

A Week in the Horn 18.03.2016

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News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma has lauded the relationship between Africa and Italy. The Italian President, Sergio Mattarella, paid an official visit to the African Union (AU) on (March 15, 2016) where he held a bilateral meeting with the Chairperson. "The visit is another concrete step to broaden and deepen the relationship between the AU and Italy," Dr Dlamini said.

The farms of Africa are prospering at last thanks to persistence, technology and decent government, says The Economist (March 16, 2016)

The African Ambassadors Spouses Group (AASG) s held its annual "African Charity Bazaar" at the African Union (AU) Headquarters in Addis Ababa at the end of last week. The annual event, aimed at soliciting fund for charities supporting vulnerable children and women, brought together various NGOs, representatives of embassies based in Addis Ababa, and diplomatic communities, among others.

Ethiopia

Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros Adhanom received Mr. Anthony Lake, UNICEF's Executive Director, in his offices today (March 16, 2016). Mr. Lake also said UNICEF would assist Ethiopia in its efforts of mitigating the current draught, adding that the assistance will not only focus on an immediate response but also on long term sustainability

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn on (March 15, 2016) has urged intellectuals to do their parts in the efforts of forging national consensus and realizing Ethiopian renaissance.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn who received the visiting President of Italy, Sergio Mattarella on (March 14, 2016) recalled the longstanding relations between Ethiopia and Italy and noted that such time-tasted ties should also be strengthened in the business and investment sectors.

Dr. Mulatu Teshome, the President of the FDRE received Sergio Mattarella, President of Italy (March 14, 2016) at the National Palace.

President Sergio Mattarella of Italy who has been on a five-day official tour of Ethiopia (March 14-17, 2016) revealed that his country supports Ethiopia's bid for a non-permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council.

Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros Adhanom held talks with Micheal Keating, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) for Somalia at his offices (March 15, 2016). Discussions focused on efforts of stabilizing Somalia and the new political developments in the country, including upcoming elections.

A two-day Sanitation and Water for All High-Level Ministerial meeting which brought together governments, donors, civil society organizations and development partners opened this week (March 15, 2016) in Addis Ababa at the African Union Headquarters.

The Ethio-South Africa Business and Investment Forum was held in Addis Ababa this week (March 14-15, 2016) bringing together senior government officials and more than 50 companies from the private sectors of both countries.

Sergio Mattarella, President of Italy met with His Holiness Abune Mathias I, Patriarch of Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Archbishop of Axum and Ichege of the See of Saint Taklehaimanot (March 14, 2016) in Addis Ababa.

Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ambassador La Yifan on (March 14, 2016) said Ethiopia if elected as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) will be successful in discharging its responsibilities in the promotion of global peace and development. Accordingly, Ambassador Yifan expressed his support to Ethiopia's bid for a non-permanent seat at the UNSC.

Ethiopia and the World Bank on (March 17, 2016) signed a 33 million USD loan agreement. Ahmed Shide, State Minister of Finance and Economic Cooperation, and Carolyn Turk, World Bank Country Director for Ethiopia, Sudan and South Sudan signed the agreement.

Ethiopia and China signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to commence the construction of Adama equipment manufacturing industrial park

The Ethiopian Railways Corporation on (March 17, 2016) disclosed the construction of four tunnels (half of the proposed no. of tunnels) commenced along the Mekelle-Woldia-Hara Gebeya railway line. The 216 km railway project is progressing as per schedule and is now 28 percent complete.

Addis Ababa is due to host a conference aimed at sharing knowledge and experience in Kaizen management philosophy and implementation strategy, the Ethiopian Kaizen Institute (EKI) disclosed on (March 15, 2016).

Eritrea

Unaccompanied children are fleeing Eritrea to avoid conscription, putting them at risk of abduction and abuse as they seek shelter in places including Europe, a United Nations rights envoy said (March 15, 2016)

Two international right groups have urged the United Nations Human Rights Council, to pay very close attention to the human right violations allegedly committed in Eritrea. While delivering a statement on (March 14, 2016) before the UN Human Rights Council, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project expressed concern over the deteriorating human rights situations and on the conditions of political prisoners

The European Parliament on (March 10, 2016) adopted a resolution on Eritrea pertaining to the human rights situation in the country. The resolution sent a strong signal to the European Commission, the EU Council, member states and the Eritrean government that human rights violations in the country needed to be addressed immediately.

President Isaias Afwerki on (March 15, 2016) departed to Qatar for a working visit. It was reported that President Isaias and the Emir of Qatar, Sheik Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, subsequently met at the State Palace and discussed bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest.

Kenya

British energy group Tullow Oil (March 16, 2016) has discovered oil in Kenya's northern Kerio Valley, a finding that could mean the opening of a second oil basin as the East African country prepares to become an oil exporter for the first time.

Kenya has secured a \$1.5 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund, a facility it is allowed to tap only in case of emergency (March 15, 2016).

Somalia

Thirty insurgents in Somalia's Al-Qaeda-aligned Shebab jihadist group were killed (March 16, 2016) in heavy clashes in the south and northeast of the country.

Puntland security forces launched crushing attacks on the hideouts of al-Shabaab militants in the Northern coastal province of Nugal on (March 17, 2016), killing scores of militants and injuring many more

South Sudan

The United Nations Security Council on (March 17, 2017) said it was deeply alarmed by ongoing violence in the country and set out specific steps for the parties to take towards full implementation of a seven-month-old peace deal, saying it would review their progress by the end of the month.

According to the Ceasefire and Transitional Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM), (March 16, 2016) South Sudan government troops and opposition forces violated the permanent ceasefire five times, between 28 December 2015 and early March. **(See article)**

Sudan

The Sudanese government on (March 16, 2016) decided to put an end to its open door policy for South Sudanese nationals fleeing the armed conflict in the neighboring country and decided to treat them as foreigners.

Sudan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on (March 16, 2016) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on security cooperation.

Sudan's Vice-President Hasabo Mohamed Abdel-Rahman (March 16, 2016) discussed with the British Ambassador to Khartoum Michael Aron on bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

The head of the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) Thabo Mbeki on (March 15, 2016) has invited a newly formed opposition coalition to take part in an informal and inclusive consultations meeting with the government on the national dialogue process.

Italian President Sergio Mattarella's Visit to Ethiopia

Italian President Sergio Mattarella had been in Ethiopia for a five day official visit (March 13 - 17, 2016,) during which he had discussions with Dr. Mulatu Teshome, the President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn and His Holiness Abune Mathias I, Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Archbishop of Axum and Ichege of the See of Saint Taklehaimanot.

President Sergio Mattarella of Italy had been received by President Dr. Mulatu Teshome at the National Palace. Discussions focused on a range of issues, including Italy's new African engagement, migration, and the fight against terrorism and peace and security concerns in the region. Dr. Mulatu Teshome said relations between Ethiopia and Italy have been flourishing in all fronts, underlining that Italian public and private companies should explore the business and investment opportunities in Ethiopia.

President Sergio Mattarella mentioned Italy is keen to enhance the bilateral cooperation in areas of trade, investment, tourism, capacity building among others. He further revealed that Italy supports Ethiopia's bid for a non-permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council. While appreciating Ethiopia's roles in promoting regional and international peace and security, combating terrorism as well as hosting and rehabilitating a great number of refugees, President Mattarella said Ethiopia deserves a seat at the Security Council. He underlined the partnership between Ethiopia and Italy should also be strengthened in areas of promoting regional peace and stability and working together to curb the challenge of migration.

President Sergio Mattarella also held discussions with Ethiopia's Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, where in the premier recalled the longstanding relations between Ethiopia and Italy and noted that such time-tasted ties should also be strengthened in the business and investment sectors. He added, the visit will scale up the business and investment relations between the two nations. President Mattarella on his part said Italy looks forward to establishing industrial parks in Ethiopia in a bid to enhance the bilateral trade and investment ties. While commending Ethiopia's role in the promotion of regional peace and security, and particularly its efforts in stabilizing countries like Somalia and South Sudan, the President said his country is keen to extend support in such regards. He also hailed the people and Government of Ethiopia for

hosting a great number of refugees, to which he expressed his country's readiness to work together with Ethiopia with a view to addressing the root causes of migration.

Ethiopia and Italy, of course, have overcome the problems arising from the eras of colonialism and fascism that affected their relations from time to time. The relationship between the two countries today, following the introduction of the current Foreign Policy Strategy, has seen a steadily strengthening trend in all areas. In fact, a longstanding historical relationship has been consolidated by various cooperation agreements and by a whole series of high level visits. Recent visits to Italy by Ethiopian officials have included Prime Minister Meles Zenawi (2004) and former Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin (February and April 2009). Visits by Italian officials have included visits by Prime Minister, Mr. Romano Prodi, (January 2007), and by Foreign Minister Franco Frattini (January 2010). The visit of Prime Minister Meles to Italy in 2004 was a particular landmark. Ethiopia and Italy signed agreements for a soft loan of 220 million Euros for the Gilgel Gibe II hydropower project, for the cancellation of US \$432 million of debts and for the return of the Axum Obelisk. There was also the agreement for a series of regular political consultation between the two Foreign Ministries marking the opening of a new chapter in bilateral cooperation between Italy and Ethiopia.

Indeed, Ethio-Italy relations were not only historic, long standing and cordial but also had been gradually expanding, covering economic cooperation, regional peace and security and global issues of common interests. The bilateral relations have further been bolstered with the visit of the Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi to Ethiopia, in July 2015. Earlier in January 2015, the Foreign Minister of Italy, Paolo Gentiloni, visited Ethiopia, during which the Executive Program for cultural cooperation for the years 2015-2019 had been signed. In addition, Foreign Minister Gentiloni signed three agreements on draught resilience and sustainable livelihood program, worth 12.9 million Euros, women economic empowerment and social integration worth 892,000 Euros and Italian support to the development of the health system in Oromia and Tigray Region States, worth 4.15 million Euros.

During his stay, President Sergio Mattarella, also met with His Holiness Abune Mathias I, Patriarch of Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Archbishop of Axum and Ichege of the See of Saint Taklehaimanot. On the occasion, the Italian President said Ethiopia and Italy have longstanding socio-economic and political relations, adding that the Ethiopian Orthodox Church could play

crucial role to cement the people to people relations between the two countries. His Holiness Abune Mathias I, Patriarch of Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Archbishop of Axum and Ichege of the See of Saint Taklehaimanot noted Ethio-Italy relations should be based on fraternity, and mutual understanding. His Holiness stressed Ethiopia and Italy should work together to deal with national and global challenges, including poverty, climate change, religious extremism and illegal migration. The Patriarch added Ethiopian and Italian churches could work more on the conservation of historical sites and antiquities.

The President's tour also included a visit to the Italian Cultural Institute in the capital, a refugee camp, in Gambella Region, one of the projects funded by the Italian Development Cooperation, the historic Lalibela Rock-Hewn Churches, in Northern Ethiopia, a world heritage, recognized by the UNESCO.

European parliament expresses concerns on the situation in Eritrea

The European Parliament on (March 10, 2016) adopted a resolution on Eritrea pertaining to the human rights situation in the country. The parliament raised various issues, including consecutive sanctions by the UNSC, the reports of the Commission of Inquiry, and other related items. The resolution sent a strong signal to the European Commission, the EU Council, member states and the Eritrean government that human rights violations in the country needed to be addressed immediately.

The resolution also reviewed its previous resolutions on Eritrea, in particular those of 7 February 2002, 18 November 2004 and 15 September 2011 with respect to the human rights situations in the country. It also took note of the previous reports, including EEAS report on the Eritrea-European Union Partnership of 2015, UN Women Country Report on the Government of the State of Eritrea, June 2014 and the report submitted to the Human Rights Council on 19 June 2015 by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea and international instruments including International Labor Organization Conventions No 29 concerning forced labor, No 105, abolition of forced labour and No 87 concerning freedom of association and protection of the right to organize, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 1981, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

The resolution attempted to demonstrate how the EU has been supporting Eritrea since its independence and how the country failed to meet the expectations of the people of Eritrea and the international community in terms of fulfilling the promises of building of democracy and the respect of rule of law under the pretext of consolidating the country's national defense. It underlined the planned presidential election 1997 had been abandoned and the constitution ratified in the same year has never been implemented to date. Instead, it took note of the fact that there has been even greater repression and even more violations of human rights in the country.

The resolution emphasized several young men and women have fled the country to escape repression and mandatory military conscription, which often starts at a very young age. It also noted many of the conscripts are often exposed to forced labor and given civilian duties and the majority of those in national service end up in slavery, in which any work, job applications and the possibility of having a family life are controlled. It further noted the continued disregard to freedom of worship and conscience, freedom of the media and freedom of expression, and the extrajudicial executions, torture (including sexual torture and sexual slavery), and the shoot-to-kill policy at the border may constitute crimes against humanity.

The Parliament also took note of the significant number of refugees fleeing Eritrea, further illustrating the gravity of the persecution in the country. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, over 400, 000 Eritreans, or 9 % of the total population, have fled; whereas UNHCR estimates some 5, 000 Eritreans leave the country every month; and in 2015 69 % of Eritrean asylum seekers had been granted a refugee status in the EU while 27 % of them received subsidiary protection. In such line, the 200 million dollar fund that the EU earmarked for development cooperation with the Government of Eritrea was one of the top agendas. In addition to migrating to Europe tens of thousands of Eritreans also now reside in neighboring Ethiopia and Sudan, bringing the country's refugee population to well over half a million, and making the country whose population is usually estimated at around 5 million people "one of the world's "fastest –emptying nations," according to the *Wall Street Journal*. In fact, the numbers of refugees may be rather higher as an Eritrean Government minister recently referred to the country's population as between "two and a half to three million". Certainly the tyranny of the government has encouraged the scale of the migration to increase steadily over the last few

years.

Taking note of the fact that refugees who flee Eritrea are also pressured to pay 2% tax to the Government of Eritrea, the EU parliament in its Resolution Number 13, condemned the use by the Eritrean government of the 'Diaspora tax', which is often collected by extortion and other illegal means and called for an end the 'guilt-by-association' policies that target family members of those who evade national service, seek to flee Eritrea or fail to pay the 2 % income tax imposed by the government.

Despite the concerns of some members of the EU parliament, representatives of the Eritrean public, regional and international activists that EU's € 200 million aid package will not directly benefit the Eritrean people, and fails to address the root causes of the refugee crisis in the country, the EU parliament in its resolution said, "The Parliament Calls on the Commission to ensure that the funding allocated does not benefit the Eritrean Government but is strictly assigned to meeting the needs of the Eritrean people for development, democracy, human rights, good governance and security, and freedom of speech, press and assembly; urges the EU to ensure the conditionality of the recently agreed aid."

One cannot dispute the value of aid to a country as impoverished as Eritrea, but whether the conditions attached to aid for Eritrea will be kept is a question that will remain unanswered for the moment. The Eritrean Government has a long record of diversion of funds for purposes unintended by the donors as the EU has seen earlier and it is far from clear how the EU plans to ensure the aid goes to the intended usage. Any analysis of the root causes of migration in Eritrea makes it clear that the vast majority of Eritrean refugees are not economic migrants who flee the country because of poverty and unemployment, but that they are rather refugees from the persistent challenges of repeated and on-going human rights violations. The large migration of youth, and more recently even unaccompanied children, is the clearest sign of extreme domestic discontent and concern with the government of Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki and the indefinite conscription.

In fact, a United Nations rights envoy on March 15, 2016 said unaccompanied children are fleeing Eritrea to avoid conscription, putting them at risk of abduction and abuse as they seek shelter in places including Europe. Even more, two international right groups have urged the

United Nations Human Rights Council, to pay very close attention to the human right violations allegedly committed in Eritrea. While delivering a statement on March 14, 2016 before the UN Human Rights Council, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project expressed concern over the deteriorating human rights situations and on the conditions of political prisoners. According to the reports of the United Nations Monitoring Group and the UN Human Rights Commission of Inquiry into Human Rights Violations in Eritrea, the Eritrean government's systematic use of extrajudicial killing, torture, rape, indefinite national service and forced labor may amount to crimes against humanity and migration. The Commission's report provides substantial and detailed evidence of longstanding patterns of human rights violations in Eritrea, concluding that abuses remain pervasive, systemic, and the product of deliberate government policy. The report says that arbitrary arrests are rampant, detainees are rarely charged or brought to trial, and scores of people have been victims of enforced disappearances. The commission said that prisoners are kept in "extremely harsh" conditions of confinement; some are held incommunicado indefinitely. People practicing any religion other than the four approved by the government are subject to arrest, harassment, and mistreatment in detention. Citizens are subject to constant surveillance and violations of privacy. Freedom of movement is restricted, with permits required for movement beyond the community where a person works or lives. Political parties are prohibited, there is no independent media, and Eritrea has not held an election since independence and there is no constitution developed to administer the socio, economic and political undertakings.

The EU parliament further expressed its concern that the Eritrean government is bent on making use of the resources to fund armed groups in neighboring countries and work to destabilize the region. In fact, in addition to its persistent record of repeated human rights violations, Eritrea has continuously attempted to destabilize the Horn of Africa region in general and Ethiopia in particular. In 2009 UN Security Council has imposed sanctions on Eritrea due to the countries activity threatening international peace. The whole range of the sanctions, including an arms embargo, the freezing of assets and a travel ban on selected individuals, were imposed on Eritrea for its support to the Al-Qaeda-affiliated terrorist organization, Al Shabaab, and other armed groups. The UN Security Council hardened the sanctions against Eritrea in December 2011 over its alleged support for Islamist militant groups such as Somalia's al-Shabaab. In addition, Eritrea

was also sanctioned for its border dispute with Djibouti and its total rejection of all calls for negotiation over its unprovoked attack and invasion of Djibouti territory. In fact, despite this, Eritrea's main regional destabilization activities have most consistently been aimed at Ethiopia either directly or indirectly. Eritrea has continuously attempted to support a number of Ethiopian opposition groups which have repeatedly, and publicly, underlined they are involved in armed struggle to try to overthrow the Government of Ethiopia. These groups include the Oromo Liberation Front and Ginbot 7 among others, and both of these and others are now openly based in Asmara, in recipient of arms, finance and logistical support from the Eritrean Government.

Of course, there can be little doubt that while the people of Eritrea need all the aid they can get, that donors should make every effort to be as vigilant as possible about the management of any aid package, since on past record most of the money might well be used to procure weapons for various Eritrean-backed armed opposition and terrorists groups which the government supports in the region. Aid, if delivered, must be given with strict obligations attached. There may be no easy solution for Eritrea's domestic situation, but at the least the EU should recognize the undisputed fact that the Eritrean government is a totalitarian state the vast majority of whose migrants are real refugees are not in search of work but who are fleeing from the very real terror of over twenty years of repression and human rights violation.

Overall, the EU parliament in its most recent resolution found there are widespread and gross human rights violations that have been and are being committed by the Government of Eritrea and that there is no accountability for them. The enjoyment of rights and freedoms are severely curtailed in an overall context of a total lack of rule of law in the region. Accordingly, it urged the Government of Eritrea to respect obligations under international human rights treaties to which Eritrea is a party; ratify and implement other international human rights instruments; and respectfully the basic rights of the peoples of Eritrea.

The 2016 Sanitation and Water for All High-Level Meeting

The 2016 Sanitation and Water for High-Level Meeting was held this week (March 15-16, 2016) at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa. The meeting which was organized by UNICEF and hosted by the Government of Ethiopia was attended by government ministers and representatives of development agencies, civil society, private sector and NGOs. The meeting

aimed at exploring ways to meet the targets on universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene as stipulated in the new Sustainable Development Goals, develop robust financing strategies and investment plans for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and share views on how those strategies and plans could also incorporate innovative financing mechanisms involving not-for-profits and the private sector. The High Level Meeting dialogue raised awareness and strengthened relations between WASH sector ministries and finance ministries, triggered stronger sector coordination in many countries, created a crucial context for advocacy and helped political and financial decision makers rely on a practical evidence to improve their decision-making.

Dr. Mulatu Teshome the President of FDRE told the gathering that Ethiopia has been working hard in guaranteeing full access to the basic social services and required infrastructure, including its engagement towards achieving universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene. Dr. Mulatu said Ethiopia recognizes the concern of water and sanitation not merely as an economic good but also as a basic right for all, which he said comes at the heart of the government's pro-poor policies. Reminding his listeners that his country has achieved the MDGs, including the target in water, sanitation and hygiene domains, he said, "In Ethiopia we believe that we have put in place key pillars that can support the sector to achieve its SDGs milestones." He noted, "Ethiopia stands ready to share its experiences on the WASH national program through field visits to our urban WASH program as well as in meeting interactions. Ethiopia seeks to identify best practices that we can learn from other members of the SWA partnership. As one of the early members of Sanitation and Water for All we are happy to see the progress that the partnership is making and indeed the opportunities it provides for collaboration especially around the newly adopted SDGs."

On the challenges of the sector faces and the way forward, Dr. Mulatu highlighted four key factors, which he said are drawn out of the experiences and best practices in Ethiopia. First, the commitment of the government in achieving the goal set nationally and internationally is a critical factor. He noted, in Ethiopia this has been achieved in many ways such as the provision in the constitution, the inclusion of the sector in the main pillars of successive Medium Term plans, continuously increasing allocation of public funds, and the creation of a strong coordination mechanism. Second, it is apparent that if WASH program is going to be successful

in a sustainable way; countries must ensure that they have technical capability and institutions that produce experts at the required level, quantity and quality. Third, it is critical to ensure harmonization of donor groups, and the procedures in terms of planning, implementation, reporting, monitoring and evaluation. Addressing inequalities, the President said remains to be a vital area. And if countries are going to meet the SDGs, he added, the disparities that may exist in the various parts of the world need to be addressed.

Kevin Rudd, newly appointed Chair of SWA (Sanitation and Water for All) and former Prime Minister of Australia, said, “I am excited to see so many ministers and senior representatives from governments in this room, but equally encouraged to see them joined by partners from the private sector, civil society, the UN system and research and learning institutions.” He added, “the Sustainable Development Goals demand both greater coordination and new modalities of finance. We need more money, and smarter ways to use the money we have.” Mr. Rudd further said, “The truth for us all is that if we began to calculate the quantum of investment necessary in water and sanitation across the world today to meet our collectively-agreed SDGs, we are looking at a vast number. And if we are truthful, there have always been limits on national budgets and certainly on budgets of the various international agencies engaged in this sector.”

According to the latest estimates, 32 per cent of the world’s population, 2.4 billion people lack improved sanitation facilities, and 663 million people still do not have access to improved drinking water sources. Diarrhoeal diseases caused by lack of access to clean water and sanitation, coupled with poor hygiene practices, kill 800 children under 5 years old every day. UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake noted, “Safe, sustainable water, and equitable, adequate sanitation and hygiene underpin all the progress we hope to make – and have to make – for children in the next 15 years.” He stressed the importance of achieving universal access in all countries, noting that in addition to health gains from safe water, better sanitation contributes to economic development, delivering an estimated US\$5.5 in social and economic benefits for every \$1 invested, through increased productivity and reduced healthcare costs. Mr. Lake said, “If we don’t make progress on WASH, we will not reach the SDGs – and millions of children will not realize their right to grow up healthy and strong. So we need to invest more, better integrate our efforts across sectors, and innovate to find new ways of reaching every child, every family, and every community; SDGs have raised the bar, so must we. ”

The Ethio-South Africa Business and Investment Forum

The Ethio-South Africa Business And Investment Forum was held in Addis Ababa this week (March 14-15, 2016) bringing together senior government official and more than 50 companies from the private sector of South Africa and their counter parts in Ethiopia. The Forum aimed at exploring opportunities, assessing investment prospects and building partnerships between businesses from South Africa and Ethiopia. The conference was also attended by senior government officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, Trade and Industry Department of South Africa, Ministry of Industry of Ethiopia, Embassy of South Africa in Addis Ababa, Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Association.

Opening the Forum, State Minister of the Ethiopian Ministry of Trade, Dr. Mebratu Meles said Africa is on the rise and there has been a huge opportunity of trade and investment within the continent. Noting that Ethiopia and South Africa are “both members of the COMESA” sharing the East and Southern Africa free trade zones, Dr. Mebratu said there have been vast opportunities for Africans as well as global investors to do business in the African continent. He said, “The next battle field of investment will be Africa”. On the bilateral trade ties, the State Minister mentioned Ethiopia exports agricultural products such as flowers and coffee to South Africa and imports pharmaceuticals, automotive and technological products in return, while also underlining that much needs to be done to enhance the trade volume and investment flow between the two countries.

Ethiopia, he said, is massively building infrastructure, and has become one of the top three countries in expenditure on infrastructure per GDP. This remarkable growth has been the result of its development, which he said was broad-based, inclusive and sustainable. The national plan ahead is moving from agriculture led economy to industrial led economy, he added. Accordingly light manufacturing investments also are priority areas of investment. Stressing on Ethiopia’s goal of becoming Africa’s industrial hub by 2025, he said the country is massively embarking on the development of industrial parks, adding that industrial parks could be developed in three ways: government, private investor and or joint ventures. In such score, he emphasized South African Investors are most welcome to come and build their own industrial parks in the country. Accordingly, Dr. Mebratu assured South African investors that the government is ready to help

and support investments coming to Ethiopia. He also related that Ethiopia is working to organize international industrial conference in October 2016.

The State Minister further listed top reasons why investors should come and do business in Ethiopia: the country's fast growing economy, government's commitment, the stable macro-economy, the competitive incentive packages, peace and stability, and the simple and transparent investment approval procedures among others.

Ambassaor Ndumiso N. Ntshinga, Ambassador of South Africa to Ethiopia, African Union and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, said Ethiopia is well placed as one of the best performing economies despite global economic slowdown. He said his government attaches a great deal of importance to trade and investment partnership with thiopia. He also said the Government of South Africa will continue encouraging the private sector players to maximize the prospect of using the ample investment opportunities in Ethiopia. Ethiopia a country with the second largest population and a well performing economy, he said can be taken as a massive opportunity to South African businesses.He further noted the Importance of working on the expansion of free trade areas to enhance the intraAfrican trade.

Getachew Regassa, Secretary General, Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce & Sectoral Association, said the chamber in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is working to enhance bilateral and multilateral trade and business relations between Ethiopia and other countries, including South Africa. South African investors, he said are one of the most frequent visitors and the ties between the two nations is getting stronger by the day, adding that their relationship goes in line with the agreement made during the 18th Ordinary Session of the AU's Heads of State and Governments meeting in 2012. W/o Hirut Zemene, Director General of Business Diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said, "it's a pleasure to meet South African investors in Addis Ababa two times in less than a year" and noted that last time the bilateral business and trade relations was based in a "concrete and realistic grounds". Hirut said South Africa has strong bases, in its industrial sectors, which she said can be of advantage to Ethiopians, noting that this area is a priority sector in Ethiopia. The Ethio-South African Investment and Business Forum also included a number of deliberations, and government-to-business (G2B) and business-to-business (B2B) sessions and round table discussions.

Parties urged to implement South Sudan's peace deal

After close to three years of fighting and up to eight attempts to make peace in South Sudan, yet another accord was signed and ratified by President Salva Kiir, and the SPLM-IO leader Riek Machar along with the presence of former detainees on August 2015. The parties agreed to declare permanent ceasefire and establish a transitional national unity government along with a transitional security arrangement which will aspire to collaboratively work towards a permanent constitution. The Compromise Peace Agreement's (CPA) implementation phase began on August 29, 2015 and the deal was unanimously approved by the country's parliament on September 10, 2015. This crucial period represented a critical step in an effort to end conflict that broke out back in December 2013.

The implementation of the Agreement, however, falls far behind schedule. According to the Ceasefire and Transitional Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM), South Sudan government troops and opposition forces violated the permanent ceasefire five times, between 28 December 2015 and early March. The country's main warring parties had reported eight incidents of clashes between them. "But both parties were implicated in the violation reports that were tabled in the meeting," Ruth Feeney, CTSAMM's strategic communications officer told reporters in Juba (March 16, 2016) after a meeting attended by representatives from both sides. The CTSAMM, Feeney said, confirmed that the warring factions have clashed in Western Equatoria, Western Bahr El Ghazal and in the Greater Upper Nile region. The Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC), the body mandated to oversee the implementation of the peace agreement, will name the party responsible for the ceasefire violations, she said. Feeney also observed that the CTSAMM was facing some problems, specifically hinged on the restrictions imposed on their movement.

As the conflict drags on, accusations of war crimes and cries for accountability are getting louder. A latest United Nations Report gave an account of the magnitude and severity of the problem. The report details a multitude of human rights violations, including the deliberate and systematic targeting of civilians and accounts of widespread rape of women and children. The UN report said that South Sudan faces "one of the most horrendous human rights situations in the world."

Furthermore, speeding up the formation of Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) was mandatory to make the fragile peace robust and more importantly to make unimpeded humanitarian action in addressing the severe humanitarian crisis in the country. Composed of the parties, key South Sudanese stakeholders, IGAD member states, the AU, and the broader international community, the JMEC began monitoring the implementation of the agreement and key reforms have been put in place since its inception on November 2015. JMEC made visits to war torn areas like Bor and Malakal to call on parties to intensify efforts for peace in late November to the hard works it made in bringing the successful arrival of the two SPLM –IO advance teams to Juba in early and mid January; from selecting the TGoNU Ministerial portfolios where the parties had already concurred to the allotment of Ministerial Positions to urging the South Sudanese government to decide on pulling out excess presidential guards force division from its headquarters located south of the presidential palace in the national capital, Juba.

The pre-transitional period of 90 days provided for in the Agreement however ended in late November without the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) and little progress was made given the delays in the arrival of the SPLM-IO to Juba. Dhieu Mathok, the Secretary-General of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO), says that their leader Riek Machar will return to Juba after all of the 1,370 security guards and police for Machar arrive in Juba. Speaking to Radio Tamazuj, Mathok said that there were arrangements in place for the opposition forces to come to Juba. The leading member of the opposition group further said they visited sites where their forces are stationed across South Sudan, while expecting their forces to arrive in Juba by next week. The United Nations Security Council on March 17, 2017 said it was deeply alarmed by ongoing violence in the country and set out specific steps for the parties to take towards full implementation of a seven-month-old peace deal, saying it would review their progress by the end of the month.