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News in brief

Africa and the African Union

IGAD's 31st Extra-Ordinary Summit on South Sudan took place on Monday (June 12), in Addis Ababa. The meeting was chaired by Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn of Ethiopia, Chairperson of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government. The meeting called for the full implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS), describing it as the only viable way forward for peace in South Sudan. It recommended a High-level Revitalization Forum of the parties to ARCSS, including estranged groups. **(See article)**

Germany holds the G20 Presidency this year and it has made the G20 Africa Partnership a central project, with the aim to improve conditions for sustainable private sector investment, investment in infrastructure, economic participation and employment. A key element in this is the Compact with Africa, an initiative within the G20 finance track. During the G20 Africa conference "Africa Partnership – Investing in a Common Future", held in Berlin this week, the German ministry of Finance announced that two more countries, Ethiopia and Ghana, had been added to the first group of compact countries.

Ethiopia and Egypt on Thursday last week (June 8) called for the United Nations Security Council to suspend investigations by the International Criminal Court against Sudanese President Omer al-Bashir. **(See article)**

The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, El-Ghassim Wane, briefed the UN Security Council on Wednesday this week (June 14) on recommended changes in the troop levels for the AU-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). **(See article)**

The UN Security Council unanimously decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) until March 2018 on Wednesday (June 14). **(See article)**

Egypt's parliament has given its approval to the plan to transfer sovereignty of the Red Sea islands of Tiran and Sanafir to Saudi Arabia. The deal was agreed during the visit of the Saudi King to Egypt in April 2016.

Ethiopia

Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn met with Somali Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre on Monday June 12. They discussed the efforts of the Somali government to stabilize the country and other issues. They also agreed to set up a Ministerial Commission to implement agreements reached. Prime Minister Hailemariam commended Somali federal government on the excellent work with its regional state administrations and on the strengthening of cooperation between them.

Prime Minister Hailemariam, Chairman of IGAD, met with Festus G. Mogae, Chairperson of Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) for the Agreement on the Resolution on the Conflict in South Sudan in advance of the IGAD Summit on Monday (June 12) in Addis Ababa. The discussion focused on ways to maintain sustainable peace and stability in the region.

Prime Minister Hailemariam gave awards to representatives of 968 micro and small enterprises which had graduated to medium level enterprise status in a ceremony at the town of Nekemte on Sunday (June 11). The successful entrepreneurs, from all over Oromia Regional State, had raised more than 1.1 billion Birr and created jobs for nearly 10,000 people. The Prime Minister praised their efforts to reduce poverty, contribute to job creation and fair distribution of wealth.

A Japanese business delegation led by the Vice-President of JETRO met with President Dr. Mulatu and Prime Minister Hailemariam during its visit to Ethiopia this week. **(See article)**

Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonen, leading a high level delegation on a visit to Japan, told Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe that Ethiopia was keen to cooperate with Japan to improve the country's human resource skills and enhance the development of the country's manufacturing sector. They agreed to work together to expand countries the Kaizen philosophy to other African and encourage engagement of Japanese private investment in Ethiopia.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu met with the Executive Director of United Nations Security Council Counter Terrorism Committee, Jean-Paul Laborde on Friday (June 9). They discussed mechanisms to strengthen the partnership between the United Nations and Ethiopia. Dr. Workneh detailed Ethiopia's successful counter-terrorism activities and its efforts to deal with terrorism in the Horn of Africa. M. Laborde said Ethiopia has a special place in continental and global counter terrorism and peace keeping efforts.

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu met with Somalia's Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre on Tuesday (June 13). Dr, Workneh stressed that Ethiopia believed neighboring countries were anchor partners and peace and stability for neighboring countries is a priority in Ethiopia's

foreign relations. He said Ethiopia was committed to work with the new government of Somalia and fully supported its efforts to deal with terrorism and ensure peace and security in the country.

UAE's State Minister for International Cooperation, Ms. Reem Alhashimy, met with Foreign Minister, Dr. Workneh on Tuesday (June 13). Dr Workneh said Ethiopia valued the strong relationship it had with UAE and emphasized that Ethiopia had a strong stance against terrorism. He also underlined Ethiopia's belief that problems should be resolved diplomatically.

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh received a courtesy visit from African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui on Wednesday June 14. They discussed continental as well as regional peace and security issues. The Commissioner commended Ethiopia's active engagement in regional peace and security, and he congratulated Ethiopia for successfully hosting IGAD's Summit on South Sudan.

Foreign Minister, Dr. Workneh on Wednesday (June 14) met Turkey's Deputy Foreign Minister Ahmet Yıldız. Mr. Yıldız, who said Turkey wanted to open embassies throughout Africa, was leading a delegation from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), to learn about the impact of drought and famine in East Africa, and is also visiting South Sudan, Kenya and Somalia. The delegation would be looking at drought, famine and natural disasters in-depth; Turkey, he said, wanted long-term solidarity in international relations not short-term economic interest.

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyhu hosted an Iftar dinner for African and Arab Muslim Ambassadors resident in Addis Ababa, on Thursday (June 15). Dr. Workneh underlined the historic importance of Ethiopia as the destination of the first Hijira. He noted Ethiopia's culture of tolerance for all religious faiths in the country and stressed Ethiopia's support for the peaceful resolution of the dispute among the sisterly countries of the region.

In a statement on the Gulf crisis, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Ethiopia would play a constructive role and do its part for a peaceful settlement. Ethiopia, it said, denounced any form of terrorist activities and any kind of support for terrorist organizations. It also rejected support for any type of negative media reports which incite instability in countries. Ethiopia believes the Gulf crisis should be resolved peacefully and it supported the efforts of the Kuwaiti Emir, Sheikh Sabah IV Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to resolve the crisis diplomatically. It would closely follow the situation and play a constructive role in the efforts to bring peace in the region.

State Minister Mrs. Hirut Zemene met with Abdikhadir Ahmed Kheyre, State Minister of Foreign Affairs of Somalia on Tuesday (June 13). State Minister Hirut said the Ethiopian government was keen to further strength the relationship in different areas and the two governments should work closely to explore potential areas of partnership. A Joint Ministerial Commission would be an important step in expediting cooperation between different sectoral ministries in areas of education, culture, police and defense.

State Minister Dr Aklilu Hailemikael, meeting the task force for repatriation of Ethiopian nationals from Saudi Arabia, said about 80.000 Ethiopians had now registered to return to

Ethiopia. 25,000 had already returned. The three-month grace period reaches its deadline at the end of the month. The regional task forces set up by the Government to receive returnees are coordinating activities with Ethiopian Airlines, the Customs Authorities, the Red Cross, the Ministries for Women And Children Affairs, Labor and Social Affairs, Youth and Sport and Transport as well as the Government Communications Affairs Office.

The Minister for Water, Irrigation and Electricity, Dr. Seleshi Bekele, attended the Africa Energy Forum conference in Copenhagen last week. He also visited the Danish Energy Agency which is involved in the Danish-Ethiopia “Accelerating Wind Power Generation in Ethiopia” Program. **(See article)**

The World Bank in its latest edition of its Global Economic Prospects says Ethiopia will be the fastest-growing economy in the world in 2017. This follows recent IMF and UNCTAD reports which also underline Ethiopia’s economic progress. **(See article)**

The rating agency, Fitch has affirmed Ethiopia’s Long-Term Foreign- and Local Currency Issuer Default Ratings (IDRs) at ‘B’ with a Stable Outlook. **(See article)**

The Commissioner of National Disaster Risk Management has described recent media reports that food for 7.8 million people would run out at the end of June as entirely incorrect, though the World Food program, which provides food to 1.7 million drought-affected people, recently expressed concerns over its ability to continue with this support because of a shortage of funds. He said the Government would cover any shortfall. **(See article)**

A Japanese company Tomonius signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) to develop and manage a 31 ha Japanese Special Zone within the Bole-Lemi II Industrial Park on Wednesday June 14. It plans to build 20 to 30 factories in the Japanese zone of the Park.

The Ethiopian Immigration and Nationality Affairs main department in collaboration with Ethiopian Airlines finalized preparations of the initial phase to commence an e-visa service for international visitors to Ethiopia, effective June 12, 2017. The e- visa can be processed and issued online where applicants apply, pay and secure their entry visa online. The CEO of Ethiopian Airlines, Tewolde Gebre Mariam, said this was part of a new national initiative to transform the tourism sector in the country.

The Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Services Enterprise (ESLSE) announced at the end of last week that another five dry ports will be built at a cost of 1.5 billion birr to handle Ethiopia’s growing import-export market. They will be constructed in Hawassa, Dire Dawa, Mekelle, Kombolcha and Wereta towns. Construction at Kombolcha, Dire Dawa and Mekelle has already started and the other two will be launched soon. The existing Modjo dry port currently handles 80% of Ethiopia’s import-exports along the Ethiopia-Djibouti trade corridor.

Djibouti

Qatar has suspended its role as a mediator between Djibouti and Eritrea and withdrawn the peacekeeping troops it deployed along the Eritrean/Djibouti border after Eritrea, claiming a strip of land at Ras Doumeira, precipitated three days of fighting along the border in June 2008. Qatar had been an “impartial diplomatic mediator” in the dispute between Djibouti and Eritrea though it failed to resolve the dispute.

Djibouti inaugurated a new port at Tadjourah on Wednesday (June 15). This will serve as the main outlet for potash exports from Ethiopia. Built at a cost of US\$90 million, the port has the capacity to export 4 million tonnes of potash a year.

Eritrea

On Monday, the Ministry of Information issued a statement supporting the actions taken by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain against Qatar. It said this was “one initiative among many in the right direction that envisages full realization of regional security and stability. It was not a matter that required an invitation to the Eritrean government or needed it to be solicited. It was “a timely issue that warrants its active support.”

The NGO ‘Human Rights Concern–Eritrea’ issued a statement on Friday last week (June 9) on Eritrea’s education system, describing it as one of “the most highly militarized education systems in the world”. **(See article)**

The U.K.’s One World Media on Wednesday last week (June 7) awarded the Paris-based Radio Erena a special award for its role as Eritrea’s sole independent source of information. Eritrea has been ranked bottom on Reporters Sans Frontières’ Press Freedom Index for eight of the last nine years. Radio Erena was founded in 2009 by exiled Eritrean broadcasts in Arabic and Tigrinya. It dedicated its award to the many journalists currently imprisoned in Eritrea.

Kenya

The IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government at its Extra-Ordinary Summit on Monday (June 12) after a briefing from Kenya’s Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs and International Trade Ambassador Amina Mohamed encouraged Kenyans to be peaceful during the electioneering period, and called upon external actors to respect the sovereign rights of Kenyans to choose their own leaders without interference.

Kenya’s Inspector General of Police said on Sunday (June 11), that the authorities had captured six men, two Kenyans and four Somalis sent by Al-Shabaab from Burhanche in Somalia to launch terrorist attacks in Kenya. Police also seized explosives, four suicide vests and bomb-making materials.

Somalia

President Mohamed Abdullahi strongly condemned Al-Shabaab’s attack on a restaurant and an adjacent hotel in Mogadishu on Wednesday that killed at least 30 people. It not only took place

in the holy month of Ramadan; it also targeted a building frequented by teenagers and young adults. The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Somalia, Michael Keating, also condemned the attack. He said it was clearly aimed at civilians who were breaking the fast; there could be no justification for such acts of wanton bloodshed.

A ship dispatched by the Turkish Red Crescent aid organization arrived in Mogadishu on Thursday (June 15) with 13,000 tons of aid to be distributed across the country. It is part of a campaign started by President Erdoğan to relieve the risk of famine in East Africa and Yemen. The aid includes food as well as medical supplies, a diagnostic laboratory and construction equipment.

The government issued a statement last week over the crisis in the Gulf, saying it was “deeply concerned about the diplomatic row between the brotherly Arab countries” and calling on “all countries involved to settle their differences through dialogue and within the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Co-operation”. On Sunday and Monday, Mogadishu hosted visits by Qatar’s State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sultan bin Saad Al-Maurikhi and Saudi Arabia’s Foreign Minister, Adel al-Jubair,

Minister of Defense, Abdirashid Abdullahi Mohamed, said this week that 50 Al-Shabaab members had defected to the government in the past two months, since the President called on Al-Shabaab members in April to take advantage of a 60-day amnesty and renounce violence.

A consultative forum organized by the Interior Ministry to discuss formulas for national reconciliation opened in Mogadishu on Tuesday (June 13). The four-day conference is being attended by senior government officials, Federal State Ministers of Interior, prominent elders, politicians and members of the civil society.

Somali special forces attacked a major Al-Shabaab training and command post on Sunday (June 11) following a US drone airstrike on the base in the Middle Juba region. The Office of President said the attack had destroyed a key al Shabaab command and supply hub and would help disrupt the enemy's ability to conduct new attacks within Somalia.

Somalia’s Ministry of Security has issued a new directive instructing Members of Parliament and Government Ministers to register their security guards within two weeks. This follows a directive instructing officials to limit their guards to four in number.

Ministers from Puntland and Galmudug met in Galkayo at the weekend to discuss the consolidation of peace and stability in the Mudug region. The agenda included the strengthening of security in the city of Galkayo. The meeting was a follow-up to the recent Adaado agreement between President Abdiweli Gaas of Puntland and President Ahmed Haaf of Galmudug.

A forum to discuss a multi-party system opened in the regional capital of Garowe on Sunday (June 11), organized by Puntland administration. Participants included top government officials led by Puntland President Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, prominent elders, politicians and members of the civil society.

South Sudan

President Salva Kiir was unable to attend the IGAD Summit on South Sudan. A Presidential spokesperson said the IGAD summit had coincided “with other commitments of the same equal importance”. First Vice-President Taban Deng Gai had however attended. **(See article)**

The Council of Ministers approved funding of nearly a million dollars for the steering committee formed by the President to implement a joint border infrastructure development project with Ethiopia. Following the agreement in February, the Ethiopian Military Engineering Corp will build a road connecting Ethiopia’s Gambella region to Mathiang and Paloch areas via Pagak; another route will join Buma, Pibor, and Bor from Jebel-Raad to Dima in Ethiopia.

Sudan

The first elements of China's first peacekeeping helicopter unit arrived in Khartoum on Sunday (June 11) to join the UN-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). Two of four Mi-171 multirole medium helicopters also arrived. The contribution of helicopters, invaluable in many peacekeeping operations, would be welcome.

President Omer Al-Bashir reiterated on Tuesday (June 13) that Sudan would continue to activate diplomatic efforts to end the Gulf crisis. He met with Qatar’s Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi who was visiting Khartoum. President Al-Bashir supported the initiative of the Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, in trying to bring the parties to the negotiating table or to broker a deal deescalating tension.

Sudan’s Foreign Minister Ibrahim Ghandour met with a representative of the Office of the U.S. Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan as well as the Norwegian Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan in Oslo, Norway. The meeting discussed Sudanese-American relations and the situation in South Sudan. Several US agencies, including the State Department, have to present President Donald Trump this month with their findings and recommendations over US sanctions on Sudan.

On his visit to Norway, Foreign Minister Mr. Ghandour also met with Norwegian Foreign Minister Borge Brende and discussed regional and international challenges besides internal developments in Sudan and ways to promote bilateral ties between the two countries.

A Sudan spokesperson on Sunday (June 11) said three commanders from the Sudan Liberation Movement- Minni Minnawi (SLM-MM) had been killed last week following fighting in the Aru area, North Darfur State. Following a defeat the rebel forces had been retreating towards Libya.

IGAD Summit demands revitalization of South Sudan’s peace process

IGAD's 31st Extra-Ordinary Summit on South Sudan took place on Monday (June 12), in Addis Ababa, under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn of Ethiopia and Chairperson of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government. The main focus was on the current situation in the Republic of South Sudan. The outcome of the meeting strongly emphasized that IGAD had spoken with one voice and conveyed the message that the Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan remained the only viable solution to bring a lasting peace and stability to South Sudan. It decided to urgently convene a High-level Revitalization Forum to include estranged groups and firmly underlined the need for all South Sudanese to join the national dialogue in a credible and transparent manner. It appointed Ambassador Ismail Wais as IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan.

The Summit was attended by President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir of the Sudan; President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda; Taban Deng Gai, First Vice President of South Sudan; Hassan Ali Khaire, Prime Minister of Somalia; Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Djibouti; and Ambassador Amina Mohamed, Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Kenya. Other attending included the Executive Secretary of IGAD; the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security; the Chairperson of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC); the EU Special Representative to the Horn of Africa; the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative to South Sudan and Head of UNMISS; the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan; the Co-Chair of the IGAD Partners Forum; and the Representatives of the Troika on South Sudan (US, UK, Norway). South Sudan Presidential Spokesperson Ateny Wek Ateny explained that President Kiir did not attend the summit "because the IGAD summit coincided with other commitments of the same equal importance. Like in any sovereign state, the president sent his first vice president, Taban Deng Gai, who had sufficiently represented the president."

In an opening address, Prime Minister Hailemariam underscored that the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) signed between the Government and the Opposition in 2015 charted the way forward to bring enduring peace, stability and a democratic order in the country. He said efforts must be further strengthened toward stability and reconciliation in South Sudan to address humanitarian crisis. He said that IGAD member states were closely following the political security and humanitarian developments in the country and reconciliation efforts. He said there had been some steps forward: the formation of and swearing in of the National Dialogue Steering Committee and the commitment to release political prisoners. He noted the city of Juba had witnessed unprecedented peace over the past ten months and there had been some reform of the economy. These were positive developments, he said. However, despite the recent announcement of unilateral ceasefire of the Transitional Government and attempts to reinvigorate national dialogue, "the situation in the ground has not shown much improvement". He said: "we have a long way to go for sustainable peace and we should do this urgently with a new spirit and energy". He concluded: "I want to assure you that IGAD is speaking with one voice and will continue to closely work with all South Sudan stakeholders, the African Union, UNs as well as all friends of South Sudan to support the peace and reconciliation effort".

Following discussion and briefings, including a report from Festus Mogae, Chairperson of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission acknowledging "some commendable progress in institution building and some reforms" in South Sudan, but urging IGAD to revitalize the implementation and compliance of the peace agreement and find practical ways to address the country's humanitarian crisis, the Summit reiterated that the full implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) remained the only viable way forward to bring about peace and stability and create the basis for a democratic political system in South Sudan. It expressed its serious concern and dismay that the implementation has faced a serious delay and called upon all the parties to take urgent steps to draw a concrete plan and timeline to compensate the delay and to revitalize its full implementation. It welcomed the recent declaration by President Salva Kiir of a unilateral ceasefire and called upon the President to follow up the strict implementation of the ceasefire, to ensure his field commanders respected it and take swift measures against those who violate it. In this connection, IGAD Summit urged the armed opposition groups to reciprocate the call for a ceasefire as well as to renounce violence.

The Summit condemned in the strongest terms the violence and armed conflict that continue to be perpetrated by government forces as well as all other armed groups in South Sudan targeting defenseless civilians and causing huge loss of lives, destruction of property, and uprooting millions of South Sudanese from their homes to take refuge in the neighboring states or suffer as internally displaced persons within their country. It emphasized that all armed opposition groups in South Sudan also shared full responsibility for the humanitarian consequences of the conflict and the human rights abuses occurring. It stressed that IGAD was committed to collaborate with the AU and the UN to take all necessary measures to hold accountable individuals and groups causing humanitarian crises and committing human rights violations.

The IGAD Summit expressed deep concern over the obstacles faced by humanitarian agencies including killings of humanitarian personnel and denial of access to deliver humanitarian supplies, calling upon the Transitional Government of National Unity to take urgent measures to facilitate unhindered access to the affected population and to bring to justice individuals and groups that have committed crimes against humanitarian workers. It also took note of and appreciated the progress made by the Government to address the issue of access through the establishment of the High-level Humanitarian Oversight Committee, and the opening of the new humanitarian corridors. It commended the Governments of Kenya and Sudan for opening new corridors for assistance. It underlined that humanitarian assistance must be provided to all citizens of South Sudan without any discrimination.

IGAD expressed its regret for the long delay of the deployment of the Regional Protection Force (RPF) and decided to convene a meeting of the Chiefs of Defence Staff of the Troop Contributing Countries, the Transitional Government of National Unity, and the UN to discuss all outstanding issues and determine a definitive timeline for full deployment of the RPF.

The Summit underlined the need for a High-level Revitalization Forum of the parties to the ARCSS, including estranged groups, to discuss concrete measures, to restore a permanent ceasefire, to fully implement the Peace Agreement and to develop a revised and realistic timeline

and implementation schedule towards a democratic election at the end of the transition period. It mandated the IGAD Council of Ministers to urgently convene and facilitate this forum in collaboration with relevant stakeholders. It also directed the Chairperson of JMEC and the Executive Secretary of IGAD to provide the necessary secretariat and logistical arrangements. It also called on the EU and the IGAD Secretariat to urgently convene a meeting of the Friends of JMEC to discuss among others the role to be played by the partners of IGAD in the implementation of the revitalization of the ARCSS.

The Summit recognized the support extended by the international community to provide humanitarian assistance to the affected population of South Sudan. It appealed to the international community to redouble its effort and also assist in alleviating the burden of the neighboring countries that continue to receive and host the huge number of refugees from South Sudan. In this context, it expressed its appreciation to the AU, the UN, the Troika, China, the EU, the IPF, and international partners and friends of South Sudan for their continued commitment and support to peace and reconciliation in South Sudan.

Ethiopia reiterates Africa's request for deferral of ICC case against President Al-Bashir

The Security Council held a briefing session on 8 June 2017 regarding the issue of Sudan and the International Criminal Court (ICC). The Special Prosecutor of the Court, Ms. Fatou Bensouda, presented her twenty-fifth report on the situation in Darfur to the Council, pursuant to Resolution 1593 (2005). She expressed disappointment, frustration and anger that not one of the suspects for whom warrants have been issued has been arrested and transferred to the International Criminal Court. She reiterated that her Office remains as determined as ever to pursue its efforts in this regard and requested the support of the Council.

In the debate that followed, Member States expressed divergent views. While some stressed the need to ensure justice for victims and urged the Council to take measures on cases of non-compliance and non-cooperation, others urged the international community to give adequate attention to the African Union's concerns and take a more objective stance on the matter highlighting the repeated requests of the AU urging the Council to withdraw its referral of the situation to the Court. There were also those who tried to strike a balance between their commitment to the Court viz-a-vis the concerns of the African Union.

Ambassador Tekeda Alemu, Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the UN, reflecting the African position on the issue, explained that Africa has expressed its serious reservation against the ICC due to the manner in which the Court has been operating. This ended up being a major disappointment and had left a very bad impression in Africa. On the issue of Sudan and the ICC in particular, he said, the African Union was convinced that the referral by the Council of the situation in Darfur to the ICC and the subsequent developments as it related to the President of Sudan would cause more harm than good, seriously undermining the ongoing efforts aimed at facilitating the early resolution of the conflict in Darfur.

He regretted that Africa's repeated requests had so far neither been heard nor acted upon; while urging the Council to respond to the AU's repeated request for the suspension of the proceedings against President Omar Al Bashir of The Sudan and the withdrawal of the mentioned referral to the ICC. Finally, he condemned in the strongest terms the attacks conducted by the armed movements in Darfur on 19 and 20 May 2017, which, he said, were aimed at undermining the implementation of the ceasefire and reversing the positive momentum registered so far. He urged the leaders of these armed groups to lay down their arms and join the political process without delay.

The UN Security Council is briefed on proposed troop reductions for UNAMID

The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, El-Ghassim Wane, briefed the UN Security Council on Wednesday this week (June 14) on recommended changes in the troop levels for the AU-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). He presented the recommendations of the Special Report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the UN Secretary-General on the strategic review of UNAMID. The African Union is proposing a 44% cut in its troops and police presence in Darfur, and the UN suggests a 30% cut in its troop personnel levels as a step towards the eventual exit of UNAMID from Darfur. Mr. Wane said this reconfiguration of UNAMID would be an important milestone towards the completion of UNAMID's mandate. UNAMID was established by the Security Council in July 2017. Mr. Wane emphasized that the level of armed hostilities remained significantly lower than in previous years. He said the Sudan Government had carried out a successful military campaign that had reduced rebellion to a small presence in Western Jebel Marra. The number of inter-communal security incidents had also decreased and progress had been made on the political front. However, there were still 2.7 million people internally displaced and a number of grievances and key issues still needed to be addressed. These included militia activities, unresolved intercommunal disputes over land and other resources, the prevalence of weapons and crime, and weak rule-of-law institutions.

Mr. Wane said this meant UNAMID had to adjust to new realities. He explained the proposal to cut troop levels involved a two-pronged approach, combining peace building and peacekeeping tasks. He said most of Darfur now required a more peace building-oriented approach, though in the Jebel Marra, the Mission would still focus on traditional peacekeeping tasks. The troop cuts would mean bringing the number of troops down to 8,736, and the police down to 2,360 from 3,403. It would include the closure of some team sites, and withdrawal of the military from another seven sites.

The political process would have a strong focus on the implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. This had now been incorporated in the Sudan Constitution. He said it contained useful provisions to address the underlying causes of conflict and help to create "peace dividends" for the population in Darfur. He underlined that activities for the protection of civilians in the greater Jebel Marra area would revolve around physical protection and emergency relief. For the rest of Darfur, the focus would be on livelihood issues and rule of law.

With reference to the issue of inter-communal conflict, the Mission would prioritize conflicts that had the potential to cause the highest number of casualties and derail the political processes. Mr. Wane also noted that closer partnership with the United Nations Country Team could respond to Darfur’s seasonal migration and the need to extend rule-of-law institutions. He emphasized that successful reconfiguration of UNAMID required the full support and cooperation of the Government of Sudan and its institutions. It would be important to ensure there was no “security vacuum” in areas vacated by UNAMID.

The Sudan representative emphasized his Government’s readiness to cooperate fully with UNAMID, the African Union, the United Nations and other partners to ensure a smooth, phased and complete UNAMID exit that would set an example for other missions. On the question of internally displaced persons, he called attention to a Government plan entailing three options: voluntary return to their places of origin; the integration of camps into nearby cities; and enabling internally displaced persons to choose where they wished to be relocated. This would, however, require international financial resources and assistance. He said the actual number of displaced people was 1.8 million rather than UNAMID’s figure of 2.7 million. He also noted that 92% of Darfur was open to humanitarian access without authorization. Other speakers underlined the importance of removing explosive devices in order to ensure people’s safety, and protecting the most vulnerable; and emphasized that the Government and armed groups must continue to work on a peace process, as well as address the root causes of the conflict and the issue of returning internally displaced persons.

UN Security Council extends UN Assistance Mission in Somalia

The UN Security Council unanimously decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) until March 2018 on Wednesday (June 14). Under resolution 2358 (2017), the Council underlined the importance of UNSOM’s support for Somalia’s political process and encouraged interaction between the Mission and civil society at the national and regional levels.

The resolution underlined the importance of UNSOM’s support to the political process, including its assistance to the peace and reconciliation process, particularly for consolidation of State-formation, for mediation in conflict, and for the constitutional review processes as well as in improving accountability of Somali institutions and support for the preparation of inclusive, transparent one-person, one-vote elections in 2021. It requested UNSOM to provide strategic advice in support of a comprehensive approach to security and to support implementation of Somalia’s National Strategy and Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism. In this context, the resolution welcomed the agreement in April to integrate regional and federal forces into a coherent National Security Architecture and the swift establishment of the National Security Council and National Security Office. It also welcomed the launch of Somalia’s National Strategy and Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism. It encouraged the commitments of international partners to provide additional and more effective

support for mentoring, training, equipment, capacity-building and remuneration of police and military forces.

The resolution welcomed the conclusion of the electoral process in Somalia and the election of President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, the swift appointment of a Government, the increased representation of women in Parliament and Government, and the increased participation and representation of the people of Somalia in the electoral process. It underlined the importance of formalizing the status of the federal member states as soon as possible, and the commitment of the federal Government of Somalia and federal member states to reach an agreement on outstanding constitutional issues. The resolution also encouraged the Federal Government to fulfill its commitment to sound, transparent and accountable financial management and to fully implement the Action Plan of its Human Rights Road Map and establish its National Human Rights Commission.

The Security Council also expressed its grave concern at the worsening humanitarian situation and renewed risk of famine and the potential impact on the Somali people. It commended the efforts of United Nations agencies and other humanitarian actors and donors in scaling up life-saving assistance to vulnerable populations. It condemned any misuse or obstruction of humanitarian assistance, reiterating its demand that all parties allow and facilitate full, safe, rapid and unhindered access for timely delivery of aid to those in need across Somalia, including by dismantling illegal checkpoints and removing administrative hurdles. It underlined the importance of proper accounting for international humanitarian support, in line with humanitarian principles, and encouraged Somali national disaster-management agencies to scale up capacity, with support from the United Nations, in order to take up a stronger coordination and leadership role.

It requested the Secretary-General to keep the Security Council regularly informed on the implementation of the resolution and provide a first written report by 1 September 2017 and then every four months.

A Japanese business delegation in Ethiopia

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn at a meeting on Thursday (June 15) welcomed the Japanese business delegation led by Dr. Katusuhiko Hirano, Executive Vice-President of the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), which is visiting Ethiopia. At a meeting also attended by Mr. Tetsuro Yano, ex-Senior Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and current President of Association of African Economy and Development (AFRECO), the Prime Minister noted the long-standing relations between the two countries. He also said Ethiopia was seeking to attract Japanese investors, something he and Japanese Prime Minister Abe had discussed recently at the G7 Meeting in Taormina Italy. The Prime Minister noted the tremendous contribution of Japanese organizations, like the Japan International Cooperation Agency and the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, to the implementation of technical cooperation and contributions through the Growth and Transformation Plan structural transformation process. He

also thanked JETRO for opening an office which would help Ethiopia's economic progress to learn from Japan's development progress, and move in the right direction to achieve middle income status.

JETRO Executive Vice-President, Dr. Hirano, said JETRO was trying to fill the gap caused by delays in Japanese companies' participation in investment in Ethiopia. He said that the delegation had visited the Mojo Dry port and the Ethiopian Airlines Cargo Facility. He was impressed by these facilities, noting that Ethiopia was an ideal place to attract Japanese investment. He said he would make further efforts to fulfill the promise of the Chairman and CEO of JETRO, Mr. Ishige, assuring Japanese companies of the value of doing business in Ethiopia. AFRECO President, Tetsuro Yano, who met the Prime Minister at the TICAD V Summit in Yokohama, appreciated the Prime Minister's role in the realization of the TICAD process. He also underlined the investment opportunities in Ethiopia and said he wanted to play a role in the country's mission to become a middle income country.

The delegation also met with President Dr. Mulatu Teshome earlier in the week on Wednesday (June 14) for discussions on political and economic issues. President Mulatu thanked JETRO and AFRECO for their prominent role in organizing the business mission and encouraged the delegation to invest in the broad economic sectors of the country, especially in manufacturing, agro-processing and other priority investment sectors.

The delegation included 32 business representatives and officials from 21 Japanese companies, JETRO, and AFRECO. The visit followed the Ethio-Japan Business Forum, held on April 25 in Tokyo. Its visit aimed to further strengthen economic relations between the two countries through enhancing the engagement of Japanese companies in Foreign Direct Investment, especially in industrial park construction. The industrial parks will create a more conducive environment for Japanese companies and encourage export trade ties with particular emphasis on flower and coffee exports to Japan. The total trade volume between Japan and Ethiopia in 2016 was about US\$731 million.

The delegation visited the Hawassa Specialized Industrial Park and met with Dr. Arkebe Oqubay, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister. Members of the delegation also met with the Minister of Transport and the State Minister of Construction. Members of the delegation met with representatives of Ethiopian companies from different sectors in a business-to-business session to discuss future joint ventures and export market links with selected Japanese companies, among them four flower producers, three flexible packaging producers, six companies from the metal and construction sector, and two logistics' companies. A number of other Japanese companies have also been showing interest in Ethiopia's booming economy. Isuzu is on the verge of opening a branch office in Addis for automotive production in collaboration with METEC; last year Japan Tobacco International purchased 40% of the shares of Ethiopian Tobacco Corporation; several top Fortune 500 companies from Japan including JFE Engineering Corporation, Toshiba and Suzuki Motor Corporation, have visited Ethiopia this fiscal year for pre- investment studies.

During the visit a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ethiopian Investment Commission and Tomonius Corporation of Japan. This is for the construction of an Industrial Park Zone for Japanese companies within the Bole Lemmi 2 Industrial Park. It will be built on 31.2 hectares within the 186 hectare park, and is expected to start service within a year. Tomonius has wide experience in industrial park construction in South East Asia.

“Ethiopia -the fastest-growing economy in the world in 2017” – World Bank....

A number of recent reports have underlined Ethiopia’s strong and continuing economic performance. The World Bank in its latest edition of its Global Economic Prospects says Ethiopia will be the fastest-growing economy in the world in 2017. Ethiopia’s GDP is forecast to grow by 8.3% in 2017, compared with global growth projected at 2.7%. The second-fastest-growing economy is that of Uzbekistan with projected growth of 7.6% thanks to rising oil prices, benign global financing conditions, robust growth in the Euro Area, and generally supportive policies among governments of several large countries in the region. Others in the top half-dozen ten are: Nepal (7.5%), India (7.2%), Tanzania (7.0%) and Djibouti (7.0%). The Bank says trade restrictions could hamper global trade, just as uncertainty over country policies could hamper investment. The Bank says that countries now need to undertake institutional and market reforms in order to attract private investment. This will help sustain growth in the long-term. The World Bank’s Chief Economist Paul Romer said, “The reassuring news is that trade is recovering,” but added that, “The concern is that investment remains weak. In response, we are shifting our priorities for lending toward projects that can spur follow-on investment by the private sector.” The World Bank noted that growth in non-resource intensive countries was anticipated to remain solid, supported by infrastructure investment, resilient services sectors, and the recovery of agricultural production.

In April, figures released by the IMF showed Ethiopia’s annual economic output for 2017 was expected to hit US\$78.3 billion from the US\$72.5 billion last year, with a strong performance exceeding projections. The IMF stresses that Ethiopia’s growth is largely fuelled by public-led spending on infrastructure and robust domestic demand. On the basis of these figures, Ethiopia is now the largest economy in eastern Africa a little ahead of Kenya which had a GDP for 2016 of \$68.91 billion, and expected to reach \$75 billion this year. Kenya’s GDP per capita, however, remains significantly higher than Ethiopia, estimated at \$1,607.1 this year, compared to Ethiopia’s \$845.9 for 2017. To join the ranks of the lower middle-income group, Ethiopia needs to reach a GDP per capita of between \$1,045 and \$4,125. Dr. Nyandemo, a development economist at the University of Nairobi, said Ethiopia was a country on the rise, with its larger population, larger size and having enjoyed a stable political environment for an extended period. He said “the institutional framework in place in Ethiopia had made mobilization resources and put it to good use.” This had allowed Ethiopia’s real estate to flourish, its manufacturing industry to reboot and its transport sector to modernize. In addition, it had low electricity prices with strong hydropower development, allowing it to provide a separate grid for its new industrial parks.

The recently published UNCTAD World Investment Report put Ethiopia as one of the top performing African countries in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows, in 2016, registering a 46% increase to US\$3 billion. UNCTAD said overall the FDI flows to Africa had continued to decline in 2016, but some producers of East Africa had registered strong flows in 2016, with Ethiopia attracting more than ever before. Ethiopia became the second largest Least Development Country host economy, up from fifth position the previous year. The World Investment Report said much of this was derived from investment in infrastructure and manufacturing. The new FDI in manufacturing could in turn, it said, create opportunities for local Small and Medium Enterprises to link to global supply chains. The report also identifies Ethiopia as one of the top performers in efforts to diversify its economy and consequently its FDI pool. It emphasized the diversification of inflow was expanding. The report noted China was one of the major sources of FDI, but also added that foreign investors from other economies, including Japan, had started investing more in Ethiopia's agro-processing, hotels and resorts, as well as in manufacturing activities.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's Economic Report on Africa entitled 'Urbanization and Industrialization for Africa's Transformation', is produced by the African Development Bank (AfDB), the OED Development Centre and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). It analyzes macroeconomic, finance, trade, social and human development trends and statistics for Africa. As we reported a couple of weeks ago, its analysis for Ethiopia notes continued impressive real GDP growth last year (8%), even if down 2.4% on the previous year, and a substantial increase in domestic credit of over 27%. It noted the continued growth in Foreign Direct Investment flows and private transfers and remittances increasing. It concluded that the indications are that Ethiopia would be the biggest recipient of private equity in eastern Africa in 2017, thanks to its friendly business environment and favorable industrial policy. It identified the structural reforms to improve export competitiveness and diversification as well as the massive investments in transport, energy and water infrastructure in the industrial zones, would reduce the costs of doing business, promote export-led industrialization and boost structural transformation and economic growth.

It notes the way public expenditure has been used to improve infrastructure to increase productivity, encourage private sector development and export-led industrial development and contribute to structural transformation. Business regulations have been simplified and institutions that support businesses strengthened. Government policies and strategies have emphasized the expansion of basic services and poverty reduction and these have made strong progress particularly with respect to access to basic services. Fiscal policies have aimed to achieve macroeconomic stability while supporting economic growth, prioritizing public spending on pro-poor and improving revenue mobilization. All this adds up effective implementation of the Climate Resilient and Green Economy (CRGE) Strategy. A major element has been the adoption of the Integrated Agro-Industrial Park Development Initiative, which is being implemented by the Industrial Park Development Corporation. This is providing serviced land and other infrastructure to reduce the cost of doing business in the industrial sector. Twelve industrial parks have been identified for development across the country and two of these parks, Hawassa and Addis Ababa, are operational. Feasibility studies have been completed and resource mobilization is underway for Integrated Agro-Industrial Park in the Oromia, Amhara, Southern

Nations, Nationalities Peoples and Tigray Regional States. On Friday last week (June 9), the Ethiopian Industrial Park Development Corporation signed an agreement with the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation to build the 75 hectare Industrial Park in Bahir Dar. The park will provide jobs for more than 20,000 people producing value added agricultural products for export. It is expected to be finished within nine months.

An important element has been the Micro and Small Enterprises Development Strategy, providing a framework for entrepreneurship development with a focus on improving the business-enabling environment, increasing access to finance and enhancing market linkages. The GTP II is providing a number of measures to consolidate implementation, including strengthening technical vocational education training (TVET) and establishing centers of excellence in 35 universities to support entrepreneurial development. The government is establishing over 2 000 one-stop service centers for business development services as well as providing 9 000 hectares of serviced land and 15 000 production sheds for entrepreneurs during the GTP II period. Last weekend, Prime Minister Hailemariam gave awards to representatives of 968 micro and small enterprises which had graduated to medium level enterprise status. At a ceremony at the town of Nekemte on Sunday (June 11) the Prime Minister praised their efforts to reduce poverty, contribute to job creation and fair distribution of wealth. The Chief Administrator of Oromia State, Lemma Megersa, said that micro and small enterprises were the way to create young millionaires. The successful entrepreneurs, from all over Oromia Regional State, had raised registered capital of more than 1.1 billion Birr and created jobs for nearly 10,000 people. Their enterprises were engaged in manufacturing, agriculture and ICT as well as other areas.

.....and Fitch Ratings affirms Ethiopia's 'B' status

At the end of last week, Fitch Ratings also affirmed Ethiopia's Long-Term Foreign- and Local-Currency Issuer Default Ratings as 'B' with a Stable Outlook. It added that it was also affirming a 'B' rating for issue ratings on Ethiopia's senior unsecured foreign-currency bonds, the Country Ceiling and the Short-Term Foreign- and Local-Currency Issuer Default Ratings. Fitch said it based its decision on a number of factors. Ethiopia's average GDP growth in 2012-16 was 9.5%, much higher than the 'B' category median of 3.9%. It said GDP growth has been little affected by the two severe drought episodes in 2016-2017. This reflected an improvement in macroeconomic stability which Fitch said was the result of a more efficient crisis management framework, higher agricultural productivity and lower dependence on agriculture due to the solid expansion in construction and to a lesser extent, services. GDP growth had slowed only moderately to 8% in fiscal year 2016 and was estimated to recover to 10% in fiscal year 2017. Inflation remained below 8%. With high public investment aiming to bridge infrastructure gaps and bring about a pick-up in manufacturing, growth was expected to average around 8% over the next three years. This would be below the 11% target set in the Growth and Transformation Plan II "but still much higher than peers".

Fitch underlined that general government finances remained sound. It expected general government debt to remain below the government's self-imposed threshold of 3% over the medium term. At 27% of GDP, this is less than half the 'B' category median of 56.4%, though

Fitch estimates the debts of state-owned enterprises involved in the massive public investment programme would add another 31% of GDP. Equally, it expected the aggregate debt of the public sector to stabilise over the next three years, because of sustained GDP growth, moderate deficits and a low debt service cost. It said the intention to limit additional non-concessional external loans, in line with IMF recommendations, should also act as a brake on debt accumulation. Fitch expected exports to pick up gradually as the country starts to reap the benefits of past investments in export-oriented light industries and infrastructure. It noted, in particular, that major industrial projects, including the Hawassa and Bole-Lemi II industrial parks, should reach full production in the next two years, and the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway would reduce trade costs.

Fitch said the political situation had returned to calm in 2017, but it also felt the prolongation of the State of Emergency suggested the persistence of significant underlying tensions, despite the relaxation of some provisions. Although it felt a relapse of political and security conditions was unlikely, it also said this remained a risk over the medium term and there was a possibility this could hamper growth and discourage foreign investments. However, it also noted Ethiopia has continued to attract a steady stream of Foreign Direct Investment, averaging 3% of GDP during the last five years.

In fact, following the unrest, a State of Emergency was a necessary response to protect the peace and stability of the country. As the State of Emergency has immediately brought about peace and stability in affected parts of the country, the provisions of the decree have progressively been relaxed. A number of restrictions including controls on mobile data network, arrest of suspects and conducting searches without court warrant have been lifted. The State of Emergency was extended for a few more months with a view to fully ensuring the nation's peace and stability. It should be noted that surveys have confirmed that over 80% of the public supports extension of the State of Emergency.

The Africa Energy Forum in Copenhagen

The 19th annual Africa Energy Forum (AEF) took place last week (June 7-9) in Copenhagen, Denmark. The decision to host the forum in Denmark was made in order to capitalize on the investment potential of Nordic countries in Africa and to showcase effectively some energy technologies that might be transferred to Africa. The Managing Director of EnergyNet organizing the Forum said that as Denmark “leads the way with its clean energy initiatives and blending of public and private finance” it was an excellent location to welcome African stakeholders and international investors to discuss project partnerships with some of Denmark's leading energy companies. The theme for the conference in Copenhagen in June 2017 was “Development financing institutions” and it offered Africa's energy sector decision-makers the opportunity to explore investment opportunities, form partnerships and sign deals.

This year, the Forum, attracted 15 Ministers of Energy and senior government officials and more than two thousand participants representing 80 countries. Established 19 years ago, it focuses

primarily on large-scale power projects, supporting the public and private sectors to get projects off the ground and connected to the grid. Equally, since 600 million people in Africa live without access to basic energy, investors are increasingly looking off-grid to areas not serviced by national grids for possible development. Energy problems most often revolve around such challenges as inability of governments to fund expansion or refurbishment, or attract private sector investment into the power sector, insufficient managerial and technical skills, lack of maintenance of existing facilities and consequent reliability problems; inappropriate tariffs, often the result of political interference, with tariffs below marginal costs; and inadequate revenue collection.

Ethiopia's minister for Water, Irrigation and Electricity, Dr. Seleshi Bekele, headed Ethiopia's delegation to the Forum, participating in the panel discussion on Ethiopia where he underlined Ethiopia's efforts to attract international investors in the future development of the power sector. Ethiopia, he pointed out, was one of Africa's fastest growing economies and it had a clear ambition to maintain its economic growth and support the development of the country. In addition, it was a leading developing country in global climate negotiations, contributing with an ambitious input to the Paris Agreement and taking an active role in the Global Green Growth Forum. Its ambitions were clearly reflected in the current five-year plan for the power sector, under which the Government is planning to increase the national power generation capacity from renewable energy sources significantly by 2020. High priority will continue to be given to hydropower, which is the backbone of the country's energy sector, but in addition, significant amounts of wind, geothermal, solar and bio-mass power generation are being developed in order to strengthen the climate resilience of the Ethiopian economy and develop the country's green economy. It is also implementing an ambitious program to provide sustainable energy to all in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Dr. Seleshi said: "Our expansion in new renewable energy generating capacity and energy access is open to being developed through the private sector and public-private partnerships." He went on to underline Ethiopia's efforts to attract international investors. There was, he said, a need to mobilize substantial amounts of capital. Ethiopia was recording strong and sustained economic growth, he said, with "a stable political environment, and conducive business setting for private investment." In other words, he added, "Ethiopia's power sector development is a huge market opportunity". The session highlighted Ethiopia's strong cooperation with a number of international partners, including Power Africa, State Grid Corporation of China and the Danish Energy Agency.

While in Denmark, Dr. Seleshi also visited the Danish Energy Agency. This is involved in the Danish-Ethiopia "Accelerating Wind Power Generation in Ethiopia" Program (AWPGE). This is program to assist Ethiopia in developing an Independent Power Producer (IPP) roadmap for wind projects and shape new procedures and framework conditions for such projects. An Implementation Partner Arrangement was signed between the Ministry and the Danish Energy Agency in February 2015, covering a number of different activities to ensure successful independent producer wind tenders, among which is a one-stop-model for wind projects inspired by Danish examples. This is to be developed by Ethiopia to ensure IPPs only have to deal with one public authority for project approvals and licenses. A workshop was held in Addis Ababa in

March. Wind power companies and experts shared experiences on wind project development. The next stage is for a Tender Design and Wind Project Financial Workshop to be organized in Addis Ababa. Overall, the aim of the Accelerating Wind Power Generation in Ethiopia program is to mobilize the private sector in the Ethiopian energy supply sector and support financing for its continuous growth and development.

International partners pledge further support to Ethiopia's drought response efforts

A delegation led by the African Union and the United Nations concluded a five-day visit to the Horn of Africa in Nairobi, on Tuesday (June 13), after visiting drought-affected communities in Ethiopia and Somalia. The group included representatives from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, the African Development Bank, the USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and the World Bank. The delegates met with Government representatives, local authorities and humanitarian partners in Ethiopia and visited drought-affected people in Dolo Zone of Ethiopian Somali Regional State and observed drought-response activities. Their visit aimed to get first-hand information about the drought-response efforts in order to mobilize resources most effectively for sustainable rehabilitation for those affected. The delegation travelled to Koracale camp in Somali Regional State, which hosts 200,000 displaced people. The UN Special Humanitarian Envoy, Ahmed al-Meraikhi, who led the delegation also held discussions with officials of Ethiopia's National Disaster Risk Management Commission on Saturday (June 10) on the situation and drought-response efforts. The delegation made financial pledges in support of the humanitarian response efforts in the drought-hit regions, and Mr. al-Meraikhi affirmed that these efforts would continue to be supported by the international community.

The Commissioner of National Disaster Risk Management, Mitiku Kassa, said Ethiopia has continued to work to mitigate the impact of the drought that had left 7.8 million people dependent on humanitarian aid from the government and the international community. He pointed out that apart from climate change and the pressure of the drought on food supplies, tens of thousands of migrants, trying to escape the continuing conflict and drought in Somalia and South Sudan, were also adding to the pressure on Ethiopia. Ethiopia was now hosting well over 700 thousand refugees from neighboring countries, he said. The Commissioner urged the international community to support drought-response efforts. Overall, Ethiopia needed a billion dollars of emergency food aid; so far only US\$365 million had come from the international community.

In an interview with the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation, Commissioner Mitiku noted that recent media reports that food for 7.8 million people would run out at the end of June were entirely incorrect. The Commissioner said that in some areas, and only in some areas, food could run out by the end of the month. This would only affect the 1.7 million people who were people receiving food aid largely from the World Food Program (WFP). WFP had raised concerns earlier about its ability to continue with this support after the end of the month because of a shortage of funds. Ethiopia hoped the donor community would be able to step in to fill that gap, "and we are hopeful; but if they fail to do so, we will have to use some of development budget to

provide emergency assistance to our people.” The Government previously allocated extra funds, of US\$272 million in 2015 and US\$109 million last year, to deal with gaps in funding. Together with the public and investors it has provided US\$200 million in support for those affected. In fact, the 2017 multi-sector and multi-agency mid-year needs assessment is ongoing at the moment. This will gauge the level of food and non-food needs in spring (*belg-gu-ganna-sugum*) rains-receiving areas across 177 targeted *woredas*. The assessment results will inform the review of the 2017 Humanitarian Requirements Document for the second half of the year.

The Minister for the Government Communications Agency, Dr. Negeri Lencho, also emphasized that recent media coverage claiming that “emergency food aid will run out by end of this month” were unfounded. He explained that the Government was providing emergency food aid for 4.7 million people, World Food Program supported another 1.7 million people, and the remaining 1.4 million drought-affected people were being supported by Catholic Charity Aid agency. He said USAID and European countries mainly funded the WFP and as the United States had not allocated a current budget for WFP, the organization feared that there would now be a risk of food shortages that might hamper its services.

Other agencies and organizations are continuing to provide aid to Ethiopia and the other countries affected by the drought across the Horn of Africa. The African Development Bank recently announced a US\$1.1 billion package to combat drought and famine in six countries, including Ethiopia and Somalia. The World Bank has a US\$9 billion portfolio of development assistance and investments in Ethiopia. In the spirit of Ramadan, Qatar has just announced US\$3 million assistance to Ethiopia to address critical needs identified by the humanitarian community; it will be provided through Qatari NGOs working with the United Nations. The King of Saudi Arabia’s Salman Humanitarian Relief Centre has also announced plans to contribute to aid efforts in Ethiopia. The Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister, Ahmet Yildiz, visited Ethiopia at the beginning of the week. He held meetings with Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh and with Commissioner Mitiku. He said the purpose of his visit to the region was to see the impact of drought. He said his delegation had been given all the information they needed and would now sort out how to coordinate priorities of assistance and implementation. He emphasized that Turkey’s ties with Africa were based on long-term for strategic partnership, adding, “We will help our African brothers in every possible way.”

This week, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) also launched a \$60 million appeal to assist an estimated 16 million people, and target 2 million of the most vulnerable drought-affected people through December of this year in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. The IOM said the drought was fuelling migration across borders, particularly from Somalia, and this could affect how both the people who are moving and the people who are receiving them, can recover from the drought. It said cross-border movements might also significantly affect the results of the poor harvest predicted as a result of below average rains during March-May, if the humanitarian response was not scaled up to meet the needs of affected populations. It said the funds would provide a combination of lifesaving and early recover interventions, as well as build long-term capacity to recover, including provision of shelter, protection, food, water and sanitation.

Education in Eritrea, conscription and World Day against Child Labor

The NGO Human Rights Concern - Eritrea took exception to a side-event organized by the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations Office in Geneva on Friday last week (June 9) to focus on “Progress in education in Eritrea”. In a statement, Human Rights Concern - Eritrea pointed out that far from progress in education, Eritrea in fact had one of the most highly militarized education systems in the world. It said it was geared only to providing the required number of human beings in the categories and occupations the regime regarded as desirable, and it was one of the least open to make any efforts to realize the latent abilities of its pupils. Education, it said, was being exploited in Eritrea as another means of social control.

The statement noted that high-school students had to undergo their final year of education, 12th grade, in the Sawa military training camp. It said many were underage when they go to Sawa and they spend the summer between ending the 11th grade and starting 12th grade in receiving full military training. Indeed, students are conscripted into the military before they finish high-school. It says the classes are overcrowded and students live under extremely harsh conditions: they suffer draconian punishments, beatings, abuses and psychological stress.

At the end of this year they are expected to pass their matriculation exams. Those who do not pass are doomed to continue as national service conscripts in indefinite national service. They are dispatched to various areas in the country to army units, or to various government departments, and work construction, agriculture, in the police, or public offices and so on. They have no say in where they work, what they do and when they can leave. Those who do pass their matriculation can continue to study – in militarized colleges around the country. They also remain national service conscripts. They are assigned to various programs of study and have no say in choosing which area of study they continue.

Human Rights Concern – Eritrea claims, “The whole education system is geared to producing skilled unquestioning laborers and not promoting critical thinking. “ It points out many programs of studies are systematically denied or not made available; vocational courses are preferred, with virtually no opportunities for humanities or arts. It also notes the military type lifestyle continues in many colleges including the Eritrea Institute of Technology which is near Asmara. Students live in barracks, in isolation from the public. They do military drills and physical training in the early morning, and other ‘political study’ programs at scheduled intervals. They cannot leave the compound to visit their home nor can they receive visitors without permission.

The NGO says the government claims that students are given education equivalent to undergraduate and post-graduate level. However, it points out there are no independent higher learning and research institutions that resembles a university; the buildings of the non-functioning University of Asmara are now being used for various other programs, and the institution itself remains closed.

It argues that the situation is no better for teachers who are also involuntary conscripts. They have no say about where they work. They are de-motivated and deliberately underpaid. It says teachers who oppose the government's teaching strategy or who seek extra employment to provide for their family can be exposed to imprisonment and harsh maltreatment. Nor are teachers immune from military re-training and physical labour in areas where widespread labour-intensive projects are under way. Most teachers are overworked and overstretched, with no available support system to insure their rights. The government does not provide means for gathering reference tools, and the libraries, such as they are filled with old and outdated books. The NGO says the teacher's association is almost non-existent with no significant purpose to operate in the country other than by the government for a political campaign and propaganda. As a result an increasing number of teachers were leaving the country in search of better opportunities elsewhere, as so many of their students have done.

While in high-school, teenage students are expected to spend their summers doing government-assigned work often in remote rural areas far from their homes during summer. Parents have no say in the way their children are educated. Although each school has a parent council, Eritrean citizens and external bodies are not allowed to independently monitor the developments or the lack of in education. As a result, Human Rights Concern – Eritrea suggests that these young people are alienated from their families and family values, introduced to the military lifestyle, and forced to work in the fields or in construction involuntarily and under minders who control them like soldiers. They are prevented from doing any other independent extra-curricular activities. This, it says, “is the reality of the supposed “Progress in Education in Eritrea.”

Human Rights Concern – Eritrea also raises questions about who are the members of the UN Country Team billed as participating in the meeting. It says they could not, for example, include any members of the UN Human Rights Council, its Commission of Inquiry in to Human Rights Violations in Eritrea or the Special Rapporteur on Eritrea as all these people are excluded from Eritrea and have never been allowed into the country.

Monday this week was, of course, celebrated as World Day Against Child Labor and the UN has called for the elimination of child labour by 2025. Speaking on the occasion, the Director-General of the UN International Labor Organization made a strong call for an end to child labor. Guy Ryder pointed out that there are still 168 million children in child labor; eighty-five million of them engaged in hazardous work. He said a significant portion find themselves undertaking dangerous work, living in areas affected by conflict and disaster. Conflicts and disasters kill, maim, injure and force people to flee their homes; destroy livelihoods, push people into poverty and starvation, and trap many in situations without basic safeguard for their rights. The first to suffer from human rights violations and abuses are often boys and girls. Many children are internally displaced or become refugees in other countries, and are particularly vulnerable to trafficking and child labor. Many of the thousands who flee Eritrea every month are unaccompanied children.

Mr. Ryder pointed out the world was facing the greatest refugee crisis in decades. Globally over 1.5 billion people live in countries that are affected by conflict, violence and fragility. While a huge part of the world's responsibility to provide sanctuary and support to children and their

families is shouldered by neighboring host countries, the ILO Director-General says much more needs to be done to share fairly the responsibility to protect refugees. He urged support to those States on the front line in affected regions, so that they could provide access to the labour market for adult refugees and access to education for their children.