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News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

The 11th African Corporate Governance Network (ACGN) meeting opened in Addis Ababa on Wednesday (August 9). The three-day meeting is being held under the theme "Ethics in Business and Good Corporate Governance." Said Kambia, Chairman of ACGN, said the major aim of the conference was to demonstrate, build and create the essence of corporate governance spirit in the continent. The conference was attended by over a 100 policy makers and company owners from 19 African countries. Eshetu Temesgen, president of the Ethiopian Institute of Corporate Governance, told participants that ethics in business and good corporate governance were the main pillars to accelerate the ongoing development in Ethiopia and the rest of the African continent.

The UN Security Council, expressing its grave concern about the threat of famine facing some 20 million people in conflict-affected Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and north-east Nigeria, on Tuesday (August 8) requested the Secretary-General to provide early warning when a conflict could lead to famine. In a Presidential Statement, the Council requested the Secretary-General to make specific recommendations on how to address country-specific impediments in order to enable a more robust short- and long-term response to this threat. It also reiterated calls on all parties to allow the safe, timely and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance to all areas and to facilitate access for essential imports of food, fuel and medical supplies.

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Secretary General, Sindiso Ngwenya, said at the weekend (August 6) that 21 out of 26 countries have so far signed the agreement for the formation of the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA), the East African Community, the Southern African Development Community and COMESA. He expected the October deadline to establish Africa's largest trading bloc to be met when COMESA Heads of State and Government hold their next Summit. He also said Somalia and Tunisia had expressed their interest in joining the TFTA, which will comprise 28 countries, cover approximately 18.3 million square kilometers and hold about 61% of Africa's population.

Ethiopia

President Dr. Mulatu Teshome received the letters of credence of newly appointed ambassadors to Ethiopia at the National Palace, on Wednesday (August 9). The newly appointed ambassadors included Ambassador Aleksander Kropiwnicki of Poland, Khusrav Noziri of Tajikistan, Timothee Odjo of Benin, Bankole Adegboynga of Nigeria, David Pierre of Seychelles, Sadi Ould El Ghadhy of Mauritania, and William Azumah Awinador-kanyirige of Ghana.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn, as Chair of IGAD's Assembly of Heads of State and Government, issued a statement welcoming the peaceful, orderly and transparent elections in Kenya, and calling on all political parties and candidates to respect the will of the people of Kenya and refrain from any act that might be of disruptive to the peace and stability of the country. **(See article)**

Prime Minister Hailemariam received the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Rwanda, Louise Mushikiwabo on Thursday (August 10). Discussions focused on ways of implementing the Ethiopian-Rwanda agreement on establishing economic integration between the two friendly countries.

Prime Minister Hailemariam met with Ahmad Ahmad, President of Confederation of African Football (CAF) on Monday (August 10). The CAF President underlined his interest to cooperate with Ethiopia in the efforts being made by the Confederation to ensure the renaissance of African football.

Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen on Thursday (August 10) briefed representatives of international development aid organizations on the ongoing drought relief efforts in Ethiopia, underlining government efforts to provide support for those in need of emergency food assistance. Earlier in the week the Mid-year Review of Humanitarian Requirements Document was released. This Government-led, multi-agency assessment was carried out over three weeks in June. **(See article)**

The House of Representatives lifted the State of Emergency imposed last October following months of protests at a session on Friday last week (August 4). Ethiopia's Defence Minister Siraj Fegessa, Secretary of the Command Post told Parliament that the country's stability was now in far better shape and in "some areas where security issues remain, local security forces have the capacity to restore order." He said nearly 29,000 people were arrested in Oromia, Amhara and SNNP Regional States as well as Addis Ababa, and 7,737 were currently on trial on charges of "taking part in violent and terrorist acts during the unrest." The state of emergency was initially declared for six months, but then extended for four months. **(See article)**

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene, met the newly appointed United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Director to Ethiopia, Ms. Elke Bettina Maas on Tuesday (August 8). Mrs. Hirut welcomed UNFPA's efforts in Ethiopia and worldwide in implementing Reproductive health, Adolescent and Youth Development and HIV/AIDS Prevention, Gender and Human Rights, and Humanitarian Response projects and especially its role in gathering data on population and development. All this was in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

At a reception held at the Rwanda Embassy in Addis Ababa at the end of last week, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut, praised the tremendous achievements

Rwanda has registered under President Paul Kagame and congratulated him and the people of Rwanda on President Kagame's re-election.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut, received the newly appointed Swiss Ambassador to Ethiopia, Daniel Hull at her offices on Monday (August 7). Noting the historic and longstanding relationship between Ethiopia and Switzerland, Mrs. Hirut stressed the need to further expand the trade and investment potential between the two countries.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut received copies of the credentials of the newly appointed Ambassador of the Republic of Madagascar to Ethiopia, Ambassador Tehindrazarivelo Djacoba Alaly on Thursday (August 10). They agreed on the need to strengthen economic cooperation between the two countries. Earlier on Monday (August 7, 2017), the State Minister also received copies of the credentials of the newly appointed Mauritanian Ambassador to Ethiopia, Sadi Ould El Ghadhy.

The UN Security Council adopted resolution 2371 (2017) last Saturday (August 5) to condemn the DPRK's ballistic missile tests and impose additional sanctions measures. The resolution reaffirmed the Council's decision that Pyongyang should abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs. Ethiopia's Permanent Representative, Dr. Tekeda, said the unanimous adoption of resolution demonstrated the unity of the Council in addressing an issue that poses serious threats to regional or international peace and security. **(See article)**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesperson, Meles Alem, in a briefing on MFA activities during the last fiscal year, on Thursday (August 10) told journalists that MFA efforts had encouraged over 80 major foreign companies and nearly a thousand smaller companies to visit Ethiopia in the last financial year and conduct feasibility studies for investment. A total of 31 business networking events had been organized by MFA missions in overseas countries. Exports diversification efforts had earned nearly 500 million dollars; more than 2 billion birr had been secured from development financiers; and 60 technology transfers arranged in space science, the medical sector, safe water, coffee and tea development, construction and other sectors as well as 236 technical and vocational training scholarship opportunities. 55 art and other exhibitions had also been arranged to help promote Ethiopia's tourism.

Three live animal quarantine centers, whose construction launched six years ago have been completed, the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries announced on Wednesday. Built at Jigjiga, Humera and Metema, the centers will come into operation this year. A fourth quarantine station was finished three months ago at Mile in Afar regional state. The Ministry said these centers would help the country boost export earnings. Last fiscal year, Ethiopia earned over 64 million US dollars exporting 237,000 live animals.

Ethiopia has prepared 110 freight train wagons dedicated to transporting liquid goods from Djibouti port to Ethiopian hinterland, in order to help solve recurrent fuel shortages. State Minister for Mines, Petroleum and Natural Gas, Kuang Tutelan, said on Tuesday (August 8) that this would ease the fuel needs for the country's fast growing economy. There are 2,500 registered fuel-transporting lorries but only 1,900

are currently operational. Last fiscal year, Ethiopia used 3 billion liters of fuel, an increase of 10% over the previous year.

Italy's Cooperation Service this week approved two humanitarian initiatives worth 4 million euros aimed to improve the living conditions of populations at risk of migrating illegally by encouraging job creation and qualitatively and quantitatively improving basic services in Ethiopia, and by assisting food security, access to water and improving the management of natural resources.

Kenya

Kenyans went to the polls on Tuesday this week (August 8) to vote for a president, 67 Senators, and 347 MPs, 47 Governors of Counties and for the members of the county assemblies. There was also a separate ballot for the 47 parliamentary and 16 senate seats for women. The presidential race was between the incumbent President Uhuru Kenyatta and his long time rival Raila Odinga. **(See article)**

Somalia

A high-level Somali delegation of senior officials of Somalia's federal and regional governments visited Addis Ababa, on Sunday (August 6) for three days of experience-sharing on federalism. **(See article)**

Somalia's Maritime Security Coordination Committee (MSCC) and the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) last week convened a meeting in Uganda of representatives from Somalia's different federal states and regions of Somalia to discuss enhancing maritime security and anti-piracy actions. **(See article)**

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia on behalf of the Copenhagen Group, which includes the Ambassadors of Ethiopia, Italy, Sweden, the UK, the US, the AU, the EU and IGAD, has raised concern that there are no women on the Constitutional Review Committee. A letter signed by the Michael Keating, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Somalia to the Somali parliament on Tuesday (August 8) said "excluding women would undermine the legitimacy and authority of the Committee...[and would also] "represent a glaring disdain for justice and human rights". Mr. Keating calls for parliamentarians to support a motion in the Lower House, sponsored by women MP's, calling for inclusion of women in the committee

The Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Somalia, Raisedon Zenenga, held discussions this week with South West state administration officials on security and visited the construction of the new headquarters of the Somali National Army's 60th Division and a military training base supported by the UK to host military officers and train security forces in preparation for taking over primary security responsibility from AMISOM. The agreement on a National Security Architecture signed by Somalia's federal and state government leaders in April endorsed an inclusive federal institutional framework for a reformed security sector.

Parliament on Wednesday (August 9) approved the National Communications Act to regulate the country's telecommunication sector. The bill calls for the creation of

telecoms regulatory authority, development of the country with telecommunications technology, protecting corporate and consumer rights and more participation by the private sector. Abdi Ashur Hassan, Minister for Posts, Telecoms and Technology thanked parliament for passing the long promised bill originally drafted over a decade ago.

South Sudan

President Salva Kiir told the visiting German Foreign Affairs minister, Sigmar Gabriel, on Thursday (August 10) that the national dialogue was the only forum through which legitimate concerns could be addressed. He would not accept renegotiating the agreement to accommodate and share power with individuals who placed personal ambitions above common interests. He called on the international community to help his administration convince the hold out opposition denounce violence, put down weapons, respond to his amnesty and return to the country to participate in the national dialogue. Mr. Gabriel told journalists he had requested President Kiir to involve all the political parties in the ongoing national dialogue process in order to achieve lasting peace in the country.

Government forces Sunday captured the rebel stronghold of Pagak near the Ethiopian border, after armed opposition forces (SPLA-IO) loyal to former Vice-President Riek Machar withdrew. **(See article)**

The Special Envoy of Intergovernmental Authority on Development to South Sudan, Ismail Wais, in a statement at the weekend underlined the determination to restore a permanent ceasefire in South Sudan. He said this must be achieved through the High-Level Revitalization Forum bringing together Parties to the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) and other stakeholders including estranged groups. The Forum is expected to develop a revised and realistic timeline and implementation schedule towards democratic elections at the end of the transition period. The Forum was authorized by the IGAD Summit in June, followed by two sessions of the IGAD Council of Ministers in July to urgently facilitate the convening of the Forum.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) has released a \$43.8m grant for South Sudan under the Bank's 'Say No To Famine - Short Term Regional Emergency Response Project' (STRERP). It signed a tripartite grant agreement with South Sudan and IGAD, which will oversee implementation of the project through an agency recruited in South Sudan. The project will target 300,000 individuals, providing food, water, fodder and medical assistance to meet the immediate hunger and malnutrition needs faced by communities affected by drought, conflicts and famine. It is also aligned with the Bank's Strategy for Addressing Fragility and Building Resilience in Africa (2014-2019), focusing on strengthening the capacity of relevant government institutions to plan, coordinate and implement disaster risk management and humanitarian responses.

Sudan

President Omer al-Bashir on a visit to Morocco met with King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia at the King's residence in Tangier on Monday this week

(August 7). They “exchanged brotherly talks and reviewed relations between the two brotherly countries”. Sudan has supported Kuwaiti mediation to end the dispute between Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and Qatar.

First Vice-President and Prime Minister Bakri Hassan Saleh and visiting Jordanian Prime Minister Hani Al-Mulki at the end of the 7th session of the Sudanese-Jordanian Joint High Committee in Khartoum signed ten cooperation agreements to enhance bilateral relations covering education, culture, youth, social development, vocational training, industrial cities, electricity and renewable energy, strategic planning, and mineral resources over the next three years. They also agreed to activate a joint business council.

The Deputy Commander of U.S. Africa Command will visit Sudan this month to discuss defense cooperation and partnership. Sudan, still under U.S. economic embargo and on its list of state sponsors of terrorism, participated for the first time in the meeting of AFRICOM chiefs of general staff in Germany last April. Last month President Donald Trump delayed a decision on the lift of economic sanctions on Sudan until October.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres and African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat announced the appointment of Lt. General Leonard Muriuki Ngondi of Kenya as Force Commander for the UN/AU Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) on Tuesday (August 8). He succeeds Lieutenant General Frank Mushyo Kamanzi of Rwanda. Commandant of the National Defence College since 2016, Lt. General Ngondi was Kenya’s Army Commander 2015-16 and previously served as Force Commander of the UN Mission in Liberia (2012), and as Commanding Officer of a Kenyan battalion for the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (2000).

Kenya's elects a president, senators, MPs, governors and county assemblies

Kenyans went to the polls on Tuesday this week (August 8) to vote in a whole series of elections: for the presidency, for 67 Senate seats and 347 members of parliament, for 47 governors of the counties and for the members of the county assemblies. There was also a separate ballot for the 47 parliamentary and 16 senate seats for women. It all amounted to a total of more than 14,000 candidates with 19.6 million registered voters, more than 45% under 35.

There were eight presidential candidates but apart from the incumbent, President Uhuru Kenyatta, and his main rival, Mr. Raila Odinga, none appeared to poll more than 0.3% of the vote. A presidential candidate needs 50% plus 1 for a first round victory. If no one reaches the required threshold run-off vote takes place within thirty days.

The voting in 40833 polling stations went of peacefully and there were few incidents reported during the voting. Incumbent President Uhuru Kenyatta earlier thanked Kenyans for conducting peaceful campaigns and urged them to remain united and peaceful after the vote. Speaking on Sunday, he urged Kenyans to maintain the existing peace and continue living together harmoniously. He said: "Let us thank God for the peace we have continued to enjoy in our country and vow to maintain it as we also pray for a peaceful election, unity and prosperity for all Kenyans." He added: "Do not allow anything to put a wedge between you. You have been good neighbors and I urge you to remain so regardless of your tribe, religion or political affiliation." He called on Kenyans to remain God-fearing people, dedicated to doing what pleases God.

As voting concluded and preliminary figures for the presidential election began to appear on the website of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), Mr. Odinga claimed that hackers had gained access and this had allowed them to alter the results coming in from the tallying centers around the country. The opposition coalition, the National Super Alliance (NSA) claimed on Thursday night that massive fraud was behind constituency results showing partial results with Mr. Odinga well behind President Kenyatta, the leader of the Jubilee Party. IEBC Chairman Wafula Chebukati responded to opposition claims of hacking, "hacking was attempted but did not succeed," and tallying of final results was continuing. The IEBC website on Thursday showed President Kenyatta with 8 million votes to 6.7 million for Mr. Odinga, but those figures had still to be checked against polling forms from the constituencies. The opposition has called for the IEBC to allow political parties to download all the forms used to tabulate results at polling station and constituency level in order to verify results.

International observers have said the elections were "free and fair", and largely peaceful. The Commission has urged people to wait calmly for the full results of Tuesday's vote. It called on all Kenyans to exercise restraint "as we await official results from the polling stations". According to the constitution, the Commission has one week to announce the final results.

Election Observation Missions came from IGAD, the Carter Center, led by former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry; from the African Union, led by former South

African President Thabo Mbeki; the Commonwealth led by Ghana's former President John Mahama, as well as COMESA, the EU, and the US's National Democratic Institute. After the election, Mr. Kerry expressed confidence in the IEBC: "We believe the IEBC put in place a detailed, transparent process of voting, counting, reporting and securing the vote, all of which lends significant credibility and accountability [to the election]". He said: "I believe that there is great legitimacy in the basic process, the question that now has to be tested is did everybody follow it, and has it in fact, somebody attempted to alter it at any stage" Former South Africa President Thabo Mbeki representing the African Union Observer group in a press conference said after the election that the group had covered 30 counties and over 400 polling stations. It had concluded election process was overall peaceful and transparent and the process had so far been in accordance with laws governing the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC).

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn of Ethiopia, Chairperson of the IGAD, issued a statement on the election on Wednesday. It said: "IGAD has been closely following the elections that took place on 8th August 2017 and appreciates the way they have been conducted so far in a peaceful, orderly and transparent manner. The people of Kenya cast their vote to elect their leaders democratically. IGAD therefore calls on all political parties and candidates to respect the will of the people of Kenya and to refrain from any act that might be of disruptive to the peace and stability of the country. IGAD would like to urge the concerned parties to stay calm until the whole process is completed to ensure a successful conclusion of the democratic exercise."

The IGAD Election Observer Mission produced its own preliminary report the day after the election, firmly concluding that the general elections on August 8 "were conducted in a peaceful, orderly and transparent manner and in accordance with the Constitution and the laws of the Republic of Kenya." The Mission, led by Tewolde Gebremeskel, Director of IGAD's Peace and Security division, arrived in Kenya on August 3 and the report covered up to the closing and counting processes on Election Day. Its objectives were to observe the conduct of credible elections allowing the people of Kenya to freely express their political will; observing whether the elections were conducted in accordance with the constitutional, legal and institutional frameworks of Kenya; and observing whether the elections met international benchmarks set out in the African Union Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa, African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the Declaration of Principles.

The election covered the Presidential election for which there were eight candidates including the incumbent. The President is elected for five years and must get at least 50% plus 1 of votes, and in addition get 25% of the votes in at least half of the 47 counties. The voting was also taking place for the 349 seats for National Assembly, including 47 seats reserved for women representatives, and the 67 senators' seats. At the county level, voting was for 47 governors and for 2,526 seats for the Members of County Assemblies.

The elections were organized by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) responsible for registration of voters and candidates, delimitation of constituencies, regulation of the nomination of candidates, the settlement of

electoral disputes, voter education and overall responsibility for the conduct of the electoral process.

In its report the IGAD Mission noted that the total number of currently registered voters was over 19.6 million and there were 40,000 polling stations throughout the country. The Mission visited 88 polling stations in Nairobi County and it noted the officials of the IEBC and staff at polling stations demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Most polling stations had opened promptly, elections observers had free access and the polling stations were well laid out with election materials adequately distributed. Most electoral officials demonstrated “very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities” and “cooperative, courteous and patient”. There were agents representing political parties and independent candidates and local and international observers present in most of the stations. In terms of the voting process, the IGAD Mission noted that some voters were unable to locate their polling stations and had to move from one station to another, and some voters were confused over allocating their ballot paper to the right ballot box. The ballot boxes did not have distinct colors to avoid confusion. This led to some papers ending up in wrong boxes and rendered spoiled. The secrecy of vote was generally upheld, and inking of fingers after voting was enforced.

The Mission observed the poll counting process and found it to be transparent and very well organized with rules meticulously followed in the presence of party agents, observers and IEBC staff. It also noted the peaceful environment and the orderly manner in which the counting and tallying took place. Security personnel were present during the whole process but their presence was not intimidating. The Mission noted the high levels of participation by women and by youth. The Mission said the peaceful environment of the whole process and the effective organization had also impressed them. It made suggestions that in the future the IEBC should consider different and distinct colorings for the ballot papers to make these easily identifiable to the elderly, consider improving time management in the polling stations and make sure all polling stations’ Presiding Officers do maintain the secrecy of voting by making the booths private under all circumstances.

The Mission’s preliminary report commended the people of Kenya for taking part in the elections and for conducting themselves peacefully throughout the process. It particularly noted the impressive participation of women and youth as observers, party agents and voters. It commended the IEBC for the efficient way it had handled its task of organizing the six elections being conducted simultaneously. It said there had been a remarkable improvement of the electoral process compared to the 2013 General Election, including improved use of the Kenyan Integrated Electoral Monitoring System (KIEMS, a system, the Mission suggested, that could be adopted elsewhere in the IGAD region.

On the basis of its observations, the Mission firmly concluded the general elections on August 8 “were conducted in a peaceful, orderly and transparent manner and in accordance with the Constitution and the laws of the Republic of Kenya.” It therefore called on all political parties and candidates to accept the outcome “and move forward on the path of democracy and development on which their nation has embarked upon”, adding that all concerned should resort to legal channels to resolve any disputes as provided in the Constitution and the electoral laws. The Mission

congratulated the people of Kenya “on the successful conduct of the 2017 General Elections.”

Diplomatic community in Addis Ababa briefed on lifting the State of Emergency

Following last week’s decision made by the House of Peoples’ Representatives to lift the Decree of the State of Emergency put in place on October 9 last year, Addis-based ambassadors and diplomats were briefed on the government’s decision on Monday (August 7) by Dr. Negeri Lencho, the Minister for the Government Communication Affairs Office, and State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene.

Dr. Negeri looked back at the reasons for declaring the State of Emergency last October following unrest in some parts of the country, the measures taken in response, the ongoing political reforms and the grounds for lifting the State of Emergency. He recalled that during the unrest in Oromia and Amhara Regional States, hundreds of lives had been unnecessarily lost, including women and children and even members of the security forces. Close to fifty investments had been affected by the unlawful acts of anti-peace elements. The promulgation of a State of Emergency was, therefore, the Minister noted, to restore law and order and ensure peaceful conduct of day-to-day activities for the public.

Minister Negeri also reminded his listeners that important sections of the State of Emergency had been revised within a matter of months following improvement of the security situation. These included the lifting of the partial curfew and travel restrictions on diplomats, the release of over twenty-one thousand detainees and full restoration of Internet activity. He also mentioned the measures taken in due course to redress the genuine concerns of the public, mentioning among other steps the detailed three-phased investigations by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, the voluntary reporting of the government’s actions to the UN Human Rights Commission, the facilitation of visit by UN Human Rights Commissioner, responding to any destruction caused to investments, and the rigorous training and rehabilitation for over 21,000 youth, whose genuine calls for reform were cause for concern, had been high-jacked by anti-peace elements. He also referred to the wide range of consultation with the various members of the public, the serious and ongoing investigations into corruption and the inter-party dialogues now underway in a bid to widen political space.

Dr. Negeri, reiterating the details of the report of Mr. Siraj Fegessa, the Head of the Secretariat of the Command Post, to the House of Representatives on August 4 last week, added that the government’s decision to lift the State of Emergency could be ascribed to the restoration of law and order in the country. With the exception of a few places, the situation had now been resolved and the normal local administration and security mechanisms were able to deal with any problems.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene thanked the diplomatic community for the patience and confidence in the country’s leadership that it had shown during the course of the State of Emergency. She emphasized the importance of the series of consultations and town-hall meetings with the different segments of

the public, including women, youth and civil societies, the setting up of the 10 billion birr Mobile Youth Fund, the inter-party political dialogues, and the government's commitment to deal with the problems of mal-administration and stem corruption. These, she said, were all part of the process to advance sustainable and equitable development and social equality, and to ensure democratic governance and the respect of human rights. Taking stock of the proposed reforms of the country's electoral law and the ongoing inter-party political dialogues, the State Minister said: "We are optimistic that we will manage to bring more people on board in the extended political space."

South Sudan Government forces capture rebel headquarters at Pagak

At the end of last week, the South Sudan Army, now called the South Sudan People's Defense Forces (SSPDF), captured the town of Pagak near the Ethiopian border, a major base of the rebel opposition SPLM-IO. A spokesperson for the SPLM-IO said its forces had left Pagak after coming under attack in the early hours of Sunday (August 7). He claimed the SPLM-IO had withdrawn after attacks by government forces on Sunday supported by air cover using heavy weapons despite the presence of civilians. He said, "We realized it would be costly for civilians and our forces have withdrawn [and] because of the artillery and bombardments, our forces decided to pull out from Pagak to avoid civilians being caught up in the cross fire. Now the government is controlling Pagak. It was an unprovoked attack, which is a clear violation of the ceasefire they claimed to have declared in May." Lt. General James Koang Chuol, the SPLM-IO's deputy chief of staff for administration and finance confirmed the fall of Pagak to government forces but was quoted as saying "It is not the end of our rebellion if Pagak town is taken by the government today. Our struggles still continue and being defeated today is not the end of everything, it is part of the war".

A spokesperson for the government forces confirmed government capture of Pagak, claiming the army had responded to an attack carried out on government-held positions in the area by the SPLM-IO. This, he said, had resulted in the SPLM-IO defeat and subsequent takeover of SPLM-IO headquarters during hot pursuit operations. He said: "Our forces were attacked by the rebels of Riek Machar and so they acted in self-defense during which they pushed them away and, in the process, took over where they used to launch their attacks on the positions of our forces. It was a response to frequent attacks which our forces have been repulsing." The governor of Maiwut state, Bol Ruach Rom, told Sudan Tribune that: "anti-peace elements have been defeated and forced to leave Pagak on Sunday afternoon because they realized that they could not match the capabilities of our forces. Their decision to leave gives us the opportunity to control and manage our border with Ethiopia". He added: "The takeover of Pagak means a lot to the people of the area. It means that there will be peace and the overall stability returning to the area and to our neighbors".

This week there were new claims that that the protagonists on both sides in South Sudan were "flagrantly disregarding humanitarian law, principles and space. The upshot is a conflict characterized by industrial levels of killing and the use of rape as a weapon of war." Certainly, South Sudan has become the most dangerous place in the

world to be an aid worker. Fifteen aid workers have been killed this year and 84 since the conflict erupted in 2013. UN OCHA has also counted 492 “access” related incidents so far this year. Half of these were accompanied by violence directed against either humanitarian personnel or assets. In June alone 24 humanitarian compounds broken into and goods looted. Humanitarian agencies are regularly requested to pay taxes on the movement of goods and personnel and the government has sharply increased international NGO registration fees, obliging its partners to pay levies to maintain lifesaving operations. Examples of aid being diverted or denied have been seen in areas controlled by both government and opposition. Humanitarian partners deserve the protection and support of those they are seeking to assist, and both government and opposition forces must remember that they have responsibilities under International Humanitarian Law, both to protect civilians, and to facilitate the delivery of lifesaving assistance.

Meanwhile, the first 120 soldiers of the Rwandan battalion of the UNMISS Regional Protection Force (RPF) arrived in South Sudan over the weekend. Mr. Shearer, the Secretary General’s Special Representative and the head of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) told a news conference in Juba on Tuesday (August 8): “Having additional troops means we can carry out more tasks related to our mandate, to protect civilians and build durable peace. He said the RPF would allow existing UNMISS troops based in Juba, to be reassigned to different places to protect civilians, support humanitarian assistance, and monitor and report on human rights abuses. For example, he said, “it would enable us to put more patrols along insecure roads where there have been attacks on civilian convoys – such as the Juba-Nimule and Juba-Bor roads.” Mr. Shearer explained the Regional Protection Force would be under command of UNMISS though it was separate in its mandate and its delivery. UNMISS says the force will provide protection to key facilities in the nation’s capital, Juba, and the main routes into and out of the city. It will also strengthen the security of UN protection of civilians’ sites and other UN premises.

The RPF was mandated by the UN Security Council to have a maximum troop strength of 4,000 and will bolster UNMISS’s capacity to deter violence and protect civilians in Juba. The force was authorized by the Security Council in the wake of the violence in July 2016. A Nepalese High Readiness company and over 100 Bangladeshi engineers have already arrived in the Mission area as part of the force. Some 600 additional Rwandan peacekeepers will arrive in next few weeks while the arrival of Ethiopian troops is imminent. RPF troops will be based in Juba and will operate, if necessary, in surrounding areas.

Mid-Year Review of Ethiopia’s Humanitarian Requirements Document

The mid-year review of humanitarian requirements was released this week. The Government-led, multi-agency *belg* (spring) assessment involved some 200 staff from Government, UN, NGO and donor partners, and was carried out over three weeks in June. Overall, the humanitarian situation countrywide was compounded by below average spring rains, the third consecutive season of poor/failed rains in the southern drought belt. The assessment found that poor *belg* rains had affected household food security in the *belg*-dependent woredas of Oromia and SNNP regions. In the pastoralist areas of Somali region and pocket areas of other spring rain-dependent

areas, an increase of livestock mortality and deteriorating body condition of remaining animals, normally a key source of nutrition and livelihood in those areas, was also found. In fact, southern and eastern Ethiopia continue to battle the impact of the Indian Ocean Dipole-induced drought, exacerbated by disease outbreaks, large scale loss of livelihood assets and displacement. As a result, the number of people requiring relief assistance to meet basic food needs has risen to 8.5 million, up from 7.8 million in April and from 5.6 million in January.

The latest assessment also notes that the national ‘hotspot’ classification, updated in early July, showed a slight increase in the number of priority *woredas* (districts) from 454 to 461, nearly half of which (228 *woredas*) are now classified as ‘priority one’ (very severe). Some 3.6 million pregnant and breastfeeding women and children under age 5 are projected to develop moderate acute malnutrition, and 376,000 children under age 5 severe acute malnutrition in 2017. It also notes that water scarcity continues to be a driver of displacement and this encourages the continued spread of Acute Watery Diarrhea.

Another potential problem is the expectation that the numbers displaced by drought are expected to be compounded by floods resulting from the current *kremt* (winter) rains. These will have a disproportionate impact on women and children. Displacement, flood-damage to schools and families’ financial constraints also result in increased teacher and student absentee rates and an increase in reported negative coping strategies such as child marriage, migration and labor. The National Flood Task Force has analyzed early warning data provided by the National Disaster Risk Management Commission and the National Meteorological Agency forecast and calculated that at least 1.5 million people could be affected by flooding during the *kremt* season and as many as 500,000 displaced.

The Humanitarian Requirements Document notes that a government-led, well-coordinated and managed response is already underway across affected areas of the country. The response is focused on support to the major relief pipelines, for food, emergency nutrition and health supplies; and technical capacity support to national service providers in the areas of greatest need. Efforts have been made to strengthen coordination and sector leadership at sub-national level, to ensure real time, evidence-based decision-making in the continual targeting of assistance.

At the same time, latest funding data indicates that all life-saving sectors are underfunded, and given the still deteriorating situation, the document emphasizes that the response needs to be further scaled up through to the end of the year. In highland areas the *meher* harvest will only start to be available towards the end of the year; in pastoralist areas, the next rains can only be expected in October, and even then it takes time for pasture to regenerate. The Humanitarian Response Plan says revised requirements for the rest of the year amount to US\$1.25 billion. Of this national and international contributions, together with a carry-over from last year of US\$232.9 million, amount to a total of US\$771.5 million as of August. The net requirement to address identified food and non-food needs for the remainder of the year is therefore US\$487.7 million.

In its most recent Weekly Humanitarian Bulletin for Ethiopia, issued on Monday (August 7), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA),

notes that Ethiopia's recovery from the devastating 2016 El Niño-induced drought has been affected by the poor performance of the *belg* spring rains this year in the southern and eastern parts of the country, compounded by disease outbreaks and the large scale loss of livelihood assets which has exacerbated drought conditions and led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. OCHA quotes the Humanitarian Requirements Document on the revised net requirement of US\$487.7 million for the rest of the year. This does not include the 4 million or so 'public works' clients of the Productive Safety Net Programme who will also require sustained assistance to the end of 2017. The recipients of the PSNP are not formally included in the Humanitarian Requirements Document Mid-Year Review, but their financial requirements, estimated at \$300m, also need to be resourced urgently. OCHA underlines that the PSNP provides cash and/or food transfers to chronically food insecure households in affected woredas in rural Ethiopia, typically for six months.

OCHA notes that the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) announced an additional \$137 million funding for the 2017 humanitarian requirement for Ethiopia and nearly \$33 million for Kenya on August 3. This brings the total humanitarian funding by the United States for Ethiopia and Kenya to more than \$458 million for this year. The additional funding is to support emergency food assistance, providing more than 111,000 metric tons of relief food for approximately three million people. The additional funding will also cover specialized nutrition supplies for malnourished children and safe drinking water and essential health services for the drought affected.

A recent Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) report also underlined the need for immediate and sustained assistance to prevent food insecurity reaching catastrophic levels for some families in the worst- affected areas. It noted the impact of acute watery diarrhoea was spreading in drought-affected regions, presenting a serious threat of food insecurity, malnutrition and dehydration, in addition to displacement of affected populations. There have been AWD outbreaks in Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Somali, SNNP and Tigray Regional States. In Tigray Regional State, 436 cases of acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) were reported in 24 *woredas* between 22 June and 3 August 2017. The use of water from unprotected or unsafe water sites, rivers and ponds was said to be the main cause of the outbreak. The Tigray Regional Health Bureau has established a command post to coordinate the AWD prevention and control efforts together with religious leaders. At least 20 temporary staff members have been deployed to the most affected woredas, with the recruitment of additional staff. The report adds the Regional AWD Task Force is conducting weekly monitoring of affected and at-risk sites and conducting community awareness activities.

A high-level Somali delegation in Ethiopia for federal experience-sharing

A high-level Somali delegation of senior officials of Somalia's federal and regional governments arrived in Addis Ababa, on Sunday (August 6) for three days of experience-sharing on federalism. The 23 members of the Somali delegation included Abdullahi Mohammed Hassen, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Internal

Affairs and Federalism of the Federal Government and officials from the Southwest, Jubaland and Galmudug States as well as the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Ethiopia’s Minister for Federal and Pastoral Development Affairs, Kassa Teklebirhan, welcomed the delegation, praising their interest in emulating best practices from the experience of Ethiopia’s multinational federal system. The Minister stressed that Ethiopia and Somalia had a lot in common, covering numerous and long-standing relations and matters in common. In his remarks, the Minister also touched on key issues relating to the experience-sharing program. He said Ethiopia and Somalia had a common objective in maintaining peace and security in their respective countries, and in the Horn of African Region in general. Ethiopia, he said, with its diverse community and huge population, had become successful in maintaining its internal security and integrity. This success had only been achieved with the full commitment of the public and all political stakeholders to all-round efforts towards the establishment and building of the country’s federal system. He said the delegation’s visit provided an opportunity for “our Somalia brothers to understand how our federal system serves the country’s internal security, peace and stability, and [for them] to take the best practices.” The Minister added: “We believe our two countries have a common destiny in the region. We have a common objective in enhancing peace and security in the region; we also have similar enemies in this regard. Sharing our experiences will, therefore, be vital to strengthen our cooperation. So, we are fully committed to extend our best practices.”

Minister Kassa said the visit of the Somali delegation would, he believed, provide the opportunity for “our Somalia brothers and sisters to closely understand the process and workings of our federal system.” He underlined that Ethiopia had achieved great success in economic growth and development. Ethiopia’s economy was, he said, among the fastest growing economies in the world and one of the factors behind this success was that the country had embarked on a federal system of governance. The federal system provided the opportunity for the Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples to administer themselves and to mobilize all their resources and knowledge for growth and development. Indeed, he emphasized, the country’s federal system had helped to create an arena that provided the opportunity to achieve the common goal of the Ethiopian people. He also noted: “We have been in a process of democratization and achieved remarkable success in that regard, exerting an immense effort towards institution building using all the capabilities at our disposal, so that the system has been able to continue sustainably.” The Minister added that achieving sustainable peace, guaranteed democracy and fast and equitable development were among the key objectives of the country’s federal arrangement, and they could not be separated one from another.

The Somali delegation during their three-day visit to Ethiopia also met and discussed with senior officials from the Ethiopian Customs and Revenue Authority, the House of Federation, the Statistics and Mapping Agency, the Addis Ababa City Administration and Addis Ababa University Institute of Federalism, and senior officials from the Tigray and Amhara Regional States.

Somalia's Maritime Security Coordination Committee meets in Uganda

Somalia's Maritime Security Coordination Committee (MSCC) and the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) last week convened a meeting of representatives from Somalia's different federal states and regions of Somalia to discuss enhancing maritime security. Those attending included Dr. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdi Hashi, Somalia's Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources and Deputy Defense Minister Abdullahi Olad as well as executive directors and directors from the Jubaland, South West state, Puntland, Galmudug and HirShabelle states. The meeting, held in Entebbe, Uganda, was also attended by representatives of regional member states, the EU and other partners. The MSCC facilitates co-operation and maritime security development between the federal states of Somalia and the Forum is an important mechanism for information sharing and cooperation to optimize the implementation of counter-piracy and maritime security capacity-building programs.

The Director of Peace and Security at IGAD, Tewolde Reda, said he expected the organization to make progress in achieving its objectives, especially after the recent elections in Somalia. He said IGAD pledged "to continue supporting the MSCC throughout 2018 and strengthen the linkages between the regional states and the federal government through the MSCC mechanisms that are currently operational."

Dr. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdi Hashi, Somalia's Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources said the economic devastation caused by the widely prevalent illegal but unreported and unregulated fishing was also an issue of great concern to most Somalis. Recently, he pointed out, the Somali government had seized a Thai fishing carrying 448 metric tonnes of fish. He also noted that a recent massacre of women, children and the security forces of Puntland by Al-Shabaab and its affiliated groups was a stark reminder to the delegates of the conference of the importance of strengthening Somalia's maritime security in all areas. He added, that on his way to Entebbe, he had read a story that the major threat to the Somalia maritime coast was not piracy but the smuggling of people and weapons.

MSCC coordinator, Abdi Ali Raghe, told the Forum that there was an alternative livelihoods program, providing vocational development initiatives and advocacy against piracy, coordinated by IGAD. The East African Community is leading national, regional, legal and legislative policies for the arrest, transfer, detention and prosecution of pirates. Uganda is going to host a regional forensics identification system that will be used both for training and referral of ballistics examinations. Dr. Dr. Abdirahman Mohamed said the federal government in Somalia was now initiating the transfer of prisoners especially those engaged in piracy to several countries in the region, including Uganda.

At the end of the meeting, the Maritime Security Coordination Committee detailed the progress made over the past year by Somali stakeholders. It said new donors to assist in the development and stabilization of Somalia in the maritime sector included Turkey, UAE, UK, Australia, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, USA, Japan, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. The regional states' representatives raised a number of concerns about their level of coordination with the MSCC, and the MSCC said it welcomed the candid discussions and exchange of views as it reviewed and re-prioritized maritime priorities.

Ethiopia Supports the UNSC resolution on DPRK

The Security Council met on Saturday last week (August 5) and adopted resolution 2371 (2017) strongly condemning the ballistic missile tests conducted by the DPRK and imposing additional sanctions measures against the country. While condemning in the strongest terms the missile launches, the resolution also reaffirms the Council's decision that Pyongyang should abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. The draft resolution was adopted unanimously demonstrating the unity of the Council in addressing an issue that poses serious threats to regional and international peace and security.

Expressing concern that nationals of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea working abroad were generating foreign export earnings to support the country's nuclear and ballistic missile programs, the resolution also decided that all Member States should not increase the total number of work authorizations for such persons in their jurisdictions, unless approved by the Security Council Committee, which was established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006). The Council also decided that States should prohibit the opening of new joint ventures or cooperative entities with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea entities and individuals, or expand existing joint ventures through additional investments. In addition, it agreed that Pyongyang should not deploy or use chemical weapons and urgently called for the DPRK to accede to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and Their Destruction.

The resolution reaffirmed that its provisions were not intended to have adverse humanitarian consequences for the civilian population of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It said the Security Council Committee established by resolution 1718 (2006) should, on a case-by-case basis, exempt from sanctions those activities that would facilitate the work of international and non-governmental organizations engaged in assistance and relief activities for the benefit of civilians. The Council also called for the resumption of the Six-Party Talks between China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation and the United States to work towards the goal of a verifiable and peaceful denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

The Permanent Representative of Ethiopia, Ambassador Tekeda Alemu, in his remarks to the Council said Ethiopia welcomed the unanimous adoption of resolution 2371 (2017) condemning, the continuing ballistic missile tests conducted by the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea in violation of various Security Council Resolutions. He said, "This step today imposing additional sanction measures as a consequence is, therefore, proper." Ambassador Tekeda also noted the importance of continuing to maintain the unity of the Council in addressing this problem. Indeed, according to Ambassador Tekeda, the Council's unity is "perhaps the most critical factor that may ensure a breakthrough eventually, if in addition the matter is handled with a great deal of care and wisdom."

Underlining the serious threats posed by nuclear and ballistic missile related programs of the DPRK to regional and international peace and security, Ambassador Tekeda

emphasized the importance of the DPRK to ceasing these provocative actions immediately to reduce the tension in the Korean Peninsula and prevent its further escalation. He warned that the situation could spiral out of control if it was not managed properly. Ethiopia, he said, believed that additional efforts should be made to try to open up possibilities for a diplomatic path toward a resolution of the problem, which was indeed both complex and dangerous. For this to happen, he said, among other things, it was important that channels of communication should be opened to avoid the risk of miscalculation and reduce tensions in the Korean peninsula. He also stressed the urgent need for finding a lasting, comprehensive, political and diplomatic solution to the DPRK issue through dialogue and negotiation. For this to be realized, Ambassador Tekeda emphasized the necessity for the DPRK to return to its international commitments on de-nuclearization and to comply fully with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.