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News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

The High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York which has been hearing the National Voluntary Reviews of the progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals over the last ten days, closed its session on Wednesday (July 19) on the theme of eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges, with a Ministerial Declaration aimed at accelerating the pace of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to lift millions out of poverty, and recognizing that achieving the 2030 Agenda's 17 Sustainable Development Goals required bolstered partnerships and urgent action. **(See article)**

Ethiopia

Ambassadors of EU member states resident in Addis Ababa held their annual Article 8 dialogue with Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn and other government officials under the Cotonou Agreement this week. Among issues discussed were the root causes of migration, job creation through the development of industrial parks, and Ethiopia's "very positive role in the Horn of Africa." Prime Minister Hailemariam briefed the delegation on the government's in-depth reform and the political reform being undertaken through dialogue with political parties and civic societies. The Head of the European Union Delegation to Ethiopia, Ambassador Chantal Heberchert told reporters that the EU welcomed the ongoing political dialogue with civic society and political parties.

Addressing a "Deliverology: Cross Sector Workshop" on Tuesday (July 18), Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn urged leaders of the respective sectors to show commitment in delivering results in order to achieve the country's development goals and respond to peoples' aspirations. He said, "deliverology is highly essential and needs the commitment of leaders. If there are no committed leaders, we cannot achieve the aspiration of our people as quickly as possible." The founder of Deliverology, Sir Michael Barber on his part encouraged participants to adapt deliverology mechanisms with the context of the country, adding: "Ethiopia is a proud country with proud history. So it is crucial to take methodology and adapt it in the context of your country. Feel free to adapt."

Prime Minister Hailemariam addressed the 15th International Conference on the Ethiopian Economy on Thursday (July 20) and called on professional associations to contribute their share for the all-round development of the country through research and capacity building.

Speaking at a two-day Seminar on the theme “Regional Framework of Ethiopian Foreign Relations and the Role of Media” on Thursday (July 20), Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu called on both the public and private media to discharge their professional duties, strive to protect the national interest and work towards building the country's image. The Minister also reminded the media to work hard to get the message out to undocumented Ethiopian nationals in Saudi Arabia to leave the country in the remaining few days of the amnesty.

Ethiopia presented its 2017 National Voluntary Review on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the High-level Political Forum held on Wednesday (July 19) in New York. A delegation led by Dr. Yinager Dessie, Minister of the National Planning Commission and composed of ministers from different government agencies, parliamentarians, and representatives of CSOs, presented Ethiopia's National Voluntary Review (NVR). **(See article)**

Co-organized by the Ethiopian Permanent Mission to the UN and the Permanent Missions of Belgium and Peru, the OECD, the World Bank and the UNCDF, a key sideline event was held under the theme of “Eradicating Poverty, Promoting Prosperity and Empowering Women through Financial Inclusion”, and Dr. Yinager Dessie, Minister of the National Planning Commission said Ethiopia had implemented a financial inclusion strategy to transform the cash economy to digital transactions. **(See article)**

State Minister, Mrs. Hirut Zemene, addressed the “Accelerating Inclusive and Sustainable Development in Landlocked Developing Countries Through Structural Transformation: Pursuing Policy at the Nexus of Infrastructure and Industrialization” event in New York on Wednesday (July 19). **(See article)**

State Minister for Industry, Bogale Feleke Temesgen said the textile industry would play a major role in Ethiopia's industry development strategy noting that textile and clothing industry had been undergoing major development propelled by low labour costs and highly motivated work force. The State Minister who opened an Ethiopian Investment Promotion Workshop in Cotton, Textile, and Apparel Sector on Thursday (July 20) further noted that Ethiopia was the largest domestic market in Africa.

A consultative workshop on improving complimentary feeding for children opened on Wednesday (July 19) and UNICEF Representative Siddig Ibrahim said Ethiopia has made a significant reduction in child malnutrition for children aged 6 to 23 months, slashing the figure of child malnutrition from 58 percent in 2000 down to 38 percent in 2016.

Minister Sofian Ahmed, an Advisor to the Prime Minister for Finance and Economic Development led a delegation to Djibouti on Sunday (July 16) for bilateral talks on transport issues with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Finance and Industry. They discussed ways to

start operations at the recently inaugurated Dorale Multipurpose Port. Minister Sofian also delivered a message from Prime Minister Hailemariam to President Guelleh

Dr. Tekeda Alemu, Permanent Representative of Ethiopia, speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends of Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development, at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development's closing session on Wednesday (July 19) on the theme of eradicating poverty, said that the world's poor countries were quite often the least industrialized. To change that, the international community must play a critical role to support investment promotion, private sector development, and technology and knowledge transfer.

A team of Sudanese journalists has been in Ethiopia this week, visiting Ethiopian Airlines and Aviation Academy as well as looking at development projects including the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and various historic sites.

Eritrea

President Isaias held talks with a delegation from the People's Republic of China Communist Party headed by Mr. Cui Shaopeng, Deputy Minister of State in the Commission Office of Public Sector Reforms at Sawa on Friday last week (July 14). The President, who called for the PFDJ and the CCP and the two governments to develop relations to the highest level, said relations between Eritrea and the PRC were strategic and based on mutual understanding and cooperation. The Head of the PFDJ Economic Affairs, Hagos Gebrehiwet, briefed the delegation on the political and economic situation in Eritrea as well as PFDJ and government relations.

The 90 year old former head of the Eritrean Orthodox Church, Abune Antonios, briefly appeared at a Mass last Sunday in Asmara. He was not allowed to address the congregation. Abune Antonios was illegally deposed as Patriarch of the Church in 2007 and put under house arrest by the government for calling for the release of political prisoners, opposing government interference in church affairs and refusing government demands to excommunicate members of the church who had criticized the government. There have been numerous calls for his release, most recently by the European Parliament. It is not yet clear if his appearance in public means he has been released from detention.

Professor Gaim Kibreab has published "The Eritrean National Service: Servitude for "the common good" & the Youth Exodus" on the Eritrean National Service, providing a detailed explanation of why Eritrea is so often called a pariah state and why its population is hemorrhaging so fast, as well as offering a harrowing account of the Eritrean National Service's debilitating and destructive impact on the overall life of the Eritrean people and the national life of the Eritrean State. (See article)

Kenya

The Principal Secretary, State Department for Planning, Ministry of Devolution of Kenya, Wilson Irungu Nyakera, told the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York that Kenya's Vision 2030, the country's long-term development blueprint, mirrored the 2030 Agenda. Kenya was putting in place targeted economic empowerment programs aimed

particularly at youth, women and persons living with disabilities. The country had adopted a devolved system of Government, decentralizing both services and resources to the sub-national levels. Kenya recognized the critical role of infrastructure, industrialization and innovation in achieving long-term development goals and had instituted programs to empower youth to participate effectively in productive economic activities.

Somalia

The Puntland Parliament endorsed no confidence motion on the government on Tuesday (July 18) with a majority voting in favor of the motion. Only one MP voted against the motion while 9 abstained. Addressing the media after the vote, President, Abdiweli Gaas said he accepted the decision of the state assembly and would choose a new Cabinet. The constitution gives the president 21 days to table a new Cabinet for approval in parliament.

UN OCHA said this week that at least 760,000 people were displaced by the ongoing drought between November last year and late June this year. 3.2 million people are still facing a food crisis and emergency, OCHA said. The call for increased funding is still short by over 50% and a high risk of famine persists in Somalia due to severe food consumption gaps, high acute malnutrition and the incidence of cholera and acute watery diarrhea.

The United Nations and African Union missions in Somalia on Tuesday (July 18) launched a joint training program for police officers from Puntland and Galmudug states to carry out joint patrols in Galkayo, as part of the ceasefire agreement between the two states. The UN Assistance Mission in Somalia and AMISOM said the trainees will also support ongoing initiatives to restore stability and the rule of law, and also act as focal points for rebuilding confidence and peace in Galkayo.

The UN and Somalia government launched an extensive program to train over 350 judicial officers countrywide as part of efforts to rebuild the country's justice sector on Monday (July 17). David Akopyan, UNDP Deputy Country Director for Somalia, said delivery of justice was critical to ensuring good governance, strengthening the rule of law and establishing order.

South Sudan

This weekend, as the first stage in the process of revitalizing of the August 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS), IGAD Foreign Ministers are expected to meet in Juba on Monday (July 24) to discuss the report of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission. The Chair of the JMEC, Festus Mogae, has said the three-stage High-level Forum seeking to revive the stalled peace agreement and find a political solution to the South Sudan crisis, will convene on September 22. **(See article)**

Ethiopia's National Voluntary Review at the High-level Political Forum in New York...

Ethiopia presented its 2017 National Voluntary Review on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the High-level Political Forum held on Wednesday (July 19) in New York. A delegation led by Dr. Yinager Dessie, Minister of the National Planning Commission and composed of ministers from different government agencies, parliamentarians, and representatives of CSOs, presented Ethiopia's National Voluntary Review (NVR). The Ethiopian delegation also participated in various sideline events and panel discussions, presenting the policies and experiences of Ethiopia in various development sectors.

The National Voluntary Reviews on SDGs at the High-level Political Forum is the United Nations' central platform for following and reviewing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. It provides for the full and effective participation of all members states of the United Nations and members of specialized agencies in the process. During the High Level Political Forum, held from July 10 to July 19, 44 countries presented details of their progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The theme of the High Level Political Forum was "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world". The set of goals reviewed in depth on this occasion were: Goal 1 - to end poverty in all its forms everywhere; Goal 2 – to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; Goal 3 – to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; Goal 5 – to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; Goal 9 – to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; and Goal 14 – to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Dr. Yinager Dessie in his presentation noted that Ethiopia believes the NVR process is an excellent opportunity to further deepen the ownership of the SDGs; assess the progress made in implementing the national development plan that integrates SDGs; and identify challenges with the purpose of accelerating efforts toward the implementation of the SDGs and respond to the legitimate development concerns of the people. The Minister also indicated that the overarching mission of the Ethiopian government has been and remains the eradication poverty with the full participation of citizens. This underlined that the whole exercise of the VNRs was in line with Ethiopia's national development commitments and practices. In the process of preparing the NVR, consultations at national, regional and local levels were carried out with "active participation of all development stakeholders - the private sector, the civil society organizations, farmers and pastoralists, women and youth, vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, legislative and the executive organs of the Government, the ruling and opposition political parties as well as development partners." So, Dr. Yinager said, the process of the 2017 National Voluntary Review of the Sustainable Development Goals in Ethiopia had been country-led and country-driven in addition to the fact that it gave an opportunity to localize SDGs and further enhance national ownership of the 2030 Agenda.

With regards to the direction of the overall development policy of Ethiopia, the Minister stressed the commitment of the Ethiopian Government in ensuring inclusive and sustainable development without leaving anyone behind. In this regard, the implementation of the SDGs started by integrating the goals into the national development plan of Ethiopia, the Growth and

Transformation Plan II (2015-2020). He emphasized that Ethiopia had been implementing comprehensive pro-poor policies through its decentralized federal system, “with a vision of joining the middle-income category and building a zero-carbon economy by 2025.” It had also fostered strong partnerships with local and external development actors to harness the necessary support in line with these priorities. To allow all sectors of society to benefit from economic development there were targeted policy interventions such as the Productive Safety Net Programs in rural and urban areas, the Small and Medium Enterprises development initiative, the youth development package and the financial inclusion strategy, giving particular emphasis to women and youth. Moreover, Dr. Yinager said, “The national budget that goes to the implementation of SDGs has reached 72% of our national spending”. He expressed his confidence that a favorable national environment had been created to accelerate the timely and full realization of SDGs in Ethiopia.

With regards to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Minister noted that early indications of performance trends showed implementation was encouraging and commendable results had been achieved so far. On poverty eradication, he noted, Ethiopia had made concerted and sustained efforts to reduce poverty in all its forms over the last two and a half decades. Poverty had decreased from 44 % in 2000 to 22 % in 2015 to help make Ethiopia one of the fastest growing economies in the world. “By implementing pro-poor and pro-growth development policies, coupled with appropriate institutional mechanisms,” Dr. Yinager added, “robust and broad-based economic growth, significant infrastructure and social development, as well as environmental management were achieved.” The growth registered, he said, “has been job-rich, with significant improvement in per capita income, both in rural and urban areas.” With its good track record and through redoubling its efforts to sustain strong economic growth, Ethiopia was likely to eradicate extreme poverty in all its forms by 2030. In order for Ethiopia to sustain this and achieve its goal, Dr. Yinager stressed the importance of continued support from development partners and he called for “development partners to honor their commitments to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.”

The government, he underlined, had made concerted efforts to expand agricultural productivity to contribute to the national goal to end hunger, through continuous capacity development of smallholder farmers and pastoralists, wider access to improved technology and agricultural extension support along with the food security and productive safety-net programs, disaster risk prevention and management, and rural and urban employment generation schemes. Priority attention had been given to household food security, improving nutrition and promoting resilient agriculture and livestock development. A conducive business atmosphere had been created to attract both local and foreign investment in the agricultural sector in a manner that was consistent with the needs of local communities and environmental protection. As a result of all these measures agricultural productivity had shown marked improvement, reaching 270.3 million quintals in 2014/15 from 180 million quintals in 2010/11. Dr. Yinager, however, reminded the Forum that agricultural productivity in Ethiopia was currently being affected by the climate change-induced drought, the worst in the last 50 years. He urged the timely and full implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Turning to health sector development, Dr. Yinager explained that preventive health services were the focus of Ethiopia's health sector development policy. To implement this it had made a huge investment in expanding health infrastructure and building human capital to ensure access to quality basic health services for all Ethiopians. The Health Extension Program that Ethiopia had implemented, he said, "had also been instrumental for effective implementation of the Health Sector Development Policy both in rural and urban areas, with the deployment of about thirty-eight thousand trained health extension workers across the country." So, he said, "the national health services coverage reached 98 % in 2015/16, maternal, infant and child health has improved significantly, incidences and spread of communicable diseases have been reduced and life expectancy has shown significant progress."

In order to ensure women's equality and economic empowerment as well as participation, the Ethiopian Government had also been implementing women's policy and development packages, along with ensuring land access for rural women, provision of financial services and entrepreneurship training as well as affirmative action. These measures, Dr. Yinager said "have yielded concrete results in enhancing the economic empowerment of women in Ethiopia." Commending the increasing participation of women in the political sphere he also noted their representation in the House of Peoples' Representatives had reached 38.7% and was up to 50 % in the legislative organs at regional and district administration levels. The 0.91 in the gender parity index in primary education (grades 1-8 for 2015-16) clearly showed that girls and women in Ethiopia were getting empowered in different development spheres.

On structural economic transformation, the Minister stressed Ethiopia's ambitious vision of becoming one of the leading manufacturing hubs in Africa, and noted the special attention given to build inclusive and sustainable industrialization, resilient infrastructure and innovation in the Second Growth and Transformation Plan. In this regard, he detailed the integrated policy measures taken to build quality infrastructure that would enhance productive capacity, increase global competitiveness and connectivity as well as support the manufacturing sector along with the huge investment made in renewable energy sector, in hydropower, geothermal, wind and solar power. Ethiopia was also building a series of eco-friendly industrial parks to attract local and foreign investment, and provide single-window services. The science and technology ecosystem that promoted the use, adaptation and transfer of appropriate technologies also served Ethiopia's endeavors to promote industrialization and infrastructure.

The Minister said important lessons could be drawn from the National Voluntary Review exercise. The most important, he said, was the registration of rapid, inclusive and sustained economic growth that reduced poverty through the implementation of comprehensive, nationally-owned development policies and strategies with political commitment. According to the Minister, this provides "an additional impetus and experience to continue to implement the 2030 Agenda." At the same time, Ethiopia was mindful that the SDGs required transformative and innovative ways of implementation, and he emphasized that poverty eradication and achieving inclusive and sustainable development would remain Ethiopia's primary objective in the years ahead. It was, therefore, critical to redouble and intensify efforts to address the development challenges Ethiopia continued to face: "the adverse impacts of climate change, unfavorable global environment such as commodity price volatility which is affecting our export performance, and deficits in good governance." While noting the crucial role of Ethiopia's

partners, both at home and abroad, in the progress made so far, Dr. Yinager also underlined the need for continued, enhanced and practical commitment to genuine and revitalized partnerships, in order to achieve the SDGs. It all reaffirmed the importance of strong political commitment and transformative leadership to realize the 2030 and the Addis Ababa Agendas, as well as the Paris Climate Agreement.

Speaking at the General Debate of the High-Level Segment of the Political Forum, Dr. Yinager said that Ethiopia was redoubling its efforts to implement the SDGs in line with its national development priorities. The Minister also stressed the need for an enhanced and revitalized global partnership to end poverty and achieve prosperity. Noting the multiple political, economic and environmental challenges facing the world and hindering the implementation of the 2030 and Addis Agendas, and the Paris Climate Agreement, the Minister stressed that the High Level Political Forum afforded countries the opportunity to renew their universal commitment to the timely and full implementation of the SDGs. He called for a strengthened global partnership to implement national development efforts in achieving SDGs.

... Participation in sideline events...

During the High Level Political Forum, the Ethiopian delegation participated in various sideline events. Dr. Yinager, at an event held under the theme of “Eradicating Poverty, Promoting Prosperity and Empowering Women through Financial Inclusion”, said Ethiopia had implemented a financial inclusion strategy to transform the cash economy to digital transactions. The Ethiopian Permanent Mission to the UN along with the Permanent Missions of Belgium and Peru, the OECD, the World Bank and the UNCDF organized the occasion. Dr. Yinager presented Ethiopia’s experience with regard to the financial inclusion of the larger section of the population, especially women. He said: “The government has implemented a financial inclusion strategy. The strategy aims to transform the cash economy to digital transaction,” adding that a women’s development package was another area of intervention being implemented by the government to support women in benefitting from the economic development of the country.

The Minister took part in a meeting on the new European Consensus on Development. He commended the EU's partnership and commitment to the 2030 Development Agenda. He welcomed the EU's consensus on development, and appreciated the EU's partnership and its commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda. He also called for enhanced partnership in the areas of climate change, job creation, industrialization and resource mobilization.

At another event organized on the theme of “Toward a hunger-free world, with adequate nutrition for all”, the State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene presented an account of Ethiopia’s efforts for the implementation of SGD 2 to end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. Ethiopia, Italy and others with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) co-organized. State Minister Hirut said Ethiopia had been consistent in terms of integrating its development policies with internationally accepted development goals, such as the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals. With agriculture as the main driver of Ethiopian economy,

Ethiopia also gave serious attention to building a climate resilience economy, and was one of only a few countries to have developed a climate resilient economic strategy.

During an ODI sideline meeting, co-organized by Ethiopia and the Netherlands on “Maintaining Momentum and Delivering Action on ‘leave no one behind’”, Ato Admasu Nebebe, State Minister for Economic Cooperation in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation, said Ethiopia was employing a multidimensional development approach with poverty reduction and ultimate eradication at the core of its development agenda. He also noted the clear recognition in Ethiopia that inclusive and pro-poor growth was the only way to eradicate poverty and ensure sustainable development. Economic growth does not always translate to poverty reduction or trickle to the poorest without targeted interventions, he said. To achieve this, State Minister Admasu said Ethiopia had devised policies and taken key measures to address the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. These efforts included: identifying pro-poor and pro-growth sectors, allocating budgets that sufficiently reflected the pro-poor growth strategy with education and health taking the highest share of budget allocations, expansion of rural investment that considered the high rate of rural poverty and the dominant role of agriculture in the economy, the expansion of all-weather roads, the health sector, the productive safety net program and a financial inclusion strategy.

The Minister of Science and Technology of Ethiopia, Dr. Engineer Getahun Mekuria attended a meeting on "Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing World: the Use of Space-based Technologies and Applications for Sustainable Development". It was co-organized by the Permanent Missions of Ethiopia and Austria and the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA). This emphasized the importance of international cooperation and partnership to promote the transfer of appropriate technology to developing countries in line with the commitments to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda. The Minister highlighted the major activities being implemented in the field of Science and Technology in Ethiopia, among them the effort to ensure that 70% of university students join the Engineering and Natural Science sectors. This was helping the country to build a strong technological base in human resources. Specialized Technical and Vocational Training Centers, Technology Institutes and Science and Technology Universities had also all become elements in the education system of Ethiopia. In addition to the tens of hundreds of research projects being conducted and financed within the Universities and Research Institutes, the Minister noted that Ethiopia was allocating additional funding for highly focused research projects that directly contributed to economic growth.

Then Minister underlined that linkages between higher institutions and industries were considered as critical policy directions. A number of sector specific university-industry linkages had been established over the last three years. The government was giving the highest priority to improving agricultural productivity through any available technology. The Ethiopian Bio-Technology Council oversees the adoption and implementation of Biotechnologies for Agricultural, Industrial, Health and Environmental applications. He also noted that Ethiopia was considering utilization of advanced technologies to speed up growth. This included space technology. Ethiopian’s Space Science and Technology Council would now provide contributions from space technologies to the growth of the agricultural, environmental, health, education, construction, land management and mining sectors.

...and State Minister Hirut addresses a LDC/LLDC event on industrialization in New York

State Minister, Mrs. Hirut Zemene, addressed the “Accelerating Inclusive and Sustainable Development in Landlocked Developing Countries Through Structural Transformation: Pursuing Policy at the Nexus of Infrastructure and Industrialization” event in New York on Wednesday (July 19). Congratulating the new High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa Utoikamanu, she underlined Ethiopia’s commitment and readiness to work with her Office and the importance Ethiopia attached to the work the UN-OHRLLS did to promote the implementation of the Vienna Program of Action.

Mrs. Hirut said inclusive and sustainable industrialization was crucial for poverty reduction, economic growth, job creation and structural transformation. Building a resilient infrastructure could also contribute to accelerate an industrialization process as well as enhancing productive capacity. She said the Sustainable Development Goal 9 (to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation) was one of the SDGs given priority in Ethiopia. Both as a Least Developed Country and as a Landlocked Developing Country, implementing SDG 9 was critical to address Ethiopia’s specific economic vulnerabilities, including geographic remoteness and participation in global value chains.

Mrs. Hirut shared Ethiopia’s experience in promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, pointing out the country had been pursuing an integrated industrial development strategy with a clear vision of becoming an African manufacturing hub by 2025. She said: “We have fully integrating SDG 9 in our current national development plan, the Growth and Transformation Plan II (2015-2020),” and given special attention for labour intensive and light manufacturing sectors, including agro-processing, leather and textiles. This would enable Ethiopia to enhance global competitiveness by adding value to primary products, but also create jobs and earn foreign currency by increasing exports as well as facilitate transfer of appropriate technology and knowledge. Alongside this were the efforts to create an enabling business environment for foreign and local investment in the manufacturing sector. One significant instrument for this was building world-class eco-friendly industrial parks. These provide access to land, eliminate challenges in logistics and custom service, and create linkages between middle and large-scale industries to promote the development of Small and Medium Enterprises. Two of these were inaugurated last weekend; two more will be launched in September. The Ethiopian government is fully committed to redouble its efforts to accelerate its industrial development agenda in close cooperation with partners. The target is to increase the annual average growth rate of the manufacturing sector to 20%.

Mrs. Hirut expressed appreciation for the continued support of bilateral and multilateral development partners, especially UNIDO, which has provided very valuable technical assistance in agro-processing, leather and textile sectors. Ethiopia is also, of course, one of the pilot countries for the Inclusive and Sustainable Development Program of UNIDO whose Country Partnership Program is aligned with Ethiopia’s Industrial Development Strategy.

The State Minister also noted that without infrastructure it would be impossible to realize industrial development. The government had been making massive public investment in building

the country's infrastructure, in order to enhance productive capacity and to promote regional integration. It had achieved encouraging progress in expanding road, railway and air transport services and in the renewable energy sector in line with Ethiopia's Green Economy Climate Resilient Strategy. It intends to raise the current power generation capacity of 4270 MW to 17,000 MW by 2020. To achieve all this and overcome the challenges posed by lack of funding and capacity, Ethiopia advocates public and private partnerships and Foreign Direct Investment in line with the priorities.

The State minister said the Sustainable Development Goals were ambitious, and so were Ethiopia's own targets. Governments, she said, needed to have ambitious and transformative targets, inclusive and sustainable agendas. They also, she concluded, needed a global partnership that equally gave due consideration to the specific challenges of vulnerable countries, if the SDGs were to be achieved by 2030.

The UN Security Council debate on enhancing African capacity in peace and security.

The UN Secretary General, António Guterres, and AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chegui, briefed the UN Security Council's open debate on enhancing the capacity of the African Union in peace and security on Wednesday this week (July 19). The Secretary-General and the AU Commissioner, emphasizing the strengthened collaboration of their respective organizations, highlighted their joint work on peace and security in the Gambia, Somalia and South Sudan, as well as other African countries, and urged adequate, timely and predictable funding for AU peace operations.

The UN Secretary-General said: "the international community needs to change the narrative about Africa and to establish a higher platform of cooperation that recognizes its enormous potential and promise." He noted the AU and the UN had a shared interest in strengthening mechanisms to defuse conflicts before they escalated, and manage them effectively when they occurred. He said their shared objective was to work closely "on the basis of the principles of mutual respect and comparative advantage in all stages of the conflict cycle and in a systematic, predictable and strategic manner." The Secretary-General emphasized the importance of the framework signed between the UN and the AU in April to strengthen partnership between the two organizations on peace and security pillars, as well as their commitments to further institutionalize and build on the partnership. The Joint UN-AU Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security includes four key action areas: preventing and mediating conflict and sustaining peace; responding to conflict; addressing the root causes; and the continuous review and enhancement of the partnership. Mr. Guterres said: "Enhancing African capacities is essentially both in the context of our collective response to international peace and security challenges as well as for the self-reliance of the African continent." He noted the challenge posed by terrorism and extremist groups, including the Somalia-based Al-Shabaab, adding, "It is my deep belief that with enhanced support to AMISOM, the African Union Force, and predictable funding, along with a coordinated effort to build the Somali National Army and police forces, Al-Shabaab can be defeated." In this context, Mr. Guterres welcomed the initiative

by the Group of Five Sahel countries to create a joint force to fight terrorism, as well as the Lake Chad Basin Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram.

One of the main points raised by the Secretary-General as well as by the AU Commissioner was the question of financial resources, equipment and technology. Overall, said Mr. Guterres, enhancing African capacities in peace and security required adequate, timely and predictable financing for African Union peace support operations. He repeated points from his report of May 26, where he identified four options where UN assessed contributions could be used to help meet AU's operational needs in peace missions. Recalling the decision by African leaders to fund 25 per cent of those operations, he said his report included financing options. The report was submitted as required by Security Council resolution 2320 (2016) on enhancing the relationship between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations.

Ambassador Chergui, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, said his organization had mandated or authorized the deployment of more than 100,000 uniformed and civilian personnel over the last decade. That had come at a huge human cost, with the number of casualties exceeding those combined in United Nations peacekeeping missions over the last 70 years. African troops, he emphasized, had also had to deal with inadequate force enablers and multipliers, and financial resource gaps. To support African capacities, Ambassador Chergui said the African Union Commission and United Nations Secretariat should establish an approach that involved real-time consultations, joint assessments and joint analysis with a view to recommending coherent options. He stressed the importance of fully supporting the operational readiness of the African Standby Force. Ambassador Chergui said “predictable and sustainable funding” through United Nations assessed contributions, remained a common African position. He looked forward to a possible Security Council decision in September on the issue of support to all Council-mandated African peace support operations.

In the ensuing debate, speakers highlighted the theatres in which African troops were taking charge of conflict response, notably in Mali, Central African Republic and Somalia, or involved in regional efforts to tackle the evolving threats of piracy, cybercrime, terrorism, and trafficking in humans or small arms and light weapons. Many speakers also deplored that the lack of financing had limited African Union efforts. They cited resolution 2320 (2016) reaffirming the Council’s determination to enhance peace and security cooperation between the UN and the AU. There were calls for another resolution to establish a principle under which peace operations would be financed through assessed contributions to the United Nations budget. Some speakers also welcomed African efforts to take charge of the future, with the approval of the funding model for the new African Union Peace Fund made at the AU 2016 summit in Kigali. The ambition and ownership shown at the Kigali summit was applauded. Attention was also drawn to the proposal, discussed with the African Union and regional economic communities during a recent senior officials meeting, for a collaborative platform for sharing information and enhancing operational cooperation between the EU, the African Union and the United Nations.

The Future of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)

The Peace and Security of the African Union at its 700th meeting on Wednesday last week (July 12) considered the Report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on the AU-United Nations (UN) Joint Review on the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and the Report on the Ten-Year Lessons Learned on AMISOM. It also renewed the mandate of AMISOM for another 12 months, until July 31, 2018 on the basis of revised core tasks. These involved: support for political dialogue and reconciliation; protect main population centers and enable political processes while mentoring Somali security entities to implement a transfer of responsibilities to the Somali National Security Force; carry out joint operations with Somali forces to secure main supply routes; conduct targeted operations against Al-Shabaab jointly with Somali forces; support capacity building in the Somali National Security Forces (SNSF), in line with the National Security Architecture and in full coordination with UN and other relevant partners; and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and support to early recovery and extension of state authority.

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISON) has now been in Somalia since 2007. During this time it has achieved very considerable successes, significantly degrading the threat posed by Al-Shabaab. The assessments conducted in 2013 and 2015 regarding a possible transition from AMISOM to a UN peacekeeping mission emphasized the necessity of AMISOM's presence for security. The outcome of Somalia's 2016/17 elections underlined the relevance of AMISOM's presence in successfully facilitating the political process and inclusive dialogue in Somalia. Equally, the security situation remains fluid as Al-Shabaab continues its asymmetrical attacks on different targets including the civilian population, the SNSF and AMISOM personnel.

During this decade of operations, as the Reports of the AU-United Nations (UN) Joint Review on the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and the Ten-Year Lessons Learned on AMISOM underline, AMISOM has faced numerous challenges, not least a considerable number of financial and logistical constraints. The most recent financial problem was posed by the decision of the European Union to reduce troop allowance by 20%. The attempt to mobilize alternative sources has not been successful. After consultations with concerned stakeholders, now the dominant rhetoric regarding AMISOM is the need to provide an AMISOM transition plan based on a realistic timeframe and the necessary conditions to enable Somalia's National Security Forces to take over the responsibilities of security in Somalia effectively. These include developing parameters to adjust AMISOM and international security support to current developments, develop adequate strategies of capacity building for a capable and inclusive Somali National Security Forces aligned with the National Security Architecture.

The Commissioner's Report noted the progress made in Somalia on the political front particularly the April 2017 agreement on the main principles of the National Security Architecture, providing a strong basis for the future of the Somali security sector. They also stressed the need for a structured and responsible transfer of AMISOM security responsibilities to the SNSF. It also underlined AMISOM's role in preventing Al-Shabaab and likeminded groups from taking over Somalia, and its successes in retaking territories and helping the peace building efforts that finally enabled the establishment of a federal state structure. The report

noted the Mission’s compliance with international law and human rights, and its assistance in terms of facilitating humanitarian relief.

It concluded there was no need for additional AMISOM troops, but underlined the continued relevance of the Mission for the period 2017-2021, not least for the urgent verification of the capacity of the Somali National Security Forces at state and national level. The report concluded that political, security and funding conditions remain vital for the transition of the security sector from AMISOM to the SNSF. These include formalization of the federal structure, the number, role, and responsibilities of the Federal Government and the security forces and the legitimization and capacity of key institutions. Strengthening Somali security capabilities is vital as is establishing a transparent payment system for regular disbursement of salaries.

After its consideration of the reports, the Peace and Security Council requested the Commission to work closely with the Federal Government of Somalia, the Troop Contributing Countries, the UN and others to revise AMISOM’s Concept of Operations. It also underlined the “the imperative of addressing current AMISOM capabilities gaps through the generation of additional enablers and force multiplier, in order to enhance the Mission’s operational effectiveness”. It called for partners to work closely with the Somali authorities and AMISOM to provide enhanced coordination of support for capacity building, welcoming the establishment of the Somalia-African Union Task Force as a coordination mechanism for support to the enhancement of the Somali security sector.

It requested the United Nations Support Office to Somalia (UNSOS) to continue to support delivery of a support package for AMISOM, in line with the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding between the AU and UN on the provision of support. It emphasized the continued presence of AMISOM in Somalia and the implementation of a viable transition needed predictable and sustainable funding for AMISOM and Somali security institutions. Bearing in mind AMISOM’s successes, the transition time-frame proposed by the AU-UN Joint Review and “the reality that AMISOM represented an exemplary AU-UN strategic and operational partnership in the implementation of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter and in the spirit of the UN-AU Joint Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, signed on 19 April 2017”, it requested the Commission to enhance engagements with the UN Secretary-General and other partners for this, including through the utilization of UN Assessed contributions for the payment of stipends for AMISOM uniformed personnel. It also urged the UN Security Council to consider as soon as possible the report of the AU-UN Joint Review and to endorse its recommendations and ensure predictable funding for AMISOM.

The Peace and Security Council also requested the AU Commission to transmit its Communiqué, the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the AU-UN Joint Review of AMISOM and the Report on the Ten Year Lessons Learned on AMISOM to the UN Secretary-General for transmission to the UN Security Council, for action, as appropriate.

A start to the process of revitalizing the South Sudan Peace Agreement

East African leaders at an IGAD Extraordinary Summit meeting in Addis Ababa earlier this month called for the revitalization of the implementation of the August 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS). They emphasized that this remained the only political solution for the country. Their final communiqué asserted "The IGAD Summit calls upon all the parties to take urgent steps to draw concrete plan and timeline to compensate the delay and to revitalize the full implementation of the ARCSS." They therefore decided to urgently convene a High-level Revitalization Forum of the parties to the peace agreement, including the estranged groups, to discuss concrete measures. The aim of the Forum is to work to restore a permanent ceasefire, to implement the peace agreement fully and to develop a revised and realistic timeline and implementation schedule towards a democratic election at the end of the transition period.

The Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC), the body tasked with monitoring South Sudan's peace agreement has now said the three-stage High-level Forum seeking to revive the stalled peace agreement and find a political solution to the South Sudan crisis, will convene on September 22. As the first stage in the process, the IGAD Foreign Ministers are expected to meet in Juba on Monday (July 24) to discuss the report of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission on the implementation of South Sudan's peace agreement.

At a meeting with stakeholders, JMEC Chairman, Festus Mogae emphasized that the Forum was intended to ensure broad consultation with stakeholders and generate proposals that could make the peace agreement implementation more accommodative, viable and sustainable. He said: "We welcome and commit to the revitalization of the implementation of the peace agreement, and call upon parties and estranged groups to seize this opportunity to make concrete proposals for consideration at the forum." Mr. Mogae said the success of the revitalization process would require willingness on the part of the parties to the 2015 peace agreement and estranged groups to compromise and accommodate one another politically. He said: "A window of opportunity has arisen and we must all seize it. I believe that with a resolute and unified approach by IGAD, the African Union, UN and the international community, and with cooperation from the South Sudanese leaders, we can never lose ground and restore hope to the people of South Sudan".

Initially, some opposition groups responded to the idea of the Forum arguing that it was not possible to revitalize the 2015 peace agreement as it had died a long time ago. That was an exaggeration. The process might be wounded, and require significant resuscitation, but it is still alive and there can be no doubt it remains the best hope for sustainable peace in South Sudan. The South Sudan government and some other stakeholders of the peace deal while critical of any review of the peace agreement did acknowledge the revitalization would give impetus to the deal. They expressed readiness to fast track implementation of provisions that had not been carried out in accordance with the implementation matrix.

In efforts to address any confusion among the parties to the conflict over the proposed High-level Forum, the Chairperson of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, Festus Mogae, met and held discussions with President Salva Kiir and the First Vice-President Taban Deng Gai. During separate meetings, the Chairperson gave an update on the regional consultations that

culminated in convening of the IGAD Extra-ordinary Summit. He outlined the objectives of the High-Level Revitalization Forum, including the need for parties to propose “concrete measures” to restore the permanent ceasefire, return to full implementation of the Agreement and develop a revised timeline towards democratic elections. He also emphasized that the revitalization process was not a re-negotiation of the Agreement but “a window of opportunity” for all parties and other estranged groups willing to return to or join the implementation within the framework of the Agreement. While seeking the perspectives of the two leaders on the revitalization process and their recommendations on how the process could be made to achieve the desired goals, Chairperson Mogae stressed: “The success will depend on the willingness by all parties to make concrete proposals and make compromises for the sake of peace in this country”.

“The Eritrean National Service: Servitude for “the common good” & the Youth Exodus

“The Eritrean National Service: Servitude for “the common good” & the Youth Exodus” is the title of a book by Professor Gaim Kibreab, a pre-eminent Eritrean scholar specializing on the Horn of Africa and devoting the last three decades to refugee studies. This, his ninth book, is an exceptionally timely and critical work profiling the rationale of the Eritrean National Service, its achievements and failures, and documenting its impact during the liberation struggle (1961-91) and in the post-independence periods, both before and after Eritrea’s invasion of Ethiopia in 1998. It provides a detailed explanation of why Eritrea is so often called a pariah state and why its population is hemorrhaging so fast, as well as offering a harrowing account of the Eritrean National Service’s debilitating and destructive impact on the overall life of the Eritrean people and the national life of the Eritrean State.

Professor Kibreab emphasizes that Eritrean National Service began during the 1961-91 liberation struggle as part of the idea of the "common good", as a project in which individual interests were willingly sacrificed in pursuit of the grand scheme of independence and the country's development. How then did this noble idea degenerate into forced labour and a modern form of slavery? And why, when Eritrea no longer faces any existential threat, does the government continue to demand such service from its citizens?

This book attempts to answer these questions, revealing the ways that the ENS lies at the core of the post-independence state. It not only supplies the military, it affects every aspect of the country's economy, its social services, its public sector and its politics. Over half of the workforce is forcibly enrolled in the ENS. The resulting multiple and detrimental consequences lie at the heart of the present situation and gloomy future, exhausting the country’s major resource, its labor force, and draining the social capital accumulated throughout the years of the liberation struggle. It is this that has set the stage for the country’s youth to flee and risk their lives for a new opportunity, livelihood and life as well as reclaim their lost dignity and freedom in faraway lands.

Unlike other commentaries and scholarly works centered on the effects of the ENS, this book looks at the original “towering aims and lofty objectives of the national service” as well as its effects as it has mutated into a grim new genre. Today, this no longer places the ENS at the service of the lives of the Eritrean people or the national life of the country. The book details the achievements of the project prior to 2002 but finds the ENS after 2002 has turned the state into a factory of unending enslavement to merely provide the regime with ways to make money and

accumulate wealth. Those that flee from the unending conscription face death, drowning or organ theft along the routes of migration from human traffickers and smugglers. The dream of independence from Ethiopia has been replaced by the dream of emigration, to Ethiopia or Sudan or overseas to Europe. This, the author notes, invites observers to describe the country as “the fastest emptying nation.”

The effects of the operation of unending national service have permeated and infiltrated into all areas of Eritrean society, into familial, neighborly, communal and national areas, as the regime aims to make everyone available for what amounts to state enslavement. Professor Kibreab details the degeneration of the political situation but, more importantly, he also shows how the traditional survival and livelihood systems of Eritrean society organized around family labor to cope with adversities and meet ends have been seriously damaged struck by the way the national service has operated. The inability of family members to play their expected crucial role in society has led to the collapse of familial and societal systems throughout the country. The destruction of the traditional livelihood system has contributed largely to arrest the process of nation-building and any effort to create a post-conflict (re)-construction of a multi-ethnic and multi-faith society. It has meant family members, especially the youth, have been unable to play their culturally determined and historically transmitted roles. This has helped to bring about a politics of despair on the part of the youth while sapping the youthful dreams and values of the liberation war in which the ENS originally based itself for development and reconstruction. This, Professor Kibreab argues, does not just drive hundreds of thousands of conscripts and draft evaders to “vote with their feet.” It has also turned the ENS into a “cancerous growth which has been eating into the Eritrean polity.”

Beyond the unending servitude, there have also been the gross human rights violations suffered by conscripts, helping to drive an exodus in search of protection and an effort to regain freedom abroad. The absence of regulatory rules for national service conscripts regarding annual leave, sick leave, punishment regimes, protection of conscripts’ rights against all forms of abuse, including rampant sexual violence, has contributed to make the youth of Eritrea ‘vote with their feet’ rather than stay to lay the foundation for the building of what the regime claimed would be a “new, progressive and secular society based on shared values.”

The novelty of this book is that it makes full use of the extensive narratives of Eritreans, who fled from Eritrean National Service after serving an average for six years, to assess the depth and scale of the impact of national service on the fabric of Eritrean society. Giving a breathing voice to the lived experiences of the normally voiceless conscripts in addition to tracing Eritreans who have fled from their country after serving in the Eritrean National Service (ENS) as well as other Tigrayan sources derived from interviews with Eritrean government officials from the highest level, Professor Kibreab concludes that the post-2002 Eritrean National Service and the absence of regulatory systems in its implementation in effect inaugurated a state of Eritrean slavehood, triggering a massive youth exodus making migration the urgent and prime goal of the youth to “disentangle themselves from unending state enslavement.”