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News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

The United Nations Convention on Climate Change, Conference of the Parties (COP23) ended two weeks of discussions and negotiations on Friday (November 17) in Bonn, Germany, with expressions of a renewed sense of urgency and of the need for greater ambition to tackle climate change. The main focus at the conference was how to maintain momentum two years after the adoption of the Paris Agreement. **(See article)**

The African Union Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) and the European Union Political and Security Committee (EU PSC) held their 10th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting on November 17 in Addis Ababa. The meeting was held within the framework of the regular dialogue of the Africa- European Union partnership. **(See article)**

The 5th African Union Commission - United States High Level Dialogue was held in Washington DC, USA last week (November 16), under the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the AU Commission and the US Department of State in 2013. **(See article)**

African Foreign Ministers and the US held a “Ministerial on Trade, Security and Governance in Africa” in Washington last week with US Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson. Discussions focused on trade and investment, security, and good governance. **(See article)**

The Chair of the IGAD Council of Ministers, together with the IGAD Special Envoy to South Sudan, briefed IGAD Plus members on progress in the South Sudan Revitalization Process at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday this week (November 22). Participants included representatives of IGAD member countries, the AU, of Algeria, Nigeria, and South Africa, and of the Troika of Norway, the UK and the US, as well as the US, China and the UN Special Envoy to South Sudan. **(See article)**

The Eastern Africa Standby Force is holding military exercises in Sudan until December 3. Defense Minister, Lt. General Mohamed Ali Salim, said 10 countries were taking part in the

exercise in eastern Sudan. The more than 1,000 troops involved are from Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. The exercise is focusing on boosting the capabilities of the forces with regard to peacekeeping, conflict and terrorism management and combating human trafficking.

The member countries of IGAD established a new regional network to expand and strengthen their fight against illegal wildlife trade in the Horn of Africa at a November 15 ceremony at African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa. Wildlife conservation ministers signed a Protocol and Declaration establishing the Horn of Africa Wildlife Law Enforcement Network (HAWEN) as a specialized technical network of IGAD. HAWEN will lead implementation of wildlife enforcement component of IGAD's Wildlife Management Strategy adopted in July, 2017 as well as support implementation in the IGAD region of the AU Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora, adopted in 2015.

The UNHCR says it is seriously concerned by Israel plans to close its Holot detention center for African migrants within four months and compel them to accept relocation to countries in Africa or face imprisonment in Israel. Rwanda and Uganda are expected to be the countries that Israel plans to send the refugees to. An Israeli High Court in August agreed the policy but tasked the government to ensure that deported migrants would be safe with the third countries. Eritrean and Sudanese refugees are likely to be most affected.

Ethiopia

President Dr. Mulatu Teshome received departing Chilean Ambassador Chomali Garib on Wednesday (November 22). They discussed strengthening bilateral relations and Ambassador Garib said Chile would strengthen trade and investment with Ethiopia and he hoped the service agreement with the Ethiopian Civil Aviation Authority would soon be implemented.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn received Dr. Abdiweli Mohamed Ali Gaas, President of the Puntland State of Somalia on Tuesday (November 21). Prime Minister Hailemariam noted that it benefitted all if Ethiopia, Somalia and Puntland cooperated in security, economy, infrastructure and trade. He underlined the need to develop infrastructure. Dr. Ali said Puntland wanted to cooperate with Ethiopia in these areas and was looking to Ethiopia's experience in civil service reform.

Prime Minister Hailemariam awarded 145 innovators, students, teachers and researchers for their outstanding contributions in technology and research at the 8th National Science and Technology Innovation award ceremony held last weekend. The Prime Minister said encouraging innovations can make the country's growth comprehensive as well as inspire innovators to further success. The National Science and Technology Innovation awards, started in 2009, have so far been presented to a total of 1,601 people.

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu attended "Ministerial on Trade, Security and Governance in Africa" in Washington on Friday last week (November 17) between African Foreign Ministers and the US. **(See article)**

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh on Thursday (November 23) held talks with President Dr Abdiweli Mohamed Ali of Puntland. Dr. Workneh affirmed the commitment of the Ethiopian government to support peace and stability in Somalia through regional mechanisms. Dr. Ali Gaas welcomed Ethiopia's interest in boosting trade and investment with Somalia. He urged an improved customs service to fast track trade links; discussions covered ways to scale up integration through increased trade and transport links.

Foreign Affairs State Minister, Mrs. Hirut Zemene, on behalf of Ethiopia as Chair of the IGAD Council of Ministers, chaired the briefing for IGAD Plus members on progress in the South Sudan Revitalization Process on Wednesday this week (November 22). **(See article)**

State Minister, Dr. Aklilu Hailemichael, led a delegation to South Korea this week to attend a meeting of the joint Ethiopia-South Korea cultural forum. **(See article)**

Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs, Ato Meles Alem, told the local media on Thursday (November 23) that Ethiopia's commitment to utilize the Nile was based on accepted norms and international laws: on the principles of equity and reason, justice, and no-harm-to-others, principles which will always best serve the people of the country. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) was being built by Ethiopians and for Ethiopians but it also benefited other riparian countries. Its role for integration made it a Pan-African project. He stressed Ethiopia's commitment to work with Sudan and Egypt on the basis of the Declaration of Principles

The Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) received the "2017 United Nations Award" for outstanding performance in Geneva on Monday (November 20). The Award recognizes exceptional achievements in promoting and facilitating foreign direct investment that contributes towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UNCTAD said Ethiopia won on the basis of its effective investment promotion strategy in promoting and facilitating FDI projects and their contribution to the realization of the SDGs. The sustainable features of Ethiopia's industrialization approach, the targeted investor recruitment strategy for Hawassa Industrial Park and the facilitation provided to firms were highly commended as examples for other countries. Ethiopia also recently received a "2017 Star Reformer Award" from the World Bank Group for outstanding performance on investment policy reform and promotion.

Ethiopia joined the global World Children's Day celebrations on Monday (November 20) and in line with the theme 'For children, By children,' child parliamentarians took over the roles of the Ministers of: Women and Children's Affairs; Health; Education; Water, Irrigation and Electricity; Labour and Social Affairs; and Urban Works and Construction and shared their ideas on issues that affect their lives. Gillian Mellisop, UNICEF Representative to Ethiopia, emphasizing the need for children's participation, stressing that this was key to ensuring that decisions made by adults are relevant to the actual needs of children. UNICEF Ethiopia launched its publication 'Hulem Lehisnat- Always for children' depicting its 65 years history in Ethiopia.

A delegation from Hunan Province, China held talks with heads of the Ministry of Mines, Petroleum and Natural Gas on the investment opportunities available in Ethiopia on Monday (November 21). The head of the delegation said Hunan investors wanted to engage in gold and

iron ore mining in Ethiopia as well as share Chinese experience and provide technological support. Prime Minister Hailemariam visited Hunan province in May and an Ethiopia-China (Hunan) Investment Cooperation Conference was held to promote investment opportunities. The Prime Minister held one-to-one meetings with a number of major Hunan companies to discuss Ethiopia's investment policy and available opportunities.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism on Monday (November 20) said Chinese tourists had contributed US\$164 million in revenue for Ethiopia in 2016. A total of 43,695 Chinese tourists had visited the country in 2016, an increase over the 41,653 in 2015. The number of Chinese tourists to Ethiopia is only surpassed by the numbers from the US and the UK. The Ministry said it was encouraging Chinese investment in Ethiopia's hospitality sector with a view to substantially increasing the number of Chinese tourists.

The Seventh Annual International Conference on Pulses Oilseeds and Spices was held in Addis Ababa this week (November 22-23) under the theme "Africa: The Future Pulses and Oilseeds Supply". Over hundred companies from 14 countries participated in the conference. The Ministry of Trade Export Promotion said the conference would allow exchange of information about the current state of the international pulses and oilseeds market, and help the country to promote its oilseeds and pulses products to international markets. This year, Ethiopia anticipates exporting 520,387 tons of oilseeds and 605,000 tons of pulses worth US\$546 and US\$413 million respectively.

Djibouti

President Ismail Omar Guelleh on a state visit to China this week (November 22-24) met President Xi Jinping on Thursday (November 23). President Xi Jinping said China sets great store by its relations with Djibouti, and was willing to advance cooperation on infrastructure projects including railways, ports, water supply, liquefied natural gas pipeline, as well as building of a free trade area and cooperation in agriculture, and to strengthen bilateral cooperation in all fields, including Belt and Road construction. President Guelleh said he considered himself a "great friend of China." They agreed to establish a strategic partnership to strengthen all-round cooperation and oversaw the signing of a framework agreement for preferential loans. Other deals signed covered economic, technical and agricultural cooperation. Assistant Foreign Minister Chen Xiaodong said later the two leaders had also discussed the logistics base China is building in Djibouti, to be used to resupply navy ships participating in peacekeeping, humanitarian and anti-piracy missions.

Japan has agreed to lease more land to expand its Self-Defense Force base in Djibouti for troops conducting antipiracy missions in the Gulf of Aden. The base was set up in the Ambouli International Airport in June 2011. The Japanese and Djibouti governments agreed on a new lease on Wednesday last week.

Eritrea

Canada's British Columbia Court of Appeal on Tuesday (November 21) dismissed an appeal by Nevsun Resources Ltd., against the hearing in Canada of a case over the alleged used of

forced labor at Nevsun's Bisha Mine in Eritrea. This means Nevsun will now have to answer allegations of human right abuses in a Canadian court. **(See article)**

The Chairman of the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA), Cardinal Berhaneyesus Demerew of the Ethiopian Catholic Church, has been refused entry into Eritrea. Church leaders from eleven other countries, who had offered to mediate in the dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia, were allowed in but Cardinal Berhaneyesus was stopped. The US has also said it would be willing to mediate.

Eritrea joined the membership of the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), becoming the 48th African country to become a participating state or a shareholder on Monday (November 20). This followed a recent visit to Asmara by Bank President Dr. Benedict Oramah when President Isaias expressed Eritrea's willingness to join Afreximbank as a Member State. Membership of the Bank gives Eritrea access to trade finance facilities, project finance services, trade information and advisory services, support in the development of a local content policy and assistance in developing and implementing industrial parks and special economic zones.

The United Kingdom has renewed its foreign travel advice in respect of Eritrea citing new low limitations on local currency handling in the country. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office message, dated November 16, warned citizens of potential confiscation of their funds or prosecution if they flout the new rules. It said no traveler leaving Eritrea can take out more than a thousand Nakfa, (about 65 dollars), and those under 18 cannot take any money at all.

Kenya

Kenya's Supreme Court on Monday (November 20) dismissed petitions challenging the validity of the re-run presidential election on October 26 which was won overwhelmingly by President Kenyatta. President Kenyatta will now be inaugurated for his second term of office on November 28. **(See article)**

Somalia

President Mohamed Abdullahi met Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince and UAE Armed Forces Deputy Supreme Commander on Tuesday this week (November 21). They discussed cooperation against terrorism, violence and armed groups, and coordination to maintain security and stability in Somalia, and following the talks agreed to strengthen bilateral ties further. President Mohamed thanked the UAE for its quick response in sending medical supplies and airlifting some injured to the UAE following the deadly attack on October 14. During his visit, President Mohamed also visited Abu Dhabi's Wahat Al Karama, the national landmark built to immortalize the sacrifices of the UAE's heroes and laid a wreath.

The Speaker of the National Assembly of Djibouti, Mohamed Ali Houmed arrived in Mogadishu on Thursday (November 23). During his visit he will meet with President Mohamed Abdullahi and Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khaire to discuss strengthening relations between the two parliaments. He will also deliver a speech to members of the parliament.

President Mohamed Abdullahi congratulated Muse Bihi Abdi on his election as president of Somaliland and praised the peaceful elections in Somaliland with all parties and candidates competing “in the democratic way.” President Abdullahi also pledged to continue talks between Somalia and Somaliland. Somaliland’s National Electoral Commission announced on Tuesday (November 21) that the winner of the presidential election held on November 13 was Musa Bihi Abdi, the candidate of the ruling Kulmiye party. **(See article)**

Information Minister Abdirahman Omar Osman said on Wednesday it had requested a U.S. airstrike that killed over a hundred al-Shabaab militants on Tuesday (November 21) to help pave the way for an upcoming ground offensive. It was the latest in a series of 29 air strikes against Al-Shabaab and ISIS fighters this year, seven between November 9 and 14. The US Defense Department has said there are now 500 US personnel in Somalia including military, civilians and contractors, primarily to provide training and assistance to Somalia forces. They also include special operations forces that carry out counter-terrorist operations.

The United Nations and African Union envoys in Somalia have started a series security assessment visits ahead of the exit of AMISOM troops. Ambassador Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Michael Keating, joined a delegation to Barawe, on Thursday last week to discuss the possibility of handing over the security of Barawe, from AMISOM to Somali security forces. Mr. Keating said the visit was consistent with the National Security Architecture and the National Defence Strategy as well as with the conditions-based transition plan.

EU NAVFOR Somalia's Flagship, ITS Virginio Fasan, seized six suspected pirates and their vessels following attacks on a 52,000-tonne container ship and a fishing vessel on November 17 and 18. All crew and vessels were reported to be safe.

Kenyan Ahmed Iman ‘Kimanthi’ who has been heading a group of foreign fighters in Al-Shabaab is reported to be on the run after falling out with Al-Shabaab’s leader, Ahmed Diriye, and Abdirahim Mohamed Warsame, the commander of Al-Shabaab’s Amniyat, intelligence and assassination wing,. Iman has been prominent in Al-Shabaab propaganda videos and influential in Jaysh Ayman, the Al-Shabaab faction operating in Kenya’s Boni Forest.

Sharjah-based Divers Marine Contracting has started construction of a United Arab Emirates naval base at Berbera. The group won the US\$90 million contract in April, and it is expected to complete construction by June next year. The Somaliland naval base will include a 300-metre L-shaped inland berthing port with a depth of 7 meters to support the military airport at Berbera, leased by the UAE for 25 years.

South Sudan

Troika representatives met with Major General Molla Hailemariam, the chair of the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM), one of the elements of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, on Thursday (November 16) in Juba. The Troika Representatives were visiting Juba ahead of the IGAD High Level Revitalization Forum scheduled to take place in Addis Ababa in December.

Dr. Festus Mogae, Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) at a session of the Commission on Monday (November 20) welcomed the Government's approval of a draft constitution and said he expected the constitutional amendment bill to be endorsed by Parliament next month. **(See article)**

Kenya's Ambassador to South Sudan told the plenary meeting of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) on Monday (November 20) that Kenya would not allow its territory to be used to carry out rebellious activities against the government and people of South Sudan. Ambassador Leshore said Kenya supported peace efforts to end the conflict and would not meddle in South Sudanese affairs.

Paul Malong Awan, former chief of staff of South Sudanese army, left Juba for medical treatment in Kenya on Sunday (November 19). He was seen off at the airport by prominent members of the Dinka Council of Elders and the concerned citizens committee which had brokered a deal to allow his departure.

Three factions of the SPLM, signed a 'Declaration of Unification' on Thursday last week (November 16) in Cairo, Signatories were President Kiir's SPLM, First Vice-President Taban Deng's SPLM-IO, and the SPLM ex-political detainees. Riek Machar's SPLM-IO has rejected the agreement, under which the Egyptian General Intelligence Service has been tasked with coordinating with the parties and following up on implementation. An agreement to reunify the SPLM was originally signed in Arusha in January 2015.

Sudan

President Omer al-Bashir travelled to Russia on Wednesday (November 22) for an official three-day visit at the head of a delegation including the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Finance and Oil. Foreign Minister Ibrahim Ghandour said earlier that discussions would cover bilateral relations, trade and economic cooperation, political coordination and consultation and mutual support in the various international fora.

Visiting U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John J. Sullivan called for a roundtable conference on religious freedoms and coexistence to promote the dialogue between Muslim and Christian clerics in Sudan on Sunday (November 19). Secretary Sullivan stressed the importance the U.S. places on Sudan's progress on dialogue, diversity, religious freedom, and human rights as part of the normalization process of relations between the two countries.

Minister of Transport Makkawi Awad said Qatar had agreed to develop Port Sudan to be the largest container port in the Red Sea to serve Sudan and its neighbors. Qatar Finance Minister Ali Sharif Al-Emadi visited the Khartoum recently and signed agreements for joint projects in various fields to push the Sudan economy forward. Qatari investments in Sudan are currently estimated at more than US\$3.8 billion, according to the Sudanese Ministry of Investment.

The 5th African Union Commission - United States High Level Dialogue...

The 5th African Union Commission - United States High Level Dialogue was held in Washington DC, USA last week on November 16. The High Level Dialogue falls within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the AU Commission and the US Department of State in January 2013. This put in place a structured process for dialogue on matters of strategic importance as well as cooperation between the Commission and the US State Department. The Memorandum of Understanding also encouraged the holding of discussions between the two parties in the context of working groups to address issues of peace and security, democracy and governance, economic development, investment and trade, and the promotion of opportunities in development. Discussants from the AU including Ambassador Smail Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security; Ambassador Minata Samate Cessouma, Commissioner for Political Affairs; and Professor Sarah Anyang Agbor, Commissioner for Human Resources Science and Technology

The priority areas for cooperation fall within the AU Agenda 2063 aspiration as “a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.” It also falls within the U.S. Government’s Strategy towards Sub-Saharan Africa: Promotion of Opportunity and Development. The priorities are derived from the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of the African Union Agenda 2063. These include: health, education, humanitarian resilience; enhancement of the role of youth and women; higher education, the promotion of technical and scientific cooperation, exchange programs, capacity building and research and development in areas of information technology.

The US Ambassador to the African Union, Ambassador Mary Beth Leonard, in her opening remarks noted that the US has “always worked closely with the African Union and the AU Commission and we remain committed to dialogue and productive engagement. The African Union is our steadfast partner on the continent and we look forward to strengthening our relationship with the AU and its member states.” She highlighted the work the US was doing with the departments of the African Union Commission in the different areas identified for cooperation. She also emphasized the support given to the Department of Political Affairs to implement the AU’s African Governance Architecture with the view to promote democracy, good governance, and human rights throughout AU-affiliated bodies, including Regional Economic Communities and member states.

Hosting the High Level Dialogue, Acting Assistant Secretary of State, Ambassador Don Yamamoto stated that “working together we hope to make the most of this opportunity to highlight the successes of the African Union, underscore our mutually productive engagement across the continent, and also to reiterate U.S. support in striving towards the shared goal of a stable and prosperous Africa.”

Discussions focused on strengthening democratic institutions, encouraging economic growth, trade, and investment, advancing peace and security, and promoting opportunity and development. The High Level Dialogue has provided a platform to offer an update on the state of implementation of the flagship projects of Agenda 2063: “A prosperous Africa based on

inclusive growth and sustainable development”, as well as social, economic, and human development with the view to improve the living conditions of the African people.

... And the AU/US Ministerial on Trade, Security and Governance in Africa

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu participated in the “Ministerial on Trade, Security and Governance in Africa” along with 36 other foreign ministers of African countries and a delegation from the African Union Commission, in Washington, D.C. on Friday last week (November 17). As US President Trump underscored during his working lunch with African leaders at the UN General Assembly earlier this year, and Under Secretary Shannon said in his September speech on Africa policy, the purpose of the meeting was to build on economic partnerships with countries committed to self-reliance and job creation; to partner with African leaders to end violence, prevent the spread of terrorism, and respond to humanitarian crises; and to work together to promote freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights. And the discussions at the Ministerial focused on three themes: trade and investment, security, and good governance. This meeting was important to promote a shared commitment to increase the flow of US investment to open markets; enhance trade; strengthen democracy and the rule of law. In addition, it helped to deliberate on the effective response to global terrorist threats.

US Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, in his opening remarks, noted that the Trump administration wanted to refocus the U.S. relationship with Africa largely on trade and investment, to help unlock the tremendous potential of what is expected to become the world's most populous continent in coming decades. He noted the U.S. exports to sub-Saharan Africa grew from \$17 billion in 2010 to more than \$25 billion in 2014. Mr. Tillerson said that last year, U.S. direct investment in Africa grew to \$57.5 billion, the highest level to date. "Africa", he said, "is a growing market with vast potential. Five of the world's 10 fastest-growing economies are in Africa, and consumer spending there is projected to exceed \$2 trillion by the year 2025." The Secretary of State, however, noted that economic growth and lasting prosperity could thrive only in environments of good governance. He said the United States also stood with its African partners to work to defeat what he called the scourge of terrorism and to address the root causes of violent extremism. The Secretary also urged African countries to help isolate North Korea, which he called a threat to all nations, by acting to implement U.N. sanctions in full, and cut off all U.N.-proscribed ties. Donald Yamamoto, acting Secretary for African Affairs at the US State Department told the meeting: We need to create jobs, help facilitate trade and address the challenges of the Africa of the future.”

In advance of the meeting, Mr. Tillerson said: "By 2050, the population of the continent is projected to double to more than 2.5 billion people, with 70 percent of that population being under the age of 30," Tillerson said. "All of these young people will have expectations for entering the workforce." Tillerson noted a more vibrant and economically competitive Africa would mean a growing middle class and increased standards of living. It would make the entire continent more prosperous. The Secretary of State also underlined the importance of the way lasting peace and prosperity could be undermined when governments failed to respect human rights and uphold the law. He said a peaceful transition of power is important, but democracy involved more than just holding fair elections. Democracy required the inclusive, peaceful participation of a nation's citizens in the political process, “including freedoms of expression and

association, an independent press, a robust and engaged civil society, a government that is transparent and accountable to all of its citizens, and a fair and impartial judiciary." He noted the U.S. was helping 20 African countries to train, deploy and sustain more than 27,000 African peacekeepers this year in United Nations and African Union missions.

The Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Ismaïl Chergui, led the AU delegation which included the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Ambassador Minata Samate Cessouma, and the Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology, Professor Sarah Anyang Agbor, to the Ministerial. During discussions on enhancing Africa-U.S. security cooperation to address transnational security threats, the Commissioner for Peace and Security stressed the need for a preventive approach focusing on addressing structural vulnerabilities conducive to the spread of terrorism. He underlined the need to provide meaningful and effective alternatives for livelihoods and political participation. In terms of response, he called for mutually reinforcing measures that focus on strengthening the criminal justice response to terrorism, the promotion of reconciliation, and the implementation of well-resourced stabilization and post-conflict development initiatives. Commissioner Chergui recalled the significant gains made through AU-led peace operation in Somalia, the successes of the Regional Cooperative Initiative for the elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA) and the efforts of the countries of the Lake Chad Basin in the fight against Boko Haram. He also highlighted other key preventive and response initiatives launched by the AU, including the Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework, the Nouakchott and Djibouti Processes, the Model Law on Counter-Terrorism, and the Lake Chad Basin Stabilization initiative.

Speaking on the occasion, Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh commended the US for its enormous support to restore peace and security as well as promote democracy in the Horn of Africa. Mentioning the impressive economic growth registered in Ethiopia over past years, Dr. Workneh also invited US investors to come and invest in the country. He noted that Ethiopia and the United States were working together on various peace and security issues, and cooperating in the fight against global terrorism and to maintain peace and security in Sudan and South Sudan. He also referred to the US support to restore peace and security as well as promote democracy in Ethiopia.

On the sidelines of the Dialogue, Dr. Workneh also met members of the U.S. Congress. During talks with Senator James M. Inhofe, Congressman John Garamendi and other Congress members, Dr Workneh gave a briefing on the current situation in Ethiopia. He noted that the government of Ethiopia was working to ensure the sustainability of its ongoing economic growth by maintaining peace in the country as well as to further strengthen its ties with the U.S. government. He also pointed out that IGAD, currently chaired by Ethiopia, was doing a great deal to ensure and build peace in South Sudan and Somalia. The Members of the Congress commended the key role being played by Ethiopia to maintain peace in South Sudan and the country's support for refugees. They emphasized that the US government would continue to work together with Ethiopia as a strategic partner.

During his visit, Dr. Workneh met with Cyril Sartor, the NSA Senior Director for Africa at the White House and discussed bilateral and regional issues. He also met with Ambassador Donald Yamamoto, the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs and exchanged views with

Congressman Ed Royce and Congresswoman Karen Bass on the sidelines of the Ministerial.

AU, EU urged to strengthen cooperation on peace and security

Within the frame work of the regular dialogue of the Africa- European Union partnership, the African Union Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) and the European Union Political and Security Committee (EU PSC) held their 10th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting on November 17 at African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa. The meeting which was co-chaired by Ambassador Cherrif Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU PSC for the month of November, and Ambassador Walter Stevens, Permanent Chair of the EU PSC.

The day before the two groups also held the 3rd Joint Retreat of the AU PSC and the EU PSC, providing a platform to exchange views on post-conflict and peace consolidation in Africa, sustainable financing of AU-led peace operations authorized by the UN Security Council and enhancement of AU/EU cooperation on peace and security, as well as on migration.

During the joint retreat the two sides recognized the need to strengthen the relationship between them and agreed on the principle of developing a framework document. This would put their partnership on peace and security on a more solid and structured basis taking into account the more complex and new threats facing both continents. They also emphasized the importance of inclusivity, to involve women, youth and vulnerable groups in building sustainable peace, security and development. They underlined the need to focus in future meetings on conflict prevention. They agreed this was better than investing in conflict management. On migration Ambassador Stevens underlined the importance of a comprehensive approach, taking into account all the elements from addressing the root causes to tackling the networks and saving lives. Participants stressed the value of a well coordinated approach towards emigration, human trafficking and smuggling.

Following the retreat, the Joint Consultative Meeting convened to discuss and review peace and security issues in Africa with particular reference to the current pressing conflict and crisis issues in Somalia, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Guinea Bissau, Sahel/Mali, Lake Chad Basin and Libya. Ambassador Mahamat underlined that the geographical proximity between the two continents and issues of peace and security were the factors that encouraged them work together in areas of peace and security. The meeting assessed how their respective organs could reinforce their joint efforts to resolve such conflicts. An exchange of views on the sustainability of financing the AU-led peace operations authorized by the UN Security Council was a major topic. Ambassador Stevens said the EU has already extended 50 million Euros support for Sahel Joint Forces, and it was now providing 700 million Euros not only for peace and security purposes but for the re-stabilization and re-construction of the whole Lake Chad area.

At the conclusion of the 10th Annual Joint Consultative AUPSC/ EUPSC meeting on conflict, post-conflict crisis and peace consolidation, participants adopted a draft joint communiqué in which both councils stressed and agreed on the need for sustained international support to

Somalia; commended AMISOM, MONUSCO, and UNMINUSMA for their respective efforts in the promotion of peace and security in Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Mali. The two councils agreed to further strengthen their cooperation in addressing challenges of peace and security on the continent.

Giving a briefing on the outcomes of the AUPSC meeting for media representatives, the Co-Chairs reconfirmed the importance of reinforcing the strong partnership of the AU and the EU on peace and security. They also underlined the relevance of strengthening trilateral cooperation between the African Union, the European Union and the United Nations. Ambassador Mahamat said that with terrorist attacks, insecurity and instability continued to prevail in many parts of Africa strengthening the joint efforts of the AU PSC and the EUPSC would be the best measure of success. He said they would be able “to identify, for each of the situations on our agenda, ways of finding joint solutions in a collective approach, taking into account, of course, new threats and developments that require us to readjust our tools in the face of insecurity and instability.” Ambassador Stevens said, “Conflicts are push factors for migration and create areas of lawlessness, safe havens for terrorist and organized crimes. All the challenges raised by these crises need a strong and coordinated response, involving all stakeholders, including the UN.” He also noted that when the EU, the AU and the UN were acting together, there was always a greater chance of success. The two Co-Chairs confirmed the strong partnership between the AU and the EU on issues of peace and security and underlined the importance of strengthening the trilateral cooperation between the African Union, the European Union and the United Nations.

The AUPSC and EUPSC will hold another joint meeting early next year to continue their cooperation in the context of a joint field trip to the Central African Republic.

Consultative meeting on IGAD’s Revitalization Process for South Sudan...

Ethiopia, as Chair of the IGAD Council of Ministers, together with the IGAD Special Envoy to South Sudan, briefed IGAD Plus members on progress in the South Sudan Revitalization Process at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia on Wednesday this week (November 22). Representatives of IGAD member countries, the AU, of Algeria, Nigeria, and South Africa, and of the Troika of Norway, the UK and the US, as well as the US, China and the UN Special Envoy to South Sudan were in attendance.

State Minister for the Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia Mrs. Hirut Zemene, on behalf of the Chairperson of the IGAD Council of Ministers, opened the session. Recognizing the overwhelming interest and support for the Revitalization Process since it had been launched, she noted the efforts made so far and the progress achieved. Mrs. Hirut underlined the crucial importance of acting together and speaking with one voice for the realization of the Revitalization Process. The State Minister delivered a clear message to all South Sudanese political forces that they should ‘silence the guns’ as soon as possible; that they should support the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) being revitalized through inclusive consultations; and that the International Community should continue its support for the effort to implement the revitalized ARCSS. The State Minister also called on the International Community for its full support for the reconstruction of South Sudan.

Ambassador Ismail Wais, IGAD's Special Envoy to South Sudan, presented a report compiled on the activities undertaken since the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Governments on June 12 called for realization of the Revitalization Process. He emphasized that the first stage of the activities of the Special Envoy's office had been the designing of a mapping exercise to help identify the parties to the revitalized ARCSS. Ambassador Wais said the mapping process had been carried out in collaboration with the UN, the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC), the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM), and the Transitional Government of South Sudan. It had involved an impressive turnout of participants from different sectors including estranged groups and individuals in four cities; Addis Ababa, Pretoria, Khartoum, and Juba. He noted that most of the parties to the peace process had submitted their position papers after pre-forum consultations. State structure, reorganization of institutions, cessation of hostility and national election were major issues of discussion in the process. Ambassador Ismail Wais noted that the results had been distributed to all stakeholders and had been widely accepted." The next meeting of the IGAD Council of Ministers, scheduled to take place December 11-12, was expected to take decisions based on the consultation report.

State Minister Mrs. Hirut's Special Adviser on South Sudan, Ambassador Fre Tesfamichael underlined the firm position of the Government of South Sudan on the Revitalization Process. He said the Transitional Government had agreed to implement a unilateral ceasefire and had supported the revitalization process in many ways, including the mapping process. Ambassador Fre noted that all the parties who had been involved in the mapping process had agreed to the cessation of hostilities and a ceasefire. With regard to the deployment of the Regional Protection Force, Ambassador Fre said 200 Ethiopian and 123 Rwanda contingents had already entered Juba. The Ambassador of South Sudan, James Pitia Morgan, took the opportunity to reaffirm the commitment of the government in Juba to the Revitalization Process.

The meeting commended the major activities of the Revitalization Process including, the consultations made with the parties to the ARCSS, the completion of the mapping exercise and preparation of what they described as a comprehensive and enlightening report. It reaffirmed its commitment to the IGAD revitalization peace process. Participants also suggested the need to put in place accountability mechanisms under which any violator of ceasefire agreements would face consequences. The need to speak with one voice on the issue of a ceasefire was strongly underlined. The meeting, noting the establishment of a High Level Ad hoc Committee on South Sudan at the 720th meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council in September, also underlined the importance of the participation of the committee which includes members of the AU's Committee of Five, along with the AU, IGAD and the JEMC.

...and Dr. Mogae briefs a JMEC plenary session

Dr. Festus Mogae, Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) on Monday (November 20) welcomed the Government's approval of a draft constitution that will allow the enactment a new constitution in line with the August 2015 peace agreement. He described it as significant progress and urged the Transitional National Legislative Assembly to expedite the ratification of the amendments to the Transitional Constitution. He expected the

constitutional amendment bill to be endorsed by Parliament next month. According to the 2015 peace agreement a new constitution should be in place 18 months after the formation of the coalition government. It would, said Dr. Mogae, lay a firm foundation for progress in the establishment of all the institutions and mechanisms provided for in the agreement.

Dr. Mogae, who was addressing a plenary session of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission also called for a “unified” and “one voice” message to end the conflict in South Sudan. He told parties in the coalition government that a “one voice” approach would strengthen revitalization efforts to end conflict. He said: “Collectively, the IGAD Heads of State must prevail over the South Sudanese leadership to rethink the current trajectory of the country and take the necessary steps to restore peace and inclusive governance”.

Dr. Mogae referred to a five-point approach that could end the conflict if accepted and implemented by parties without hesitation. He said this involved an inclusive political process, bringing together all parties and estranged groups, a cessation of all hostilities and a renegotiated permanent ceasefire that includes all armed groups, as well as the establishment of transitional security arrangements with robust verification and enforcement mechanisms. Other elements would involve a clear plan of action to address the current dire humanitarian situation, facilitate eventual voluntary return of IDPs and repatriation of refugees, and an enforcement mechanism that included accountability measures for spoilers and violators.

Dr. Mogae also underlined the need for specific reforms to ensure the conduct of credible, free and fair elections at the end of the transitional period and dedicated funding for implementation of the revitalized peace agreement. He emphasized that the current security situation remained fragile, and renewed calls to stop the fighting, end the violence, deal with criminality, prevent sexual and human rights abuses, improve human suffering and address the economic crisis. He said violations of the ceasefire had continued since the last plenary joint briefing, leading to the publication of five violation reports, one of which highlighted the extent of sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by uniformed men in Yei River state.

COP23: Need for renewed urgency and more effort to tackle climate change

The United Nations Convention on Climate Change, Conference of the Parties (COP23) ended on Friday in Bonn, Germany, expressing a renewed sense of urgency and the need for greater ambition to tackle climate change. The main focus at the conference was how to maintain momentum two years after the adoption of the Paris Agreement. COP23 took place a year after entry into force of the Paris Agreement, now ratified by 170 Parties out of the 196 which adopted the Agreement which calls upon countries to combat climate change by limiting the rise of global temperature below 2 degrees Celsius and aim not to exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius. A week before the opening of COP23, the World Meteorological Organization announced that the levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere surged at “record-breaking speed” to new highs in 2016.CO2 emissions, after remaining stable for three years, will rise by two percent in 2017, a development that one scientist called "a giant step backwards for humankind".

COP23 ran from November 6 to 17, chaired by Fiji, an island State particularly affected by the impacts of climate change, and climate finance and climate resilience were at the center of the discussions. One key outcome of the conference was the Talanoa Dialogue. Talanoa is a Fiji term for a conversation in which the people involved share ideas and resolve problems. The dialogue aims to encourage the international community over the coming year to take more ambitious action to close the global climate mitigation gap. Under the leadership of Fiji and Poland, this dialogue aims to bring together contributions from the scientific sector, industry and civil society and produce be a stocktake geared to motivating the Parties to take more ambitious action to close the global climate mitigation gap.

Agreement was reached on Fiji's Gender Action Plan, highlighting the role of women in climate action, and a global initiative, the 'InsuResilience' Global Partnership, a major scaling-up of an initiative started by the G7 in 2015, was launched with the aim of providing insurance to hundreds of millions of vulnerable people by 2020. Fiji's Prime Minister Bainimarama said the Global Partnership was a practical response to the needs of those who suffer loss because of climate change.

Fiji said in advance of COP23 it wanted to make progress on "Loss and Damage" as a priority of its presidency. In 2013, at Warsaw, a Loss and Damage mechanism was created offering the concept of compensating victims of climate change. Article 8 of the Paris provided a legal basis for long-term action on loss and damage," calling for action that is "cooperative and facilitative." This now offers a third strand to provide funds to offset climate change, along with mitigation, reducing worldwide emissions to make climate change less severe, and adaptation, taking steps to make the world more resilient against the impacts of climate change.

There is broad consensus that since the wealth of industrialized countries is based on the historical burning of fossil fuels, they should be responsible for decarbonizing their own economies and for helping out the rest of the world. However, the "finance gap" remains a looming threat to implementing the Paris Agreement and discussions of "loss and damage" compensation for the irreparable and most destructive impacts of climate change have now been put off to COP24 next year in Poland. France is convening a 'One Planet summit' next month, and COP24 is taking place in Katowice, Poland, in December 2018. Brazil has offered to host COP25 in 2019. The UN Climate Summit takes place in September 2019

One encouraging factor at COP23 was an upsurge in the response from cities, local administrations and businesses, including American cities and states, underlined their commitments to achieve the goals set out in Paris. This was especially welcomed in the context of the US withdrawal from the Paris accord. Mayors from 25 cities around the world, representing 150 million citizens, pledged on Sunday (12 November) to cut their carbon emissions to net zero by 2050. The C40 Cities network, which supports cities in tackling climate change, has committed to aid nine large African cities, including Cape Town, Addis Ababa, Lagos and Nairobi, to craft long-term green plans. The almost 7,500 cities in the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy launched a new global standard for measuring and reporting emissions from cities and local governments, to be applied from 2018.

During the conference, Ethiopia's Minister for the Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr. Gemedo Dalle, addressed the High-Level Forum on South-South Cooperation on Climate Change: "Partnership for Climate-Friendly and Sustainable Development: Southern Countries in Action". He underlined the very real benefit of building cooperation and the positive opportunities that could arise. Ethiopia, he said, had worked to focus on implementing partnerships, with governments in Africa, outside the continent and various development agencies and organizations, and had integrated cooperation into its strategies. Working closely with those supporting Ethiopia's cooperation projects had brought tremendous contribution in achieving economic growth and stimulating development at the macro level. He emphasized that many youth were already part of the solution: "If we guide our youth, with skills and training, that can enable them to become creative and entrepreneurial, we will then be able to address many of the development dreams we may have." Entrepreneurship, he said, was an inclusive process to be engaged in further to achieve a robust economy. Dr. Gemedo emphasized: "Through our Climate Resilient Green Economy strategy, we have already started industrial development paths, and an inclusive transformation plan and sustainable agricultural path at macro and grass-root levels." It was in this spirit, he added, that Ethiopia was joining the Partnership for Climate Friendly and Sustainable Development.

Ethiopia's State Minister for the Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Kare Chawicha Dabessa, participated in a panel on the presentation of the Sustainable Insurance and Takaful Facility (SITF). This integrates the fundamental principles of Islamic finance to close the insurance protection and the disaster risk reduction gaps. It is a vulnerable country-led initiative which seeks to fill gaps in the G7 Climate Risk Insurance Initiative (InsuResilience) and other risk transfer mechanisms. Ato Kare said Ethiopia as a chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum /Vulnerable 20 Group of Finance Ministers (V20) welcomed "the initiative being put forward to provide access to innovative climate and disaster risk finance to vulnerable countries including sustainable insurance scheme." The CVF aims to extend insurance coverage against climate-related risks to every community in its member countries for the period 2030-2050 or sooner. The Forum announced during the Marrakech climate talks last year that it would work to achieve 100% renewable energy production within the same timeframe. The V20 has set an initial target of raising at least 20 billion US dollars for V20 economies by 2020 from international, regional and domestic mobilizations.

Ethiopia is currently the Chair of the 48 nation Least Developed Countries group. Chairman, Gebru Jember Endalew, said the LDC group came to COP23 with "high expectations for a COP of action and support, with substantive outcomes to achieve the goals set by the international community in Paris." He welcomed the "progress that has been made here at COP23, including the adoption of the Gender Action Plan and the Indigenous Peoples' and Local Communities' Platform." He noted progress had been made on the design of the Talanoa Dialogue, which he identified as a dialogue that must lead "to an increase in ambition by all countries to put us on track to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius." He underlined that it remained "essential that we amplify marginalized voices and recognize the disproportionate impact of climate change on women and indigenous communities around the world. This is crucial for achieving global climate justice and for addressing the multi-faceted threat of climate change."

Ato Gebru said, "A key priority at COP23 was making significant progress on developing the 'ruleset' that will govern how countries implement their Paris Agreement commitments". Many areas of work, he pointed out, were still lagging behind and this jeopardized ability to complete the Paris ruleset by the agreed deadline at the end of 2018. He stressed the necessity to "urgently put pen to paper to properly finalize the ruleset in a thoughtful and considered manner, without a last-minute rush." He underlined the need to rapidly translate work done in the negotiating rooms into tangible action on the ground. This, he stressed, called for "ambitious climate action by all countries through strengthening and implementing national contributions, managing the decline of fossil fuels, and promoting renewable energy." He said, "The LDCs are committed to leading on ambitious climate action in our countries - a key example is the LDC Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Initiative, an LDC-owned and driven initiative to bring universal access to clean energy in the world's poorest countries."

Ato Gebru also underlined that tackling climate change required support for adaptation and loss and damage action in poor and particularly vulnerable countries. He thanked Germany, Sweden and Belgium for their contributions to the Adaptation Fund and Least Developed Countries Fund, but added that the LDC group hoped to see other countries following suit and "rapidly accelerate their finance pledges to meet the scale of support needed by developing countries to fill the ever-widening finance gap." He stressed: "the need to adapt to, and address the irreversible loss and damage arising from, climate change is a matter of urgency for LDCs. The scale of loss and damage that LDCs are experiencing is already beyond our capacity to respond and it will only get worse, with more lives lost, more destruction to infrastructure and a bigger impact on our economies. We will not be able to raise our people out of poverty if we do not effectively address loss and damage and for that we need support." The LDCs, he said, called "for a global response to climate change that is fair and equitable, that advances the interests and aspirations of poor and vulnerable countries and peoples, and fulfils our Paris vision of limiting warming to below 1.5°C to ensure a safe and prosperous future for all."

President Kenyatta to be sworn-in for a second term on November 28

Kenya's Supreme Court ruled on Monday (November 20) that Uhuru Kenyatta won the re-run presidential election on October 26. In a unanimous decision, the Court dismissed two petitions challenging the validity of the October 26 vote. It said the petitions failed to show that the poll was so fundamentally flawed to warrant nullification: "The court has unanimously determined that the petitions are not merited ...As a consequence, the presidential election of October 26 is hereby upheld as is the election of Uhuru Kenyatta."

The Court had nullified the August 8 presidential election over irregularities and ordered a new vote. It was the first time a court in Africa had overturned a presidential election. Opposition leader Raila Odinga, whose legal challenge led to the nullification, however, boycotted the repeat election. He said the Independent Boundaries and Election Commission was not ready to conduct a credible election. The petitioners challenged President Kenyatta's victory, arguing that the Commission was supposed to conduct a fresh nomination process after Mr. Odinga withdrew.

They also argued the election should not stand since 25 constituencies did not participate in the repeat poll.

Following the Supreme Court's decision, President Uhuru Kenyatta will now be sworn-in for a second term on Tuesday next week (November 28). The ceremony will take place at the Safaricom Kasarani Stadium in Nairobi. After his victory in the repeat poll on October 26, the President said, "Today, I as a Kenyan celebrate the resilience of the nation, but I also celebrate the resilience of our democracy." He said any other county experiencing the turns and twists of the recent electoral process "would have burst asunder." He appealed for unity and said he would consider dialogue with the opposition after the outcome of any court proceedings. The President described his victory as a validation of his win in August, saying the 7.5 million votes that he received in October amounted to 90% of what he got earlier. In August, President Kenyatta received 54% of the vote to Mr. Odinga's 45%.

Wafula Chebukati, chairman of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, had said before the October 26 vote that he could not guarantee its credibility. However, before announcing the results, he said he was confident it had been a "free, fair and credible election." In a statement after Monday's Supreme Court decision, Mr. Chebukati said the unanimous decision by the court had affirmed the agency's resolve and its efforts to conduct a free, fair and credible election.

Mr. Odinga issued a statement claiming the Supreme Court decision had been made under constraint and describing the Jubilee government as illegitimate. The statement said: "We in NASA have repeatedly declared we consider this government to be illegitimate and do not recognize it," adding, "This position has not been changed by the Court ruling, which did not come as a surprise. It was a decision taken under duress." The opposition said they will not recognize President Kenyatta's presidency and will continue to fight for what they call electoral justice. Mr. Odinga, who has called for another election, has said he will form a "resistance" movement to oppose the government, which has in turn accused opposition leaders of fomenting violence with incendiary rhetoric.

State Minister, Dr. Aklilu Hailemichael, visits South Korea

Dr. Aklilu Hailemichael, State Minister of Foreign Affairs led a delegation to South Korea this week to attend a meeting of the joint Ethiopia-South Korea cultural forum. The delegation, which included Mrs. Meaza Gebremedhin, State Minister of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, arrived in South Korea on Tuesday (November 21). Accompanied by Ethiopia's Ambassador to the Republic of Korea, Ambassador Shiferaw Jarso, they visited the Korea Culture and Information Service in Sejong-city on Wednesday. The Korea Culture and Information Center is an affiliated institution of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Korea and it is involved in the promotion of Korea overseas and is involved in international cultural exchanges.

Dr. Aklilu noted that the Ethiopian government wished to share Korean experiences in establishing and operating Korean cultural centers outside Korea. He underlined the importance

of promoting Ethiopian culture to other countries as a way of increasing the number of tourists to Ethiopia. He emphasized that the government was dedicated to promoting Ethiopia's diverse cultural and tourist attractions, including UNESCO registered heritages. Mr. Kim Tae-hoon, Deputy Minister of the Korea Culture and Information Service, told the Ethiopian State Ministers that Korea was very willing to support Ethiopia in regard to the development of cultural centers and to share Korean experiences in expanding the growth of culture and tourism. Dr. Aklilu and Mr. Kim agreed to hold further discussions on future cooperation.

The Ethiopian delegation also visited the Korea Tourism College, a private two/three year vocational college specializing in tourism and its development. Ethiopia also has a public college under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism specializing in tourism, and Dr. Aklilu suggested the two colleges of both countries should work together and develop an exchange program for students and staff. Mr. Kim Sung-I, President of the Korea Tourism College, welcomed the idea, and agreed to exchange ideas how to cooperate in the areas of student exchange and scholarships for Ethiopian students organized through the Ethiopian Embassy in Seoul. The College promised to initiate a Memorandum of Understanding in the near future to form the basis for their cooperation. Dr. Aklilu, Mrs. Meaza, and Ambassador Shiferaw toured the campus and the facilities of the college. They also had a chance to meet the Korean students attending the college.

The result of Somaliland's presidential election announced this week

Somaliland's National Electoral Commission announced on Tuesday (November 21) that the winner of the presidential election held on November 13 was Musa Bihi Abdi, the candidate of the ruling Kulmiye party. The Commission said there had been an 80% (556,617) turnout of the over 700,000 registered voters. Musa Bihi Abdi had received 305,909 votes (55%); Abdirahman Abdullahi Irro, candidate of the main opposition Waddani Party had 226,092 votes (40.7%), and the third candidate, UCID's Feisal Ali Warabe had 23,141 votes (4.17%).

The Chairman of the National Electoral Commission said he was satisfied the Commission was able to meet the conditions set for the election, "and I believe it was a free, fair and credible election." The election was also overseen by 60 election observers from 27 countries, members of an International Election Observer Mission, funded by the UK. Dr. Michael Walls, head of the International Observer Mission, said, "On election day, we are pleased to have observed a poll that in the main seems to have preserved the integrity of the electoral process." The Mission "congratulated Somaliland on a largely peaceful process; another progressive step in the electoral evolution." The observer team dispatched observers to 350 out of the 1,600 polling stations across all six regions in Somaliland as well as covering the counting process. It said: "Observers noted that polls opened and closed on time, in a generally calm environment, with peaceful voting, and no major violence or intimidation observed," and eligible and domestic observers were able to conduct their work without restrictions.

The voting process was unusually sophisticated with the registered 700,000 voters using biometric eye scanning identification. This provided the world's most sophisticated voting

register, and was in fact the first time anywhere in the world that iris recognition has been used in a presidential election. In looking for an improved and effective democratic performance, Somaliland wanted to reduce voter duplication. It considered the effectiveness of different face, finger and iris recognition technologies, and concluded iris recognition was the best available to avoid voter duplication, which had occurred in the 2008 elections.

Following the voting, Waddani claimed there had been vote rigging and the use of fake ballot papers. There were protests in Hargeisa and Burao in which three people died. The International Election Mission said in a statement that it was aware of the complaints and grievances about the electoral process, and it urged complainants to pursue those grievances through appropriate customary and legal channels. The statement said the Mission stood by its earlier statements reporting “a largely peaceful and well-organized polling day in areas observed”. It said it still had a small team of observers to report on the post-poll process and it called on all Somalilanders to work to maintain the peace and to respect due process as results were finalized and complaints considered. It said, “We remain convinced that appropriate customary and formal avenues are available for the peaceful pursuit, consideration and adjudication of disputes.”

Following the protests, retiring President Ahmed Mohammed Mohamud Silanyo also issued a strong warning against hooliganism, violence and illegal demonstrations while the counting was taking place. He said November 13 had been a great day for Somaliland and thanked the people for the manner in which the exercise of the electioneering process took place across Somaliland. He described it as a national triumph.

The main opposition candidate, Abdirahman Abdullahi ‘Irro’, originally said he would disassociate himself from the results if Musa Bihi won. However, following the announcement of the results, he issued a statement conceding that “Mr. Bihi will be the fifth president of Somaliland”. He said, “I know there were irregularities and the commission declared false results”, but stressed he accepted the results for the sake of his people and added all candidates who participated in the election had “the responsibility of bringing people together”.

Eritrea: Nevsun’s efforts to stop forced labor case fail

Canada’s British Columbia Court of Appeal on Tuesday (November 21) dismissed an appeal by Nevsun Resources Ltd., that sought to block a case brought against the company by three Eritreans over the alleged used of forced labor at Nevsun’s Bisha Mine in Eritrea. The Bisha mine is 60% owned by Nevsun Resources and 40% owned by the Eritrean government through ENAMCO (Eritrean National Mining Company). A British Colombia lower court ruled last October that the lawsuit could proceed in British Columbia, saying that as Nevsun was a British Colombian company, the British Columbia court had territorial jurisdiction. Nevsun appealed the ruling, arguing the case should be dismissed and that any lawsuit should be heard in Eritrea, not Canada.

Counsel for the plaintiffs welcomed the decision: “This is a very important win for the claimants. Nevsun will now have to answer these allegations of grave human right abuses on their merits in

a Canadian court of law.” The case can now go forward in a British Columbia court, though Nevsun can still appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada.

In Tuesday's judgment, three British Columbia Appeals court judges said the lower court judge had not erred in his ruling, and dismissed all three of Nevsun's appeals. Giving a unanimous judgment, Justice Newbury expressed particular concern about the lack of adequate alternative recourse in Eritrea, the plaintiffs' country of origin. In reviewing the evidence on Eritrea's judicial system, Justice Newbury agreed with the assessment of the lower court, noting that the plaintiffs faced the prospect of “no trial at all” in Eritrea, or a trial “presided over by a functionary with no real independence from the state (which is implicated in this case) and in a legal system that would appear to be actuated largely by the wishes of the President and his military supporters.” Justice Newbury also noted that the Eritrean government's practices of institutionalized forced labor through its so-called ‘National Service’ program were “not contemplated by any legislation”. In any event, the acts alleged were so grave that they “could not be justified by legislation or official policy.” The ruling allows that the plaintiffs can prosecute a civil case in Canada for Nevsun's alleged complicity in crimes against humanity, slavery, forced labor and torture at the Bisha mine. The Court also noted that international law is “in flux” and that transnational law, which regulates “actions or events that transcend national frontiers”, is developing, especially in connection with human rights violations that are not effectively addressed by traditional “international mechanisms”.

In affidavits filed with the court, the plaintiffs, who have since left Eritrea, said they were forced to work at Nevsun's Bisha Mine from 2008 to 2012 and that they endured harsh conditions, including hunger, illness and physical punishment at the hands of military commanders. The three plaintiffs allege they were national service conscripts and that their labour was provided to Nevsun and its operating subsidiary, Bisha Mining Share Company, through two Eritrean government-owned construction firms subcontracted to build the mine. They alleged those Eritrean companies are documented slavers and the plaintiffs' labour was extracted under threat of torture, arbitrary detention, imprisonment in inhumane conditions and reprisals against family members. Nevsun argued that the Eritrean military never provided labour to the mine, and, even if it did, the company said it was not directly responsible for employing the workers.

In fact, various Eritrean human rights organizations have drawn attention to the use of National Service conscripts as forced or slave labor by international companies operating in Eritrea over a number of years. The UN Commission of Inquiry on human rights in Eritrea has also extensively documented the use of conscript labor. In a report presented to the UN Human Rights Council last June, the Commission noted: “Like the victims of the crime of enslavement in Germany during the Second World War, in Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge regime, and in the former Yugoslavia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s, the victims of the military/national service schemes in Eritrea are not bought and sold on an open market.” It referred to the uncertain legal basis for the national service programmes, and the arbitrary and open-ended duration of conscription, which routinely lasted for years beyond the 18 months provided for by law, and the involuntary nature of the service beyond that period. It noted the use of forced labour, including domestic servitude, to benefit private, party-controlled and State-owned interests, and the associated limitations on freedom of movement, as well as the inhumane conditions of service, including the use of torture and sexual violence, the extreme coercive measures to deter escape and

punishment for alleged attempts to desert military service, without any administrative or judicial proceedings. The Commissions also emphasized the limitations on all forms of religious observance for conscripts, and what it described as, overall, “the catastrophic impact of lengthy conscription and conditions on freedom of religion, choice, association and family life.”

Specifically referring to forced labor, the Commission noted the extensive use of conscript labour for the benefit of the Government, as well as senior officials. Conscript labour, it said, had been used in construction projects, ranging from roads to schools, clinics and office buildings, and in support of private enterprises; in agriculture; in the civil service, to staff government ministries as well as work as teachers and nurses; and in the judiciary as judges. The use of conscript labour in, *inter alia*, construction and agriculture had benefitted not only the state but private individuals, and private and state-controlled enterprises. One account of conditions of workers at an enterprise, quoted by the Commission, said: “The workers did not receive sufficient food. There were many diseases because of the poor nutrition and poor sanitation. Labourers were flogged and subjected to especially hard labour if they misbehaved, refused to work or disobeyed orders. Medical treatment is very basic and insufficient. Movement is severely restricted and commanders prevent conscripts from going anywhere even when they are sick. Workers are rarely allowed to go on leave. They are compelled to stay and work long hours.”

The Director of Human Rights Concern – Eritrea (HRC-E), Ms. Elsa Chyrum, said the Appeal Court decision was “a significant milestone in holding perpetrators of gross human rights violations in Eritrea to account”. She said: “The Canadian court judgment is a huge step forward in the struggle for accountability for human rights abuses. If the plaintiffs go on to win this case, it will have major implications for other potential cases against international companies and their operations in Eritrea. Former Eritrean victims of forced/slave labor, now refugees in other parts of the world, are registering with human rights groups to file cases against international companies operating in Eritrea, and HRC-E says it is compiling a list of ex-victims. HRC-E says it is hoped that, “when this case finally comes to judgment, that it will become clear to all international companies working in Eritrea that they will be held responsible for the treatment of the workforce provided by the Eritrean government in their industrial operations.”