

18.12.2015

A week in the Horn

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News in Brief

Africa and the Africa Union

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Tuesday (December 15) announced the formation of an alliance of 34 mainly Muslim countries against terrorism and extremism. Among the countries included are Benin, Chad, Togo, Tunisia, Djibouti, Senegal, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Gabon, Guinea, the Comoros, Ivory Coast, Libya, Mali, Egypt, Morocco, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Yemen.

Ethiopia

The Ethiopian government, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) launched a joint

appeal on Friday (December 11) to raise \$1.4 billion to provide emergency assistance to the 10.2 million people Elnino induced drought affected people.

Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros Adhanom, attended the International Conference on Universal Health Coverage in the New Development Era opened in Tokyo on Wednesday (December 16) under the theme: "Toward Building Resilient and Sustainable Development". **(See article)**

Dr. Tedros Adhanom gave a keynote address at an Ethiopian investment Seminar in Tokyo on Thursday (December 17), on the theme: "Manufacturing Investment and Development of Industrial Zone in Ethiopia". **(See article)**

The meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Water of Sudan, Ethiopia and Egypt which met last weekend to discuss the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, in Khartoum agreed to resume discussions on December 26-27 in Khartoum for further consultations on technical and political issues.

A group of French companies visited Ethiopia this week (December 15-17) within the framework of the third Franco-Ethiopian Business Forum organized by the French Embassy in Ethiopia, MEDEF International and Business France.

The 5th International Multidisciplinary Conference on Connecting Knowledge and Innovation (KEI) opened in Addis Ababa on Monday (December 14) **(See article)**

A conference on Journalism in the Global Context was held last Friday (December 11) in Addis Ababa University. **(See article)**

Eritrea

A German delegation led by Dr. Gerd Muller, the Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, paid a one day visit to Eritrea on Tuesday (December 15). Dr. Muller held talks with President Isaias Afwerki.

Kenya

President Kenyatta opened the World Trade Organization Ministerial Meeting which is being held for the first time in Africa, in Nairobi on Tuesday December 15). (**See article**)

Somalia

National and regional leaders in Somalia ended a three-day meeting of the National Consultative Forum in Mogadishu on Wednesday (December 16). It decided the next election in 2016 would be based on a combination of district and clan processes. (**See article**)

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke strongly condemned renewed clan fighting in Beled Weyne on Tuesday, (December 15). The President said “Clan clashes must end and those who are involved should know that they will be held accountable.”

South Sudan

The Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC), set up by the IGAD’s mediation for South Sudan to oversee full implementation of the Compromise Peace Agreement signed in August by the warring parties of

South Sudan has set out a detailed timetable for the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity on 22 January, 2016.

Sudan

The United Nations Security Council on Tuesday (December 15) extended for another five months the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). It also called for Sudan and South Sudan to swiftly resume regular meetings to resolve the final status of the region.

Informal meetings between Sudanese government and Sudan's People Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) delegations started on Wednesday (December 16) in Addis Ababa to discuss areas of disagreement before resuming official talks.

International Conference on Universal Health Coverage in Tokyo....

The International Conference on Universal Health Coverage in the New Development Era was held in Tokyo on Wednesday this week (December 16) under the theme: "Toward Building Resilient and Sustainable Health Systems". The Conference was co-organized by the Japan Center for International Exchange; the Japanese Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance and of Health, Labor and Welfare; and the Japan International Cooperation Agency. Other collaborators in the Conference included the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; the China Medical Board; the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; the Global Health Innovative Technology Fund); Japan's Anti-Tuberculosis Association; the Rockefeller Foundation; the United Nations Foundation; the World Bank Group and the World Health Organization.

On September 25 this year, the 193 members of the United Nations General Assembly formally adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This new development agenda reflected the evolution that has taken place in international development since the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, and acknowledged the necessity for further efforts and an enhanced global partnership to address the inequalities within and among countries in terms of the progress they have made toward eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions. The global balance of power has also shifted since 2000, as new economies have emerged and resources, actors, and methodologies have become more diverse. In the health field, the international community has committed itself to ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for all through the achievement of Universal Health Coverage. As such, this Conference was designed to explore the role of Universal Health Coverage in the transition from MDGs to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and enhance preparedness and responses to health crises based on the lessons learned from the recent Ebola crisis.

Opening the Conference, Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe noted that Japan had long contributed to global health challenges by mobilizing expertise, taking action and producing tangible results. He pointed out that the reason why his country prioritized health came from the conviction that it was among the most important elements within the concept of human security, which consistently strove for the protection and empowerment of all individuals and the fulfillment of their potential. Prime Minister Abe said, "one of the most overarching goals of my tenure as Prime Minister has been to make a 'Proactive Contribution to Peace' based on the principles of international cooperation. This means that contributing to world peace and prosperity is a fundamental principle and aim of Japan's foreign policy. To

this end, I believe that playing a major role in the effort to meet global challenges including global health, based on the concept of human security, is nothing less than the implementation of our ‘Proactive Contribution to Peace’”. Prime Minister Abe reminded his listeners that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which was adopted at the United Nations in September 2015 was set to meet numerous health related targets including the achievement of Universal Health Coverage as well as put in place a wide range of countermeasures against health threats including infectious diseases.

Touching upon the health challenges that the world is currently facing, the Prime Minister underlined the need to strengthen the response to public health and emphasized the need to strengthen the response to public health emergencies. He stressed the need to proactively implement global measures that were able to respond swiftly and effectively to the emergence of an epidemic of infectious disease or other public health emergency. He cited the Pandemic Emergency Financing facility proposed by the World Bank and the Contingency Fund for Emergencies established by World Health Organization as important tools to mobilize financial resources when a public health emergency occurs. Secondly, the Prime Minister stressed the need to provide basic health services to all individuals throughout the entirety of their lives. In order to address these two issues simultaneously Prime Minister Abe said that health systems needed to be resilient, sustainable and inclusive. To develop such health systems, in accordance with the unique circumstances of each respective country, the Prime Minister added that strong political will, clear plans, and the mobilization of adequate financial and human resources on a global scale including developing countries, were indispensable.

One of the key sessions of the Conference on Universal Health Coverage was dedicated to Ethiopia. The session reflected on Ethiopia's successful record in the provision of health services and facilities for millions of its people and on its remarkable achievement of the health-related Millennium Development Goals. Ethiopia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Tedros Adhanom noted that in Ethiopia, health concerns were the subject of twin principles. In the first instance, health was considered as a rights issue, an end by itself; and secondly, the Minister underlined, health was also a means to development. Dr. Tedros said: "Ethiopia has achieved many of the Millennium Development Goals, including a 69% cutback in maternal mortality and a decline in fertility rate from 7.7 % in the 1990s to 4.1% in 2014." He also noted that Ethiopia had achieved the target on reducing HIV prevalence, tuberculosis and malaria deaths. The Minister said the country's success in all these areas underlined the strong political commitment of the Ethiopian government. He added that Ethiopia had now embarked on forging universal Primary Health Care. This, he said, was do-able.

Following the exercise of ownership at the level of political leadership and of ownership at the grassroots level, Dr. Tedros said that Ethiopia has managed to break the conventional understanding of the provider-receiver cycle in the health system. In doing so, the Minister said Ethiopia set up a vibrant Women Development Army and mobilized millions of community members to implement the activities of the health system, literally providing door-to-door services. On top of the country's ownership of the health system and services, Dr. Tedros also noted that Ethiopia had been able to forge genuine and effective collaboration with partners. Looking to the future, the Minister emphasized the importance of building a strong health system with continuous improvement mechanisms rather than merely engaging in emergency systems.

As one of the first major conferences on global health to be held after the adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, the International Conference on Universal Health Coverage was able to identify opportunities and challenges in changing epidemiological and demographic concerns and in the evolving development context. It also discussed national institutional arrangements and the proposed changes in global institutions and governance structures in order to promote sustainable and equitable Universal Health Coverage. In addition, the Conference was able to define the role of the G7 in promoting equity in health and enhancing preparedness for health crises; to discuss the expectations for the 2016 G7 Summit and ministerial meetings; and explore how to strengthen collaboration on global health issues with the G7 and regional and global institutions, emerging countries, and non-state actors. In May, Japan will be hosting the first G7 Summit since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals last September and the Ebola crisis. Prime Minister Abe said this would provide a key opportunity to move the global health agenda forward.

...and an Ethiopian Investment Seminar in Tokyo

An Ethiopian investment Seminar was held in Tokyo Thursday (December 17). Co-organized by the Embassy of Ethiopia in Tokyo and the Japan Institute for Overseas Investment, the Seminar was held under the theme: “Manufacturing Investment and Development of Industrial Zone in Ethiopia”. Dr. Tedros Adhanom, Minister of Foreign Affairs, gave keynote address underlining that since the establishment of formal diplomatic relations in 1955, Ethiopia and Japan have maintained very close and cordial relations. Taking note of Japan’s support to Ethiopia in the alleviation of poverty and enhancement of productivity, Dr. Tedros also emphasized the way Ethiopia had benefited from the Japan’s Kaizen Philosophy and from a policy of industrial dialogue. He said the support of the Japanese

government in agriculture, water supplies, education, and infrastructure development had positively impacted on the lives of millions of Ethiopians. The Minister commended the people and Government of Japan for their support to allow Ethiopian Airlines fly to Japan which had, he said, proved an important milestone in boosting bilateral ties and creating an enabling environment for expanding trade, investment, tourism and above all people-to-people relations with Ethiopia in particular and Africa in general.

Reflecting on the positive developments in Ethiopia, the Minister said that: “Ethiopia is an emerging country, one of the most vibrant in Africa; it is politically stable and peaceful. It has a government which is committed to fight poverty, enhance democracy and good governance; the economy has expanded by 10% or more every year for more than a decade and we are determined to sustain this impressive growth.” These developments, the Minister added, were not confined to Ethiopia as the country was also playing a role in infrastructure connectivity with neighboring countries, constructing roads and railways across borders and supplying power to the region. Dr. Tedros stressed that the Government of Ethiopia was committed to creating a business environment that ensures a platform for the smooth flow of Foreign Direct Investment and the growth of industrial parks in the major cities. All this was aided by the provision of a legal framework with insurance and credit facilities and other support institutions.

Over and above the overall conducive business environment and political stability, the Minister pointed out that Ethiopia offered significant advantages to investors, including macro-economic stability, abundant natural resources and a trainable work force. Other factors included low-cost energy, a sizable and captive market, a clean business climate and most of all a committed government bent on transforming the economy from a largely agricultural basis into an industrialized manufacturing economy.

Accordingly, the Minister said, building and developing industrial parks had now become the country's top priority. In this connection, the Minister said, "I'm particularly pleased to see the growing interest on the part of Japanese investors to engage in these developments." Dr. Tedros added that, "I'd like to assure you of the continuous support and facilitation by the relevant agencies in Ethiopia to extend support to those interested to invest in our industrial parks."

The Minister also reminded his listeners that in September 2015 Japan's Prime Minister Abe had announced JETRO's decision to open a branch office in Addis Ababa. This, he said, would help attract many more Japanese companies and further strengthen the investment relations between the two countries. The African-Japan Business Investment Forum which was held in Addis Ababa last September, the Minister said, could also be seen as a demonstration of Japan's keen interest in scaling up business and investment in Africa as well as Ethiopia. The Minister concluded by hoping that the Seminar would provide his listeners with all the necessary and relevant information about investment opportunities in the priority manufacturing sectors in Ethiopia and the current status of the development of industrial parks.

Following Dr. Tedros' keynote address, Ethiopia's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Japan, Dr. Markos Tekle, briefed Japanese investors and companies on the overview of Ethiopia's Investment Laws and the progress in industrial zone development. He noted that Ethiopia offered numerous advantages to invest and do business, including solid financial incentive packages, rapidly improving logistics and infrastructure, very competitive cost of operations and a hospitable environment for expatriates. The Ambassador said the financial incentive packages comprised an assortment of income tax exemption, duty-free

import of capital goods, construction materials, machines and vehicles, access to loans from the Ethiopian Development bank at low interest rates for up to 70% of the total investments, particularly in the manufacturing sector, and preferential market access packages, such as AGOA, EBA and the COMESA free-trade engagement. On the provision of improved logistics and infrastructure, the Ambassador noted the availability of direct flights to 90 destinations with Ethiopian Airlines, 28 international airlines flying to Ethiopia, a fast growing network of highways, domestic airports and railways and on site customs in each park.

On the nature of the very competitive cost of operations in the country, Ambassador Markos said that Ethiopia was characterized by competitive labor costs real state costs at par with comparable countries and lower costs of business operation in general. Describing on the country's hospitable environment the Ambassador said the political stability, large network of international educational institutions and the numerous and excellent recreational facilities and the good weather make Ethiopia a favored investment destination. In addition, Ambassador Markos, said investors engaging in industrial parks would be met with easy access to rent or buy pre-built factory sheds, easy access to serviced land, common facilities, efficient solid and liquid waste management, dedicated power, easy access to government agencies and custom clearance.

Kenichi Ohno, Professor at Japan's National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, also briefed participants on Japanese industrial cooperation, speaking on Kaizen and the country's industrial policy dialogue with Ethiopia. Expressing Ethiopia's uniqueness, Professor Ohno said Ethiopia's resolve and speed was combined with enhanced policy capability on the ground, sustainable growth and industrialization. On Ethiopia-Japan Industry Policy Dialogue, the Professor emphasized the practical benefits

and prospects of implementing the Kaizen philosophy and the numerous platforms dedicated to forge policy dialogue among the two countries. He noted that industrial park development in Ethiopia was now being prioritized with rapid creation of organizations, laws and regulations, investor services, and construction of industrial zones. Other speakers at the Seminar included Ms. Junko Ishii, Director-General in charge of Industry and Business Development Support, JETRO (the Japan External Trade organization). She also briefed Japanese investors about the investment potentials in Ethiopia. Mr. Endalkachew Sime, Deputy-secretary general for Operations at the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral associations, presented a brief sketch of the state of Joint Venture and Business Partnerships in Ethiopia.

The Paris Conference of Parties, COP 21

The Conference of Parties, COP21, took place in Paris from November 30 to December 12, over-running slightly as many expected. At the opening, addressing a record number of Heads of States at a conference for climate change, French President François Hollande said, "No conference has ever gathered so many leaders from so many countries ... but never before have the international stakes been so high." Reaching agreement, many immediately called the conference a "historical turning point" in the fight against climate change.

French Foreign Minister Fabius summed it up: “We have achieved what we thought was impossible...The proposed agreement is differentiated fair, durable dynamic balanced and legally-binding...” UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon said: “the time has come to acknowledge that national interests are best served by acting in the global interest and solidarity. Nature is sending us urgent signals. We must protect the planet that sustains us. For that we need all our hands on deck.” President Obama praised the Agreement as “historic” but said “The problem's not solved because of this accord, but make no mistake; the Paris agreement establishes the enduring framework the world needs to solve the climate crisis.” He added that: “It creates the mechanism, the architecture, for us to continually tackle this problem in an effective way.” The targets are bold but they also empower “businesses, scientists, engineers, workers, and the private sector, investors, to work together.” China's chief negotiator Xie Zhenhua described the deal as not perfect, but added: “this does not prevent us from marching historical steps forward.”.

The main elements in the agreement are that all countries agreed with the aim of significantly reducing the risks and impacts of climate change, limiting the temperature rise to “well-below” 2.0C above pre-industrial levels, and “pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5C,” though many smaller island nations wanted a more audacious goal, limiting warming to 1.5C. All countries agreed to voluntarily cut emissions with the long-term aim of reducing to zero the net amount of emissions in the second half of the century. The rich, and some wealthy developing countries, will mobilize \$100 billion a year from 2020 to help the developing countries adapt to climate change, and this figure will be progressively scaled up. The pledge to provide US\$100bn by 2020 to the developing world was made back in 2009, but the funds have been slow in coming. Currently, of the promised \$100bn only about 4% has been distributed among the developing

countries. The Paris Agreement recognized this by stating that the collective financial contribution of US\$100bn per year from the developed world for mitigation and adaptation actions would be continued till 2025. In addition, it also recognized the need to reward developing countries for their action towards building a carbon neutral economy by establishing result-based payments for alternative policies, in effect making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development.

For poorer countries, adaptation is more important than mitigation of their already low carbon output, but so far only 24% of climate financing is spent on adaptation. According to Kofi Annan's Africa Progress Report, around \$11 billion is required by 2020, but development finance for adaptation in Africa has amounted to \$516 million on average each year. This may now change with the launch of the Green Climate Fund as this will devote 50% of all its funding to adaptation. It will also be "gender responsive", to tackle the special vulnerability faced by rural women. Equally, the structure of climate financing needs to become more responsive to the priorities of the recipients rather than the priorities of the international implementing institutions and the donors. Capacity needs to be increased and investment is needed to boost capabilities of government departments. Overall, in fact, funds need to be more flexible and less risk averse as well as more transparent. Greater emphasis should be placed on the development of national capacity, and on appropriate ways to engage private businesses and investors. Developing countries are increasingly seeing a low-carbon development pathway as the way forward, but they require technology transfer and financing to achieve this. It is increasingly less about aid than investment with African governments increasingly focusing on domestic resource mobilization that requires clamping down on tax dodging and curbing illicit financial flows out of the continent.

The agreement also embraced each party's successive Intended Nationally Determined Contributions and allows for these to reflect a party's highest possible ambition, and its common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances. Prior to the meeting, all signatory nations were required to submit their INDCs and indeed many countries did manage to do so, including all of the major developed and developing countries, though contributions are variable. Developed countries refer to actual cuts in emissions; developing countries have provided a range of targets including limits on emissions in comparison with the results of 'business as usual'. The Paris Agreement now provides for the need to review these national implementation activities every five years, though there is no mention of any sanctions if targets are not met. Countries have shown their commitment in different ways in submitting their INDCs. Ethiopia, for example, also mentioned her hard work on clean electric power from renewable resources, on increasing resilience to climate change, on modernizing livestock management and on conducting climate smart agriculture. According its INDC Ethiopia intends to limit its net greenhouse gas emissions to 145MT CO₂e or lower in 2030 that is a 64% reduction from the 'business-as-usual'. It is an ambitious commitment to curb its greenhouse gas emissions between now and 2030. In the context of the INDC, the parties have agreed to promote environmental integrity, transparency, accuracy, completeness, comparability and consistency, and ensure the avoidance of double counting.

Questions remain. For instance, there is still widespread disagreement over how much of the proposed funding should be grants as opposed to loans, and over what the money should be spent on. The issue of holding countries to emission cuts, remains a serious problem. Emissions reductions promised at the conference still mean 2.7C of warming, far above the agreed target.

To fix this, pledges will be reviewed in 2019 and countries will have to endure a "global stock take" of all emissions in 2023 and every five years thereafter. Two years after each "stock take", new pledges will be made. The UN is hoping that peer pressure will instead keep countries on track, despite a lack of penalties for missing targets. The Agreements reached at COP 21 are not legally binding, so the impact of the Paris Climate Change Conference still depends on committed government and domestic policy makers. Equally important will be the subsidies for renewable energy, restrictions on fossil-fuel extraction and true dedication in investing in "carbon-capture and storage technology."

Despite this, however, COP 21 could well be the turning point which shows that the world can stand for the greatest common causes, for the future of humanity and for global cooperation and peace. There was genuine concern about the climate visible in Paris, and, throughout, developed countries said they accepted their obligation to lead the efforts to respond to climate change. Indeed, the Paris Agreement marks an unprecedented political recognition of the risks of climate change. It has underlined the urgency that more vulnerable nations feel about the issue, and it has linked an economic transition to political progress. Arguably, the most significant effect of the Paris agreement in the next few years will be the signal it sends to investors, that the governments of the world have decided that the age of fossil fuels has started drawing to a close.

The Agreement makes a real effort to be balanced, enshrining the concept of "Principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities" principle. Indeed, the theme runs throughout the accord, drawing distinctions between responsibilities of developed and developing countries all the way through. It recognizes loss and damage, speaking of "averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including extreme weather events and slow onset events, and the

role of sustainable development in reducing the risk of loss and damage". The Agreement establishes a task force on climate change-related displacement and a "clearinghouse" for risk transfer, a form of insurance. It requests cooperation between countries on early warning systems, emergency preparedness, information sharing on slow onset events, comprehensive risk management, the resilience of communities, livelihoods and ecosystems; and "non-economic losses", recognizing the cultural losses that could result from climate change impacts.

Countries have promised to improve reporting on finance, and committed to balance funding between mitigation efforts and adaptation, significantly increasing adaptation support before 2020, and helping the most vulnerable countries deal with the impacts of a warmer world. In Copenhagen, rich countries promised to give \$100 billion a year from 2020 to 2025. The Paris Agreement confirms this but it also adds that this number is only the "floor" of climate finance and that there is an intention to scale this up. It acknowledges the financial contributions of developing countries, saying they can continue to make voluntary commitments to giving further cash. In its preamble the Agreement tells countries that, when taking action to address climate change, they should "promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity."

The Paris Agreement speaks of "universal access to sustainable energy in developing countries," in particular in Africa, through the enhanced deployment of renewable energy. There's no mention of fossil fuels and this is perhaps the heart of the potential impact of the Agreement. It provides a foundation and impetus for investors to make different decisions and for

countries to change the way their economies work and how people live. It is about making a global transition to a green economy.

A Conference on Journalism in the Global Context

A Conference on Journalism in the Global Context was held at Addis Ababa University on Friday last week (December 11). The theme of the conference was "Perspectives from Africa - Challenges for Europe". The Addis Ababa University School of Journalism in collaboration with the Erich Brost Institute organized the Conference in partnership with International Journalism faculty of the TU Dortmund University in Germany.

After opening remarks by Dr. Negri Lencho, the Dean of the School of Journalism and Communication at Addis Ababa University and from Professor Susanne Fengler, Erich Brost institute, there were presentations on the media and on foreign coverage of Africa presented by the Deputy Chief of Staff at the African Union Commission, Ambassador Febe Potgieter-Gqubule and by Mr. Eric Chinje of the African Media Initiative. Both stressed the AU's efforts to work with the media to put more focus on the structural transformation of the continent and the need to encourage both national and international media to give more coverage to such areas as the transformation of agriculture, infrastructure development, urbanization and the numerous other issues which are shaping the future of the continent.

The presenters also raised the challenge of telling the positive side of the African story and of rejecting the continued negative coverage of the international media. For example, last year the coverage of African Union

Assembly by the international media focused mainly on President Robert Mugabe's election as a Chairman of the African union rather than on the agendas discussed during the summit. They pointed out that unless Africa starts to tell its own story, as the European media does, there is little chance of improving international coverage. Referring to the negative coverage of Africa, mainly shaped by the perspectives of foreigners, Ambassador Potgieter-Gqubule raised the "danger of the single story" concept developed by the Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi. This is not primarily an issue of creating stereotypes but of those stereotypes becoming the only story. To avoid this danger journalists should take care to tell the stories from different angles and capture the complexities of any story.

After the two presentations, panel discussions covered such issues as migration, business and governance. In the discussions, panelists Veye Tatah, Editor in Chief and Publisher of Africa Positive magazine; John Nigrachu, a news reporter from the Daily Nation of Kenya; William Davison, an Addis Ababa-based journalist for Bloomberg Business and Tamerat Gebregiorgis, Managing Editor of the Ethiopian weekly Fortune, noted the challenges faced by the media including the capacity of media organizations in Africa, coverage of African issues from non-African perspectives, the interests of subscribers that focused on national issues rather than regional issues and the lack of original reporting.

The panelists also discussed the current environment for the media in the Horn of Africa on a comparative basis. The experience of the Daily Nation in covering the Kenyan parliament and the sensitive issue of corruption was mentioned as an example of reporting governance-related issues. The negative influence of advertisers, the relatively high coverage of scandals and less detailed attention paid to positive developments like the MPESA mobile payment system and the Ushahidi election-monitoring software were

seen as challenges for profit-oriented private media organizations. It was suggested that the private media “fixation” on domestic issues in many countries and the lack of interest in providing publicity to success stories also contributed to the continued relatively negative coverage for Africa. Participants of conference underlined the importance of establishing more Africa-based international media organizations, working in collaboration with domestic media, to reflect balanced coverage of the continent.

The Fifth Conference of the Global Knowledge Exchange Network

The 5th International Multidisciplinary Conference on Connecting Knowledge and Innovation was held for the first time in Africa this week at the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa. The Conference, on Monday and Tuesday this week (December 14-15) was followed by a workshop at Jimma University on Thursday and Friday (December 17-18). The theme for this 5th conference is “Connecting Knowledge and Innovation 2015”. The Global Knowledge Exchange Network was established in 2011 with the aim of facilitating a sustainable exchange of knowledge for African and Friends of Africa, for researchers, academics, practitioners and students from different disciplinary backgrounds. It has, therefore, taken the first steps to provide a platform dedicated to facilitating debate and exchanges of views between various disciplines with a view to unlocking the massive potential of scientific knowledge scattered around the world.

The Conference was organized by the Global Knowledge Exchange Network of the UK and **by** Jimma University of Ethiopia in close collaboration with the Addis Ababa Science and Technology University, the Satellite Connections in Education and Health Group, the Alliance for

Brain Gain and Innovative Development , and the Network of Ethiopian Scholars (NES-GLOBAL). The conference's focus was on exploring and increasing synergies for African knowledge-based entities to increase their "Knowledge and Innovation" as well as further explore the best ways to collaborate with and participate in science and evidence-based research projects. In addition, the conference also generated ideas for academics, researchers and practitioners to find new, organized ways of thinking about topics or ideas and suggest promising directions for future research. The conference also provided extensive possibilities for the exchange of scientific research findings. Nearly twenty papers were presented, and panel discussions focusing on different initiatives and experiences for sharing knowledge and technology were also a central element in the conference.

At the opening of the conference Dr Amare Desta, Coordinator of the Global Knowledge Exchange Network, underlined that "the Diaspora community has a number of contributions to make in such kind of international event. In fact concerning the higher education sector," he said, "the Diasporas can contribute to the growth and development of the sector especially in addressing the human resource challenges. They could also contribute to the betterment of educational quality in universities and colleagues through technology transfer and collaboration in research and participation in the exchange of best practices."

Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros Adhanom gave a keynote address, underlining that there was an increasing reliance on international networks to develop mutual partnership, cooperation, and collaboration as well as on transfer of knowledge and technology. The Minister said the necessity for intellectual capital and concomitant knowledge and technology transfer was more pressing than ever before. This was needed to vigorously sustain Ethiopia's two-digit economic growth of the last 11 years and to provide it with the

capacity to remain competitive in the global economy. Dr. Tedros said Ethiopia believed that there was a huge untapped amount of knowledge in the Diaspora which had tremendous intellectual capital and this could effectively fill the skill and knowledge gap in various socio-economic sectors. He further added that was why Ethiopia was exerting the utmost efforts to mobilize Diaspora members to serve as a bridge to forge mutually beneficial partnerships and cooperation for the betterment of the people and the country.

Following the conference, there was a workshop held in Jimma University for conference participants and others. The major aim of the workshop was the creation of an opportunity for learning and sharing knowledge in various research areas and methodologies in addition to the creation of an enabling environment for the exchange of experience in terms of post-graduate research project supervision and mentorship. Over 400 participants drawn from the Diaspora community living in different parts of the world and Ethiopian academics and scholars attended. Overall, the expectation is that the week will provide for recommendations on ways to expand and elaborate improved knowledge-exchange among Ethiopians in the Diaspora and their counterparts in the country.

The World Trade Conference Ministerial meeting in Nairobi

The 10th World Trade Organization (WTO) Conference was held this week

in Nairobi, (December 15 -18), the first of its kind in Africa. The WTO, founded in 1995, currently has 162 members, of which 117 are developing countries or separate customs territories. Decisions in the WTO are generally taken by consensus of the entire membership. The highest institutional body is the Ministerial Conference, which meets every two years. Its aim is to open up trade for the benefit of all, providing a forum for negotiating agreements to address obstacles to international trade and ensure a level playing field as well as provide a legal and institutional framework for the implementation and monitoring of trade agreements.

Opening of the conference, Director General Roberto Azevedo, who noted that the conference marked the 20th anniversary of the WTO, called on its members to be inspired by the ‘historic’ Paris agreement on global warming, and reach a similarly ambitious pact to liberalize world trade to lift millions of people out of poverty. In his key note address to the Conference, Kenya’s President Uhuru Kenyatta said countries this year had displayed unparalleled cooperation in addressing some of the most pressing problems facing humanity. He hoped for a similar spirit of cooperation would be present to achieve a successful conclusion of the Nairobi Ministerial Conference of the WTO. President Kenyatta said it was important to build on the WTO’s Bali Ministerial Declaration two years ago, and agree on tangible outcomes in Nairobi to lend credence to the WTO as a rule-based organization. The negotiation in agriculture in the Doha Round were the ones from which developing countries can derive most gains, he said, and agriculture was particularly important for Africa considering that majority of the population depends on it for food, livelihood, and employment. Distortions in this sector had continued to prevent Africa from realizing its full potential, he said, adding that Africa’s farmers cannot compete against heavily subsidized farmers in developed countries.

Addressing the Conference, Kenya's Foreign Affairs and International Trade Cabinet Secretary Amina Mohamed said the 10th Ministerial Conference would lose its appeal as a negotiating forum if it does not come up with agreements in Nairobi. She said if decisions were not made on key issues, members would have to make a decision to have an organization with a negotiating function or leave that out and focus on dispute settlement and trade agreement. She told the conference that many governments were investing heavily in building alliances through preferential trade agreements outside the WTO. These, she said, "can complement the multilateral trading system but they can never provide a substitute." She said the variety of factors, geopolitical rivalry, the threat of protectionism, and increasingly fragmented trade relationships, made a strong case for putting aside differences and revitalizing the WTO. Africa faced formidable development challenges and needed trade to build prosperity, She said that Nairobi would not be able to complete the WTO's current negotiating agenda though some progress could be made, but the key challenge was to forge agreement on how the WTO can move forward after Nairobi.

A head of the Conference, the WTO Director-General Roberto Azevedo appealed for one last effort from trade ministers to deliver some significant progress. He called on member states to "seize this last opportunity to show the flexibility and political will that we need." At the center of the arguments within the WTO are the trade-distorting farm subsidies of rich countries and the adverse impact these have on millions of resource-poor subsistence farmers in developing countries. India has pointed out that farm lobbies in the developed world shape the destiny of these poor farmers and the G33, a coalition of 48 countries, wants to see flexibility for developing countries in limiting market opening of the agriculture sector. The reduction of subsidies was originally a clear mandate of the Doha Round negotiations with a 'development' agenda.

The Doha Round, which began in 2001, is the most ambitious set of negotiations since the modern multilateral trading system was set up in the 1940s. It covered agriculture, manufacturing, services and trade rules, and the assumption was that rich western countries would open up their markets to agricultural goods in return for better access for their manufactured goods and service sector companies. From the outset of the Doha Round progress was slow and since the global recession in 2008, the Doha talks have developed into an impasse between the developed and the developing world.

Deep differences, however, persist between the developed and the developing world on market opening commitments. It has proved difficult to reach any consensus and particularly so over distortions in world trade. The developed countries now want to see the Doha Round either end or be expanded to include the latest challenges facing global trade, including value chains, e-commerce, labor, environment, competition policies, investment pacts and state-owned enterprises. Michael Froman, the US trade representative, said recently the attempt to secure a comprehensive global deal has become stuck and it was time to admit that “Doha was designed in a different era, for a different era, and much has changed since...It is time for the world to free itself from the strictures of Doha.” Developing countries want other interests, including protection of the interests of poor farmers and a permanent solution for the issue of public stock-holding for food security purposes, to be priorities. They do not want dilution of the development elements of the Doha Round through emphasis on the new interests of the developed world. They also want developed countries to drastically reduce the massive trade-distorting farm subsidies.

The success of the Doha Round negotiations would go a long way to correct the disparities in agricultural trade rules that many see as biased in favor of

developed countries. Indeed, India has suggested there could be no better tribute to the Ministerial Conference taking place in Africa for the first time than to come up with measures to protect the poor farmers and the right to food security of developing countries. It wants to see agreement on a Special Safeguard Mechanism, allowing temporary rises of duties to counter sudden import surges and price falls, and a permanent solution on public stockholding for food security.

The National Consultative Forum considers Somali electoral options

The second plenary of the National Consultative Forum on the 2016 electoral process opened in Mogadishu on Sunday (December 13), with national and regional leaders reviewing the outcome of public consultations across Somalia and within the diaspora and deliberating on the most appropriate and inclusive electoral process for 2016.

Representatives from the federal government and federal parliament, emerging and existing federal member states, civil society, women and youth met to discuss how to elect members of the legislature and the executive branch when their mandates expire next year. Those attending included President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud; the Speaker of the Federal Parliament, Mohammad Sheikh Osman (Jawari); Federal Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke; the President of Puntland, Abdiweli Ali “Gaas”, the President of the South-West Administration, Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adan, the President of Jubaland, Ahmed Islaan “Madobe,” and the President of Galmudug, Abdulkarim Guled, as well as Federal ministers, members of the Federal Parliament, representatives from the regional administrations, the Deputy Governors of Benadir, Hiraaan and Middle Shabelle and of Somali civil society, including women and youth. Attendees also included members of the diplomatic corps and of international

organizations including the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Somalia, Nicholas Kay, and the new Special Representative of the Chair of the Commission of the African Union and Head of AMISOM, Ambassador Francisco Caetano Jose Madeira.

After three days of discussions, the National Consultative Forum therefore agreed that there should be no extension of the constitutional term limits of the executive and legislature, and that the electoral process in 2016 should involve the formation of both the Lower House and the Upper House. Parliament is to have representation based on a balance between the constituency and clan; and the members will be chosen by electoral colleges which will convene and vote in Federal state capitals. These electoral colleges are to contain representation from women, youth and civil society, and there will be a minimum fixed number of seats reserved for women in both houses as well as enhanced representation of youth and marginalized groups. The Forum agreed that a political roadmap should be developed and agreed for the period between now and the implementation of the electoral process in 2016, and secondly for the period from 2016 to 2020 to deliver universal suffrage elections in 2020. This roadmap should be an integral part of the final agreement on the electoral process for 2016. The final details of the electoral model and its implementation will be discussed with constituencies and agreed and launched in Kismayo on 10 January 2016.

The National Consultative Forum said it welcomed the free expression of many different and often divergent views expressed during the consultations that it described as a major exercise of participatory politics. It noted the desire of Somalis to see a political transition when the mandates of the legislature and the executive end in August and September 2016, respectively. It stressed the electoral process must reflect the diversity of Somalia. The Forum said the outcome of the regional consultations was that

there was no consensus on any single electoral option preferred by all Somalis. It therefore concluded that only a model combining the elements from each of the four options could provide an electoral process that reflected the preferences and critical conditions that people wanted.

The Forum reviewed the conclusions from the public consultations held across Somalia in November and from those held in the Diaspora in December. During these meetings, Forum delegates and others attending systematically discussed four different options for the electoral process. The first was a Nation-wide Electoral College set up to elect all 275 MPs. This would combine nation-wide political parties with an electoral system of proportional representation. Second: State-level Electoral Colleges formed in each of the existing and emerging Federal Member States should elect MPs to represent their respective Member States. Third: District-level Electoral Colleges formed in each of the 92 districts based on the pre-1991 administrative divisions to elect MPs for each district. The final option was for a Clan-based Electoral College: Electoral College to be formed on the basis of clan elders but with enhanced representation to select MPs to represent their clans as had been the case in 2012 process.

On Monday at the opening of the forum, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud told the gathering that the Forum was a critical step in the country's political history and called for fruitful deliberations in line with the aspirations of the Somali people: "The people of Somalia have spoken and expressed their views." People want their views to be taken into consideration, he said, "and that is what should be done." Speaker Mohamed Sheikh Osman urged the delegates to put aside their individual interests and work for the common good of Somalia and the Somali people. Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke explained that the consultations were carried out widely to give Somalis, including those in the diaspora, the opportunity to air their views.

SRSR Nicholas Kay described the forum as historic and appealed for compromise and consensus among the leaders to move the process forward: “The process will not be perfect. It will not achieve everything for everyone. Indeed it will not achieve everything for anyone. But everyone will get something. Reaching a compromise on an electoral model that meets the most essential requirements and can be implemented next year is a critical step on the road towards your ultimate goal: universal elections”

Mr. Kay said this achievement could not be overstated. It had been “a major exercise in participatory politics”, and a “manifestation of the principal values of democracy and a very tangible demonstration of how Somalia is returning to peace and security.” He said it was the first time for decades that Somalis had been able to have a collective say in shaping their own political future.

Mr. Kay noted the many different and often divergent views, describing this as not a problem but “part of a democratic culture”. Not perfect but the best available. This was also true, he said, of the electoral process that would be decided. “The process will not achieve everything for everyone. Indeed it will not achieve everything for anyone. But everyone will get something.”

Mr. Kay emphasized that achieving a compromise on an electoral model that could meet the most essential requirements and which could be implemented next year was “a critical step on the road towards the ultimate goal of universal elections.” Mr. Kay said next year’s electoral model would have to be a hybrid, combining selection with election. But, he said, there would be electoral choice, and that was “a key leap forward”. All those people who have now had a say in the decision, including women and youth, would not be silent again in the future, he said. They had played a big role in the process so far and they would have to be represented adequately in the electoral colleges, as well as in the parliament that emerged.

Mr. Kay stressed that reaching agreement would involve making concessions. That was never easy, he said, but it wasn't only leaders who needed the courage to take difficult decisions. Constituencies and communities behind the leaders also needed the courage to accept difficult decisions. He said that the international partners hoped that the process would reach a strong and binding political agreement on an electoral model that provided at least for four things. The first was an element of choice, with no mere nominations of MPs and with voting taking place across the country not just in Mogadishu. It should produce a parliament with at least 30% women and increased representation of people less than 35 years; and finally provide a system that provides a bridge between 2012 and full democratic elections at the end of the next parliament. He urged the Conference to also agree on the political and practical steps needed between now and August 2016 to implement the model, and also the later requirements for post-2016 actions to deliver one-person one-vote elections at the end of the next parliament. Mr. Kay said specifically that firm political commitments and timelines were needed.

He said that the world, through the United Nations Security Council, had underlined the importance of meeting the 2016 deadline. He reiterated yet again that "there is no international appetite for an extension beyond the time set in the Provisional Federal Constitution", adding firmly "I believe the Somali people expect its leaders to keep their word." Somalis, he said, must agree on their own political and electoral system. But time was short and it was necessary to make "careful, but rapid, progress." Somalia was engaged in a state-building project that was a lot like a house-building project: "The foundations are the federal member states you have created, the walls are the federal constitution, and the roof of the house is the electoral process for 2016." He asked if the house would be strong enough:

“I think it will, I think the foundations are pretty solid, the walls are there and the roof should be good enough. My message is what you are doing is building something that will have to be good enough for the weather in August 2016.” Mr. Kay noted that it would be possible to make the roof better, after 2016 and strengthen the walls.

In 2013, Somalia’s government drafted its Vision 2016 with the aim of providing a framework for the Government until the end of its mandate in 2016. Vision 2016 outlined three pillars: preparing the country for free and fair elections in 2016, finalizing the Provisional Constitution, and completing the process of establishing the Federal State with the establishment of the remaining federal member states.

Vision 2016 and the international community supported this mandate following the election of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, a new parliament and adoption of a new constitution in 2012.

The 2015 Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Program launched in Addis Ababa

The United Nations Development Program released its annual Human Development Report on Monday (December 14) at the UN Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa. The report titled "Work for Human Development" calls for respectable and equitable work for all. The notion of human development in the report stresses the fact that development is much more than economic growth. Equity, sustainability, productivity, empowerment, cooperation and security are its main pillars, and the concept

emphasizes that the primary focus should be given to building human capacities.

The Human Development Report was first launched in 1990. It has been given recognition by the United Nations as “an independent intellectual exercise” and “an important tool for raising awareness about human development around the world.” This report is now released annually by the United Nations Development Program and is the product of a carefully selected team of leading scholars, development practitioners and members of the Human Development Report Office of UNDP. Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn; UNDP Administrator Helen Clark; the Director of the Human Development Report Office, Selim Jahan; and the Executive Secretary of the United Nations’ Economic Commission for Africa, Dr. Carlos Lopes, attended the launch of this year’s Human Development Report in Addis Ababa.

The findings in the Report underline that the idea of work is broader and deeper than either jobs or employment alone, and that finding ‘decent work’ for everyone is one of the world's biggest development challenges. The Report proposes the enhancement of human development gains through work, suggesting a set of strategies to create job opportunities, to ensure workers’ well-being and to develop targeted actions that will transform current realities.

In fact, the Report, as Helen Clark, the administrator of UNDP, said attempts to put people rather than economies or economic growth at its center and it focuses on all kinds of paid and unpaid work from running a home to running a business. The Report also tries to address the fact that women are disadvantaged in the world of work. Helen Clark, in her opening speech at the launch of the Report, stated that societies urgently needed new policies, institutional reforms, and more equitable access to care services to

address the major gender imbalances in paid and unpaid work. She went on to point out that all societies would be better off if the half of their members were able to participate fully and equally in work opportunities.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn underlined that Ethiopia attached proper importance and attention towards the aim of achieving sustainable growth by the reduction of poverty. He also emphasized the necessity of holding in-depth discussions on human development to resolve some of these issues highlighted in the Report. Dr. Carlos Lopes, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, said the Report takes a wide view of the concept of work to account for conventional jobs and unpaid care work as well as voluntary work and creative work. It highlighted the progress made and the challenges remaining, depicting many of the different factors affecting the world of work.

The launch of the UNDP Human Development Report concluded by reaching a common consensus that with the incredible progress of African economies over the last decade or so, the main challenge that Africa currently faced was finding a mechanism on how to legalize this expansion of work and to give protection to workers. It was noted that the rights to ‘decent work’ and also to be protected as a worker were fundamental for the development of a country.
