

News in Brief

Good Governance report considered by Government officials

A successful Ethio-Kenyan Joint Border Commission meeting in Hawassa

Security arrangements for South Sudan

“No concessions for Eritrea’s tyrannical regime” says European MP

Ethiopia improves its standing in the World Bank’s Doing Business Report

World Energy Council Executive Assembly and Summit in Addis Ababa

The Secretary-General’s message to Ethiopia on the UN’s 70th Anniversary

News in brief

Africa and the African Union

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon announced the appointment of Tegegnework Gettu of Ethiopia as Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) on Monday (November 2).

The UN General Assembly on Friday (October 30) elected 18 States to serve on the United Nations Human Rights Council for three-year terms beginning on 1 January 2016. Those re-elected included Ethiopia and Kenya.

Ethiopia

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn and Sudan President Omar al-Bashir agreed to enhance the strategic partnership between their two countries during talks held on the sidelines of the third India-Africa Forum Summit in New Delhi last week. Discussions also covered increased Ethiopian use of Port Sudan and measures to strengthen the tripartite agreement on the Nile River.

Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros met the departing Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Ambassador Hamadi Meimou on Tuesday (November 3), who was leaving Addis Ababa to take up the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mauritania.

The Minister of Urban Development and Housing, Mekuria Haile, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Mr. Yoo Li, Korea’s Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport in Seoul on Tuesday (November 3) for a cooperation framework on urban development and the housing sector. Mr. Yoo Li said the Republic of Korea was committed to extend support and provide knowledge, technology transfer and experience sharing.

A report from the World Bank’s Migration and Development department says that remittance flows to Ethiopia and Kenya from their Diaspora were significantly above average compared to the rest of the Sub-Saharan Africa. The National Bank of Ethiopia reported last year that official receipt of remittances reached US\$1.5 billion, an 88% rise over the previous year.

Standard Bank Group, Africa's largest bank by assets with offices in 20 African countries, has opened a representative office in Addis Ababa. Chief Executive, Ben Kruger, says this will act as an entry point for clients seeking to invest in Ethiopia and will be administered by Standard Bank's head office in South Africa.

Several hundred members of Ethiopian communities living in and around Rome met Sunday (November 1) to celebrate the 8th commemoration of Ethiopia's National Flag Day at the Ethiopian Embassy in Rome. **(See article)**

Djibouti

President Ismail Omar Guelleh opened the 4th African Conference of Islamic Finance in Djibouti on Wednesday (November 4). The two day conference was organized by the Central Bank of Djibouti to discuss ways to promote economic exchanges between Africa and the Middle East through Islamic finance. Islamic banks currently hold 16% of banking assets in Djibouti.

Eritrea

The Minister of Education, Semere Russom and Pekka Haavisto, Special Envoy of the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed an Agreement on Technical Cooperation on Higher Education in Asmara on Monday (November 2). The agreement is to enhance the quality and development of education; bolster the use of research; promote development of information technology; support installation of digital libraries; and strengthen agricultural research.

The Chairman of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea, Mike Smith, told the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly on Thursday last week (October 29) that "a very significant number" of Eritreans were fleeing to seek a life free from fear. **(See article)**

Kenya

Kenya's Interior Cabinet Secretary, Joseph Nkaisery, visiting the Dadaab Refugee complex on Monday (November 2), emphasized that Kenya, in collaboration with the UNHCR, is working on a program to ensure smooth and voluntary repatriation of the more than 500,000 refugees. He said "We have to ensure that the refugees go back to a safe place. That is why we still have our troops inside Somalia to stabilize the country."

The US and other donors to Kenya have criticized plans to suspend 959 NGOs in Kenya over claims of financial malpractice. A joint statement signed by envoys from UK, Canada, The Netherlands, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Germany and Denmark said donors supported transparency and accountability with regard to NGOs but "regulation must be fair, reasonable and justly administered".

A report from the World Bank's Migration and Development department says that remittance flows to Kenya and Ethiopia from their Diaspora were significantly above average compared to

the rest of the Sub-Saharan Africa. The Central Bank of Kenya said in the year to August these had increased by 9.2% to US\$1,510 million, up from US\$1,383 million in 2014.

The Kenya Commercial Bank Group, (KCB Group) announced in Thursday last week (October 29) that it had received approval to open a Representative Office in Ethiopia. It hopes to use this to facilitate trade between Ethiopia and other East African countries while playing its part in driving economic expansion.

Somalia

Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke held talks with the AMISOM Force Commander, Lt. General Jonathan Rono, on Sunday (November 2), to discuss the political and security situation as well as enhancement of cooperation and bolstering the fight against Al-Shabaab terrorists. He said coordination and cooperation were key to defeating Al-Shabaab.

An Al-Shabaab suicide attack on the Salafi Hotel in Mogadishu on Sunday (November 1) killed 15 people and left dozens wounded. Those killed in the attack included an MP, the hotel owner a young journalist and General Abdikarim Dhagabadan, a former Somali military chief responsible for recapturing significant areas from Al-Shabaab.

A three day Inter-governmental Conference on Fiscal Federalism, attended by Government and State Finance Ministers and officials, agreed to form a national commission to oversee harmonization of tariffs and taxes and implement a modernized financial management system to curb pilferage and mismanagement. The meeting also agreed on equitable sharing of foreign aid.

Puntland was hit by heavy rains from a tropical cyclone on Tuesday. The storm swept away hundreds makeshift homes and submerged boats. Relief efforts were hindered by flooding that cut roads and landslides.

South Sudan

The Head of the IGAD mediation, Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin welcomed the signing of the final agreement on the South Sudan Security Arrangements in Addis Ababa on Tuesday (November 3) (**See article**)

The SPLM-IO is holding a conference at its headquarters at Pagak near the border with Ethiopia for its leadership to brief the meeting on what should be done for implementation of the peace and to discuss general preparations for the formation of the planned Transitional Government of National Unity in Juba by December. (**See article**)

The last group of Uganda People's Defense Force soldiers withdrawing from South Sudan crossed into Uganda on Friday (October 30). South Sudan Government forces took over the former UPDF bases in Nesitu, Juba airport, and Bor, as they wait for the arrival of international peacekeeping troops.

A spokesperson for the South Sudanese government rejected increasing internal and international pressure to reverse the presidential order expanding the number of states from 10 to 28 states. The spokesperson said “the government reiterates that it will not under any circumstances bow down to the calls to revoke its decision on creating 28 states.”

A new rebel group in South Sudan has been formed in protest against the recent presidential order expanding the 10 current states to 28 states. The Tiger Faction New Forces (TFNF), led by General Yoanes Okij, said in a statement on Friday (October 30) that the order was a desperate attempt to derail and frustrate the implementation of the peace agreement.

Sudan

Sudan and Saudi Arabia signed four framework agreements related to agriculture, electricity, drinking water and the construction of three dams. The Sudan Government said Saudi Arabia would be investing US\$1.7 billion for the constructions of the three dams. The signing was witnessed by King Salman, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, and President Omer al-Bashir who arrived in Saudi Arabia for a visit on Tuesday (November 3).

The Sudan Government has announced that it will be holding a conference on human trafficking and illegal migration in Eastern Sudan, in collaboration with local community leaders in Kassala and El-Gadaref states. No date has been set for the conference. Sudan will be participating in the international conference of human trafficking and illegal immigration taking place in Malta on November 11 and 12.

The Foreign Ministry has expressed deep regret over President Obama’s decision (on October 28) to renew the economic and trade sanctions imposed on Sudan in 1997 for another year. In a statement issued on Wednesday (November 4), it said the decision came at a time when Sudan was continuing the fight against organized and cross-border crimes and human trafficking besides its cooperation in the counter-terrorism efforts.

Good Governance report considered by Government officials

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn last week chaired a top-level government panel to consider a study on good governance practices and failures in Ethiopia. The Panel focused on the findings of the study on how far good governance is practiced, the challenges it faced and the way forward. The study also looked at the issue from all possible angles: government, civil service and the public as well as from the perspectives of stakeholder institutions.

The role of good governance in assuring fair provision of development for all, advancing service and transparency as well as providing rapid delivery of solutions for problems and creating an enabling environment for citizens to be active players in good governance, is a necessity. The Government has established and is implementing good governance packages and civil service reform programs for both rural and urban areas. These projects have aimed to ensure benefits to the public from ongoing developments and fill the gap between the leadership and bureaucracy

as well as minimize problems like rent-seeking and other issues. There are, of course, still further areas that need to be looked at and dealt with. The Government had underlined its determination to resolve the challenges this time round.

One aspect of this has been the conduct of a nationwide exploratory scientific study conducted by the Policy Study and Research Institute in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Service and Human Resource Development. The aim was to assess the commitment of the leadership to implement good governance and the scope of the study covered all the regional states as well as selected federal institutes. The study concentrated on assessing good practices and challenges on the basis of the factual activities of everyday practice as well as on theoretical assertions.

The Prime Minister noted that the study was also intended to provide a basis for the implementation of the findings and recommendations. Ato Fisha Haftetsion, Senior Researcher at the Policy Study and Research Institute presented the details of the study, pointing out that it had two main foci: the leadership of the country and the civil service on the one hand; and the effects and responses of the public on the other. In terms of the leadership and of civil servants, the concentration was on their level of commitment, their attitude to service giving, accountability and competence as well as the challenges and problems they face. In terms of the public, the study looked particularly at the reasons why people were inhibited from being active players and participants in the efforts to build good governance in the country.

The study identified rent-seeking as the major challenge to building good governance. The researchers elaborated this especially in relation to the land administration sector. Although a proclamation has been put in place, implementation remained a serious problem. A lack of strategic leadership and leaders spending much time on routine were also among the problems identified with reference to land administration. The study noted the lack of coordination between various government offices with reference to various construction projects. Another problematic sector was investment where a lack of administration capacity was identified. Problems were also found in the trade sector where the researchers found problems related to lack of administration of the demand and supply sides. Justice was presented as a sector that had room for the further expansion of good governance. The study mentioned the Addis Ababa Water Supply Bureau in relation to a lack of administrative capacity, and similarly noted there was room for developing good governance in the electric power corporation over power distribution.

The researchers responsible for the study also presented a number of recommendations as solutions for the challenges they had found. Among these was implementation of reforms and the building up of the administrative capacity of sectors susceptible to rent seeking. The public at every level, and stakeholder institutions like the media, should be encouraged to participate properly and actively in building up the structures of good governance. Mechanisms to measure leadership capacity should be put in place, and the leadership and administration should be provided with the necessary technology. These should also allow for proper transparency of the way officials provide service to customers and conduct their meetings.

Prime Minister Hailemariam noted that the research had presented the major and measurable aspects of the problems in implementing good governance and opened the floor for discussion.

Dr. Debretsion Gebremikael, Coordinator of the Economy and Finance Cluster with the rank of Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister of Communication and IT, praised the study. He emphasized that it had identified a list of areas for consideration. He suggested more discussion on the limitations of the research and on the ideas that had emerged for dealing with the challenges in fuller detail. Getachew Reda, Head of the Government Communication Affairs Office with the rank of Minister, said that progress could be made in a short time if areas to be improved were to be identified clearly and everyone collaborated closely to deal with the issues. Other Ministers shared ideas concerning their own respective offices.

The discussions have been extensively broadcast and much welcomed. The general response has been to underline that while the debate of good governance was long overdue, the most important factor was how the suggestions and recommendations that have been made would be implemented on the ground. We will cover more of the discussion next week.

A successful Ethio-Kenyan Joint Border Commission meeting in Hawassa

The 30th session of the Ethio-Kenyan Joint Border Commission was held at Hawassa, Ethiopia on Tuesday and Wednesday, last week (October 27-28). The Ethiopian delegation, led by the Vice-President of the Southern Nations, Nationality and Peoples of Ethiopia, Admasu Ango, included 33 federal and regional officials from the Oromia, Somali, and Southern Nation, Nationalities and People's Regional States. The Kenyan delegation, headed by Ambassador Mohamud A. Saleh, Regional Coordinator for North Eastern Region, included 55 officials. The meeting covered the exchange of ideas on the promotion of peaceful coexistence between border communities and enhancing cross-border trade and related activities among the peoples on both sides of the border.

The Southern Nations' Vice President, Admasu Ango, welcoming the visitors, noted that Ethiopia was determined to further strengthen its longstanding relations with Kenya on the basis of mutual understanding and cooperation. He underlined the progress made in implementing agreements concluded during previous meetings of the Joint Commission. Ethnic clashes and cattle rustling among border communities had been significantly reduced, he said, and a second phase of inspection and maintenance of 33 kilometers of border pillars had been concluded. He noted that terrorism and human trafficking posed a serious threat to the peace and security of border areas. Intelligence information sharing as well as enhancing the capacity of joint border committees helped to tackle these threats.

Kenya's Regional Coordinator for North Eastern Region, Ambassador, Mohamud A. Saleh, said the troop contributions of both countries to AMISOM, and involvement in development projects such as Lamu Port Transport corridor and in Northern Corridor Integration Projects in which both countries cooperated enhanced existing bilateral relations. Kenya, he said, treated Ethiopians residing in Kenya as its own citizens. He welcomed the fact that the meeting would address the common concerns of the two countries and would develop means to monitor implementation of previous recommendations.

The meeting divided into two clusters for political and security issues and for economic and social areas. These reviewed the progress made in implementation of each cluster as recommended during 29th session of the commission. Agreed minutes after the meeting pointed out that the two countries had agreed to strengthen bilateral relations covering various political and security cooperation, and economic and social cooperation of common interest.

In the political and security cooperation cluster discussions provided agreements concerning boundary pillar inspection and maintenance, immigration and human trafficking as well as ethnic clashes and cattle rustling, small arms and light weapons, terrorism and related issues. The Joint Boundary Committee presented a report on boundary pillar inspection carried out in April/ May this year along a 33 kms stretch of sector 2. The Joint Boundary Commissioners/ Administrators appreciated the work of the Joint Boundary Committee and recommended continued activity for other phases of inspection and maintenance. The Commission also decided to convene a meeting of Joint Boundary Committee dealing with border inspection and maintenance, the establishment of a boundary and border database, the review of implementation of previous boundary treaties and related issues in February, at Naivasha in Kenya.

The Commission considered the efforts of each government in dealing with illegal human trafficking, a real threat to the peace and security of the border areas and indeed to both countries. The Ethiopian delegation told the meeting that in forming a national committee against human trafficking headed by the Deputy Prime Minister, Ethiopia was doing its best to mitigate illegal human trafficking. The Kenyan side emphasized the need to involve the public and tighten up legal instruments to deal with the problem. The Commission discussed the issue of work permits and agreed to synchronize the actions of the Ethiopian Immigration Office and the Kenyan Embassy in Addis Ababa. The Kenyan side requested the opening of additional border posts to effectively fight transnational organized crime; Ethiopia felt that studies had concluded that strengthening and improving the effectiveness of existing border posts would be more effective than opening new ones.

The meeting also discussed ethnic clashes and issues related to cattle rustling. The Commission agreed on the importance of encouraging local level solutions to traditional style conflicts of this kind. The Commission decided on the participation of local elders in Commission meetings and recommended organization of more cross-border cultural events. It recommended local elders and administrators should meet on a quarterly basis and submit reports to the Commission. The Commission also acknowledged proliferation of small arms and light weapons and terrorism as threats to the border areas as well as to regional and international peace and security. The two sides agreed to share experiences on carrying and registration of arms, on taking legal action on illegal possession and trafficking of weapons according to their own national laws and their Mutual Defense Pact. They also decided to take concerted efforts to eradicate threats of terrorism through intelligence sharing, close cooperation and proactive action as laid out in the Mutual Defense Pact.

In the economic and social cooperation cluster, discussions covered border trade, customs, health, agriculture and livestock, and education related issues. The meeting agreed to prepare the draft document on border trade protocol for signature at the next meeting of the Joint Border Commission. It also decided to implement the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in

2010 on customs' related issues, including the establishment of a common Customs' Task Force, mitigate contraband trade and promote formal trade across border areas.

Noting collaboration in exchanging information on outbreaks of disease, on vaccination and immunization activities, and in meeting to deliberate on border health concerns, the Commission agreed to conclude the MoU on Health at the next meeting of Joint Ministerial Commission. The two sides agreed to share information on livestock disease, carry out livestock identification and traceability arrangements that could control cattle rusting, capacitate existing animal quarantine activities and develop new ones, to minimize border conflicts, plant additional water points and improve management of grazing lands. In order to implement the MoU on Agriculture and Livestock, signed in 2011, the Commission arranged to nominate and exchange Agriculture and Livestock Sector Joint Technical Committee membership by January next year. The two sides also agreed to implement the MoU on Science and Technology signed in 2012, and agreed to establish the relevant Joint Technical Committee by March 2016. To reduce illiteracy and speed up development, they also agreed to conduct awareness creation programs for parents along border areas to enable them to send their children to school.

At the close of the meeting, the Commission decided that the 31st session of the Ethio-Kenyan Joint Border Commission would be convened in Kenya in 2016, on a mutually agreed date.

Security arrangements for South Sudan

The head of the IGAD mediation, Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin, has welcomed the signing of the arrangements for security in South Sudan by the warring parties. He was speaking after Major. Gen. Stephan Babanen from the South Sudan government, Lt. Gen. James Koamg Chucoal Ranley from the SPLM-IO and General Oyai Deng Ajak of the Former Detainees signed a final agreement on the South Sudan Security Arrangements in Addis Ababa at the Sheraton Hotel. The signing was witnessed by the IGAD's special envoys, the members of the IGAD-Plus Mediation, international partners, government officials, diplomats and friends of South Sudan.

The warring parties had been meeting at chief negotiators' level, including military commanders, since October 21. Discussions had covered implementation of the signed agreements, concerns raised by the IGAD mediation on its proposed harmonization document and a variety of other issues that had to be resolved to ensure implementation of a permanent ceasefire and creation and implementation of the institutions provided for in the "Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan" as well as the time frame for implementation.

According to the agreement, the two sides will deploy a total of 4,830 shared forces in Juba, 3,420 for the Government and 1,410 for the SPLM-IO. The South Sudanese Government will also be able to deploy a total of 650 presidential guards while SPLM-IO will have 350. Another 1,820 guards and military police, shared between the two sides will also be deployed. A unified command will decide on their status, encampment and deployment. The parties have also agreed to the deployment of a 3,000 strong joint integrated police 1,500 from each side, for security in Juba. They will also deploy another 2,400 from the joint integrated police, 400 from each side to

the towns of Bor, Malakal, and Bentiu. The signatories have also committed themselves to build confidence between the parties and ensure security is provided to leaders and to the people.

Taban Deng Gai chief negotiator of the SPLM-IO said the day marked a critical step towards the full implementation of the peace agreement. He described it as an “historic day to the people of South Sudan. We are committed to fully implement the peace agreement and more importantly to the reunification of the SPLM.” He added that re-unification of the SPLM was a key to reunite the people of South Sudan and reconcile the nation.

Michael Makuei, the acting chief negotiator of the South Sudan Government, stressed that the Government would remain committed to the implementation of the peace agreements and the day marked the start of the real operationalisation of the signed agreements: “Today we will start implementation as we move from here,” he added. He said that from now on the process for the implementation of the agreement would be transferred to South Sudan and “What ever difficulties and hurdles we might face along the way we will address them all together”.

Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin, Chairman of the IGAD Special Envoys, congratulated the two sides on their commitment to overcome the crisis and expressed optimism that this would soon lead to a peaceful and prosperous South Sudan. He said: “We are confident that by middle of this month we will see the inauguration of solid progress achieved towards the implementation of the process in Juba” He said he hoped the inauguration would be crowned with the presence of the leaders of IGAD and many friends of South Sudan with the presence of all signatory parties at the highest level possible.” Ambassador Seyoum said he also hoped this would see Botswana’s former president, Festus Gontebayo, head of the IGAD Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, pushing forward the process of the implementation. He stressed, however, that there was still need for collective support for the realization of the implementation process.

Taban Deng Gai chief negotiator of the SPLM-IO, who called on partners to support the process of the implementation, said that the SPLM-IO team will leave for Juba on November 15. Once in Juba, it will discuss with the Government on a number of issues, including security, before SPLM-IO leaders, led by first Vice President-designate Riek Machar, and his forces return to Juba. The SPLM-IO and the Former Detainees will also discuss with the Government on issues of peace building, mobilization, and sensitization of the public through dissemination of the Agreement.

On Thursday (November 5) the SPLM-IO opened a meeting at its headquarters at Pagak near the border with Ethiopia. A SPLM-IO spokesperson said the conference would bring together the political and military leaderships of the SPLM-IO and representatives of the movement from abroad and leaders of the civil society organizations would also take part. It would be the first conference organized by the SPLM-IO leadership since the signing of the peace agreement in August. The spokesperson said the top leadership would brief the national liberation council and the military command council on the steps taken and what needs to be done for implementation of the peace deal as well as discuss general preparations ahead of the formation of the planned Transitional Government of National Unity in Juba by December. The spokesperson stressed the SPLM-IO had committed itself to the full implementation of the peace agreement. The discussion also covered the presidential order increasing the number of states in South Sudan

from 10 to 28, and Riek Machar issued a press statement calling on President Kiir's government to revoke the decision. The statement said the SPLM-IO rejected the unilateral creation of 28 States in South Sudan, describing it as "a clear violation of the Peace Agreement signed in August on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan." The statement says the Peace Agreement was signed on the basis of the current 10 states and that after the ratifications of the agreement by the National Legislature in Juba and the SPLM-IO, the national constitution amendment committee established under the peace agreement "is the only body that will initiate amendments in the constitution". The SPLM-IO meeting called on IGAD mediation and its international partners to put pressure on the Government to respect the peace deal.

"No concessions for Eritrea's tyrannical regime" says European MP

The Chairman of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea, Mike Smith, briefed the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly two weeks ago on Thursday (October 29). He told the Third Committee that "a very significant number" of Eritreans were fleeing from a country that was not in a situation "of conflict or unrest" in order to seek "a life free from fear". Mr. Smith said that the fact that "so many people feel the need to flee their birth place in order to live a decent life free from fear is an extraordinary indictment of the government that has controlled Eritrea since independence more than 20 years ago." He listed factors that forced such an "alarming exodus." These included: "No elections since 1993; no independent press since 2001; ongoing restrictions of all freedoms: movement, expression, religion, association; arbitrary arrests with no fair trials or no trials at all' forced labor; torture." He said the Report of the Commission of Inquiry, presented to the UN Human Rights Council in June this year, went a long way to explaining why the number of Eritreans fleeing the country towards Europe has grown steadily since 2001 and indeed had accelerated with a growth of more than 150 per cent between 2013 and 2014.

Mr. Smith said that the international community, in the form of the Human Rights Council, had responded to these dramatic findings by reiterating its deep concern over the ongoing reports of grave violations of human rights. The Human Rights Council had decided to extend the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea for another year to investigate the systematic, widespread and gross violations of human rights in Eritrea with a view to ensure "full accountability including where these violations may amount to crimes against humanity." Mr. Smith said this was an unprecedented move for a county that was not at war.

This is just the sort of evidence that has appalled many former supporters of Eritrea. European MP, Lady Kinnock, was a long time advocate of Eritrea's struggle for independence. Her view today is forthright and uncompromising. There must be no concessions for Eritrea's tyrannical regime. Proposals for financial aid to Eritrea to help stem the refugee tide, she says, must be rejected and robust action against the regime continued.

In a recent speech, Lady Kinnock gave a detailed and damning account of conditions in Eritrea with "human rights violations, relentless cruelty, tyranny and oppression, tragically, everyday experiences for Eritreans". This was horrifying, and it was also, she added, "so far away from

what so many Eritreans heroically fought for”. She said she had travelled to Eritrea in the later 1980s, and had been deeply impressed by the resilience of the people in their struggle for independence. She had written a book expressing her great admiration for their fight, for organizations like the National Union of Eritrean Women, and for their leader, Isaias Afewerki. When independence came, she said, she and others, and countless Eritreans, had rejoiced at what all thought was the beginning of a future of freedom.

“We were so wrong”, said Lady Kinnoek. She said that now, twenty-two years later, Eritrea was being described as Africa’s North Korea. She added: “the cruelty that is inflicted on Eritrean people by the Afewerki regime justifies that description.” She noted that the national assembly hadn’t met since 2002, the 1997 constitution had never been implemented; there was no independent judiciary; there were extra-judicial executions and torture, and arbitrary detentions of journalists, teachers, and members of religious groups were common; Eritreans were not allowed to move, speak, assemble or organize freely; indefinite compulsory military conscription and forced labor prevailed. She quoted the recent UN Commission of Inquiry’s reference to such conditions as “slavery” and its conclusion that “some of the gross and widespread human rights abuses which are being committed in Eritrea, under the authority of the government, often constitute crimes against humanity”. She continued: “the list of atrocities goes on. Women face discrimination and sexual and gender-based violence and are denied access to justice. Few, if any, detainees are brought to trial. “Disappearances” are commonplace. Prisoners are held in crowded underground cells or in shipping containers with no space to lie down.”

Indeed, she said, the regime in Eritrea is, in short, “a secretive, reclusive, authoritarian tyranny,” ruthlessly controlled by President Afewerki. She added: “His rule of terror is a complete betrayal of the cause of liberation and self-determination for which so many Eritreans fought and died. Nothing can obscure the fact that Eritreans are being terrorized and trapped into what amounts to enslavement. And that, Lady Kinnoek, says is why such large numbers of Eritreans are prepared to risk everything, including the shoot to kill system operating in border areas – to escape their country to seek a better life for themselves and their families. These people, she emphasized “are unquestionably refugees under every definition of that pitiful status.” Therefore, the EU “must surely uphold the principle of providing refuge to people who have a genuine and justified fear of persecution, and are fleeing from what manifestly constitutes crimes against humanity.”

Eritrea is isolated politically, regionally and internationally and UN sanctions are firmly in place. What is needed, Lady Kinnoek says, is decisive action, and a clear and unequivocal policy on maintaining and fully enforcing UN sanctions against the Eritrean regime.” She went on to say that suggestions that substantial financial aid should be given to Eritrea as part of efforts being made to stem the exodus of refugees would be “disastrous.” This is because, on the basis of all the evidence about the regime, any EU aid offered to Eritrea would be seen as an endorsement of the government and used to entrench a repressive regime, not to help those in need: “It would almost certainly breach the EU’s commitment that states “human rights is at the forefront of EU development co-operation”.

The UN Security Council shares concerns over Eritrea. Last month it extended sanctions on Eritrea as well as the mandate of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group for another year. It called on the Government of Eritrea to facilitate the Monitoring Group’s access into Eritrea and

to provide information on various issues, including Djiboutian prisoners missing in action since clashes between Eritrea and Djibouti in June 2008. It also expressed concern at the detailed evidence of ongoing Eritrean support for regional armed groups in Ethiopia and Djibouti and concluded that the Eritrean regime remained a serious threat to peace in the Horn of Africa and the region as a whole.

Part of the Monitoring Group's remit has been to try to ensure that finances are not diverted by the regime to destabilize the region. This has been extraordinarily difficult since the Eritrean government has consistently refused access to the Monitoring Group. Its report noted that the Government would not disclose budget appropriations. It was promised official data nearly two years ago; nothing has been forthcoming. This lack of transparency is one reason why the Monitoring Group expressed its concern over reports that the European Union is considering a substantial increase in aid to Eritrea. The Monitoring Group said it would be necessary for "due diligence, monitoring and full oversight of the dispersal of large amounts of aid to Eritrea." Without this, it noted there was every possibility that such funds would be used to support regional destabilization.

In recent months, the EU has reportedly been preparing a Euro 200 million bilateral aid package and a Euro 40 million to curb migration and human trafficking. Exactly how this aid might be monitored is difficult to see as there is no official government budget or budgetary procedures in Eritrea. There are no democratic institutions in the country and no independent media. Increased aid to Eritrea would very probably contribute to undermining peace in the region and increase the number of refugees. Indeed, as Lady Kinnock suggested, it would also be seen as an endorsement of the regime and used to support the regime rather than help those in need. Certainly, there is no indication that the regime has any intention of putting an end to the severe human rights violations itemized by the UN Commission of Inquiry into Human Rights Abuse in Eritrea; and unless that happens, no amount of aid will have any effect in stemming the flood of refugees leaving the country.

The EU appears keen to encourage reforms in Eritrea by providing aid ostensibly to tackling the root cause of the exodus of refugees by encouraging development. The EU High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Ms. Federica Mogherini, warned Eritrea in October to respect human rights and urged the country to engage in serious reforms. There has been no indication that Eritrea is prepared to listen. All indications are that it would use any additional aid to modernize its armed forces and continue to operate its system of perpetual national service, or "forced labor", as well as continue to use aggression as an instrument of foreign policy and destabilize the region.

Lady Kinnock concluded: "Nothing can obscure the fact that Eritreans are being terrorized and trapped into what amounts to enslavement by a regime that imposes tyranny, cruelty and oppression. Nothing should diminish the reality that Eritrean victims of that persecution deserve our solidarity. Conciliation and concession towards regimes such as exist in Eritrea will surely fail. No such softening should ever be contemplated. Our own freedom compels us to fulfill our duty to those who are not free, and never will be until the vileness that imprisons Eritrea is ended." It is difficult to disagree.

Ethiopia improves its standing in the World Bank's Doing Business Report

The World Bank released its Doing Business Report 2016 on Thursday last week (October 29). This is a study, produced annually by the World Bank Group since 2003, measuring the costs to firms of business regulations in 189 countries. The study has become one of the flagship products of the World Bank Group in the field of private sector development and it has led to the redesign of a number of regulatory reforms in many developing countries. It presents a detailed analysis of costs, requirements and the procedures that specific types of private firms are subject to in all countries. It then creates ranking for every country. The study is backed up by broad communication efforts, and by creating rankings it spotlights countries and leaders that are promoting reforms as well as those that are not.

The Doing Business Report this year has made a number of changes in the way it rates countries, expanding benchmarks that measure the quality of regulations as well as the efficiency of the business regulatory framework. The report has also now added some recent developments in good practice in those indicators that had already measured quality. One notable finding here is that while most cases show better marks for efficiency than quality, a comprehensive study within each indicator shows that the two are actually somewhat proportional. Of the ten indicators that have been used since the first report in 2003, five have been adjusted this year: Dealing with Construction Permits, Getting Electricity, Enforcing Contracts, Registering Property and Trading Across Borders.

Overall, in this year's report, Ethiopia is ranked 146 out of 189 countries in overall ease of doing business. This is two places higher than last year. The report says Ethiopia has made some progress in several key areas of business regulation in the past decade, noting that it now provides an enabling regulatory environment in several areas of doing business and has achieved some substantive results. Measuring Regulatory Quality and Efficiency finds that Ethiopia does relatively well on indicators related to construction permits, cost of warehouse value, enforcing contractors, good electricity, registering property and resolving insolvency.

The report finds Ethiopia is among the best performers in the sub region on enforcing contracts, with a global ranking of 84 and 7th in the region. This is due, in part, to past efforts to ease the process of contract enforcement which has resulted in considerable improvements in time involved. A case in point in this regard is that over a decade ago it would take an entrepreneur in Addis Ababa 690 days to resolve a commercial dispute. Today it takes only 530 days, less time than in Canada. In the area of Dealing with Construction Permits, Ethiopia ranks 73 worldwide. The time required to build a warehouse in Ethiopia is 129 days compared to 152 days on average in the high-income Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development economies. 12 years ago it took a local entrepreneur 47 days to start a business in Addis Ababa; now, it takes only 19 days.”

Ethiopia's rank in the various categories are: Starting a business (rank 176); Getting credit (rank) 167; Trading across borders (rank) 166; Dealing with construction permits (rank) 73; Protecting minority investors (rank) 166; Paying taxes (rank) 113; Getting electricity (rank) 129;

Enforcing contracts (rank) 84; Resolving insolvency (rank) 114; and Registering property (rank) 141

The report certainly indicates that Ethiopia could improve. One example was that in addition to the steps, time and cost to get connected to the grid, the Getting Electricity indicator assesses power outages through the quality of supply and transparency of tariffs index and in this Ethiopia was still underperforming. Similarly on Registering Property, Ethiopia could improve the quality of its land administration system, its reliability, transparency and geographic coverage. With reference to these continuing challenges and other areas such as business incorporation, protecting minority investors, trading across border, and getting credit, these are challenges that the Government of Ethiopia is now taking into consideration. It is making a real effort to tackle obstacles in these areas.

In fact, Ethiopia's persistent double-digit economic growth of the last couple of decades has already brought about significant progress in several key areas of business regulation. In fact many international financial institutions now predict it will become the third largest economy in the continent in three to four years time. It has certainly reached a stage where it can comfortably manage multiple major projects such as the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, Bole International Airport expansion, building of an oil pipeline to Djibouti and the construction of 5060 kms of railway line.

The Acting World Bank Country Manager for Ethiopia, Qaiser Khan, noted that Ethiopia had made progress in several key areas of business regulation in the past decade. He also pointed out that the regulatory burdens of cost, procedures and paid in minimum capital requirements were higher than the regional average. This underlined that there is still work to be done. In the last decade Ethiopia has implemented a total of seven reforms to ease business regulations, and this is a slower pace than the regional average; in the past year there have been no changes.

World Energy Council Executive Assembly and Summit in Addis Ababa

The World Energy Council Executive Assembly and World Energy Leaders Summit took place in Addis Ababa during the week of October 26 to 30. Organized by the World Energy Council and Ethiopia's Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Electricity, the Summit was attended by Ministers and senior government energy officials from across Africa and more widely, as well as hundreds of energy company executives and energy sector pioneers. The Assembly's governance meetings and the Executive Assembly plenary were held during the first part of the week. The Executive Assembly included round table committee as well as global and regional discussions. The aim was to bring national and sectoral developments of the energy sector into the framework of regional integrations and global experience sharing and partnerships. One session on Tuesday morning praised countries that are pioneering the advance of the energy sector in various areas and commended Ethiopia in Africa for its clean energy commitments and its energy infrastructure integration accomplishment. The session also discussed best experiences in renewable energy development including, solar, hydro, wind and low-carbon-economy approaches. The Future Energy Leaders' Summit took place on Wednesday (October 28). This

was followed by an Energy Summit open to all delegates and a private World Energy Leaders' Summit for CEOs. An African Ministerial meeting was held on Friday.

An 'Ethiopia day' on which Ethiopia shared its energy sector experiences with participants was held on under the theme of a "Green Climate Resilient Economy key to sustainable development as embarked by Ethiopia". The Minister of Water, Irrigation and Electricity, Motuma Mekasa, said Ethiopia was aggressively working to utilize its untapped renewable energy sources and diversify its source of energy. The Minister pointed out that Ethiopia was striving to generate power from hydropower, solar, wind, geothermal and dry waste. He emphasized that the major power generation projects were being built with the intention of realizing regional integration as well as for the development of Ethiopia.

Abebe Kahsay, Chief Operator, Ethiopian Electric Power Transmission, said that Ethiopia was working to acquire technology, knowledge and best practices in energy sector from different countries. It was also striving to build domestic capacity in power production, transmission and management. He stressed that Ethiopia's energy sources were, by and large, clean energy. The major source of energy was predominantly hydro-power. He also mentioned Ethiopia was working to ensure energy efficiency, conservation, sustainability and working on natural resource conservation to build green economy. The participants at the World Energy Council Executive Summit appreciated Ethiopia's unreserved effort to build green energy. They also commended Ethiopia's determined efforts to bring about regional integration through the provision of cheap power and expansion of transmission lines. There was general agreement that other developing nations should follow the foot-steps of Ethiopia in its green energy policy and strategy.

Overall, Ethiopia has been giving high priority and will continue to concentrate on renewable energy development and using hydropower as the major and most reliable segment of the country's energy sector development. The policy also gives significant emphasis to the wind, geothermal, solar and bio-mass being developed to increase renewable energy diversification. Ethiopia's energy development policy enumerates the respective areas of power production and energy sector development that will provide for the acceleration of the fast growing economy of the country as well as its goal of becoming a Carbon Neutral Middle Income Country by 2025. The priorities of the energy policy also allow for exploration for natural gas and other hydrocarbon fuels, and bio-fuels for transportation and household use. The policy emphasizes energy efficiency and conservation, environmental sustainability, gender mainstreaming and capacity building and technology transfer.

Indeed, the Climate Resilient Green Economy strategy underlines just how far the country has embarked on maximizing the utilization of diversified renewable energy alternatives. Major power sector development projects now under construction include the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam that will add 6000MW to the grid and the Genale Dawa III for 254 MW; the Aluto Langano Geothermal Expansion project, the Repi Waste-to-energy and the Malka Sedi Biomass among the Solar, wind and waste projects. The Gigel Gibe III Dam, with a capacity of 1870 MW, started generation of power a few weeks ago. As a result of these and other developments, Ethiopia has managed to expand connections to some 5,554 towns, and under the next Growth and Transformation Plan II, another 10,205 towns will be connected to the national

grid, raising the current 54% rural access to electricity to 90% during the GTPII Period 2015/6-2019/20.

A major aspect of the discussions at the World Energy Council Executive Assembly and Summit arose from the latest report from the World Energy Council: “The road to resilience – managing and financing extreme weather risks”. The energy community is increasingly concerned about the slow progress and level of ambition in the negotiations ahead of the COP21 meeting in Paris in December. The World Energy Council’s message from the Executive Assembly affirmed that the energy sector across the world is ready to respond to a strong signal from Paris to accelerate the energy transition. The Council issued a call to the 21st Conference of Parties calling for a clear pathway from Paris that will end the growing uncertainty that has cast a shadow over the energy sector for many decades. It said the energy community urgently needed a clear carbon pricing scheme in line with the global objectives that will allow all to make efficient economic decisions. This should be the key priority. The Council called for determined pragmatism which would produce predictable policy and balanced regulatory frameworks to unlock the needed investment for affordable, reliable and sustainable energy. It said reducing policy risk was critical and only the adoption of strong and balanced national energy policy frameworks could provide substantive progress. It said the addition of the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions track to the negotiations was an important step but translating the international objective to the national level for energy requires an Energy Trilemma approach, which balanced the needs of energy security, environment and the social agenda.

The World Energy Council noted that it was clear that the world was not on track to keep emissions down to 2 degrees Celsius. The increasing number of extreme weather events was already affecting critical energy infrastructure. Extreme events had quadrupled over the past 30 years and this trend and its effects would continue unless decisive and extensive mitigation and adaptation measures were taken. It said an historic energy transition was needed. The energy sector was central to any solutions and would be fundamental to its success. Solutions needed meaningful engagement with the energy sector and greater dialogue between policy and business leaders. The World Energy Council called on the Parties in Paris to agree on a clear, unambiguous and equitable climate framework and carbon pricing scheme to enable the energy sector to deliver the needed energy transition for the greatest benefit of all.

The Secretary-General’s message to Ethiopia on the UN’s 70th Anniversary

The United Nations marked its 70th anniversary at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa on October 24 in Addis Ababa under the theme “Strong UN: Better World”, a theme designed to underline the aim of showcasing the UN’s role in promoting peace and security, human dignity, social progress and better living standards for humanity. The anniversary included a flag raising ceremony, speeches and a message from the UN Secretary-General, was attended by senior Government officials, United Nation’s executives and staff and invited guests.

George Okutho, UN Resident Coordinator, said this was “the time for global action” in 2015. He pointed out the year had “already seen a number of key events including the Third World

Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, in March; the five-year review of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in April-May in New York; and the Third International Conference on Financing for Development which took place in Ethiopia in July and resulted in the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action". He also detailed the role and achievements of the UN, the way it was contributing in Ethiopia and noted Ethiopia's achievements in the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. George Okutho also read a message from the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, which stressed that the UN had adopted Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals a month earlier. These "will provide a broad and integrated development framework for the next 15 years." The Secretary-General noted that the end of 15 years of the MDGs and the occasion of the 70th anniversary offered "an opportunity to take stock and reflect on the road ahead." In the development community, MDGs were often referred to as the most successful global anti-poverty push in history. They had helped to lift more than one billion people out of extreme poverty. The Secretary-General's message praised Ethiopia as a country that had made notable and wide strides in development and this was "clearly confirmed by the progress achieved in countries like Ethiopia, which has met six of the eight MDGs, including MDG 4 that was met ahead of the 2015 deadline." MDG 4 had the goal of reducing child mortality.

The Secretary-General noted that Ethiopia had placed the MDGs at the centre of its overall development planning and fully mainstreamed the MDGs in its subsequent medium term development strategies." He said "based on Ethiopia's great overall success in achieving the MDGs, it is timely to look at the road ahead and see how the new Agenda 2030 and SDG framework can help Ethiopia achieve its goal of becoming a climate-resilient, middle income country by 2025. The new national medium-term development agenda, the Growth and Transformation Plan (2015/16 - 2019/20, which mainstreams the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) would provide a timely and comprehensive basis for tackling the remaining challenges. The Secretary-General's message emphasized "for more than a decade, Ethiopia has put up an exemplary performance, and many developing countries now look up to Ethiopia as an inspiration for achieving progress and results."

The Secretary-General said that when Ethiopia had hosted the Third FfD Conference one of the central questions discussed was how the global community and individual countries could finance the SDGs. The question of financing global development goals has already been a prominent part of the MDG experience and strong reliance on Official Development Assistance would "contribute to fill the gaps in poor countries". The message said that the "SDGs put more emphasis on the understanding that the future of our planet is a shared responsibility of all countries and all people, rich and poor. Issues of equality and inclusiveness are relevant in all countries, and development challenges such as climate change transgress national borders." The Secretary-General underlined that there was wide agreement that ODA would remain essential for countries with a low tax base and limited domestic resources. He, therefore, stressed "donors should therefore do everything to fulfill their commitments of providing 0.7pc of GDP as ODA." His message underlined the importance of domestic resource mobilization along with this, and noted that Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros Adhanom, had remarked at the recent High-level Panel on SDG's in New York that "developing countries should play their part by

expanding domestic resource mobilization and proper utilization of funds”. Dr. Tedros had added emphasis on the importance of the role of the private sector: “if you are part of the solution in alleviating poverty and empowering consumers, ultimately you promote markets for your products and services and you will be rewarded from your partnership in sustainable development.”

Dr. Carlos Lopez, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, stressed that the celebration was an especially important one as the UN was also marking the adoption of Agenda 2030. He said most African countries had achieved universal primary enrolment rates at above 90 percent and one half of the continent had achieved gender parity. Some 43 African countries were among those that witnessed the most significant decrease in child mortality between 2000 and 2013. Dr. Lopez said Africa’s new partnership in attracting investment was changing its economic relations and the continent was now the second most attractive investment destination in the world. Previously, despite being home to abundant natural and human resources, Africa had not been able to productively use these to transform its economy. He reminded leaders of the extra work that lay ahead to reduce poverty during the coming years. Dr. Lopez also commended Ethiopia for its contribution to the achievements of the UN in Africa.

Speaking at the ceremony, State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Taye Atsikeselasei, emphasized that Ethiopia had been one of the founding members of the United Nations 70 years ago. He said the UN had accomplished much that was commendable, in promoting development, providing humanitarian aid, advancing human rights and conducting peacekeeping operations, to which it was the second largest troop contributor. Ambassador Taye said “We also celebrate UN Day because it provides a unique forum for all its member states, large and small, powerful and weak with their different histories, cultures and traditions to come together and discuss and deliberate on matters of common interest.”

The State Minister expressed his hopes that the United Nations would contribute to fulfilling the needs and aspirations of the people of the world in the 21st century. Ethiopia, of course, fully supports the Common African Position on reform of the UN, the Ezulwini Consensus, adopted by the African Union on March 8, 2005 in Addis Ababa after deliberations on the Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change for the UN. The Ezulwini Consensus covers collective security and the challenge of prevention; and collective security and the use of force; as well as institutional reform of the UN including the creation of a more professional Secretariat and the reform of the Security Council. It concludes that Africa should be fully represented in all the decision- making organs of the UN, particularly in the Security Council. This meant that Africa should have no less than two permanent seats with all the prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership including the right of veto and five non-permanent seats. Africa opposes the veto in principle but as long as it exists, as a matter of common justice, it should be made available to all permanent members of the Security Council. It also says the African Union should be responsible for the selection of Africa's representatives on the Security Council and the criteria for selection should be a matter for the AU to determine.