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News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

The UN Security Council, adopting resolution 2385 (2017) on Tuesday (November 14), extended the modified arms embargo on Somalia and the authorization for maritime interdiction of illicit arms imports and charcoal exports for another year. It also extended the arms ban on Eritrea until November 15, 2018, and renewed the mandate of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group until December 15, 2018. **(See article)**

The Somali and Eritrea Monitoring Group's latest annual reports on the sanction regimes for both Somalia and on Eritrea were presented to the Security Council at the beginning of the month. **(See articles)**

The Water Ministers of Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt held their and the 17th Ministerial Tripartite National Committee on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam last weekend (November 11-12) in Cairo, Egypt. **(See article)**

The UN Security Council extended the mandate for the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei, a contested territory between Sudan and South Sudan until 15 May 2018. Meeting on Wednesday (November 15) the Security Council also decided to maintain UNISFA's authorized troop ceiling of 4,791 until 15 April 2018. **(See article)**

The United States -African Union High Level Dialogue and Ministerial is taking place in Washington, November 16-17. 37 Foreign Ministers from throughout Africa, including the AU leadership, are participating. The discussions are expected to focus on multilateral issues concerning trade and investment, counterterrorism, and good governance. Don Yamamoto, Assistant Secretary of State for Africa said: "The objectives of the meeting are overall to broaden and deepen the relationship between the United States and Africa," adding that featured viewpoints will be on economic growth and trade opportunity and development, and then on democracy and governance, and finally peace and security.

The Conference of the Parties (COP23), held under the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in Bonn, comes to an end today (November 17) following the high-level segment which took place this week. Disappointingly, efforts to raise funding for those hit hardest by global warming were deferred to 2018 in a “loss and damage” text adopted on Tuesday. The head of the Ethiopian delegation, Dr. Gemedo Dalle, Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change attended a high-level Forum on South-South Cooperation on Wednesday, underlining the importance of cooperation while stressing South-South cooperation was not a substitute but a complement to North-South cooperation. He emphasized Ethiopia’s commitment to partnership at all levels and with all organizations. We will consider the results of COP23 next week.

The 2nd UN Peacekeeping Defense Ministerial Conference took place this week in Vancouver, Canada (November 14-15). Attended by over 500 delegates from 79 countries, was co-hosted by Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Japan, Netherlands, Pakistan, Rwanda, Uruguay, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Discussions revolved around four themes: ‘Integration of gender perspectives into peacekeeping’, ‘Innovation in training and capacity building’, as well as focusing on improvements to UN peacekeeping operations and securing dozens of new pledges of military equipment and expertise from member states to meet the UN rapid deployment requirement for 2017-18.

“The suffering of migrants detained in Libya is an outrage to the conscience of humanity,” United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra’ad al-Hussein, said in a statement issued on Tuesday (November 14). He described the European Union’s policy of assisting the Libyan coastguard to intercept and return migrants in the Mediterranean as “inhuman,” and called the detention system for migrants in Libya “broken beyond repair”. On Monday, ministers from 13 European and African countries pledged to act to ease the migration crisis and help improve conditions for people held in Libya.

IGAD and the ECA organized a two-day High Level Policy Dialogue on Conflict and Development in the Horn of Africa this week (November 13-14), to discuss the challenges posed by domestic, regional and international geopolitical developments to peace and stability in the IGAD region. **(See article)**

IGAD convened the 4th Steering Committee Meeting of its Land Governance Project on Friday (November 10), following last week’s IGAD Workshop on Land Dialogue in Addis Ababa. Those attending included representatives from the ECA and the Swiss Development Cooperation Agency. IGAD’s Land Governance Project provides support to Member States in implementing the AU Declaration of Land and the Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa. **(See article)**

Ethiopia

President Kersti Kaljulaid of Estonia made a state visit to Ethiopia on Tuesday and Wednesday this week (November 14 and 15), holding talks with President Dr. Mulatu Teshome and other officials. Estonia currently holds the presidency of the Council of the EU, and President

Kaljulaid also met with AU officials ahead of the EU-AU Summit to be held in Abidjan at the end of the month. **(See article)**

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn made an official visit to Qatar this week, (November 13-15), meeting with Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani for talks on enhancing bilateral relations as well as a number of issues of common interest in tourism, trade and investment. The Ethiopian delegation included Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, Defense Minister Mr. Siraj Fegessa, Minister of Culture and Tourism, Dr. Hirut Woldemariam, and Commissioner of the Ethiopian Investment commission, Fitsum Arega. **(See article)**

Foreign Minister, Dr. Workneh met with the Special Envoys of Norway, United Kingdom and the United States, the Troika on South Sudan on Friday last week (November 10). Discussions covered the ongoing development of the revitalized IGAD peace process. **(See article)**

The Water Ministers of Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt held their 7th Ministerial and the 17th Tripartite National Committee on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam last weekend (November 11-12) in Cairo, Egypt. **(See article)**

Ethiopian and Djiboutian Ministers of Transport signed a one stop common border post agreement at the end of last month to ensure quick and “seamless operation” of the electrified 760 kilometer Addis Ababa-Djibouti rail transport system when into comes into full operations shortly. **(See article)**

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene, and other senior officials met British Ambassador to Ethiopia, Mrs. Susanna Moorehead for the 4th Ethio-UK Joint Meeting to discuss human rights, migration and accountability on Monday (November 13). Mrs. Hirut underlined Ethiopia’s democratization process and its work to protect human rights, noting that 36 of the 106 articles in the Ethiopian constitution are focused on human rights.

The UK announced on Friday last week (November 10) that it had doubled the amount of export finance it is making available to support UK-Ethiopia bilateral trade, increasing it to £200 million. The British International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox made the announcement during a visit to Addis Ababa, Trade between the UK and Ethiopia was worth 15.4 billion birr (£439 million) in 2015.

Ethiopian Airlines won the Airline of the Year Award for the sixth consecutive year. It was given by the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) during its 49th Annual General Assembly (November 13), in Kigali. AFRAA annual awards recognize excellence in service delivery, innovation and competitiveness in airlines, individuals and service providers in the African aviation industry.

Ethiopian Airlines has placed a firm order for four more Boeing 777 Freighters at a cost of US\$1.3 billion. Ethiopian's Chief Executive Officer, Tewolde Gebremariam, said the aircraft were for additional capacity not replacement and expected to be delivered in 2018-19.

Djibouti

The Chief of Staff, General, Zakariye Sheikh Ibrahim said at the end of last week that Djibouti is planning to send troops to Somalia following President Mohamed Abdullahi's recent plea for further support against Al-Shabaab.

Eritrea

The Secretary of the Peoples Front for Democracy and Justice, Alamin Mohammed Seid and the Minister of Local Government, Woldemicael Abraha, opened the Eritrean Community Festival in Riyadh last week on November 9, being held under the theme "Laying Pillars for Vibrant Development". They also held a seminar for Eritrean nationals in Riyadh last week on the situation in Eritrea and regional developments, briefing participants on nation building, foreign relations and as well as the strengthening the PFDJ which they described as the priority task.

Somalia

AMISOM announced on Tuesday (November 14) that 1,000 soldiers would be withdrawn from Somalia by December 31, in line with AU and UN Security Council resolutions, but another 500 more police would be added to AMISOM police units. **(See article)**

Minister for Education, Abdi Dahir Osman, signed the agreement to join the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS) in Islamabad at the end of last week.

The Ministry of Constitutional Affairs, Parliamentary Oversight Committee and the Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission, signed a memorandum of understanding, on Tuesday (November 14) outlining their roles and working relationship. Disagreements between the two bodies led to a postponement of a constitutional conference scheduled in October. The constitutional review process must be completed by 2018 to pave the way for the national referendum to adopt a new constitution.

Humanitarian Affairs Minister, Ms. Maryam Qasim, resigned on Wednesday. Ms. Qasim is second minister to resign following former Defense Minister Abdirashid Abdulahi Mohamed.

Somaliland went to the polls on Monday (November 13) for its third presidential election, using biometric eye scanners for voter identification. It was the first time in the world that iris recognition has been used in a presidential election. The result is expected at the end of this week.

IGAD organized a two-day Consensus Building Preparatory workshop for peace-building and the implementation of the different ceasefire and peace agreements signed between Puntland and Galmudug Administrations over the Galkayo dispute. The workshop brought together Governors and Mayors of Puntland and Galmudug regions with their respective peace committees to discuss and recommend a roadmap to bring about a lasting peace. Also present were representatives from the Federal Government Ministries of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation and the IGAD Special Mission to Somalia.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said in its Repatriation Update for Somalia on Friday last week (November 10) that 108,498 refugees have returned to Somalia so far, since voluntary repatriation exercise began in December 2014. Of these, 73,943 refugees were from Kenya, 33,921 from Yemen (33,511 spontaneous and 418 assisted) and 626 from other countries.

Sudan

President Omer al-Bashir visited Uganda this week (November 14-15) for bilateral talks with Uganda President Yoweri Museveni. Areas of discussion included trade and investment, agriculture, regional peace and security as well as international matters of mutual interest. The President's delegation included ministers, senior officials and a business delegation. A Sudan-Uganda Business Forum was held during the visit.

President Kersti Kaljulaid of Estonia's visit to Ethiopia

President Kersti Kaljulaid made a state visit to Ethiopia on Tuesday and Wednesday this week (November 14 and 15). Estonia currently holds the presidency of the Council of the EU, and President Kaljulaid's visit, ahead of the EU-AU Summit to be held in Abidjan later this month, was largely aimed at discussing ways of boosting e-governance, strengthening regional and peace and security, and EU-AU relations and the UN Security Council.

On her arrival in Addis Ababa, President Kaljulaid was welcomed by President Dr. Mulatu Teshome, and the two Presidents held bilateral talks on Wednesday. President Dr. Mulatu has expressed Ethiopia's strong desire to further enhance its ties with all members of the European Union including the Baltic States and closely work together in both multi-lateral and bilateral matters. Dr. Mulatu said Estonia's presidency of the EU Council would afford the opportunity for both countries to work closely together on African, global and bilateral issues of common interest. President Dr. Mulatu also explained the immense investment and business opportunities Ethiopia offered for Estonian businesses. He also underlined the need to support Ethiopia's ongoing efforts to address the root causes of migration through youth employment. Dr. Mulatu suggested that EU-Africa cooperation would be more robust if it could focus more on socio-economic development and use instruments such as Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.

Praising the Ethiopian side for the warm welcome accorded to her, President Kaljulaid said Estonia was keen to strengthen its ties with Ethiopia. She noted that scaling up its relations with Ethiopia would also greatly help Estonia forge closer relations with Africa. Mrs. Kaljulaid expressed her country's serious interest in sharing its experiences in IT and e-governance.

Earlier, President Kaljulaid met the African Union Trade and Industry Commissioner, Albert M. Muchanga at the AU Headquarters. The meeting provided an opportunity to exchange views on a wide range of issues, including peace and security and the Continental Free Trade Area, as well as the digital economy and information and communication technologies. The Commissioner praised the partnership between the African Union and the European Union and the continued joint efforts by the two institutions to address common challenges. He looked forward to the

successful holding of the African Union-European Union Summit in Abidjan at the end of the month, November 29-30, under the theme “Investing in Youth for a Sustainable Future”. Commissioner Muchanga briefed President Kaljulaid on the Continental Free Trade Area, one of the Flagship Projects of Agenda 2063, under its First Ten-Year Implementation Plan.

Discussions also included the ongoing efforts by the G5 Sahel countries to fully operationalize their Joint Force, which offers a decisive way forward for the fight against terrorism and organized crime in the Sahel. The African Union delegation expressed appreciation for the support provided by the European Union and called for further efforts to mobilize additional resources for the Joint Force. A Donors Conference is scheduled to take place in Brussels in mid-December 2017.

President Kaljulaid noted that Africa currently has the rather unique opportunity, to jump a number of steps in the development of a digital society. These had required Europe to spend a lot of time and energy but now Africa could avoid these. She pledged her country’s commitment to share relevant experiences with the African Union, including on digital economy and ICT, adding that e-governance is the highway to development. Ms. Kaljulaid expressed appreciation for the African Union Commission’s efforts, and highlighted the importance of continued efforts to enhance co-operation between Africa and Europe. They agreed a Memorandum of Understanding to promote e-governance would be signed between the African Union Commission and Estonia on the margins of the 5th African Union-European Union Summit.

During her visit, President Kaljulaid also visited the immigration center in Addis Ababa which takes care of children who have been caught up in illegal human traffic networks. On her social media page, she wrote: “In Europe migration has been very topical in recent years, but it is only in this part of the world. There is a much greater movement from the south of us. In order to understand whether and how to control the flow of migration to Europe, we must focus much more on its initial causes.”

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn’s official visit to Qatar this week

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn made a three-day official visit to Qatar this week, November 13-15. The Prime Minister and his delegation, which included Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, Defense Minister Mr. Siraj Fegessa, Minister of Culture and Tourism, Dr. Hirut Woldemariam, and Commissioner of the Ethiopian Investment commission, Fitsum Arega, was welcomed on arrival at Doha’s Hamad International Airport by the Qatar Minister of Economy and Commerce, Sheikh Ahmed bin Jassim bin Mohamed al-Thani, Qatar’s Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ethiopia’s Ambassador to Qatar and members of Ethiopian Diaspora community in Qatar. This high-level visit was primarily aimed to strengthen bilateral ties between Ethiopia and Qatar in the fields of education, health, tourism, trade and investment, and a number of agreements were discussed and signed during the visit.

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh said the visit was aimed at strengthening the ties with Qatar on the basis of win-win principles, the signing of new agreements and discussing implementation of some eleven agreements and memoranda of understandings signed between the countries during

the Emir's visit to Ethiopia earlier this year. The Minister said that as Ethiopia encourages countries to resolve disputes through peaceful negotiations and dialogue, it supported the efforts of Kuwait to resolve the dispute between countries in the Gulf.

During the first day of his visit, the Prime Minister met with Ethiopian Nationals in Qatar and held discussions on matters of national development. Commending Ethiopians in Qatar for the prominent support they have given to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, The Prime Minister urged them to repeat such patriotic acts for other development projects back home. He pledged to give all necessary support for Ethiopian communities living in Qatar. He briefed them on the situation in the country ranging National development, illegal human trafficking, trade investment and social affairs. The Ethiopian community in Qatar commended the economic growth registered in Ethiopia. They asked the government to provide support for the opening of a community school in Qatar, and following a request by Prime Minister Hailemariam, the Emir granted permission for the community in Doha to open a community school for Ethiopians residing in Qatar.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn held talks with His Highness, Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani of Qatar at the Amiri Diwan palace on Tuesday. Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani expressed Qatar's keenness to cooperate with Ethiopia on socio-economic matters, adding that Qatar wished to mutually benefit from the growth of Ethiopia by engaging in investment and trade. The Emir lauded Ethiopia's consistent efforts to encourage peace and stability in the Horn of Africa. He noted that Qatar valued the policies based on principle that Ethiopia followed in multilateral affairs. Prime Minister Hailemariam called on the Emir to support Ethiopia's development efforts. These, he said, would benefit both countries and help boost trade ties.

The two leaders stressed their respective country's keenness to boost ties in all areas and witnessed the signing of agreements by Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu and Qatar's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman to provide for a waiver of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic and official passports, and by Finance and Economic Cooperation Minister, Dr. Abraham Tekeste, and Qatar Economy and Trade Minister, Ahmed Bin Jassim for mutual investment protection.

During his visit, The Prime Minister visited the Qatar Foundation and held talks with Sheikha Moza, Chairperson of the Foundation. The Foundation has expressed its wish to engage in the health sector of Ethiopia. He also attended a Business Forum at which Qatari businessmen were briefed on the existing conducive investment opportunities in Ethiopia. Ethiopian Investment Commission Commissioner, Fitsum Arega, gave a brief account of the immense business opportunities Ethiopia could offer to Qatari investors. The event was organized by the Ethiopian Embassy in Doha, the Qatar Chamber of Commerce and the Qatar Business Council.

In an interview on returning to Ethiopia on Thursday (November 16), the Prime Minister stressed that Ethiopia and Qatar had agreed to cooperate on advance technology in the agriculture logistics supply sector. The Prime Minister dismissed rumors of Qatar funding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, noting that GERD was a project funded by Ethiopians alone.

UN Security Council extends arms embargoes on Somalia and Eritrea for another year

The UN Security Council, adopting resolution 2385 (2017) on Tuesday (November 14), extended the modified arms embargo on Somalia and the authorization for maritime interdiction of illicit arms imports and charcoal exports, as well as the arms ban on Eritrea, until November 15, 2018. By a vote of 11 in favor, none against, and four abstentions, the Council also extended the mandate of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group until December 15, 2018.

On Somalia, the resolution extended the humanitarian exemptions to the sanctions and reiterated that the arms embargo on Somalia did not apply to deliveries of military goods for the Somali federal security forces. At the same time, it restated the need to keep such weapons out of the hands of other parties through application of strict guidelines by the Government and its partners. It urged increased cooperation by AMISOM to register all military equipment captured. Expressing concern that the Al-Shabaab terrorist group continued to derive revenues from charcoal as well as from natural resources in Somalia, the Council renewed the ban on the import and export of charcoal into or out of the country, and requested that AMISOM and Member States help the Federal authorities implement a total ban. The Council also requested the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group (SEMG) to continue its investigations related to the export to Somalia of chemicals that may be used as oxidizers in the manufacture of improvised explosive devices, such as the precursors ammonium nitrate, potassium chlorate, potassium nitrate and sodium chlorate.

The resolution welcomed the further improved relationship between the Federal Government of Somalia and Federal Member States, and the efforts of the Federal Government to restore key economic and financial institutions, increase domestic revenue and implement financial governance and structural reforms. It underlined the importance of financial propriety in contributing to stability and prosperity and the need for zero tolerance to corruption to promote transparency and increase mutual accountability. It expressed concern about continued reports of corruption involving members of the Federal Government Administration and the Federal Parliament, underlining that individuals engaged in acts that threatened Somalia's peace and reconciliation process might be listed for targeted sanctions. The Council expressed serious concern at reports of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and at the ongoing difficulties in delivering humanitarian aid in Somalia. It underlined the importance of timely and predictable payment of salaries to the Somali security forces, and the need to build the capacities of the Somali National Security Forces, in particular the provision of equipment, training and mentoring, in order to develop credible, professional and representative security forces to enable the gradual handing over of security responsibilities from AMISOM to the Somali security forces.

On Eritrea, the Council expressed concern regarding reports by the Monitoring Group of Eritrean support for armed groups in the region. It yet again urged the Government to facilitate the visit of the Monitoring Group and the UN Eritrea-Somalia Sanction Committee to the country. It called on Eritrea to cooperate fully with the SEMG, in accordance with the SEMG's mandate. It called on Eritrea and Djibouti to continue to engage in resolving the issue of Djiboutian combatants

missing in action from the clashes in 2008, and urged Eritrea to share any further available detailed information about prisoners. It recalled the African Union's deployment of a fact finding mission to the Djibouti border following the withdrawal of Qatari forces, and noted that the mission had been able to visit Djibouti but had yet to visit Eritrea. It also welcomed the call by the AU Assembly in July to encourage the Chairperson of the Commission to pursue efforts towards normalization of relations between Djibouti and Eritrea. It reiterated that the dispute between Djibouti and Eritrea continued to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region. The Council underlined the importance it attached to all Member States complying with the terms of the arms embargo imposed on Eritrea by resolution 1907 (2009), and expressed its intention to keep measures on Eritrea under regular review, in light of the upcoming midterm update by the SEMG due by 30 April 2018.

Somalia's representative broadly welcomed the resolution, particularly the steps being taken to fully implement the charcoal trading ban. Al-Shabaab, he noted, remained Somalia's most pressing threat, and security issues were a top priority for the Government. In that respect, greater international assistance was needed for the Somali National Army and a more robust AMISOM force. He regretted the resolution had not further aligned the embargo with his country's national security architecture. He pledged the Government's enhanced efforts to increase compliance with the sanctions regime.

Djibouti's representative at the UN, noting the lack of progress in resolving the issue of prisoners and other matters, said the UN Security Council had sent a clear political signal that Eritrea had only itself to blame for the renewal of sanctions. The resolution offered Eritrea ways to act and behave in order to improve relations.

Ambassador Tekeda Alemu, Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the UN welcomed the adoption of the resolution renewing the mandate of SEMG for another year. He emphasized the sanctions regime has critical importance for regional peace and stability. Ethiopia attached a lot of significance to its full and effective implementation. In this context, he noted, the SEMG had provided extensive information and analysis in its latest annual report. He expressed appreciation to the Group for its dedicated efforts in monitoring the implementation of this sanctions regime and thanked those who voted for the resolution, not because Ethiopia was so fond of sanctions, but because "there is for now no other alternative for putting a stop to the acts of destabilization, something impossible to overlook in the report of the Monitoring Group."

Ambassador Tekeda noted the growing influence of ISIL/Daesh as a cause for serious concern in Somalia and said it offered more reason to continue to intensify efforts in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. This needed necessary support to the Somalia National Security Forces and AMISOM. He said the security gains made in recent years could not be taken for granted and they could easily be reversed without sustained international support and engagement.

With regard to Eritrea, Ambassador Tekeda said: "We have seen no change of behavior whatsoever in the country's destabilizing activities in the region." Eritrea continued to violate the arms embargo and support armed opposition groups operating in the region, and the SEMG had documented very well, with corroborated evidence, just how Eritrea continued to violate the

sanctions regime in complete disregard of the relevant Security Council resolutions. He said this could not and should not be taken lightly. The SEMG had said it could not find conclusive evidence of Eritrea's support to Al-Shabaab: "We should, therefore, allow the SEMG to finalize its investigations." He also pointed out that Eritrea had continued to obstruct the implementation of resolution 1862. It should be called upon to clarify the situation of the remaining Djiboutian prisoners of war as called for by this resolution adopted. Eritrea, he emphasized, continued to refuse any constructive response to either the SEMG request to visit the disputed area between Djibouti and Eritrea or to the AU fact-finding mission following the withdrawal of Qatari forces. The visit to Djibouti had already been conducted; the Eritrean leg was still awaiting Eritrea's positive response. This was, he said, a clear indication that Eritrea did not have any desire to fulfill its obligations.

Ambassador Tekeda said countries under sanction normally try to cooperate as much as possible. Eritrea had shown no willingness or readiness to extend the necessary cooperation to either the Sanctions Committee or the Monitoring Group. This, however, was not a favor; it was an obligation. Eritrea must comply with the decisions of the Security Council. The continued insistence on refusing the Sanctions Committee and the Monitoring Group to visit Asmara suggests Eritrea has something to hide. A country which desperately wants sanctions lifted should logically show maximum cooperation. This is not the case with Eritrea. Once again, this Council has urged Eritrea to facilitate visits by the Chair of the Sanctions Committee and the SEMG.

Ambassador Tekeda stressed that treating Eritrea to a different standard because of geo-political and other considerations will only embolden it, and send a very wrong signal to others. That, he said, was why Ethiopia supported the extension of the sanctions regime for another year. It was, he added, a step in the right direction.

.... The UN Monitoring Group report on Somalia...

The Somali and Eritrea Monitoring Group report on Somalia was presented to the UN Security Council at the beginning of the month. The report noted the successful election of a new President, Abdullahi Mohamed Abdullahi, in February, and the appointment of a new Prime Minister and cabinet in March. It said relations between the Federal Government and the regional administrations had been strained by the Government's apparent backtracking on commitments to devolve power under the new national security architecture and by a continuing lack of consensus over resources. The SEMG said these strains were exacerbated by growing tensions among members of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Overall, the report covered acts that threatened the peace, security and stability of Somalia, including the activities of Al-Shabaab, and ISIL, intercommunal violence, public financial management, resource governance, the resurgence of piracy and electoral misconduct. It considered the arms embargo and the illicit flow of weapons into Somalia as well as the compliance of the Federal Government and security sector institutions with their obligations. It also looked at the establishment of a UAE military base in Berbera, at the registration of captured weaponry and at security sector reform. Other areas covered in the report included the obstruction of humanitarian assistance, violations of international humanitarian law involving

targeting of civilians and violations of the charcoal ban as well as State and non-State cooperation with the SEMG. There are 33 annexes as well as a number of recommendations.

The report noted that Harakaat al-Shabaab al-Mujaahidiin (Al-Shabaab) continued to pose the most immediate threat to peace and security in Somalia. It said the very large improvised explosive device detonated in January revealed traces of potassium nitrate, suggesting that Al-Shabaab might have begun to manufacture home-made explosives. It commented on the expansion of Al-Shabaab's presence in Puntland, and the growth of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) faction which briefly took control of Qandala. The Monitoring Group remained concerned by the continuing flow of illicit weapons into Somalia, particularly through the north coast of Puntland. The Federal Government has called repeatedly for the complete lifting of the arms embargo. However, it was unable to fully comply with obligations under the partial lifting of the embargo. Given the vulnerability of the system to diversion, and the threat this poses to peace and security, the Monitoring Group recommended no further easing of the arms embargo.

The report said that despite some limited improvements in public financial management, federal institutions remain incapable of addressing pervasive corruption. Mechanisms established to review Government contracts have continued to be circumvented, and the lack of transparency regarding company ownership left Government contracts open to concerns of nepotism. It said misappropriation and misuse of public land in Mogadishu was ongoing; and the printing of counterfeit Somali currency in Puntland continued to undermine economic stability.

Intercommunal conflict, often exacerbated by the involvement of national and regional forces and Al-Shabaab, caused significant harm to civilians. In June, Al-Shabaab began an aggressive campaign of child recruitment, forcing hundreds of children into the group's madrasa system. Drought, Al-Shabaab's continued ban on humanitarian operations and its violent blockade of Government-held areas resulted in the displacement of more than 800,000 civilians. Humanitarian workers also faced increased danger of abduction and the destruction and looting of supplies by Al-Shabaab but efforts by both international humanitarian partners and Somali community organizations prevented Somalia from slipping into another famine.

The SEMG also drew attention to the illicit exports of charcoal from southern Somalia. It said Al-Shabaab had resumed systematic taxation of charcoal at checkpoints and a conservative estimate suggested it received at least \$10 million a year from this. The Monitoring Group said the United Arab Emirates was a primary export destination as well as a hub for criminal networks that violated the charcoal ban. Implementation of the charcoal ban had been poor, particularly by the Interim Juba Administration and AMISOM in Somalia and the United Arab Emirates among importing countries.

...and on Eritrea

A central problem for the Somali and Eritrea Monitoring Group's report on Eritrea has been the continued refusal of the Eritrean authorities to allow SEMG entry into the country over the last few years. This has continued and this report emphasizes that this has prevented full investigation of alleged violations of the sanctions regime. The report, for example, underlined

that despite adoption of Security Council resolution 2023 (2011) there was still a serious lack of transparency around financial transactions, particularly in the mining sector. It said Eritrea was obtaining revenue from its mining sector, but said it was unable to prove that such funds were being used to finance specific violations of sanctions. This made it impossible, the SEMG said, for it to carry out its mandate fully. Despite repeated calls by the Security Council and efforts by the Chair of the UN Sanctions Committee to encourage the Government of Eritrea to engage constructively with both the Monitoring Group and the Committee, Eritrea continued in its refusal.

Referring to one of the several reasons for the imposition of sanctions, the SEMG said that it, once again, found no conclusive evidence for Eritrean support for Al-Shabaab. It did not as Eritrean sources claim, suggest the Security Council should consider lifting the arms embargo on Eritrea. It did, however, recommend, as it has done before, that the Security Council might consider disassociating the sanction regimes for Eritrea and Somalia and setting up an entirely separate sanctions regime for Eritrea.

However, while the SEMG found no “independent corroborating evidence” for the allegations of arming Al-Shabaab from Somali regional administrations and two neighboring countries, it did find concrete evidence that Eritrea continued to act in defiance of the sanctions regime in several other areas. It determined that Eritrea had continued to provide support for rebel militias and armed groups based in Eritrea and continue activities which heightened security in both Ethiopia and Djibouti. It said “Eritrea continued to provide support to armed groups intent on destabilizing Ethiopia and Djibouti, including the Benishangul People’s Liberation Movement, the Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD-Armé), Patriotic Ginbot Sebat (Ginbot 7) and the Tigray People’s Democratic Movement.” It said the active support of Eritrea for these groups was in violation of paragraph 16 of Security Council resolution 1907 (2009), and continued to generate insecurity in the region and undermined the normalization of relations between regional Member States.

Concerning the Eritrean-Djibouti border, the SEMG noted “Evidence available to the Monitoring Group indicates ongoing activities on the Eritrean side of the border at Ras Doumeira.” It said: “The lack of clarity that has persisted on the mediation role of Qatar within the framework of the agreement of 6 June 2010 created new uncertainties for the implementation of resolution 1862, ” and over the issue of the Djiboutian combatants missing in action since the clashes of June 2008.

The SEMG report also looked at the arms embargo, the flow of military equipment to or through Eritrea and from Eritrea as well as support to the Eritrean armed forces, the overhaul of equipment potentially used by the Eritrean military and the expansion of the UAE military base at Assab. While it found no evidence of any large shipments of weapons or ammunition to or from Eritrea in violation of the arms embargo, it did find evidence of external support, in the form of both training and technical equipment for the Eritrean military. It noted that the “establishment and continuing expansion of a military base of the United Arab Emirates near the port city of Assab, which involves the transfer of military materiel to and exchange of military assistance with Eritrea, constitutes a violation of the arms embargo.”

The UN Security Council extends the mandate of UNISFA in Abyei

The UN Security Council has extended UNISFA's mandate in Abyei, a contested territory on the Sudan and South Sudan border until 15 May 2018. Unanimously adopting resolution 2386 (2017) on Wednesday (November 15), the Security Council also extended, for the same duration, tasks of UNISFA set out in the resolution that authorized the deployment of the same force 2011.

It also extended until 15 April 2018 UNISFA's support for the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, which was established by the two countries as part of the negotiations on South Sudan's independence from Sudan in July 2011. The Security Council, however, said this renewal of UNISFA's support for the Mechanism would be "the final such extension" unless the parties, no later than 15 March next year, facilitated full freedom of movement for UNISFA, opened the first phase of the border-crossing corridor, met to discuss border demarcation and the so-called "14-Mile" disputed area, cooperated in opening the Mechanism's team sites and convened meetings of the required Joint Political and Security Mechanism to resolve such issues. The Council decided to maintain the authorized troop ceiling of 4,791 for UNISFA until 15 April 2018, but said the ceiling would decrease to 4,235 unless the Council decided to extend UNISFA's support for the Mechanism. The Council requested that the Secretary-general submit a written assessment of actions taken to fulfill those requirements by 1 April 2018.

UNISFA's establishment came after the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in the south reached an agreement in Addis Ababa to demilitarize Abyei and let Ethiopian troops monitor the area. The 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement provides for the contested territory to remain part of the north, that is in the Sudan, until the organization of a referendum determines its fate. Difference over who should participate in the referendum had prevented the holding of the referendum. One community, the Dinka Ngok organized a unilateral referendum in October 2013 to underline its wish to join the Republic of South Sudan. However, Khartoum, Juba, the African Union and the international community refused to recognize the result.

South Sudan's ambassador to the UN, Ambassador Akuei Bona Malwal, welcomed the extension of UNISFA's mandate, hailing its accomplishments as well as Ethiopia's contributions to UNISFA. He said: "This extension comes at a time when the Republic of South Sudan and the Republic of Sudan, through their leaderships, renewed their resolves in solving any outstanding differences within the agreed channels established." He hoped through the mandate extension, the people of Abyei would realize lasting peace as a permanent settlement sought under the auspices of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel.

Ambassador Omer Dahab Fadl Mohamed (Sudan) paid tribute to UNISFA for having maintained peace in Abyei. He underlined that Sudan had never opposed implementation of obligations relating to the Joint Monitoring and Verification Mechanism. There was, therefore, no reason to cease the mission's operations. Recounting the recent summit meeting where the leaders of the two countries had discussed the issue, he called upon South Sudan to accelerate its support for

the establishment of all Abyei institutions, as agreed. He reiterated Sudan's commitment to cooperate with UNISFA in fulfilling all its tasks, under the overall objective of maintaining the current peace until a final status agreement was reached.

Ethiopia's representative, Ambassador Tekeda, also welcomed the resolution. He said he would have liked to see the mandate renewed as a whole since support to the Mechanism was integral to UNISFA. Its presence had kept the peace in the Abyei area, although it fell far short of the terms to which the parties had agreed. Hopefully, momentum from recent bilateral summit meetings would foster more progress, allowing UNISFA to build further on its accomplishments.

The 17th Ministerial Tripartite National Committee meeting on GERD

The Water Ministers of Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt held their 17th Ministerial Tripartite National Committee on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam last weekend (November 11-12) in Cairo, Egypt. The meeting was a continuation of the talks held on October 18 in Addis Ababa and aimed at discussing and reaching agreement on agenda unfinished in October. Ethiopia, aiming to boost the level of transparency and lift confidence among the three countries, facilitated a visit to the dam in October. This was critical in providing the ministers with more detail of the issues and created a platform for the further consideration of pending issues and approval of the draft points of discussion on the Draft Inception Report.

The Tripartite National Committee (TNC) has been following up the conduct of the agreed two studies recommended by the International Panel of Experts in 2013,. These studies are to cover hydropower/water resources simulation modeling and a trans-boundary socio-economic and environmental impact assessment. The Committee has held several meetings to discuss and agree the mechanisms for conducting the studies, of which the meeting last weekend was the latest.

At the Cairo meeting last weekend, all three countries presented their proposals on resolving pending issues. Ethiopia presented a proposal for the Consultant to adjust the Draft Inception Report in line with the Contract Document signed between the TNC of the three countries and the Consultant in Khartoum in September last year. Ethiopia's request was based on a well-founded argument that the Draft Inception Report, submitted by the Consultant had a number of flaws and was contrary to the Contract Document in many aspects. The Sudan agreed. In fact, the argument of Sudan and Ethiopia demonstrated their aim of speeding up the conduct of the two studies on GERD. Their position also underlined the need for the Consultant to respect the Contract Document and resubmit the Inception Report in order to allow for the smooth conduct of the two studies recommended by the IPoE.

Following these delays, some irresponsible media outlets have been claiming the Declaration of Principles signed by the leaders of the Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan in March 2015 is not being respected. In fact, far from this being the case, Ethiopia has repeatedly calling on all stakeholders to respect the Declaration of Principles and act accordingly. This sort of inaccurate reporting is nothing more than an attempt to escalate technical discussions to a political level and claim there is some crisis about GERD. This is not the case. Ethiopia is committed to the Declaration of Principle and is continuing to work steadily towards achieving cooperation and win-win gains

for all the basin countries. It was, of course, Ethiopia which initiated the establishment of the tripartite committee to review the study and design documents of GERD in order to enhance confidence and build trust among the Nile Basin countries.

Ethiopia firmly believes that conducting the two IPoE recommended studies, through the process of the Consultancy Services Agreement (the Contract Document between the TNC and the Consultant) and the Declaration of Principles on the GERD project, should be respected and strictly followed. On completion, GERD will be Africa's largest dam and will have 6,000 MW installed power generating capacity. It is a major developmental project and will provide substantial benefits for all the Nile Basin countries.

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh briefs Troika Envoys on South Sudan

Foreign Minister, Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu met with the Special Envoys of Norway, United Kingdom and the United States, the Troika, on South Sudan on Friday last week (November 10). He briefed the Troika on the ongoing development of the revitalized peace process and the role Ethiopia had been playing in facilitating the peace mediation as a neighboring country in particular and as chair of IGAD more generally. The Troika Special Envoys noted that the revitalization process was encouraging and making progress.

Dr. Workneh expressed his government and IGAD's appreciation for the support the Troika, and other international partners, have been rendering towards the revitalization of the South Sudan peace process. He emphasized that the situation in South Sudan remained a serious threat to regional peace and security, not least for Ethiopia which is shouldering a heavy burden as a result of the renewed outbreak of conflict, including a continued and massive flow of refugees as well as proliferation of illicit small arms and weapons within its own borders.

Dr. Workneh pointed out that the IGAD council of Ministers had identified the necessary key players in South Sudan's peace process. IGAD's framework for bringing back peace in South Sudan was making progress, he said, adding that the Troika had been very supportive since the start of the revitalization process. Equally, he stressed the need for continued and increased support for the revitalization process. Dr. Workneh urged the Troika countries to make every effort to support IGAD's and AU's efforts to end the suffering of the people of South Sudan.

Looking beyond the regional issue of South Sudan, Dr. Workneh also welcomed Ethiopia's longstanding bilateral diplomatic relations with all the Troika countries. He said Ethiopia had been working with Troika member countries to further expand people-to-people relations, and promote and cement bilateral relations over a wide array of issues, including economic growth, democracy, human right activities and regional peace and security operations.

Earlier last week, Sudan Presidential Assistant, Ibrahim Mahmoud Hamid, met with the visiting British and Norwegian Special Envoys last week in Khartoum to discuss South Sudan and Sudan's role in the ongoing regional and international efforts to end the crisis in South Sudan. British Special Envoy, Christopher Trott, said the UK welcomed Sudan's role, its humanitarian

efforts and the hosting of refugees. He reiterated Britain's keenness to work with Sudan and regional governments to reach a peaceful settlement and to bring stability in South Sudan. Norway's Special Envoy, Erling Skojonsberg said they discussed ways to implement the IGAD-brokered peace agreement, to achieve peace and find a solution to the conflict. The Special Envoys underlined their support for the High-Level Revitalization Forum for the South Sudan peace process and stressed they wanted the IGAD countries to convene an inclusive meeting as soon as possible.

The one-stop border bilateral agreement between Ethiopia and Djibouti

The Addis Ababa-Djibouti standard gauge railway will be coming into full operation shortly. The fully electrified 760 kilometer line, the first of its kind in Africa was completed last year and has been completing its testing as well as finalizing some technical safety and security issues for both passengers and goods. At the end of last month, a high-level ministerial delegation, led by the ministers of transport and including representatives of immigration and customs departments, ambassadors of the two countries, the CEOs of the railway company and other relevant organizations, made an historic trip from Addis Ababa to Djibouti on October 29 to start final trial operations.

The next day, in Djibouti, Ahmed Shide, the Minister of Transport of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Mohamed Abdoukadir Moussa, the Minister of Equipment and Transport of the Republic of Djibouti, signed the one stop common border post agreement. At the signing ceremony, Ato Ahmed indicated that the agreement paved the way for the "seamless operation" of the Addis Ababa-Djibouti rail transport system. The Minister noted that the project had been the brainchild of the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and of President Ismail Omar Guelleh. Now under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn and President Guelleh, the construction and operation of the railway would play a vital role in integrating the economies of the two countries.

Mr. Moussa noted that Djibouti and Ethiopia shared a common history, religion and culture, and their future was intertwined. They were mutually interdependent. This was why, to benefit their peoples and develop their economies in a steadfast manner, they had been engaged in the expansion of infrastructural developments to connect the two countries. The signing of this bilateral agreement, said Mr. Moussa, heralded a new era in the history of "our two sisterly countries" and would, he believed, bring development and prosperity to both peoples.

The one stop common border post agreement will help both countries to have one border post and enable them to handle immigration and customs activities under one roof. This is crucial to the smooth movement of peoples and goods, and a state-of-the-art border post, with all necessary amenities, has been constructed at Gelille in Ethiopia.

The agreement allows for the police, immigration and customs officials of Djibouti can access the one stop border post with full diplomatic immunity to enable them to carry out their duties and responsibilities smoothly. Under the agreement, passengers are not required to disembark at the common border post. Immigration officials will randomly check the travel documents of

passengers inside the train. This procedure will help keep stoppage at the border post to a minimum and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the line. The agreement stipulates that the immigration activities for cross-border or international travelers will be handled at departure and destination stations, as airline transport services are.

The signing of the one stop common border post agreement is a major step forward for the realization of full operation of the railway. What remains to be finalized are commercial and other technical procedures and these should be completed in the coming months.

AMISOM to withdraw 1,000 troops and add 500 police

AMISOM announced on Tuesday that 1,000 soldiers would be withdrawn from Somalia by December 31, in line with the African Union and UN Security Council resolutions, and 500 more police drawn from the police contributing countries, Burundi, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zimbabwe, would be added to strengthen the Somali police force across the country.

The Special Representative of the African Union Chairperson for Somalia, Ambassador Francisco Madeira, the head of AMISOM, stressed to journalists that the withdrawal of AMISOM troops from Somalia would be “gradual” and “conditions-based.” He said: “AMISOM has begun its drawdown from Somalia and will have its troop numbers reduced by 1,000 on Dec. 31. Our withdrawal and transition must be gradual, conditions-based, responsible, and done in a manner that does not compromise the safety and security of the Somali people.” The first withdrawal, which will be on a pro rata basis, will see each of the five countries reduce their troops by four per cent. Uganda, with the highest number of troops in AMISOM (6,223) will send home about 250 troops, followed by Burundi with 5,432 troops releasing 217 soldiers. Ethiopia with 4,395 troops will pull back 176, Kenya’s 3,664 will be cut by 146 and Djibouti’s 1,000 troops will lose 40.

Because of this, Ambassador Madeira said troop movements had started in different parts of the country and would continue so that security responsibilities start to shift to the local military. He said: “This is a process of re-alignment to effect the reduction in numbers and begin the handover of security responsibilities to Somali forces. I want to assure all that this exercises being conducted with caution to ensure the security of the Somali people is not compromised.” Ambassador Madeira also noted the urgent need for Somali forces to be equipped with necessary weapons and key logistical support including timely payment of stipend, adding, “Other urgent support includes provision of quality medical care and establishment of key infrastructure – barracks and training centers

Ambassador Madeira said as part of the military withdrawal, AMISOM would deploy an extra 500 police officers to strengthen training and mentoring for Somali Police He said: “The deployment of additional police officers will help extend law and order in Somalia, hence further securing the country.” AMISOM will reduce its troops by 1,000 by December, followed by further cuts next year, an exercise expected to end by 2020 as part of its exit strategy. AMISOM

exit is, however, also tied to the ability of the Somali National Security Forces to take over effective security for the country. The reduction in peacekeepers would run concurrently with the Somali National Army assuming security responsibilities.

An IGAD High Level Policy Dialogue on Conflict and Development

A two-day High Level Policy Dialogue on Conflict and Development in the Horn of Africa opened Monday (November 13). IGAD's Peace and Security Director, Ambassador Tewelde Gebremeskel, in his opening remarks said the Dialogue, co-hosted by the ECA and IGAD, was important because domestic, regional and international geopolitical developments presented serious challenges to peace and stability in the IGAD region. He added: "Political and religious upheavals in the Middle East over the last decade have changed the political and diplomatic landscape in the IGAD region and will probably continue to do so. With the Saudi-Yemen conflict, the Horn of Africa has become a battlefield for dominance, in addition to the fighting in Yemen, Syria and Libya."

Ambassador Tewelde said IGAD was a region where international and regional geopolitical and geo-economic interests dictated intervention. The interests include, but were not limited to, maritime security, countering terrorism and violent extremism, and anti-piracy efforts. Disputes over trans-boundary resources such as the Nile River and other border disputes also played into the peace and security dynamics of the region. In addition, the migration crisis had also resulted in the European Union's "knee-jerk diplomatic rapprochement in the region". The result was that: "Our region is at cross-roads, facing the dichotomy of crises and transformation, transitions", he added, "are often characterized by unpredictability and volatility." He said: "Only correct interventions that support the transformation processes can ensure that the crises are abated and gradually reduced and ultimately eliminated from the region. Specifically, in peace and security, transformation requires the building of predictive, responsive and adaptive capabilities in IGAD member States." Ambassador Tewelde underlined that while governance was one of the causes and accelerators of challenges to peace and security in the region, it was also a game changer in determining peace and security.

ECA's Capacity Development Division Director, Stephen Karingi, said persistent conflicts in some parts of the continent had far reaching implications for Africa's aspirations to achieving socio-economic transformation and sustainable development. Africa's leaders, he said, were acutely aware of the constraints that conflicts and associated instability continued to impose on development efforts, including the negative impact on efforts to actualize the long-term development and transformation agenda embodied in Agenda 2063. He said: "Consider for example, the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa, which have witnessed violent and intractable conflicts, and have yet to emerge as fully stable and peaceful despite long years of regional and global mediation, peacekeeping and peace building efforts," He noted new conflicts had emerged along the Sahel Belt part of the Horn of Africa, led by relatively new actors, vying to combine conventional and non-conventional warfare, targeting innocent civilians. He said: "These new conflicts are clearly beyond the scope of the African Union and its Regional Economic Communities progressive peace and security architecture."

It was against this background, Mr. Karingi said, and within the framework of the longstanding strategic partnership between the AU and the ECA, that the ECA had undertaken in-depth research and analyses of the root causes of conflicts in certain regions. The research focused particularly, on the Great Lakes, the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, with the additional aim of assessing the cost and consequences of conflict on development. He emphasized that the main goal of the Dialogue was to allow key stakeholders to fully appreciate the findings of two reports: “Human and Economic cost of Conflict in the Horn” and “New Fringe Pastoralism in the Horn and the Sahel Region”. These are studies that show the economic and social costs of conflicts and effects of conflict on development at large. The meeting therefore deliberated on the root causes of conflict, the economic and social consequences and the way conflicts affect development and growth in the IGAD region. Mr. Karingi said the dialogue would allow Member States to identify with the proposed policy options suggested, identify gaps in current practice and concentrate on the core elements of such policies related to efforts to prevent and manage conflict as well as post-conflict reconstruction.

IGAD’s Land Governance Project takes another step forward

Following last week’s IGAD Workshop on Land Dialogue in Addis Ababa (November 8-9), IGAD convened the 4th Steering Committee Meeting of its Land Governance Project on Friday (November 10), chaired by IGAD’s Director of Agriculture and Environment, Mohamed Moussa. Attending were representatives from UNECA and the Swiss Development Cooperation Agency as well as Aboud Gabir Saeed, Minister of Environment, Natural Resources and Physical Development of Sudan.

Mr. Mohamed Moussa underlined that land governance was being integrated more into IGAD programs: “Within the resources that were available to IGAD, I am happy to report we achieved most of the activities that we committed to under the work plan”. He noted phase II of the IGAD Land Governance Project was “geared towards support to Member States in implementing the AU Declaration of Land and the Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa.”

Dr. Joan Kagwanja, from UNECA recognized that even if the IGAD Land Governance Project had started late, it was catching up fast in terms of implementation. IGAD, she said, was paradoxically very advanced compared to other Regional Economic Communities in Africa. She pointed out: “It is extremely useful to be directly interacting with Member States’ practitioners and decision-makers in land governance so as to fast-track implementation which is at a very commendable stage”.

Peter Sidler of the Swizz Agency expressed his satisfaction with the formation of the land governance platform. This should be seen as a tangible result that makes IGAD a pioneer in the implementation of the African Union Land Policy Initiative. He shared his positive feelings about the potential financial support by Switzerland for the second phase of the Project.

The members of the Steering Committee were then briefed on the achievements and challenges of the Project. Projections for 2018 were discussed before the meeting closed. As we noted last week, the overall objective of the Regional Multi-Stakeholders Dialogue Platform is to create an

enabling dialogue environment for member states, regional institutions, development partners, CSO, private sector and other stakeholders to learn from each other and identify possible areas of collaboration and convergence for land policy reform agendas at country and regional levels. The Land Policy Initiative was established in 2006 as a joint initiative of the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank. The Land Policy Initiative and IGAD, with financial support from the Swiss Development Cooperation, are implementing a project to mainstream land governance in the IGAD Programs in line with the AU Declaration of Land and the Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa.