but also for other countries – Sudan, Egypt and other African countries as well.”

What the successful Canada-Africa Business Summit means for Ethiopia

M. Christian Paradis, Canada’s Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, said at the conclusion of the first Canada-Africa Business Summit last week that “Twenty years ago, a prosperous Africa would have been considered just a dream; today, Africa is filled with hope. Many commentators say Africa is on the rise; I say Africa has risen.” Indeed, this economic success story has led many to chart a new chapter of cooperation with Africa on development as well as on the economic and security fronts.

Ethiopia is at the heart of this economic resurgence, defined as one of the pacemakers of an embodiment of the Africa Rising narrative and outpacing many of its regional peers in areas of economic, political and social development. Its economic diplomacy provides the catalyst for

mutually comprehensive cooperative partnerships with many countries and international companies, to provide for more trade and investment, catch-up technologies, know-how, and expertise which can develop a value-added manufacturing sector to move out of an agrarian economy. Ethiopia's Foreign Affairs Ministry and its missions abroad, in collaboration with other economic agencies, business associations and promotional bodies are committed to this new economic diplomacy aiming at making business and investment opportunities a prelude to increased FDI, economic growth, job creation and poverty reduction. The development of the country's investment and business landscape through organizing business and investment forums is a work in progress in advancing the nation's economic interests and shared benefits.

The first ever Canada-Africa Business Summit and the associated Ethio-Canada Business and Investment Forum in Toronto last week reveals this positive aspect of this in prioritizing education, financial and insurance services, information and communications technologies, infrastructure, mining, and transportation as the engines of mutual advancement and common prosperity. With Ethiopia defined as one of the Focus Countries, the summit highlighted its growing economic, strategic and diplomatic significance in regional and global geopolitical affairs. The forum was an effective platform for bilateral and collective dialogue as well as productive and practical cooperation redefining Ethiopia's bilateral relations with Canada from one based on development assistance into a pragmatic economic partnership based on the mutual benefit that can be secured from an equal footing. Strengthening an innovative, forward-looking and comprehensive economic partnership reflected the present realities. The summit, in fact, came at a critical moment to shift Ethio-Canada ties towards economic cooperation and allow them to tap business and investment potentials. Minister Paradis said: "We cannot rely on international funds for forward-looking approaches.... Canadian businesses are models of best practice. They use innovative approaches, financial instruments and technologies to build local capacity and create benefits for communities [as well as] help African countries transition from aid recipients to prosperous trading partners."

The selected areas of discussion at the summit covered the major driving forces for the self-development of Africa and of Ethiopia. Failures to develop education, financial and insurance services, information and communications technologies, infrastructure, mining, and transportation to the necessary levels are slowing Africa, and Ethiopia, in the march towards continental rebirth and national renewal. Forging cooperative partnerships with Canada in these areas is therefore a valuable resource to break through these bottlenecks and provide a demonstration for economic take off and transformation. Strengthening the cooperative partnership between Ethiopia and Canadian in these areas offers unprecedented future opportunities that will yield tangible results as well as usher in a new era of economic engagement.

Canada has a long and impressive tradition of "harnessing natural resources for economic growth" including minerals, metals, and energy. Ethiopia has a lot to learn to sustain the momentum of its current and future economic trajectory. Both the Summit and the Forum featured the dedication and determination of Canadian government and business leaders to inject a new impetus to Ethiopia's economic take off and national modernization. Canada, said Ed Fast, the Minister of International Trade, is committed to "corporate social responsibility and sustainable development" as an important element of its engagement with Africa. He went on to

say that this engagement included “supporting the Canadian extractive sector in responsible and transparent operations in Africa and working with host countries to develop capacities to manage their natural resources.” Minister Paradis equally emphasized that Canada would devote its “capital, technology, and entrepreneurial expertise to support African nations as they grow.”

Minister Paradis, in bilateral talks with Ethiopia’s Minister of Mines, Ato Tolessa Shagi, emphasized that Canada was ready to support Ethiopia in mining sector development, and announced that Canada would contribute \$12.5 million to strengthen education for mining in Ethiopia. He also noted Ethiopia would be able to draw lessons and best practices from Canada’s experience. He emphasized Canada was keen to support Ethiopia’s efforts in natural resource development. Indeed, sharing best experiences, and supporting institutional and human resource development is a testimony to Canada’s firm commitments to Ethiopia’s developmental project and transformation. Minerals, metals and energy have been drivers of Canada’s success in building “a strong and sustainable national economy” and are the gateway to unlock the potentials of Ethiopia’s emerging mining sector. This partnership in natural resource development, mining engineering and geology can also be an additional job-creator for millions as well as provide for sustainable economic development.

Ethiopia is emerging as a powerhouse of green, clean and renewable energy in Africa. Canada’s engagement in energy will help attain the vision of attainment of carbon-neutral middle-income status by 2025 as well as the setting up of a climate-resilient green economy. This development path requires both development and sustainability in the face of the challenges of climate change. More than most countries, Ethiopia has experienced the catastrophes of frequent droughts and inadequate rainfall as a result of environmental degradation. Developing and utilizing renewable energy for green development is, according to Ethiopia’s Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy, both an “opportunity” and a “necessity.” This has laid the foundation for the start of the massive development of green energy. Canada’s capital, technology and entrepreneurial expertise can add real value to the realization of Ethiopia’s vision, expediting efforts for sustainable development and the eradication of poverty. It can also help to enhance research and promote advanced technologies to generate clean energy. The effects will not be confined to Ethiopia. A “truly sustainable response to economic development and climate change” goes beyond national interests and could help meet the aspirations and energy demands of the peoples of the region and more widely into Eastern and Northern Africa.

The four days of networking and exchanges of views between the business leaders, key decision makers, and business communities underlined the value and the need for further cooperation and help for Ethiopia to “transition from aid recipient to prosperous trading partner.” Solomon Afework, President of the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations, pointed out that Canada was Ethiopia’s third largest donor and stressed this must be changed to “a more comprehensive win-win approach based on trade and investment.” He said Ethiopia’s investment and business landscape, the “electrifying progress” and “resounding change” in the economic arena and the way the country was emerging as a destination of FDI inflows as well as its prospects of becoming a middle income country in the coming decade called for Canadian companies and business firms to engage in the country’s development. Total trade volume only amounted to US\$39.2 million in 2013; with Canadian exports to Ethiopia worth US\$21.3 million; Ethiopia exports to Canada standing at US\$17.8 million. Ethiopia’s transition from an

aid recipient to a prosperous trading partner would sow the seeds of a lasting economic partnership. Ato Solomon said the business communities of the two countries had an “irreplaceable role” to play in increasing the economic links of the two countries. Ethiopia’s delegation, he said, had come to Canada to help fill this gap and to inform Canadian firms about exactly what Ethiopia could offer them.

The Canada-Africa Business Summit and the Ethio-Canada Business and Investment Forum offered the two business communities a future of increased sustainable development and mutual benefits and a way for more pragmatic, productive and all-rounded Ethio-Canada relations. It demonstrates both countries are willing to move away from the path of development aid and create a mutually cooperative partnership. The pledges made at the meeting by the Canadian Government and by Canadian companies to provide more investment, share best experiences and expertise and technology transfer in natural resource development, infrastructure, education, agriculture, and other areas of development, sharply increase the prospects of an expanded bilateral cooperative partnership and a rapid rise in business and investment ties. The meetings, in fact, have defined the way forward and offer an invaluable opportunity to start a journey of real economic partnership for the benefit of both peoples.