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News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2383 (2017) calling for a comprehensive response to prevent and suppress acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia on Tuesday this week (November 7). **(See article)**

A two-day IGAD Workshop on Land Dialogue took place in Addis Ababa this week. One of the pre-events in advance of the 2nd Biennial Conference on Land Policy in Africa which is being held in Addis Ababa next week (November 14-17), the theme of the workshop, the first of its kind organized by a Regional Economic Community to discuss implementation of the AU Declaration on Land, Land Governance and Administration, was "Good governance in land administration in IGAD region". **(See article)**

The United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Eastern Africa said on Tuesday (November 7) that number of people facing crisis-level food insecurity in Eastern Africa in October had increased by 18% to 36.5 million from 30.9 million a year ago. Its latest Food Security and Nutrition Situation report says repeated episodes of drought, conflict and insecurity, high stable food prices and high refugee displacement across the region were the main drivers of food insecurity. It said food security is expected to deteriorate in Burundi and Rwanda until the end of the year, and improve in Sudan, Ethiopia and Uganda in coming months.

Ethiopia

President Dr. Mulatu Teshome received their Royal Highnesses, Crown Prince Magnus and Princess Mette-Marit of Norway, on Tuesday this week (November 7). During their three-day state visit, the Crown Prince and Princess also visited the African Union Commission, met with Norwegian civil society representatives and visited the Hitsats refugee camp for Eritrean refugees at Shire. **(See article)**

President Dr. Mulatu Teshome said on Tuesday (November 7) that youth who make up about 70% of the population wanted a better standard of living and stable employment. He said the government had already invested US\$400 million in a revolving fund to be made available to budding young entrepreneurs and is building industrial parks to employ the hundreds of thousands of fresh graduates annually. In addition to job opportunities, the government was also giving assistance to the private sector to help ease youth employment.

First Lady, Mrs. Roman Tesfaye, attending the Global Nutrition in Milan on Saturday (November 4), met with the representatives of partners and donors including the Italian government and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. She held discussions on ways to strengthen cooperation on nutrition and promotion of gender equality. **(See article)**

Prime Minister Hailemariam met the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney, on Monday (November 6) for discussions on ways of furthering the many-sided partnership between Ethiopia and Ireland. Their talks also covered mutual cooperation between Ethiopia and Ireland in rural development and job creation for youth. Mr. Coveney, who was on a three day visit to Ethiopia and Kenya, also held talks with Foreign Minister, Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu.

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu updated Addis Ababa-based diplomats on the current situation in Ethiopia on Tuesday this week (November 7) in one of the Ministry's regular briefings. It focused on the recent clashes in Oromia and Somali Regional States, unrest in some parts of Oromia and the recent devaluation of Ethiopian birr. **(See article)**

Foreign Minister Dr Workneh Gebeyehu received copies of the credentials of the newly appointed Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba. Ambassador Vilma Thomas Ramirez on Monday (November 6). Dr. Workneh, noting their special and historic relations, urged the need to further scale up collective efforts in health, education, science and technology. Mrs. Ramirez mentioned the preparations to commemorate the 40th anniversary of those Cuban troops who died in the Ogaden war 1977-78, expressed her readiness to boost relations to a higher level. She said the upcoming visit of President Dr. Mulatu to Cuba would raise relations to a new level.

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh met with Somaliland President Ahmed Mohamed Silanyo on Friday (November 10). Dr. Workneh, referring to Somaliland an "Oasis of Peace", expressed his hope that Somaliland would witness another free, fair and peaceful election on November 13. Dr. Workneh noted Ethiopia's readiness to support democratic and economic developments in Somaliland. President Silanyo will also meet with Prime Minister Hailemariam.

The 23rd annual "Conference of the Parties" (COP23), held under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), opened in Bonn on November 6. The Ethiopian delegation is led by Dr. Gemedo Dalle, Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. **(See article)**

Minister of Mines, Petroleum and Natural Gas, Motuma Mekassa, said on Friday last week (November 3) that the China Poly Group plans to start exporting natural gas from the Calub and Hilala fields in the Somali Regional State by mid-2019. He said the shipments from would be

exported along a 700-kilometer pipeline to a port complex being built in Djibouti. POLY-GCL Petroleum Group, a partnership between China Poly and the Hong Kong-based Golden Concord Group, signed five production-sharing agreements with the Ministry in 2013. The project is being financed by the China Development Bank.

Dr Tilaye Gete, Minister of Education, heading the delegation to the 39th session of the UNESCO General Conference in Paris, has expressed its readiness to conserve its heritages. The session (October 30-November 14) is being held under the theme “SDGs and UNESCO’s Role in the Multilateral System.” The Minister thanked UNESCO for removing the Simien Mountain National Park from the List of World Heritage sites in danger and for inscribing the Gada system on its Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity List. Ethiopia is showcasing its experiences in poverty reduction and expansion of education at the event. Dr. Tilaye urged UNSECO member states to provide support for the establishment of the Africa Bio Fund.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Aklilu Hailemichael met Dr. Stefan Liebing, Chairman of the German- Africa Business Association (Afrika-Verein) on Thursday last week (November 2). Dr. Aklilu invited the Association to further look on Ethiopia’s investment priorities including manufacturing, renewable energy, chemicals, pharmaceuticals. Dr. Stefan Liebing underlined the importance of enhancing cooperation, emphasizing the energy sector.

The House of People’s Representatives has approved ten draft proclamations for the endorsement of international agreements covering various areas including air service, road and railway agreements; agreements on economic, science and technology matters; culture; joint border controls; and general cooperation agreements. **(See article)**

Germany signed an agreement on Friday last week (November 3) to continue cooperation in sustainable land management, strengthening drought resilience and enhancing agricultural productivity, including agricultural mechanization and technology for small-holder farmers. It will provide a total of €212.6 million to support implementation of agriculture, education and biodiversity projects and programs in Ethiopia. Germany’s Sub-Saharan Africa Director-General Dr. Stefan Oswald said Ethiopia was a positive example in implementing Agenda 2063 of the African Union, and underlined the importance of mobilizing and releasing the strings on the private sector.

An Ethiopia Culture Festival 2017 was held in Chuncheon City, South Korea, Saturday last week (November 4). The festival to promote Ethiopian culture was attended by senior Chuncheon City officials and members of Gangwon Provincial council. It included the Ethiopian coffee ceremony, Ethiopian music and dance as well as a photo exhibition featuring Ethiopian soldiers who participated in the Korean War.

Ethiopian Airlines added a 6th weekly service to and from Yaoundé, Cameroon and Libreville, Gabon as of Friday (November 3). Ethiopian currently flies to 55 African cities.

Ethiopia’s year-on-year inflation rose to 12.2% in October according to the Statistics Office, up from 10.8 % the previous month. The rise was driven by increases in food prices rising from

13.2% in September to 16.1% in October. Non-food inflation, however, fell from 8.1% in September to 7.8% in October.

Eritrea

The Board of Directors of the African Development Bank on Monday (November 6) approved an intervention strategy in Eritrea for 2017-2019, to support the Government's National Development Plan (2014-2018) for economic and social development through agricultural transformation. It provides for investments to improve access to inputs and agricultural technology and aims to enhance production, productivity, value-addition, and marketing within the region. It will promote greater inclusivity, as well as technical assistance, advisory services, and advocacy to build public sector institutional and human capacities to enhance delivery of basic social services.

Members of the underground "Freedom Friday" (Arbi Harnet) movement have called for an international inquiry into the protests last week in Asmara, sparked by the arrest of a 90 year-old community elder, chair of an Islamic School.

Kenya

President Kenyatta on Sunday (November 5) issued an invitation to Mr. Odinga to hold talks. He said he was open to talks on uniting the country and rebuilding broken relationships. President Kenyatta's invitation followed a call by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Justin Welby, during the centennial celebration of the Anglican Church of Kenya at All Saints Cathedral in Nairobi.

Three petitions to the Supreme Court to contest the electoral process were filed at the end of last week. The petitions target all sides in the process – the Electoral Commission, the President and opposition leader, Raila Odinga. The Supreme Court has until November 14 to rule on these petitions. If it upholds the election results of October 26, President Kenyatta will be inaugurated on November 28.

Finance Minister, Henry Rotich said on Tuesday (November 7) that the forecast for Kenya's economic growth in 2017 would reach no more than 5%, down from earlier projections of 5.5%. This was due to the impact of drought and the political problems arising from a prolonged election cycle. The National Treasury earlier this year trimmed its economic growth forecast from 5.9%.

Somalia

President Mohamed Abdullahi, speaking at the conclusion of the eight-day National Consultative Forum at the end of last week, praised the agreement reached would lead the country to a lasting peace. The Federal and State's leaders agreed on a joint offensive against Al-Shabaab and highlighted the importance of training and equipping Somali forces. The communiqué said the leaders underlined the need for strategic plans to annihilate the terrorists and carry out pre-emptive measures, as well as for security across Somalia to be tightened and improved. The

communiqué said they also agreed to work closely for the betterment of Somalia and to “create an atmosphere based on unity trust and patience to allow the leaders to work together.”

Deputy Prime Minister, Mahdi Mohamed Guleed, was attending the fourth World Youth Forum held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt this week from November 4 to 10. The theme is “We Need to Talk”. Mr. Gulleed also met with President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi for talks on ways to eliminate terrorism and job opportunities to encourage Somali youth to reject extremism. President El-Sisi pledged to work the Somali government.

The Minister of Internal Security, Mohamed Abukar Islow, leading a delegation to Qatar, met with Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani on Tuesday (November 7). Discussions covered joint cooperation, especially in military matters and combating against terrorism, as well as regional and international issues of common concern.

Ambassador Francisco Madeira, Special Representative of the African Union for Somalia and Head of the AU mission in Somalia (AMISOM), has called for increased reinforcement of Somali security forces to enable them effectively position themselves for takeover ahead of phased exit by African Union troops. He said realignment of troops, “including the movement of Ethiopian military contingents”, were taking place in readiness for the transitioning of security responsibilities to Somali Forces. **(See article)**

Mohamed Ali Guyo, IGAD Special Envoy to Somalia, met the UAE Ambassador to Somalia, Ambassador Mohammed Ahmed Al Othman, on Saturday (November 4) in Mogadishu. They discussed means to enhance co-operation between the UAE and IGAD and joint support to security and stability in Somalia.

A delegation of federal and state officials this week attended an IGAD-organized workshop to share best practices from Ethiopia on federalism and devolution. The delegation, led by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Internal and Federal Reconciliation, included representatives from Puntland, Jubaland, Southwest, Galmudug and Hir-Shebelle and the Benadir regional administration. **(See article)**

Emergency shelter kits, funded by the UK Government, have started to arrive in Somalia. The 20,000 kits will provide shelter for 140,000 drought- displaced Somalis across various regions in the country. In addition to protecting families living in harsh conditions, they will provide a level of security and protection for some of Somalia’s most vulnerable people.

Dubai-based DP World announced on Monday (November 6) that it plans to develop a greenfield economic free zone in Somaliland to complement its development of the Port of Berbera. DP World Group Chairman, Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem, and Somaliland’s Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Dr Saad Ali Shire, signed the agreement for the Berbera Free Zone, which will target such sectors as logistics and manufacturing. The first phase will cover 4 of the 12.2 square kilometers earmarked for the project. DP World said last year development of the port would require investment of \$442 million in three phases.

Campaigning for the election of Somaliland's fifth president ends on Friday (November 10) with voting on Sunday (November 13). The three presidential candidates vying to succeed President Ahmed Mohamed Silanyo are Muse Bihi Abdi (Kulmiye party), Abdirahman Irro (Waddani) and Faisal Ali Warabe (UCID).

South Sudan

Information minister, Michael Makuei Lueth said at the weekend that the South Sudan government would pay the outstanding arrears, of US\$262 million, for the transfer of oil through Sudan. Under the 2012 Cooperation Agreement South Sudan pays to use Sudan's export pipeline as part of the Transitional Financial Arrangement to help Sudan cover the gap resulting from the loss of oil revenue following South Sudan's independence in 2011.

The Canadian Government has imposed individual sanctions on three South Sudanese officials accused of gross violations of human rights, Paul Malong Awan former chief of general staff, Malek Reuben Riak Rengu, deputy chief of defense for logistics and Michael Makuei Lueth, Minister of Information. This came two weeks after the Canadian parliament adopted a law giving the government the power to impose asset freezes and travel bans on human-rights abusers around the world. The U.S. Treasury Department imposed similar sanctions on the three officials in September.

Former army chief, General Paul Malong Awan, who had been placed under house arrest in Juba has been released, after President Kiir reportedly sent a delegation of elders to Awan's home on Thursday (November 9), ending months of detention.

Sudan

President Omer Al-Bashir, addressing the general conference of the National Union of Sudanese Youth in Khartoum on Monday (November 6), pledged to hand over the country free of conflicts in 2020. Calling on the Darfur residents to hand over their weapons, he said the rebellion in Darfur was about to end, and vowed to achieve peace in the South Kordofan and Blue Nile states. President Al-Bashir said last August: "I'm not a dictator and I don't want to cling to power. I won't run for another term, my term will end by 2020 and I won't be able to run again according to the constitution and the constitution won't be amended".

Commander of the Rapid Support Forces in Darfur, Mohamed Hametti Daglo, said on Sunday (November 5) that his militia had deployed "a very large number" of fighters to support the disarmament campaign in Darfur. The government launched a six-month disarmament campaign to collect illegal weapons in August and the higher committee for the collection of weapons started an additional phase of the campaign in all of Sudan's states last month.

Foreign Minister Ibrahim Ghandour told parliament on Monday (November 6) that Sudan and the United States will resume discussions on the remaining outstanding issues in the normalization of their bilateral relations within three weeks. Last October, the American administration lifted its economic sanctions but other sanctions are still in place including Sudan's designation in the list of states sponsoring terrorism. Mr. Ghandour, who emphasized

the importance of completing dialogue and full normalization of relations with the United States and the European Union, said he expected the US to upgrade its representation in Khartoum from a charge d'affaires to ambassador 'at any time.'

The Crown Prince and Princess of Norway make a state visit to Ethiopia

President Dr. Mulatu Teshome received their Royal Highnesses, Crown Prince Magnus and Princess Mette-Marit of Norway, on Tuesday this week (November 7) at the National Palace. The Crown Prince and Princess were on a state visit to Ethiopia. Following their arrival, the Crown Prince held discussions with President Dr. Mulatu, Ministers and high-level officials of the Ethiopian government. President Mulatu noted that the Crown Prince and Princess's visit to Ethiopia would expand bilateral relations between the two countries and have a significant impact on trade, investment and other relationships. The two sides discussed ways to elevate the historic links between Ethiopia and Norway to a new level.

President Dr. Mulatu commended the number of Norwegian companies actively engaging with development in Ethiopia. These included Norfund, Yara International, Nera and Mester Grønn. The President urged the need to work closely to further reinforce bilateral ties, adding that: "Ethiopia offers outstanding business opportunities in many areas including agriculture, manufacturing, construction, mining and mineral exploration as well as other areas." He expressed his hopes that Ethiopia and Norway further bolster their bilateral relations in a wide range of areas.

Crown Prince Magnus expressed Norway's strong desire to have robust cooperative relations with Ethiopia. He said "Our strong bilateral relationship is built on longstanding friendship between our two countries. Today our mutual interests cover areas such as combating climate change, managing migration, securing access to education, investing in health, creating jobs and promoting sustainable and inclusive development". He also highlighted that Ethiopia was an important partner to Norway, noting: "We share a strong belief in a UN-led world order, and in the importance of seeking joint solutions to shared challenges, such as climate change". He reiterated that Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals provided an overarching framework for the two countries joint efforts.

The discussions also covered cooperation and partnership between the two countries in areas of private sector engagement. The two sides exchanged views on peace and security matters with reference to South Sudan and Somalia. They agreed on the importance of working together to consolidate peace and stability in the region.

President Dr. Mulatu and the Crown Prince, who was accompanied by a high-level business delegation, opened an Ethiopian-Norway Business Seminar later in the day. The seminar was organized to encourage Norwegian and Ethiopian companies looking to establish new partnerships and explore new opportunities in the Ethiopian market. An agreement was signed by Yara International to lay the foundation for large-scale potash production at its Dallol potash mine in the Afar Regional State. The agreement was signed by the Minister of Mines, Petroleum

and Natural Gas, Motuma Mekassa, and the President and CEO of Yara International, Mr. Svein Tore Holsether, who said: "We are glad to achieve this key milestone in the Dallol mining project. A mine in the Afar region would contribute significantly to economic development locally and nationally. We recognize and appreciate the efforts made by the Ethiopian government in supporting the project, both by providing necessary infrastructure and through making the mining agreement possible."

The Crown Prince and Princess also visited the African Union Commission and met with the AU Commission Chairperson, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat. The AU Commission Chairperson commended Norway for its longstanding support for priority sectors in Africa and said he looked forward to strengthening existing cooperation and private sector investment in Africa's emerging economic sectors such as the Blue Economy of which Norway is a global leader. The Chairperson pointed that Africa had more than 30 coastal and island Member States that could greatly benefit by harnessing opportunities presented by the Blue Economy. The Crown Prince also addressed the AU's Permanent Representative Committee and invited guests from the diplomatic corps, International Organizations and civil society. Focusing on the strong historic relations between Norway and the African continent, he underlined the strategic partnership between Norway and the AU, and issues of common global interest, such as human rights, gender equality, health, education and climate partnership, as well as private sector promotion and development.

The Crown Prince noted that the pursuit of global peace has long been a priority for Norway, as has ensuring respect for human dignity and emphasized that Norway was keen to further strengthen its cooperation with the African Union on peace and security. He noted that AU and Norway had an extensive partnership on peace and security and described this as the first pillar of the partnership between them. The other two pillars, he said, were good governance and human rights and sustainable development and job creation. Among the areas for cooperation was Norway's support for strengthening AU's civilian capacity for peace support operations, conflict prevention and mediation. The Crown Prince hailed the AU's achievements in addressing peace and security, and said: "The AU has shown leadership in addressing peace and security, the first pillar of our partnership. A lot has already been achieved," and he saluted "all those who are working to protect the innocent and to combat violent extremism, including the many brave African peacekeepers." He underlined Norway's direct engagement in peace and reconciliation in a number of countries, adding that, "more often than not, Norway seeks to promote peace by supporting other actors such as the UN regional and sub-regional organizations, including the AU and IGAD, national governments and NGOs." He also said that Norway was a candidate for a seat on the UN Security Council for the period 2021-2022, and he hoped would "provide an opportunity to further strengthen our relationship with the AU on peace and security issues."

During his visit, the Crown Prince met with the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Ms. Eziakonwa-Onochie, and country representatives of various UN agencies, including UNDP, UNOCHA, UNHCR, IOM, WFP and UNICEF. He opened the Ethiopian-Norwegian Conference of Health and Higher Education, and visited the Sustainable Land Management Project site in Oromia Regional State where he was welcomed by the State Ministers of Finance and Economic Cooperation, and of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The Crown Prince and Princess also met

with Norwegian civil society representatives in Ethiopia and visited the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission where they spoke with Commissioner Dr. Addisu Gebregziabher and other members of the Commission. The Crown Prince and Princess concluded their visit to Ethiopia by going to Axum in Tigray Regional State and visiting the Hitsats refugee camp for Eritrean refugees at Shire.

During Crown Prince and Princess' visit, Norway's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Eriksen Søreide, announced that Norway was providing a further NOK 10 million (US\$1.2 million) for people affected by drought in Ethiopia. She said: "The humanitarian situation in parts of Ethiopia is dire as a result of long-term drought. Norway is now providing a further NOK 10 million in aid to people in need, and will consider providing additional support on an ongoing basis." Ms. Eriksen Søreide added: "The droughts we have seen in recent years in parts of Ethiopia show the immense humanitarian suffering climate change can cause in poor areas. In the face of increasingly frequent droughts, we must help to meet the acute humanitarian needs, while also seeking to prevent new crises." Norway has provided a total of NOK 79 million in humanitarian support to Ethiopia already this year. Norway's aid is channeled through the UN, the Red Cross and Crescent and Norwegian humanitarian organizations, among them the Norwegian Refugee Council and a group of civil society organizations led by Norwegian Church Aid.

Ethiopia's First Lady at the Global Nutrition Summit 2017

This year's Global Nutrition Summit was held in Milan, Italy, on November 4. It aimed to review existing commitments and obtain new promises and support packages to accelerate the global response to malnutrition, an underlying cause of nearly half of all global child deaths. It brought together numerous representatives of governments including Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Niger, Tanzania and Zambia from Africa, cities, international agencies, foundations, civil society organizations and businesses.

Overall, US\$3.4 billion was committed to tackle the global malnutrition crisis, US\$640 million of this in new funding. International NGOs and the World Bank extended and increased their 2013 commitments with pledges to spend US\$1.1 billion and US\$1.7bn respectively on nutrition by 2020. Among Foundations making commitment at the Summit were the Dangote Foundation of Nigeria (\$100 million), Tara Trusts of India (\$50 million), Eleanor Crook Foundation of the US (\$100 million) and the Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation of Switzerland (\$100 million). "When nutrition is at the top of the agenda, countries can tap into their full potential," Gates Foundation co-chair Melinda Gates said at the event. "Today's summit made it clear that the world understands this. These commitments bring us one step closer to a future in which every child not only survives, but thrives." The Gates Foundation is the fourth largest donor to global nutrition efforts, after the United States, European Union, and United Kingdom.

The Global Nutrition Report 2017, launched at the summit, showed that, in spite of progress, 155 million children globally are still stunted, that is they are too short for their age often due to lack of nutrients affecting physical and cognitive development, and that and the world is not meeting internationally agreed nutrition targets. Financing to tackle malnutrition has been alarmingly low. Donors spend less than 1% of overseas aid on nutrition, and countries usually allocate no

more than between 1% and 2% of their health budgets to the issue. Former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, Chair of the Kofi Annan Foundation, said: “The global malnutrition crisis endangers the physical and mental wellbeing of present and future generations; ...Progress in tackling both under-nutrition and obesity is possible with targeted commitments, like those made here today. We need further urgent investments so that people, communities and nations can reach their full potential.”

The Summit concentrated on three priority areas: i) Improving Nutrition Within Planetary Boundaries: Cities Taking the Lead; ii) Closing the Nutrition Gender Gap; and iii) The Future We Want: Transforming our food systems for improved nutrition. It aimed to build on the legacy of the first Nutrition for Growth conference held in London in 2013, which mobilized over US\$4 billion for nutrition projects, and US\$19 billion for projects that improve nutrition via projects in other sectors such as agriculture, water and sanitation. It was the first global forum of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2026), being co-led by the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization. “It’s inspiring to see more countries commit to investing in better nutrition,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom, Director-General of WHO: “This is one of the most basic steps to improving health and promoting development. I look forward to seeing more countries committing funds as part of the Decade of Action on Nutrition.” José Graziano da Silva, Director General of FAO said: “Ending all forms of malnutrition must become the basis of a new social contract in which no one is left behind. The Decade of Action on Nutrition calls us all to action to reach this goal.”

Governments present at the Summit committed themselves to expand domestic programs to improve nutrition for mothers and children including Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, and Zambia. Ethiopia through its National Nutrition Program committed itself to reduce the prevalence of stunted, underweight and wasted children under five. Ethiopia’s First Lady, Mrs. Roman Tesfaye, told the Summit that Ethiopia was proud that rates of malnutrition in Ethiopia had reduced in recent years, but she also underlined that it was “critical that these numbers continue to decline given malnutrition’s devastating impact, specifically in children. By investing in robust national programs,” she said, “we are striving to improve child health and development across Ethiopia.”

Ethiopia’s First Lady underlined the Government’s commitment, emphasizing that nutrition was one of its main development agenda items. It had put holistic, community specific and gender sensitive approaches at the centre of its strategies to address the challenges of food security and under-nutrition. These strategies, she said, ranged from ensuring adequate food production, diversified diary practices and complementary feeding to food fortification measures. Ethiopia’s agricultural programs, including the Second Agricultural Growth Program, had enabled it to maximize food security and self-sufficiency at national level with plans to sustain increased production to ensure food self-sufficiency at household levels soon.

She noted Ethiopia’s increasing expenditure on nutrition since the commitments it made at the 2013 Nutrition for Growth Global Summit, had reached US\$455 million in 2015/16 alone. It included inclusion of pregnant and lactating women in the country’s existing Productive Safety Net Program and covered nutrition-sensitive programs (\$333 million), nutrition in emergency response programs (\$68 million), and nutrition-specific programs (\$54 million). In addition,

Ethiopia had established a National Nutrition Coordinating Body and a National Nutrition Technical Committee, responsible for supporting and devising an integrated approach for planning across all sectors to end malnutrition. The Government was implementing its Second National Nutrition Program for the period 2016-2020.

The nutrition measures taken so far, First Lady Roman said, had enabled Ethiopia to reduce child stunting from 44.4% in 2011 to 38% in 2016, and decrease women with anemia from 27% in 2005 to 23% in 2016. 73% of mothers in Ethiopia now began breastfeeding their children within an hour of birth and 92% within a day. Exclusive breastfeeding rates had steadily increased from 49% in 2005 to 58% in 2016. This showed Ethiopia was moving on the right track towards achieving its “Nutrition for Growth” commitments.

At the same time, she added, rates of chronic and acute malnutrition were still high, with the prevalence of stunted and under-weight children under five standing at 38% and 24% respectively. 24% of women of reproductive age have anemia and 22% were undernourished. The Government aimed to cut stunting to 26% by 2020, and underweight children to 13%. The First Lady said such efforts also needed broader and more predictable support from donors’ in ways consistent with national priorities such as gender equality, and the global vision of “better nutrition for all, everywhere” which goes beyond “national borders and political agenda”.

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh briefs Addis Ababa-based diplomats on local issues

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu updated Addis Ababa-based diplomats on the current situation in Ethiopia on Tuesday this week (November 7), focusing on the recent clashes in Oromia and Somali Regional States, unrest in some parts of Oromia and the recent devaluation of Ethiopian birr. This was one of the regular Ministry of Foreign Affairs briefings for members of the diplomatic community who reside in the country, covering relevant concerns and giving particular emphasis on current socio-political and economic issues.

Referring to the causes of the unfortunate and regrettable clashes in Oromia and Somali Regional States instigated by rent-seeking groups who wanted to take advantage of minor conflicts, Dr. Workneh said the government was now working to dismantle the activities of these rent seeking groups along the border between the two regions. The Foreign Minister said the government had held series of discussions with residents in the affected areas, their community elders and religious leaders, as well as the presidents of the regional states on September 14 and October 4, urging them to work together on the basis of the Federal Constitution and resolve conflicts through dialogue. He said preparations were underway to organize a ‘peace conference’ soon in the city of Dire Dawa. This would include community elders, religious leaders and the population at large. In addition to these actions, the government had also sent delegations to neighboring countries and states of Djibouti, Kenya, Puntland, and Somaliland to provide details to allow for a clear understanding of what had been happening.

Dr. Workneh referred to the visits by a group of high-level government officials, led by Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen, to the people who had taken shelter in temporary camps, in Dire Dawa, Harar Hamaresa and Babile. He emphasized that the Government was assisting those displaced and was urgently developing a rehabilitation program. Elders and religious leaders in the areas of conflict had reaffirmed their commitment to support the efforts of government to restore law and order, stressing the need for close and continuous collaboration. He said that the government was taking all necessary measures to stabilize the areas affected by the conflict and the situation in the border areas between the Oromia and Somalia Regional States was now getting back to normalcy.

Following earlier incidents that took place along the borders of the Oromia and Somali Regional State border, with killings and substantial displacement of civilians, illegal protests took place in at least in eight towns of the Oromia region causing the death of eight people in Shashemene and Borena areas. The Foreign Minister said the Oromia Regional State had now taken measures against offenders who had targeted civilians as well as against members of the police and the military who had acted irresponsibly.

Dr. Workneh pointed out that the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission was now carrying out an investigation of the causes of any deaths and alleged abuses that had occurred in the areas of conflict. Once that investigation had been completed, the Government would take action in full accordance of all relevant laws against perpetrators of the recent killings and displacements.

Regarding the issue of reform of the country's electoral process, Dr. Workneh referred to the productive talks under way between the country's national parties. He said a number of different proposals had been put forward among the ruling EPRDF and fifteen national opposition political parties aiming to create a wider democratic space. At the end of last week, they agreed to reform the country's electoral system and scrap the simple majority vote system. Under new electoral rules, Ethiopia will have a hybrid electoral system with 80% elected by simple majority vote and 20% by a proportional vote system. The parties also agreed to increase the number of federal parliamentary seats from the current 547 to 660 to accommodate the changes.

The Foreign Minister said the recent devaluation of the currency, the Birr, was a Government move to "prop up exports". Ethiopia is Africa's biggest coffee exporter, he pointed out, but total export revenue had been falling short of targets for several years because of weak global commodity prices. The country earned US2.9 billion dollars from exports last fiscal year (2016-2017), against a target of US4 billion dollars. The devaluation would help to correct this. The Minister emphasized that overall Ethiopia's economy remained one of the fastest growing in Africa, indeed in the world, with the IMF expecting a growth rate of 9% for this fiscal year (2017-2018).

The Minister responded to questions from members of the diplomatic community. The diplomatic community commended the Government's deep commitment to respond swiftly to any challenges and its efforts to transform challenges into opportunities and use them as tools to hone the capacity of the country.

COP23 Climate Change Conference opens in Bonn

The 23rd annual Conference of the Parties” (COP23), held under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), opened in Bonn on November 6. The meeting, which brings together some 10,000 government delegates, another 8,000 people from NGOs and civil society and around 2,000 journalists from around the world, lasts until November 17. COP23 takes place just as the UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO), released its provisional statement on the State of the Climate. It said: “It is very likely that 2017 will be one of the three hottest years on record with many high-impact events including catastrophic hurricanes and floods, debilitating heat waves and drought.” WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas told delegates in Bonn that the past three years have all been in the top three years in terms of temperature records. “This is part of a long term warming trend,” he said, pointing to recent “extraordinary weather,” including temperatures topping 50 degrees Celsius in Asia, record-breaking hurricanes in rapid succession in the Caribbean and Atlantic reaching as far as Ireland, devastating monsoon flooding affecting many millions of people and a relentless drought in East Africa.

Opening the conference, COP 23 President, the Prime Minister of Fiji, Frank Bainimarama, said “The need for urgency is obvious. Our world is in distress from the extreme weather events caused by climate change – destructive hurricanes, fires, floods, droughts, melting ice, and changes to agriculture that threaten our food security.” He added: “Our job as leaders is to respond to that suffering with all means available to us. We must not fail our people. That means using the next two weeks and the year ahead to do everything we can to make the Paris Agreement work and to advance ambition and support for climate action before 2020.”

“Wherever we live, we are all vulnerable and need to act,” Mr. Bainimarama told delegates. He said Fiji was helping build a Grand Coalition for decisive, coordinated action by governments at every level, by civil society, by the private sector and by all citizens on earth. He said. “That’s why we installed an ocean-going Fijian ‘drua’ canoe in the entrance here to remind everyone of the need to fill its sail with collective determination to make COP23 a success and confront the biggest challenge humanity has faced.” UNFCCC Executive Secretary, Patricia Espinosa, reminded the participants that: “We have some very specific goals we must achieve while we are here in Bonn. We expect these negotiations to be the next essential step that ensures that the Paris Agreement’s structure is completed, its impacts are strengthened, and its goals achieved. We also need to move forward to fulfill the commitments that are due in 2020. In this regard, finance and mitigation pledges are essential.”

The Bonn Conference features a series of meetings and events, including the high-level segment, November 15-16, attended by Heads of State and Government, Ministers, and UN Secretary-General António Guterres. The UN Secretary-General has already invited leaders to consider championing six high-impact areas at a special Climate Summit in 2019. These areas are: investment in clean technology; maturing carbon pricing; enabling the energy transition; risk mitigation and building resilience; augmenting the contribution of sub-national actors and business; and mobilizing climate finance. Among the side events scheduled at COP 23 are those to be organized under the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action, to show how cities, regions, private sector companies and investors are all trying to implement the Paris Agreement

in the areas of energy, water, agriculture, oceans and coastal areas, human settlements, transportation, industry, and forests.

According to Ethiopia’s Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Ethiopia will be reflecting the position of the Least Developed Countries at COP23. Minister Dr. Gemedo Dale said this will reflect the position of Ethiopia and other developing countries on various climate change issues, including the Paris Agreement. The Minister noted that Ethiopia is the current chair of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Forum, representing 48 states. Ethiopia, he said, has submitted twenty different documents reflecting the stand of the LDCs on environment and climate change. Ethiopia’s delegation includes 24 people from governmental organizations and another 30 from NGOs. The Minister, who said the delegation had prepared in detail for bilateral and multilateral negotiations, noted the conference was expected to finalize pending issues, including the adaptation fund to implement the Paris Agreement.

There is no doubt that climate change is already significantly increasing the likelihood of extreme weather, from heat waves to floods, and without sharp cuts to global carbon emissions, we can expect “severe, widespread, and irreversible impacts” for billions of people and for the natural world. The landmark Paris agreement, s adopted by the 196 Parties to the UNFCCC at COP21 in December 2015, delivered the first truly global deal to tackle climate change, but national action needs to be significantly toughened to meet the goal of keeping global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius, and to 1.5 degrees Celsius if possible. A year ago, the Marrakech Climate Conference (COP22) concluded with the Marrakech Action Proclamation, for “our climate and sustainable development”, under which the UNFCCC State Parties affirmed their “commitment” to the “full implementation” of the Paris Agreement. Today, 169 Parties have ratified the Agreement.

UN Security Council calls for a comprehensive response to piracy off the Somali coast...

The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2383 (2017) calling for a comprehensive response to prevent and suppress acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia on Tuesday this week (November 7). The resolution, passed unanimously, renewed authorization for international naval forces to fight piracy off the coast of Somalia for another year, underlining that piracy exacerbated instability in Somalia as well as fueled corruption and terrorism. The resolution noted that the joint counter-piracy efforts of States, organizations, the maritime industry, the private sector and civil society had resulted in a steady decline in pirate attacks since 2011, but it expressed concern over a number of piracy incidents occurring this year. Resurgent piracy posed a threat to prompt, safe, and effective delivery of humanitarian aid, to the safety of seafarers, international navigation and commercial maritime routes.

The resolution noted Security Council support for the outcome of the London Somalia Conference in May and the commitment of the Federal Government and Federal Member States of Somalia to developing their maritime security capacity. It underlined the primary responsibility of the Somali authorities in the fight against piracy, and noted “the several requests from Somali authorities for international assistance to counter piracy off its coast,” including a

letter of 2 November 2017 asking member states and international organizations to support the Federal Government in its efforts to address illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing in its Exclusive Economic Zone. The Somali representative to the UN, Abukar Dahir Osman, told the Security Council that illegal fishing by foreign companies was a serious problem and was depleting seafood resources. He described the root causes both of piracy and of illegal fishing as poor state control, lack of legal economic opportunities and an absence of the rule of law. He emphasized that renewal of the current mandate to fight piracy could only be effective if it also addressed the impact of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. The resolution expressed its serious concern over these reports and acknowledged this accounted for millions of dollars in lost revenue each year, and could contribute to destabilization among coastal communities.

It renewed the Security Council's call for States and regional organizations to cooperate with Somalia and each other through deploying naval vessels and military aircraft, providing logistical support, and seizing equipment suspected to be used in piracy. It called upon UN Member States, "working in conjunction with relevant international organizations, to adopt legislation to facilitate prosecution of suspected pirates off the coast of Somalia." It recognized the need to continue investigation and prosecution of people who planned, organized, financed or profited from pirate attacks, including key figures of criminal networks involved. It urged States, in conjunction with relevant international organizations, to adopt legislation to facilitate prosecution of suspected pirates and take appropriate actions under their existing domestic law to prevent the illicit financing of acts of piracy and the laundering of proceeds. It commended Kenya, Mauritius, Tanzania, and Seychelles, for their efforts to prosecute suspected pirates in their national courts.

The resolution encouraged States, under whose flag ships sailed, and States from whose ports ships came, to consider the development of safety and security measures on board vessels, including the development of regulations for the use of privately contracted armed security personnel on board ships. It called upon Member States to assist Somalia, at the request of Somali authorities, to strengthen Somalia's maritime capacity, and it renewed its call for States and regional organizations able to do so to take part in the fight against piracy, highlighting the importance of coordination to deter acts of piracy. It also called on all States to cooperate fully with the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group, including information sharing about possible violations of the arms embargo or the charcoal ban.

The resolution reaffirmed respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence, and unity of Somalia, including Somalia's sovereign rights in accordance with international law, with respect to offshore natural resources, including fisheries. It affirmed the primary responsibility of Somali authorities to combat piracy and underlined that peace and stability within Somalia, the strengthening of State institutions, economic and social development, and respect for human rights and the rule of law were necessary to create the conditions for a durable eradication of piracy. Somalia's long-term security, it noted, rested with the effective development by Somali authorities of the Somali Coast Guard and Maritime Police Units, Somali National Army, and Somali Police Force.

The Security Council welcomed the draft coast guard law which the Somali authorities, with the support of the European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) Operation ATALANTA and

EUCAP Somalia had submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval by Parliament. It urged the Somali authorities to continue their work to pass a comprehensive set of anti-piracy and maritime laws without further delay and establish security forces with clear roles and jurisdictions to enforce these laws and to continue to develop the capacity of Somali courts to investigate and prosecute persons responsible for acts of piracy and armed robbery. This must include key figures of criminal networks involved in piracy who plan, organize, facilitate, or illicitly finance or profit from such attacks. It urged the Somali authorities to continue to expedite the passing of comprehensive anti-piracy and maritime laws and to establish security forces with clear roles and jurisdiction to enforce those laws, as well as strengthen the capacity of Somali courts to investigate and prosecute those responsible for piracy.

The resolution also commended the efforts of the European Union Naval Forces (EUNAVFOR) Operation ATALANTA, Combined Maritime Forces' Combined Task Force 151, the counter-piracy efforts of the African Union and the naval activities of the Southern Africa Development Community, as well as the efforts of other States to suppress piracy and protect ships. It noted their importance in securing the safe delivery of World Food Program assistance by sea.

...the Head of AMISOM calls for increased support for Somali security forces

Ambassador Francisco Madeira, Special Representative of the African Union for Somalia and Head of the AU mission in Somalia (AMISOM), has called for increased reinforcement of Somali security forces to enable them effectively position themselves for takeover ahead of phased exit by African Union troops. The head of AMISOM underlined the need for urgency saying: "timely and well-coordinated support is necessary to consolidate the gains already made in the country and enable the Somali National Security Forces assume full responsibility for the country's security, once the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) exits." Ambassador Madeira, speaking to the media in Mogadishu on Tuesday this week (November 7) said: "The forces urgently need to be equipped with necessary weapons, key logistical support including timely payment of stipends, provision of quality medical care, establishment of key infrastructure including barracks and training centers among others."

He said AMISOM would reduce its troops by 1000 before the end of the year, adding that realignment and redeployment of troops in all the sectors is ongoing. This was aimed at positioning the troops strategically to effectively deal with the security situation. He said: "Troop movements have started in different parts of the country and will continue for the coming weeks. This is a process of realignment to effect the reduction in numbers and also begin the handover process of national security responsibility to the Somali National Security Forces. However, The AU Special Representative emphasized that the drawdown will be gradual and conditions-based to ensure the security of the country is not disrupted. "It is about re-arranging ourselves in manner that we remain effective despite the reduction of numbers", he said, adding, "We all have one enemy, Al Shabaab. We must consolidate whatever skills, knowledge and assets we can gather, as one united force," In this context, he noted that the Ethiopian troops reported arriving in Somalia last week were not new forces but merely replacing existing troops. Ambassador Madeira pointed out that any troop increase in AMISOM must be approved by the African Union and by the UN Security Council. He said: "The numbers are fixed and no increase of troops can take place without a clear agreement with the African Union and without the UN."

Commenting on the recent bombings, including the appalling October 14 attack, in Mogadishu, Ambassador Madeira urged the Somali public to play their role in improving the country's security by sharing information with the security forces. He said: "Every citizen has a role to play in this effort to ensure that Somalia is pacified and freed from all elements of terror. It is important to note that security forces cannot uproot Al-Shabaab from the communities if the residents do not play their part by sharing the necessary information with the relevant security organs." He said AMISOM together with the Somali National Security Forces could only enhance security if residents reported, to the relevant authorities, suspicious individuals and movements in their communities. He also urged the public to support the efforts by the federal and state governments to counter violent extremism, noting that Somalia was at a critical stage of transition towards peace and security. He said 500 police officers will be deployed to train and mentor the Somali Police who will enforce law and order in the country.

Ambassador Madeira reiterated AMISOM's commitment to support Somalia to establish a strong army and police force capable of securing and maintaining law and order in the country. He said: "the focus for AMISOM going forward is to continue strengthening the capacity of the Somali National Army and the Somali Police Force as we begin the drawdown. Training and mentorship through joint operations will continue." AMISOM, together with the SNA, would also continue engaging in offensive operations to defeat Al-Shabaab and ensure the security situation the country improved.

...and an IGAD workshop on federalism for Somali officials and experts

The Permanent Secretary of Somalia's Ministry of Internal and Federal Reconciliation, Abdullahi Mohamoud, brought a high-level delegation of government officials and experts to Addis Ababa this week to share best practices from Ethiopia on federalism and devolution. The delegation includes representatives from the Somali Federal Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Constitutional Affairs, and Planning as well as from ministries in the states of Puntland, Jubaland, Southwest, Galmudug and Hir-Shebelle and the Benadir regional administration.

The Permanent Secretary, who leads the delegation said: "The federalism system in Somalia is still at its infancy stage. In our effort to understand better and consider most suitable federal model for our country, we have made visits to other countries such as Switzerland for its federalism experience and Kenya to learn from its devolution system. " He said: "We know we cannot make a hasty decision on which type of federal model we will adopt for Somalia. Each and every country has their own unique situations and has adopted models that are suitable for their own context. We have come to Ethiopia in pursuance of such effort."

Mr. Mahamoud said they wanted more experience about federalism especially from the Somali Regional State of Ethiopia and also from the devolution taking place under the Kenya system. He said the delegation was in Ethiopia to learn about fiscal federalism, to see how Ethiopia's federalism was working and how Ethiopians share the resources of their country. He said Somalia wanted to have a federal system of governance as a remedy to the challenges that still persisted following the civil war and to provide an alternative solution to the unitary system that the country had previously.

During their time in Ethiopia, the group are attending a three-day IGAD experience-sharing workshop on federalism and devolution (November 9-11) in Addis Ababa. IGAD said the workshop aimed to enhance the capacity and understanding of Somali government officials and experts, learning from Ethiopian and Kenyan experience on federalism and devolution respectively. It provided an opportunity to learn how Ethiopia's Somali Regional State institutions "are structured, harmonized and functioning at the local levels." In addition to senior officials and experts, it is being attended by representatives of civil society organizations, youth and women groups.

IGAD's Peace and Security Director, Tewolde Gebre-Meskel, said the workshop aimed at supporting Somalia in its efforts to adopt a federal system and implement decentralization. It would allow member state to share their experience on the positive development and challenges of federalism, he said, adding that when IGAD member states want to consider federalism, they choose Ethiopia as an example because federalism has been working there for two decades.

He said federalism was the only a system that helped to avoid marginalization of peoples, and there was an accommodation of diversity: "and this is all what federalism is basically." The Deputy Speaker of Ethiopia's House of Federation of Ethiopia, Mohamed Rashid, said Ethiopia survived as a nation and had realized sustainable development because of federalism. He said: "In an environment of deep and multiple diversities, peace and sustainable development can only be achieved with a mechanism that ensures equitable and fair sharing of power and resources, with economic opportunity availed for all without discrimination. What Ethiopia has done is exactly the same".

The House of People's Representatives approves draft proclamations on foreign relations

The House of People's Representatives in its fourth regular session on November 2 approved ten draft proclamations for the endorsement of international agreements. These were made in accordance with Article 55 (12) of the Constitution of the FDRE. They focused on various areas: transport, including air services, road and railway agreements; agreements on economic, science and technology matters; culture; joint border controls; and general cooperation agreements.

The transport sector agreements endorsed by the house included: an agreement signed in Khartoum on December 4, 2013, by the Governments of Ethiopia and the Sudan on the Operation and Management of a Standard Gauge Railway Network; an agreement with the Republic of Djibouti on Passenger Road Transport Service, signed in Djibouti on February 7, 2015; an Air Transport Agreement with Czech Republic, signed in Kuta on, November 19, 2014; and an Air Service Agreement with the Republic of Philippines, signed in Manila on October 8, 2014.

The agreements covering general cooperation and science, technology and economic areas, included: an agreement signed in Addis Ababa, on July 14, , 2012, between the Governments of Ethiopia and the Republic of Zambia on Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation; a General Cooperation Agreement with the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

which was signed in Caracas on March 19,, 2016; and a General Co-operation Agreement with the Government of the Republic of Cote d’Ivoire, signed in Abidjan March 31, 2016.

The other three agreements endorsed by the House were: a Bilateral Agreement between the Government of Ethiopia and the Government of Kenya on Joint Borders Controls, Procedures, Facilities and Management, at Moyale Border Post, signed in Addis Ababa on April 23, 2014; a Cooperation Agreement in the Field of Tourism with the Government of Ghana, signed in Addis Ababa on June 23, 2015; and an agreement on the establishment of an International Think Tank for Land-Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs), signed on September 22, 2011.

All these agreements are aimed at boosting ties with the countries of signatory in the respective areas of cooperation, and they open the door for more cooperation in other areas. Ethiopia has made it very clear that it has the ambition to extend its links and connections with other regional states in its quest for more economic, cultural and people-to-people ties. This provides the motive to expand railway, road and power infrastructure throughout the region. Following its continuous economic growth, is looking for more import/export outlets. The Standard Gauge Railway Network Agreement signed with the Sudan underlines the point. Ethiopia in addition to boosting overall bilateral ties will get alternative port access via Port Sudan. The air service agreements will help Ethiopian Airlines expand its destinations and increase aviation sector cooperation. Similarly, the Joint Administrative Agreement signed between Ethiopia and Kenya will enhance and boost border security and trade.

The General Cooperation Agreements with Venezuela and Cote d’Ivoire provide for South-South cooperation platforms, as well as a legal framework to encourage further cooperation on socio-economic, cultural and diplomatic matters. The agreement on the establishment of an LLDC countries’ International Think Tank will benefit Ethiopia by engaging in feasibility studies and research on transit and port systems and capacity building programs. It will also put the country in a better negotiating position in its bid to become member of the World Trade Organization (WTO). In addition, overall, these agreements will allow for improvements in the flow of trade, investment and tourism as well as encourage transport options. They come into force once the proclamations have been published in the Federal *Negarit Gazette*, and they will be implemented by the relevant ministries and authorities.

An IGAD Workshop on Land Dialogue in Addis Ababa

A two-day IGAD Workshop on Land Dialogue took place in Addis Ababa this week. Opened by Ethiopia’s State Minister for Natural Resources, Dr. Kaba Urgessa, on Wednesday (November 8), the workshop was one of the pre-events in advance of the 2nd Biennial Conference on Land Policy in Africa which is being held in Addis Ababa nest week (November 14-17).

In his opening remarks, State Minister Dr. Kaba urged IGAD Member States to use the platform to share experiences and challenges related to effective land administration. He noted land is one of the critical resources on which Africa’s socio-economic development is anchored and it therefore should be properly managed. He noted: “This regional dialogue is one of the successful

achievements of IGAD, Member States and development partners in establishing a regional dialogue platform which is one of the calls of the AU Declaration on Land”, adding, “This is the start, we have to continue strengthening the regional dialogue platform to share our best practices and challenges in the land sector, in particular land harmonizing and integration agenda in the IGAD region.” said Dr. Kaba.

The theme of the workshop, the first of its kind organized by a Regional Economic Community to discuss implementation of the AU Declaration on Land, Land Governance and Administration, was “Good governance in land administration in IGAD region”.

The ECA’s Capacity Development Division Director, Stephen Karingi, in his remarks to the workshop urged Africa to optimally leverage its land resources for its people. He said land played a crucial role in Africa’s socio economic development and this emphasized the need for the continent to optimally use this resource. He said: “We are all aware that many of our countries continue to face challenges, which are surmountable, including of poverty, food and nutrition insecurity and natural and environmental degradation; with serious consequences for our people, especially the most vulnerable.” Mr. Karingi said one of the root causes was the inefficient and non-inclusive use of the land resources. Mr. Karingi also noted that the challenges were compounded by the reality that many land administration systems are not informed by rigorous research, so, he said, “The result is a system with poor governance and accountability, and as a consequence they do not guarantee security of tenure for the majority of the population including women and vulnerable groups.” This should not be the case in a continent with nearly 60% of the world’s arable uncultivated land: “Clearly, Africa is yet to optimally leverage its land resources for its people. This is why land governance and administration are important,” adding it was imperative for member States to develop and put in place efficient land administration systems with high quality of service. He said dialogue, such as this one, would help member States address these challenges.

Mohamed Moussa, Director of the Agriculture and Environment Division at IGAD, underlined the importance of land to economic and social development and to ensuring peace and security. The majority of African governments, he said, had embarked on land policy and institutional reforms to address land issues in the context of national development. The key issues that needed to be addressed in this context, he said, were “securing land rights to improve livelihoods and facilitate economic development; the centrality of urban land delivery and urban land development; natural resource access and sustaining common property resources; property rights and environmental sustainability; equitable land distribution and restoring wasted and alienated land; land and gender issues; and land and conflict.”

Peter Sidler, from the Embassy of Switzerland’s Cooperation Office in Ethiopia, noted that Switzerland collaborated with the African Land Policy Centre in supporting African countries and Regional Economic Communities in integrating the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, (known as the VGGT), and the AU Framework and Guidelines for Land Policy in Africa into national legislation. He stressed that this regional dialogue platform was a very important step in this regard.

