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News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

The African Economic Conference 2017 was held over three days this week (December 4–6). Co-organized by the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) under the theme “Governance for structural transformation”, this year’s conference focused on the achievement of structural transformation in Africa with an emphasis on developmental governance. Ethiopia’s Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn opened the conference and gave a keynote speech. (**See article**)

US Acting Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Ambassador Donald Yamamoto attended the Somalia Security Pact Review in Mogadishu this week, before travelling to Kenya and to Ethiopia on Thursday (December 7.) In Kenya he met with President Kenyatta and other officials as well as representatives of civil society to encourage all sides in Kenya to participate in a national dialogue following the presidential election. In Ethiopia, he met with Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn and Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu on bilateral issues. He also discussed regional concerns, including food security, peacekeeping and refugees with both Ethiopian officials and with officials at the African Union Commission. (**See article**)

The United Nations has appealed for a record \$ 22.5 billion in humanitarian aid for 2018, to raise funds to help 91 million of the world’s most vulnerable people, out of 136 million in need. A UN statement on Friday last week (December 1) said more than \$10 billion was needed to address the humanitarian crises in Syria and Yemen alone, but needs were rising substantially in a number of African countries. UN Coordinator Mark Lowcock said the number of people in need of humanitarian aid has increased by more than 5%. The statement said Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan were in need of more than a billion dollars of aid to assist the most vulnerable, though it noted that humanitarian needs had declined in Ethiopia as well as in Afghanistan, Iraq, Mali, and Ukraine.

The 5th High-Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa: “Assisting Incoming African Members on the United Nations Security Council in preparing to address peace and security

issues of concern to Africa” started at the beginning of the week in Livingston in Zambia. It brought together the incoming African Members of the UN Security Council (A3), Cote d’Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea; the sitting A3 Member, Ethiopia; the outgoing A3 Members, Egypt and Senegal; as well as Member States of the AU Peace and Security Council and Special Representatives and Envoys of the AU Commission Chairperson, representatives of the United Nations, AU Partners and the AU Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations. The aim was to prepare the incoming A3 Members to articulate, defend and promote common African positions as reflected in the decisions of the PSC and the AU Assembly effectively in the decision-making process of the UNSC on peace and security issues of interest and concern to Africa.

A 15-day training course on conflict prevention for 29 participants from Somalia, Uganda, Mali, Burundi, Rwanda, Liberia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Sudan, and Ethiopia opened at the Ethiopian Peace Support Training Center in Addis Ababa at the beginning of the week. The Center’s director, Brigadier General Habtamu Tilahun, said the training was aimed at developing knowledge of the nature, causes and characteristics of conflict and building basic skills in understanding conflict prevention strategies and other tools of conflict prevention. The training is organized by the Training Centre, in collaboration with the government of Japan and United Nations Development Program.

The Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF) concluded the field training exercise "Mashariki Salaam II," at Gebeit military base in eastern Sudan on Sunday (December 3). Units from Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda took part. Sudan Defense Minister Awad ibn Auf said the EASF was now ready to confront terrorist elements. The EASF Head of Mission, Ambassador Ismail Chanfi, said the exercise confirmed the EASF was moving to higher levels of professionalism, and had the capability to effectively deploy in a real peace operation mission. He said the exercise had actualized the capacity for the EASF to operate in a multidimensional and multinational environment.

Ethiopia

The 12th Nations, Nationalities and People’s Day was celebrated on Friday (December 8) at Semera in the Afar Regional State in the presence of Prime Minister Hailemariam. The occasion was also attended by President Omar Al-Bashir of Sudan, President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti and the Prime Minister of Somalia. In a message of congratulations, President Dr. Mulatu Teshome said all nations, nationalities and people of Ethiopia had the responsibility to safeguard the Constitution and ensure its effective implementation. The day also commemorates the day when Ethiopia’s Constitution was adopted. It provides the opportunity to capitalize on successes and is celebrated to strengthen democratic unity, as well as encouraging more development and continuation of efforts to resolve current challenges through sustained deep reform. It is a celebration based on respect, concern and mutual socio-economic development for all the peoples of Ethiopia. It is also a day that celebrates the youth of Ethiopia as they are the ones with the responsibility of carrying over this event to the next generation.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn held talks with Special Envoy of the King of Saudi Arabia, Major General Ahmad Hassan Mohammad Asiri on Saturday (December 2). They

discussed way to strengthen socio-economic and security cooperation between the two countries and ways to reinforce their peace and security cooperation in the region. The Special Envoy said Saudi Arabia wanted to elevate its historical and longstanding ties with Ethiopia to a new high. He added that the Saudi government wanted to engage in modern agricultural development in Ethiopia, and would work with the government of Ethiopia to attract more Saudi investors into the country.

Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen is leading the Ethiopian delegation to the Egyptian-hosted African Economic Forum 2017 at Sharm el Sheikh this weekend. He will join five Heads of State including Cote d'Ivoire's Alassane Ouattara, Rwanda's Paul Kagame and Guinea's Alpha Conde, as well as other leaders and senior officials at the business and investment conference whose theme is "Driving investment for inclusive growth". The aim is to expand intra-African investments and cross-border collaboration in the continent.

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu co-chaired the Second Ethiopia-Nigeria Joint Ministerial Commission with Nigeria's Foreign Minister, Geoffrey Onyeama this week, in Abuja. An experts and technical working group meeting preceded the Ministerial Commission Meeting on Tuesday (December 5). **(See article)**

Foreign Affairs Minister, Dr. Workneh, on Monday (December 4) called for strengthening the socio-economic partnership between Ethiopia and China. The Minister was meeting newly appointed Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ambassador Tan Jian who presented copies of his credentials to the Minister. Dr. Workneh said the ties between Ethiopia and China had shown a consistent upward trajectory in recent years and he would like to see socio-economic relations reach "a higher level." Ambassador Tan Jian commended the success of bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, infrastructure, manufacturing and other sectors.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented its quarterly report last week to the House of Peoples Representatives' Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs, briefing members of the committee on the activities undertaken by the Ministry in the first quarter of the Ethiopia year. **(See article)**

The Sultan Alimirah Anfre International Airport at Semera, the Afar Regional State capital, was inaugurated on Thursday (December 7) by Ahmed Shide Minister of Transport and the Chief Administrator of the Afar Regional State, Haji Seyoum Awel.

The Embassy of Italy in Ethiopia signed a 14 million Euros grant financing agreement with selected civil society organizations to encourage employment opportunities aiming to reduce illegal migration this week. The agreement is part of the 20 million Euros for the Stemming Illegal Migration in Northern and Central Ethiopia (SINCE) program. This aims to improve the living conditions of vulnerable populations including potential migrants and returnees. It is funded by the European Union Trust Fund for Africa and will be implemented in Amhara, Oromia, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples', and Tigray Regional States and Addis Ababa, with specific focus on youth and women.

The European Commission announced new emergency assistance of 15 million Euros to help food insecure people in Ethiopia due to severe drought. This brings the EU's total humanitarian funding for the country in 2017 to over 91 million Euros. EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos Stylianides said the new aid will enable humanitarian organizations to step up emergency food assistance and the treatment of malnutrition in the country.

Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on behalf of the Ethiopian Government and People, expressed its profound sadness over the attack on Ethiopian and German Tourists at the tourist attraction in Afdera, Afar Regional State, not far from the border with Eritrea, on Sunday this week (December 3). The Government offered its deepest condolences to the families of the German tourist who was killed and the Ethiopian tour-guide who was injured when the group was fired upon by unidentified gunmen.

The Central Statistical Agency announced on Thursday last week the fourth population and housing census, planned for December 2017, had been postponed until February because of technical problems. Ato Biratu Yigezu, the Director General of the CSA, said preparations were nearing completion. 180,000 tablet computers had been purchased to utilize mobile data collection during the census. 185,000 people will take part in the exercise. The third population and housing census, in 2007, found a total population 77.1 million. The constitution calls for a census to be carried out every ten years.

The National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) issued new directives on foreign currency related issues to promote foreign direct investment and export last week. Foreign Exchange Director, Yenehasab Tadesse said banks should allocate 40 % of their foreign currency to priority sectors. These can also obtain up to 60 % external loan and sub-price credit to allow investors to get machinery and equipment from abroad.

The Ethiopian Investment Commission said this week that the 5 industrial parks now operating in Ethiopia have created around 40,000 job opportunities. The number of job opportunities will increase as new sheds at the Kombolcha and Mekelle Industrial Parks are transferred to investors. The Commission stressed the government was stepping up its efforts to finalize other industrial parks to help solve the problem of unemployment.

US Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ambassador Michael Raynor, launching a photo exhibition honoring the life of US President John F. Kennedy at Dire Dawa University in advance of a youth conference held there on Thursday (December 7) underlined President Kennedy's role in creating the Peace Corps, still active in Ethiopia. Since 1962, nearly 4,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have worked in Ethiopia with young people. Ambassador Raynor called on Ethiopian youth to work together, to be clear and constructive about goals, their messages, and the outcomes they wanted to achieve. He underlined the value of peaceful and respectful dialogue as the best way to build understanding, resolve differences, and overcome challenges

Djibouti

More than 500 companies have been taking part in the first Djibouti International Trade Fair that opened on Sunday (December 3). The five-day fair attracted companies from Canada, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Japan, Somaliland, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and the U.S as well as Djibouti. Prime Minister Abdulkadir Walid said the international fair, which coincided with Djibouti's 40th independence anniversary and 110th anniversary of the Djiboutian Chamber of Commerce, provided an opportunity to benefit from international experience in different sectors. **(See article)**

Ethiopia's Ambassador to Djibouti said at the weekend that within the next three months the installation of a water pipeline from Ethiopia to Djibouti would be complete and the entire tap water supply of Djibouti would come from the Adigala wells in Ethiopia. These would supply 104,000 cubic meters of water to Djibouti every day. Ambassador Shamebo Fitamo Adebo said the water was being supplied for free. This, he said, was recognition of the fact that the peoples of the two countries "have blood ties".

Eritrea

The Israeli Government says it plans to begin deporting asylum seekers from Eritrea and Sudan to Rwanda and Uganda within the next few weeks. The deportations will apply only to migrants from Eritrea and Sudan, but not those from Darfur, who entered Israel illegally and who are not officially recognized by the government as asylum seekers, or who have had their application for asylum rejected. Those who are in the official process of seeking asylum may not be deported.

The Middle Eastern budget carrier Air Arabia has announced it is to open a weekly service to Asmara from its base at Sharjah, in the UAE. The service will start on December 12.

Kenya

President Kenyatta has announced that Kenya wants to host a global conference on the 'blue economy'. Opening the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly on Tuesday (December 6), President Kenyatta said the conference would serve as a build-up to the 2020 United Nations Oceans Conference which Kenya has expressed interest in hosting. The Environment Assembly which concluded on Wednesday, brought together over 4,000 government representatives, UN officials, business leaders, scientists and civil society representatives together to discuss a sustainable solution to pollution and the threat it poses to life on Earth.

The International Court of Justice ruled in February this year that it had jurisdiction to adjudicate the dispute between Somalia and Kenya concerning maritime delimitation in the Indian Ocean and that Somalia's application was admissible. Somalia filed its four-volume memorial of claim in July. Kenya has until December 18 to respond. Kenya's counter-memorial will include a statement of relevant facts, a statement of law and submissions, and Attorney-General Githu Muigai, says it will be filed on or before December 18. The court is being asked to determine, on the basis of international law, the complete course of the boundary dividing the maritime areas appertaining to Somalia and to Kenya in the Indian Ocean, including the continental shelf

Somalia

The first Somali Security Conference was held on Monday (December 4) in Mogadishu. Co-convened by the Federal Government, the UN and the AU, it was attended by President Mohamed Abdullahi, regional state presidents, the Head of AMISOM and Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission for Somalia, Ambassador Madeira, as well as the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia and Ambassador Yamamoto, the Assistant US Secretary of State for African Affairs. **(See article)**

President Mohamed Abdullahi chaired a meeting of the Somalia Partnership Forum in Mogadishu on Tuesday (December 5). Somali Federal and state-level leaders met with senior representatives of the international community, to discuss humanitarian and development issues. **(See article)**

President Mohamed Abdullahi chaired a meeting on the review process of the provisional federal constitution on Wednesday (December 6). The constitutional review commissions briefed the President, Speakers of the two houses of parliament, Member State leaders and other officials on the status of the process and the upcoming national constitutional review conference to be held in January. The meeting underlined the importance of fast-tracking and finalizing the review process so a referendum on the draft constitution can be held.

President Mohamed Abdullahi traveled to Egypt on Thursday (December 7). On his second visit to Egypt since August, President Mohamed is attending the Africa Economic Forum at Sharm el Sheikh. He was invited by President Abdel Fatah El-Sisi, and he is expected to hold talks with President El-Sisi on strengthening bilateral relations and on regional issues including relations between the Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Somalia.

Minister of Education, Culture and Higher Education, Abdirahman Dahir Osman, met with Dr. Mohamed Abdul Wahed Ali al-Hammadi, Qatar's Minister of Education and Higher Education in Doha at the weekend. They discussed co-operation between Qatar and Somalia in the education sector and the means to develop this. Minister Osman and his delegation will be making field trips to educational, cultural and social institutions.

The Somalia Humanitarian Country Team's Humanitarian Needs Overview released at the end of last week says t four consecutive poor rainy seasons has resulted in growing humanitarian needs across Somalia. It estimates that in 2018, 6.2 million people, half of the total population of Somalia, will need humanitarian assistance and protection. **(See article)**

The Military Operations Coordination Committee for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) held its 25th Meeting in Addis Ababa on Friday last week (December 1) to discuss operational activities and exchange views on capacity building support for the Somalia National Security Forces to enable them take over security responsibilities from AMISOM. **(See article)**

The National Independent Electoral Commission issued certificates of temporary registration to seven political parties at the beginning of the week. NIEC chairperson Halima Ibrahim said the registration of parties marked a milestone in transition from the clan based system into a political party option. “We have to create political parties that will compete in the elections that will take place in the country in order to move away from the system of 4.5 to one person one vote. Formation of political parties is one of the steps towards the 2020 elections set out during the 2016 agreements. The seven parties are: Justice Party (led by Zakariye Haaji); United Democratic Party (Fauzia Haji); Somali People’s Party (Salad Jeele); National Democratic Party (Abdirashid Ali); United Somali Republican Party (Ali Tima-jilic); Development Party (Suleiman); Somali Society Unity Party (Yasin Maalin).

Somalia has become the 14th signatory to the Jeddah Amendment to the Djibouti Code of Conduct, the instrument developed to repress piracy and armed robbery against ships operating in the Gulf of Aden and the Western Indian Ocean. The Amendment broadened the scope of the Djibouti Code when it was adopted at a high-level meeting in Jeddah, in January this year. It covers measures for suppressing piracy, arms trafficking, trafficking in narcotics, illegal trade in wildlife, illegal oil bunkering, crude oil theft, human trafficking, human smuggling and illegal dumping of toxic waste. Other signatories to the Jeddah Amendment are Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mozambique, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Somalia, United Arab Emirates, Tanzania and Yemen.

The leaders of Galmudug state and Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a (ASWJ) signed a power-sharing agreement in Mogadishu on Wednesday (December 6). They signed a 14 point agreement by which ASWJ recognizes the Galmudug administration as the legitimate regional administration, allows the administration into Dhusamareb, the designated capital, and paves the way for ASWJ’s leader, Sheikh Mohamed Shakir, to be installed as the new Chief Minister. The agreement, reached in IGAD-brokered talks held in Nairobi and Djibouti, was signed in Mogadishu in the presence of President Mohamed Abdullahi, Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre and other ministers and MPs.

Puntland State government declared a state of emergency on Tuesday (December 5) and appealed for food, water and other resources because of shortages triggered by the severe drought. Puntland said 34,000 households across the region were affected by drought following the failure of successive rainy seasons, and 70% of the area faced extreme drought. No rain was expected for another five months.

South Sudan

The members of the "Troika" of Norway, United Kingdom and United States released a statement on Thursday last week (November 30) underlining their support for the High Level Revitalization Forum. **(See article)**

Sudan

President Omer Al-Bashir and President Idriss Deby have to increase security coordination between Sudan and Chad at a meeting in Ndjamena on Saturday (December 2). They also agreed

to enhance the ability of joint Sudanese-Chadian forces "to face challenges and instability in Libya, Central African Republic and South Sudan." President Al-Bashir stressed the need to expand exchanges of information, empower the joint forces and enable them to control the border and to stop elements that sought to sabotage relations between the two countries. President Deby, who praised Sudan's disarmament campaign, said Sudan could benefit from Chad's experience in collecting illicit weapons. President Al-Bashir arrived in Ndjamena on Friday for a two-day official visit to attend Chad's National Day celebrations.

Three armed groups in Darfur region extended for two months a unilateral cessation of hostilities and reiterated their commitment to the African Union-brokered Roadmap Agreement for peace in Sudan. In a joint declaration, last week, the Sudan Liberation Movement - Transitional Council (SLM-TC), the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the SLM-Minni Minnawi extended their humanitarian truce from 30 November 2017 to 31 January 2018. They said the objective of this extended Cessation of Hostilities was "to protect civilians, provide unhindered humanitarian access to war-affected populations, and create a conducive environment for peace."

State Minister for Defense, General Ali Mohamed Salim, and visiting Hungarian Minister of State for Security Policy and International Cooperation, István Mikola on Monday (December 4) discussed ways to enhance military cooperation under the cooperation protocol signed in 2016. The delegation expressed interest in cooperating with Sudan in military training as well as other fields including agriculture, medical issues, water management, and irrigation. After a visit by Foreign Minister Ibrahim Ghandour to Budapest in October, Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said Sudanese anti-terror forces were working closely with the TEK, a Hungarian agency specializing in counter-terrorism, hostage crises, and gun violence. Last October, Hungary announced the resumption of academic scholarships for Sudanese students.

Prime Minister Hailemariam at the African Economic Conference 2017

The African Economic Conference 2017 was held over three days this week (December 4–6). Co-organized by the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) under the theme "Governance for structural transformation", this year's conference focused on the achievement of structural transformation in Africa with an emphasis on developmental governance. Speakers stressed this was the key to unlocking Africa's potential and advancing its prosperity, and the three agencies pledged their readiness to support the continent's pursuit of an African agenda for stronger democratic states and rapid structural transformation that positively impacts on human development.

Participants exchanged ideas on progress made in the area of economic structural transformation by African governments. They also discussed policies, programs and mechanisms that can help governments to unlock their economic potential. In five plenary sessions as well as dozens of research presentations, the five hundred or so present heard of possible homegrown solutions and ways to learn from experience to achieve structural transformation on the continent. There were five plenary sessions covering 'the theory and practice of governance for structural

transformation in Africa'; 'the role of the state in governing development in Africa'; 'inclusive resource governance as a driver of structural transformation'; 'role of institutions in transformative governance'; and 'governance for Africa's industrialization', as well as break-out sessions that featured presentations and discussions by prominent academics, policy makers, civil society, and representatives from development organizations, allowing for a more in-depth and technical analyses of issues related to "Governance for structural transformation", including e.g. governance, institutions and economic development; the role of the state; financing structural economic transformation; assessing the role of decentralized government institutions; governance of natural resources; migration; urbanization, and best practices in regional integration.

The conference provided an opportunity for participants to assess the impact of current economic and political governance strategies on economic transformation, poverty, inequality and human development in Africa. It offered in-depth presentations of policy-oriented research by both established academics and emerging researchers from the continent and beyond, who debate and recommend policy options on how governance in Africa can better support the continent's structural transformation. The Conference will produce a report containing a summary of key findings and key policy recommendations distilled from conference papers and keynote speeches.

In his keynote speech, Prime Minister Hailemariam underlined that the quality of governance explained and drove transformation, development and democratization, and asked what type of governance best served Africa. Africa's priorities, he stressed, had to do with development, democracy and equity, and for African countries to structurally transform themselves rapidly and inclusively, the most viable option was a strong, active, developmental and democratic state. Structural transformation as related to the national development agenda was, he said, all about the achievement of industrialization. He referred to the experiences of East Asia where those industrializing did not have 'the conventionally prescribed and over-promoted neoliberal governance capabilities' when they started. There, and in other successful developmental states, transformation was brought about through an effective and successful centralization of economic rents and the allocation of value-creating sectors. He emphasized that conferences like this were important for discovering best practices from successful developmental states and adopting and adapting these lessons to specific socio-economic, political and cultural contexts. This, he said, could also be frustrating as the academic and policy discourse had been dominated by the neoliberal paradigm, and moving beyond it required deconstructing conventional economic assumptions and coming up with alternative solutions and strategies.

The Prime Minister noted that the developmental state being built in Ethiopia was "not a developmental state of the East Asian variety but a democratic one: a state that is both developmental and democratic." This, he said, was a necessity not only to avoid the costly mistakes of the past but also to align successful lessons with democratic principles and move towards democratic transition and consolidation.

The turn of this century offered unprecedented opportunities to bring Africa out of poverty and backwardness once and for all. Both domestic and global circumstances were relatively conducive to capitalize on these opportunities. But success greatly depended on building

governance capabilities committed to structural transformation. The Prime Minister emphasized these were very different from those espoused by the neoliberal paradigm. They had to be appropriate to address the market challenges that constrained growth and transformation. In East Asian and other developmental states, these governance capabilities helped the implementation of development strategies to accelerate capital accumulation and technology acquisition, and so improve resource allocations and achieve political stability. The Prime Minister said building and strengthening the necessary governance capabilities could only be done in the process of implementing and experimenting on country-based industrial policies. Mistakes would be made and these should be corrected “in real time” to avoid a major crisis. If they weren’t, one result would be ‘crony capitalism’.

Success would come not just from technical and bureaucratic reforms but through governance capabilities that improve productive competitiveness. The task of improving and reforming governance capabilities should be done taking into account of existing political settlements and socio-economic and cultural contexts. Sustainable development and structural transformation was achieved by focusing on the size of the national pie and in a way that addressed the interests of various social classes and a fair share for all. The Prime Minister reminded his listeners there were also what he called ‘success traps’. Periods of rapid growth and structural transformation were, he said, inevitably underpinned by crisis and social tensions and conflicts. The process of transformation must involve intertwined strategies of capital accumulation, technology acquisition, and strategic and careful management of social conflicts that come with creation of the new wealth and the emergence of new social classes and actors.

Over all, the state should be inclusive and independent, able to devise and implement painful decisions in a socially contested situation for the greater good and greater number. That, he said was what defined an inclusive, democratic and embedded autonomy. Prime Minister Hailemariam stressed that experience in Ethiopia showed success was possible even if the challenges were daunting. Ethiopia, he said, had achieved fast and pro-poor growth for a decade and half. It had now embarked on an unprecedented industrial transformation. This brought its own opportunities and challenges, but he underlined, “as we move forward, we are more than ever determined to address the myriad challenges that we have been facing and are ready to capitalize on the potential.”

In conclusion, he underlined that in the 21st century African countries could no longer afford to remain indecisive and passive in response to other global events and actors. It was up to Africans alone to determine their destiny. In Ethiopia, he said, history was offering the chance “to determine our fate and transform our economy and politics;” the ultimate prize was “our people and their wellbeing: we will not and cannot fail in our effort to structurally transform our nation.”

Executive Secretary of ECA, Vera Songwe, called on leaders, economists and policy-makers to “look beyond the standard indicators of good governance. She said: “There is a growing consensus that African countries require a more conducive governance environment for them to be able to pursue better public policies and ultimately to achieve better outcomes, including structural transformation and inclusive development,” she said. The two concepts, of governance and structural transformation, were linked by centrality and importance in moving Africa

forward towards the development trajectory envisioned in both the 2030 development Agenda and Agenda 2063. They were mutually reinforcing. Over time, economic transformation can advance core governance objectives of accountability, participation and transparency. Development and structural transformation were not overnight phenomena. Development, she said, results from long-term strategies, policies and effective partnerships and governance is an important and necessary condition for economic diversification, value addition and transformation. She highlighted the importance of infrastructure and energy, of tackling illegal financial outflows, sorting out land rights and control of fisheries. For all this an appropriate macroeconomic policy framework is critical and in turn this needed strong institutions. Africa, she also emphasized, should also strengthen the governance of its regional integration processes, especially with increasing continent-wide progress towards integration through initiatives such as the Continental Free Trade Area negotiations. It needs strong Pan-African institutions to set the terms of integration, ensure implementation and resolve disputes.

The second Ethio-Nigeria Joint Ministerial Commission meeting in Nigeria

Ethiopia-Nigeria diplomatic relation goes back to 1960s' when the two countries opened their respective diplomatic missions. Since then Ethiopia and Nigeria's relations have always been warm and friendly, growing into an important strategic partnership which influences both their bilateral and multilateral engagements. They have common interests in many areas as been demonstrated by a number of high-level official visits, including visits by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and Prime Minister Hailemariam to Nigeria, and President Olesgun Obasanjo and President Goodluck Jonathan to Ethiopia. In 2006, Ethiopia and Nigeria agreed to scale up their political and diplomatic relations to a more comprehensive and strategic partnership, establishing a Joint Ministerial Commission where the two sides exchanged agreements of cooperation on political, social education, economical and other areas.

The Second Ethiopia-Nigeria Joint Ministerial Commission was held last week, in Abuja, co-chaired by Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu and Nigeria's Foreign Minister, Geoffrey Onyeama. The opening on December 5 was preceded by a one day experts and technical working group meeting which reviewed existing partnership platforms and explored potential areas of cooperation to broaden the ties between the two countries. Foreign Minister Onyeama noted that after the long delay from the inauguration of the first Joint Ministerial Commission meeting held in Addis Ababa in 2006, the two sides had now re-committed themselves to renew their long-standing partnership and further explore strategic areas of cooperation at this second meeting. They were determined to catalyze actions towards realizing their common goals of mutual advantage and it was this that had led to the re-initiation of the Commission, he said.

Foreign Minister Onyeama recognized that the two countries shared common values and interests, and noted that joint cooperation and strategic partnership between them was aimed to attain sustainable development and alleviate poverty in their respective countries. He said their joint strategy was based on the pursuit of sustainable economic development. Full implementation of the agreements identified in the Memorandum of Understanding and continued review of progress were important if both sides were to get the expected results.

Dr. Workneh underscored that Ethiopia attached great importance to the relations between the two countries. He said they should explore untapped opportunities and the considerable possibilities to deepen economic ties for the mutual benefit of their two peoples. He said enhancing trade, business and investment ties was very significant to assure deepening bilateral relation between them. He assured Nigeria of Ethiopia's commitment to the implementation and continued review of the progress of signed agreements and of Memorandum of Understanding from both Commission meetings.

Acknowledging the key roles being played by Ethiopia as a current member of the United Nations Security Council and by Nigeria as a long-standing member of the African Union Peace and Security Council, the two Ministers pledged to continue commitment of their countries to fight terrorism, violent extremism and promote conflict prevention and resolution on the African continent and internationally. They also agreed to scale up collaboration and consultation to collectively achieve their common vision of fostering multilateral cooperation in a rapidly changing world.

The two sides explored strategies to consolidate cooperation in industrialization and trade, Air Services, technical assistance and capacity building, diplomatic training, defense, education and cultural exchange, health investment promotion, science and technology, information, communications and media, and political consultations. They also signed an MOU on youth and sports development. The third session of the Joint Ministerial Commission is now scheduled to be held in Ethiopia in 2019.

While in Nigeria, Dr. Workneh met with Alhaji Aliko Dangote, the founder and owner of the Dangote multinational industrial conglomerate. Noting the investment flow from Nigeria to Ethiopia was steadily growing, Dr. Workneh underlined that the Dangote investment group was the most prominent company involved but noted that others were now following suit. He stressed that Ethiopia had a lot to offer to business people from Nigeria. Be it in investment, trade or tourism, he said, we need to replicate our successful cooperation in the political and security issues on the economic front.

Ethiopia's participation at Djibouti's International Trade Fair: "Your Gateway to Africa"

Djibouti's First International Trade Fair, "Your Gate Way to Africa," and the associated Regional Integration and Private Investments in Infrastructure Forum, were held this week, December 3-7. The event, part of the celebrations of Djibouti's 40th anniversary of independence this year was organized by the Djibouti Chamber of Commerce in commemoration of its own 110 anniversary.

The Ethiopian delegation was headed by Ahmed Shide, Minister of Transport, and included delegates from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the President and Secretary General of the Ethiopian Chambers of Commerce and Sectoral Associations and the Ethiopian Tourism Organization, as well as private sector tour operators and hoteliers.

Minister Ahmed Shide told the Regional Integration and Private Investments in Infrastructure Forum that economic development was a continuous and comprehensive process of international trade fairs, infrastructure development, economic integration and private investment. He pointed out the continued growth and progress of the region. Economic growth in the East Africa region in 2016 was 5.3%, following on from 6.5% in 2015 and 5.9% the year before. He pointed out the emergence of the East Africa region as the strongest growth hub on the continent was further attracting potential partners in investment and trade. The region's proximity to Asia, which boasts the biggest and fastest-growing emerging economies, was another factor why the growth potential for the East Africa region would, he said, continue to support optimistic projections and associated policy actions. The Gulf economies, as part of their diversification and reorientation drive could also provide further impetus to the trade and investment dynamics existing between East Africa and the Middle East. Mr. Ahmed said differentials in the resource base as well as the efforts on both side of the Red Sea to promote complementarities among their economies would also support economic integration initiatives.

These, he said, were just a few indications that East Africa region was not only on a strong growth trajectory but also that there were still ample opportunities that could help drive these economies into the next decade. Minister Ahmed also stressed that for countries like Ethiopia and Djibouti, where geographical, social and cultural factors encourage economic integration, it was critical to support such opportunities through policy, investment and infrastructure. President Ismail Omar Guelleh and Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn had made clear their strong support for joint developments of various infrastructure projects, railways, roads, water, and ports. These were paving the way for unique integration of the two countries' economies. It was an example for other African countries.

At the Forum, Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Business Diplomacy Directorate underlined the significance of the International Fair as an event that can enhance and strengthen the existing economic cooperation among countries in the Horn and East Africa and raise this to a higher level. It would also create wider opportunities for the international business community's access to the regional market. The strong Ethio-Djibouti diplomatic ties are deeply entrenched; and Ethiopia is continuing to work hard to improve the environment for ease of "doing business" and further strengthen business relations with the region and the international community in general and Djibouti in particular. It continues to focus on domestic and regional infrastructure development and integration, including roads, power, railways, and others areas to fulfill private sector demands, all within its eco-friendly development policies. Renewable energy production, promoting clean and green development, and the zero carbon emission strategy, are all benefitting the potential regional energy market. Ethiopia is now providing hydropower to Djibouti and Sudan, and soon to Kenya. By the end of the Second Growth and Transformation Plan (2020) Ethiopia will be exporting a substantial amount of cheap power to most of the region, as part of its belief in the importance of building up regional integration. Projects such as the Ethio-Djibouti railway, the gas pipeline project and the drinking water pipeline are all manifestations of growing regional integration. Currently, the tourism flow from Djibouti to Ethiopia, and vice-versa, is increasing as is the volume of trade between the two countries.

International consultants, government officials, CEOs and owners of various multinational companies and chamber representatives of several countries discussed the challenges and future prospects of regional integration during the panel discussions of the forum.

US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Ambassador Yamamoto in Ethiopia

Former US Ambassador to Ethiopia and Djibouti, Donald Yamamoto, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, is on a series of visits this week and next week, travelling to Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia, and then Rwanda and the U.K. In Somalia, Ambassador Yamamoto attended the Somali Security Conference and its Partnership Forum before heading to Kenya to meet President Kenyatta. In Ethiopia he met and held discussions with Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn and Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu as well as holding meetings with officials of the African Union Commission.

During the meeting with Prime Minister Hailemariam, Ambassador Yamamoto noted that Ethiopia was a vital partner of the U.S. in regional and continental matters. He noted that Ethiopia served as an engine of economic growth and stability in the region and the continent. The head of the Media and Public Relations Delivery Unit at the Prime Minister's Office, Zadig Abraha, said later that Ethiopia and USA had agreed to boost bilateral cooperation and work closely in stabilizing the Horn of Africa in three major of cooperation: economic cooperation, human rights, and defense and security affairs. They will in particular exert efforts to bring peace to South Sudan and Somalia.

While meeting Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu earlier, Ambassador Yamamoto noted Ethiopia's regional as well as continental efforts demonstrate the country's resolve to continue to play a pivotal role in Africa's collective progress to achieve peace, democracy, development and integration in the continent. He said this was best epitomized by Ethiopia's forward-looking efforts both in bilateral as well as multilateral fora on climate change, peace and security, and economic development. Recalling meetings with Ethiopian peacekeeping forces in Mogadishu and elsewhere, the Ambassador said they carried out their duties to a high degree of discipline. Taking note that Ethiopia has made genuine progress towards meeting national as well as global development goals, Ambassador Yamamoto stressed the need to sustain the remarkable growth in the country. This, he said, entails "deeper commitment." He underscored the need to forge inclusive growth that can make the youth a part of the "extraordinary" development in the country.

The Acting Assistant Secretary noted the US's full-fledged support for the IGAD-led High-Level Revitalization Process in South Sudan. He called for all parties to the peace process to be fully committed to the process and provide a once-and-for-all closure to the chapter of misery for the people of South Sudan. He commended the progress being witnessed in Somalia and called for vigilance to fast track the development of the country towards a stable and prosperous future.

Dr. Workneh commended the government of the U.S. for being a reliable partner in Ethiopia's continuing efforts to ensure tranquility, economic development and collective responsibility

within and without the country. He briefed Ambassador Yamamoto and his delegation on the ongoing efforts of the government in transforming the country's untapped natural and human resources to best sustain its remarkable economic growth and achieve its ambition to join the middle-income countries by 2025. The Foreign Minister noted his Government's due consideration of the sizable issue of youth employment, and its continuous efforts to put in place the necessary strategies to resolve the problem.

On issues of regional common concern, Dr. Workneh assured Ambassador Yamamoto of the positive progress seen in South Sudan regarding the revitalization process and called for more support to ensure stability there.

Ambassador Yamamoto also met AU officials to discuss issues of regional concerns, including food security, peacekeeping and refugees.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Quarterly Report to the House Foreign Affairs Committee

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented its Quarterly Report last week to the House of Peoples Representatives' Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs. The report briefed members of the committee on the activities undertaken by the Ministry and the results gained in the first quarter of the year.

The report noted that Ethiopia's involvement in the 72nd United Nations General Assembly after it opened in September had managed to ensure the passing of a number of decisions of benefit to Ethiopia's national interest. It had played an active role in the debates and held a dozen fruitful discussions with other national leaders. The role Ethiopia was playing in multilateral matters had seen a significant boost in the period. It had, of course, chaired the Security Council in September and as chair of the IGAD council of Ministers it played a leading role in advancing the South Sudanese Revitalization Process. In all its multilateral engagements, the Ministry underlined a firm stand on the issues of migration and refugees. The report also pointed out that the Ministry's multilateral and bilateral efforts had brought valuable results in utilizing trans-boundary resources, including the Nile, for the benefit of the people. It noted the continued efforts to encourage ratification of the CFA by the member countries of the Nile Basin initiative had shown promising results. Agreement had also been reached on the full implementation of all areas of strategic engagement between Ethiopia and the European Union.

The efforts to realize economic integration of the Horn of Africa had continued and there had been a number of discussions to ease access and use of the Djibouti port corridor and ports of the Sudan and Somalia. Ethiopia continued to play a leading role in the reconstruction of Somalia and the realization of lasting peace in South Sudan.

In terms of image building, the Ministry promoted a wide range of activities encouraging tourism, investment choices and other efforts to raise the country's overall prestige. It had facilitated pre-investment visits by some 25 anchor companies and 241 small and medium scale companies. Agreements had been made for financial support from Japan and India worth

US\$246 million as well as US\$1.5 billion aid from the World Bank and the Government of Korea.

Efforts to engage the Diaspora in its county's development also continued through a number of different organized bodies in the Diaspora. Ethiopian missions in North America, Asia and Oceania, Middle East and Europe organized a series of Diaspora associations. These have contributed a lot to encourage Foreign Direct Investment flows, the successful deliberations of business fora, links between chamber associations, and in encouraging tourism. In this regard the Ethiopian Diaspora Association; the Alliance for Brain-Gain and Innovative Development; the Oromiya Diaspora Association and the Amhara Diaspora Investment Association have achieved notable results according to the report. Some 47 fora were held with a total of 5312 participants, and over 3,200 members of the Diaspora deposited over 13 million dollars in foreign currency bank accounts.

In terms of customer satisfaction of the Ministry's activities, the report noted that the introduction of systems of service feedback meant it had managed to continuously improve its delivery mechanisms. It had also contributed to assist stakeholders to synchronise agreements and Memoranda of Understanding with the policies and strategies of the county's foreign Relation. Overall, the report concluded, the Ministry had engaged in fruitful bilateral and multilateral activities over the previous three months and it had secured and encouraged Ethiopia's national interests.

Security Conference in Mogadishu agrees to develop a plan for the transition process....

The first Somali Security Conference in Mogadishu was held on Monday (December 4). Co-convened by the Federal Government, the UN and the AU, it was attended by President Mohamed Abdullahi, Prime Minister Khayre, the regional state presidents, the Head of AMISOM and Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission for Somalia, Ambassador Madeira, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, Michael Keating, and representatives of the AU, EU, and other international Partners as well as security and military chiefs who briefed the meeting on ongoing operations aimed at driving Al-Shabaab out of all the areas it still controls.

In his opening speech, President Mohamed Abdullahi said: "Security is our greatest requirement if this country is to realize its full potential." He went on: "As a Government, we are absolutely determined to win the war against al-Shabaab and (Islamic State) with the full support of our international partners. Without security and counter-terrorism, there cannot be a peaceful, prosperous and progressive Somalia to which we all aspire." He said Somalia had made significant progress in implementing the Security Pact agreed during the London Conference but underlined that the current security requirement far exceeded the country's economic means: "We urgently request the international community to increase its diverse and generous support if we are to protect the gains we have made thus far." He added: "Financing the security sector presents a significant challenge for which we have to find sustainable solutions with the commitment and support of our international partners. We must address the critical security gaps

before transitioning security operations and responsibilities to a fully trained, equipped and supported Somali security forces.”

The conference was organized as a follow-up to last May’s London Conference on Somalia, which had endorsed the political agreement reached by the federal and state leaders a month earlier for coherent National Security Architecture and said it would support the Security Architecture as set out in the Security Pact between Somalia and the International Community. This provides for a National Security Council chaired by President Mohamed Abdullahi and including state presidents, and state-level security councils. It lays down the crucial importance of AMISOM in securing Somalia’s security, with international partners reaffirming their support to AMISOM and agreeing that the transition from AMISOM to Somali security forces from 2018 should be condition-based. It also details plans for staged Somali security sector reform as part of a comprehensive approach to advance sustainable security. This involves the integration of the security forces of the state governments in the national army or police under the activities of the National Integration Commission, in order to provide for a national army of at least 18,000 troops excluding Special Forces (Danab), Air Force and Navy. It also included the creation of Danab forces for each sector. A 32,000 strong national police force would be set up at state and federal level with military police elements (Darwish) to work with the army in times of crisis. The international community acknowledged the need to commit additional and more effective support for security reform, including more standardized and better training and capacity building for police and military forces as well as improved public financial management and payroll systems.

The Security Conference considered developments since the London conference, noting agreement of the implementation plan for the National Security Architecture, the recent integration of 2,400 Puntland troops into the Somali National Army, and the completion of the Operational Readiness Assessments as an essential component for 'right-sizing' and reforming the Somalia National Army and Police Force. The Assessments were, the final communiqué said, the first realistic assessment and it looked forward to the assessment of regional and local forces to complete the picture and form the foundation for transition over the coming years." It noted work had been done on planning for the transition from AMISOM to Somali forces. There had been four National Security Council meetings and the National Security Council meeting on December 3, which approved the National Security Architecture Implementation Plan, State Police Plans, and the Justice and Corrections Model. It endorsed the revised Prevention/Counter Violent Extremist national strategy, a component of the Security Pact, agreed last week.

The communiqué agreed three priorities for immediate action. The first of these was implementation of the National Security Architecture, and the Federal Government and Member States (including the Benadir Regional Administration) agreed to accelerate agreement on the political decisions necessary to ensure its full implementation, and the complete integration of regional forces into Somali security forces and institutions, as well as operationalization of Regional Security Councils with agreed roles and responsibilities.

Secondly, it agreed to work immediately on “a realistic, phased, conditions-based transition plan with clear target dates”, drawing on the Operational Readiness Assessment results, to transfer security responsibility from AMISOM to the Somali security forces. A draft transition plan

would be completed before the Joint Review of AMISOM requested by the Security Council next year. This would set out strategy, priorities, milestones and conditions for the transition, including stabilization and state-building activities as well as military, police and justice plans. The communiqué stressed these should provide for affordable, accountable, and acceptable forces, able to provide security across Somalia, and that this required transparent and effective financial and human resource systems to be in place, and frameworks to ensure human rights compliance.

The Federal Government and Federal Member States committed themselves to continue to lead the implementation of the National Stabilization Strategy and to continue to initiate local solutions to prevent recruitment and radicalization as well as enable effective human rights protection, and conflict resolution. AMISOM would continue to support the transition through the priority tasks set out in UN Security Council resolution 2372. These include securing main supply routes, securing key population centers, to mentor and assist Somali security forces, in line with the National Security Architecture; further degrading Al-Shabaab, and implementing the transition process.

The third priority area was continued international support to build-up the capacity of Somali security forces and institutions. International partners reiterated their commitment to provide sustainable, political and material support, and agreed assistance should be distributed across the Comprehensive Approach to Security in order to embed military and police activities, tackle the underlying drivers of conflict and violent extremism and set the conditions for economic growth. International partners committed to support the transition plan through the Comprehensive Approach to Security, including exploring options for sustainable, predictable funding for AMISOM.

The next Security Conference will be held alongside the next Somali Partnership Forum in 2018 in order to assess progress and set the priorities for the next phase.

... the Partnership Forum welcomes progress and calls for investment in jobs...

For the second consecutive day, Somali Federal and state-level leaders met with senior representatives of the international community, this time in a meeting of the Somalia Partnership Forum focusing on humanitarian and development issues on Tuesday (December 5). The meeting concluded with a call for greater investment in the country's economic development to create more job opportunities, rehabilitate essential infrastructure, and improve the living conditions of the Somali people. The Somalia Partnership Forum is the apex body for the work of the Somalia Development and Reconstruction Facility and the Comprehensive Approach to Security. It convened to take stock of progress achieved in 2017 and review milestones to be achieved in 2018. Discussions covered the importance of linking political and security progress with economic recovery and humanitarian intervention, noting the importance of building accountable state institutions, generating greater opportunities and livelihoods for the benefit of the population, and breaking the cycle of humanitarian crises.

The Forum, which included representatives from 25 countries and 6 multilateral organizations, as well as representatives from the Federal Government and Member States, was opened by the President and chaired by Prime Minister Khayre. In a keynote address, President Mohamed said the Government intended to reduce poverty by two percent each year and had created jobs for thousands of Somali youth since taking office. “We must still do more to retain our young people,” he said, to develop, to prevent radicalism and bring about political stability. He said debt relief would provide Somalia with access to loans from international financial institutions to pay for urgently needed infrastructure improvements. He emphasized the Federal Government sought “to enhance the effective communication and coordination between federal states and the federal government,” adding “let me reiterate that we are committed to federalism.” He said the Federal Member States which formed a Council of Intergovernmental Cooperation earlier in the year to coordinate their activities, were instrumental in ensuring representative governance.

Several speakers warned that the threat of a major humanitarian disaster still loomed over millions of Somalis, and continued support from international partners was needed for the foreseeable future. Peter de Clercq, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator and the Secretary-General’s Deputy Special Representative for Somalia said it was necessary to exercise extreme caution because “the situation remains the worst we have faced in recent living memory after four failed rainy seasons”. He said, “We continue to need deliveries of humanitarian assistance to the tune of \$100 million per month.” The humanitarian response plan for Somalia for 2018 will seek to raise another \$1.5 billion.

The communiqué welcomed progress made in a number of areas: the agreement of a road map to secure an electoral law in 2018 and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to complete the review of the provisional constitution as well as take this to the Member States for consultations; and the commitment to one-person one-vote elections in 2021, to federalism at all levels of government and to continue regular and substantive dialogue between the Federal Government and the Member States. It welcomed the conclusion of recent elections in Somaliland and encouraged the resumption of talks between the Federal Government and Somaliland, and the dialogue between the Galmudug Interim Administration and Ahlu Sunna wal Jama’a. The Government’s prioritization of anti-corruption initiatives was applauded and the Forum urged all partners to continue the comprehensive approach to security, to enable local reconciliation, community recovery and prevention of violent extremism.

It commended the efforts to mobilize resources and coordinate relief efforts in 2017 but underlined concern over the 6.2 million people still in need of humanitarian assistance due to drought and conflict, and particularly that “below average rain falls for a fourth consecutive season and forecast indications of a fifth consecutive below average season indicate that a risk of famine remains in many areas in 2018.” It strongly urged all partners to take necessary actions, including provision of resources, to ensure continued delivery of urgent humanitarian relief. It welcomed the Drought Impact Needs Assessment to help development of a Recovery and Resilience Framework (RRF), with support from the United Nations, World Bank, and the European Union. It endorsed the approach of building long-term recovery and resilience solutions that address root causes of drought and famine. It looked forward to the launch of the RRF and the Humanitarian Response Plan early in 2018, and urged all partners and the Government to make progressive and incremental recovery investments targeting priorities.

On the economic front, the Forum welcomed the establishment of the National Development Council. It acknowledged the Ministry of Finance's steps to increase internal revenue collection, as a fundamental step to pursue debt relief. It urged further progress be made on revenue and resource sharing, especially with regards to offshore fisheries and extractives. The communiqué called upon the international community to take responsibility and work with Somalis to stop illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing. The Forum recognized the significant progress made by the Government in successfully completing the second IMF Staff Monitored Program, and looked forward to the results of the ongoing IMF review. It strongly emphasized the fundamental role that expanded access to basic services, health, education and social protection, must play in Somalia's recovery and collectively committed to support the institutional, legislative and delivery frameworks needed. It recognized that youth was the backbone of Somalia's future and called for action to empower youth and provide social and economic opportunities.

The Forum also welcomed the development of the Mutual Accountability Framework of the New Partnership for Somalia, applauded the progress in 2017, and affirmed commitment to achieving the 2018 milestones set out in the Framework. Development aid, estimated at US\$ 1.7 billion for 2017, was a 30% increase over the previous 3-year average, primarily driven by the surge in humanitarian support. In this context, the Forum urged all partners to meet aid flow reporting requirements, and undertake joint planning and implementation of programs to minimize duplication. The next Somalia Partnership Forum meeting, to be held at the end of the first half of 2018, would undertake a first substantive review of the Mutual Accountability Framework.

Meanwhile, the government and the United Nations signed the UN Strategic Framework for Somalia on Tuesday (December 5). This lays out the collective strategy, commitments and actions of 23 UN agencies and the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia in support of development priorities as outlined in the National Development Plan, and towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The UN said the Plan follows an extensive strategic assessment that gathered inputs, feedback, hopes and aspirations of a broad range of stakeholders, including Somali civil society, government counterparts and the public. It has adapted gender equality and women's empowerment, human rights, and youth engagement and empowerment as cross-cutting issues, and is structured along five strategic priorities: deepening federalism and state-building, supporting conflict resolution and reconciliation, and preparing for universal elections; supporting institutions to improve peace, security, justice, the rule of law and safety for all Somalis; strengthening accountability and supporting institutions that protect; strengthening resilience of Somali institutions, society and population; and supporting socio-economic opportunities for Somalis. UN Special Representative, Michael Keating, said the Strategic Framework sets out how the UN will support Somalia, covering key areas including achieving universal elections, strengthening the rule of law and improving governance. It will, he said, "guide our collective efforts to improve the quality of life and opportunities for all Somalis."

...while Somalia's humanitarian needs are increasing...

The Humanitarian Needs Overview released by the Somalia Humanitarian Country Team at the end of last week says that drought, spanning at least four consecutive poor rainy seasons, has

resulted in severe and growing humanitarian needs across Somalia. It says humanitarian needs are on the rise due to limited rain, displacement, lack of access to basic services and continuing conflict.

Next year, it estimates that in 2018, 6.2 million people, half of the total population of Somalia, will need humanitarian assistance and protection. Of these, some 3.3 million will require urgent life-saving assistance due to the combination of vulnerabilities resulting from drought-induced displacement, conflict and limited access to basic services. More than one-third of those in need are internally displaced persons, including 866,000 people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) as of November this year. In addition, malnutrition rates are on the rise, with the overall median prevalence of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate at 17.4%, significantly above the emergency threshold of 15%. This reflects a serious deterioration in the humanitarian situation compared to late 2015, when the overall median prevalence of GAM was at 12.2%.

During 2017, the Somalia Humanitarian Country Team says over a million people had been displaced by drought and conflict since January. The majority of these have moved from rural areas to urban centers. The estimated number of displaced in Somalia is now over two million. The current *Deyr* rainy season (October–December) started late and has in general performed below average. This marks the fourth failed rainy season in as row. The long-term forecast of a below-average *Gu* season from April to June next year, means that the prospects for relief are grim. Peter de Clercq, the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, said: “Drought and conflict have continued to be the principal drivers of humanitarian needs in Somalia, with the civilian population in many parts of the country exposed to significant protection risks that threaten life, dignity and wellbeing on a daily basis.”

Mr. de Clercq said the provision of life-saving assistance, the reduction of emergency levels of acute malnutrition, reinforcement of the provision of resilience support as well as “the centrality of protection” would form the basis of their response strategy for next year. He called for collective Somali and international efforts to support the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan once it is launched early next year.

Somalia’s deputy Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, Elmi Omar Eynsane, said the 2018 Somali Humanitarian Needs Overview would reflect the federal, state and regional level authorities’ and the humanitarian community’s collective and shared understanding of the crisis. It would include the most pressing humanitarian needs and estimated number of people who required assistance. The process is a Somali-driven process and culmination of a wide consultative exercise, including the voices of federal and state authorities and affected communities. He said: “we are confident that it provides the evidence base to inform the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan and the baseline for monitoring and accountability systems.”

The Humanitarian Needs Overview draws from multiple sectoral assessments, including multi-sector needs assessments which involve consultations with affected communities, authorities at all levels, and from humanitarian partners operating in Somalia. This ensures that the priorities and concerns of each of these sectors will be represented in the overall humanitarian response in 2018. The Overview identifies priority needs to support strategic planning and resource

mobilization for the Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan for the year. The Somalia Humanitarian Country Team emphasized that serious and persisting humanitarian situation requires a simultaneous effort to address the underlying causes for the recurring crises, including food insecurity and mass displacement. The ongoing Drought Impact Needs Assessment and the development of a Recovery and Resilience Framework link the humanitarian response and the necessary investments in resilience.

...and AMISOM's MOCC agrees on further military coordination

Earlier, the Military Operations Coordination Committee for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) held its 25th Meeting in Addis Ababa on Friday last week (December 1). Hosted by the African Union Commission, the Chiefs of Defense Staff or their representatives AMISOM Troop/Police Contributing Countries (Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda) and Somalia, attended with representatives from partner organizations and countries, including the UN, the EU, the UK and the US participating. The meeting, chaired by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui, took place against a backdrop of the preliminary conclusions of the Operational Readiness Assessment process, of UN Security Council resolution 2372 (2017), and this week's Somalia Security Conference on December 4.

The meeting was briefed by the AMISOM Special Representative for Somalia, the AMISOM Force Commander and its Police Commissioner who gave an account of the prevailing political and security situation. They emphasized that although Al-Shabaab had been significantly weakened, it continued to pose a major security threat. Discussions covered a number of critical issues relating to AMISOM's current operational challenges, the preliminary outcomes of the Operational Readiness Assessment, and the need for adequate and sustainable resources for both AMISOM and the Somali National Security Forces. The meeting also exchanged views on the necessary capacity building support for the Somalia National Security Forces to enable them take over security responsibilities from AMISOM effectively.

The Coordination Committee agreed to refocus its offensive operations in the light of this future aim, and also resolved issues relating to command and control as well as broader coordination between the two forces. The meeting directed that the review of the AMISOM Concept of Operations should commence immediately with an experts' meeting in view of the heightened security threat and logistical support challenges. It should include the AU Commission, AMISOM, Troop/Police Contributing Countries, and the UN Support Office to Somalia. Considering the initial findings of the Operational Readiness Assessment, the Military Operations Coordinating Committee emphasized that the Somali takeover of primary security responsibility from AMISOM was still dependent on enhancing the capacity of Somali National Security Forces. The meeting, therefore, agreed to step up training support to the Somali National Army. It appreciated the commitment by the Troop Contributing Countries to support the SNA to build its combat capability.

The Military Operations Coordinating Committee also stressed that the Joint Somalia-AU Taskforce and the Joint Operations Centre were critical mechanisms to allow for close coordination and planning between the Federal Government and the AU at various levels. They

would provide a vehicle for coherence in partner support in the handover of security responsibilities. The Committee reiterated that enhanced support to Somali institutions and structures, including local governance, was complementary to the broader security efforts in Somalia. It underlined the importance of the Somalia Security Conference securing support for the comprehensive list of requirements of the Somali National Security Forces and AMISOM in preparation for the Somali takeover of security responsibilities in the future.

Troika statement in support of the IGAD High-level Forum on South Sudan

Preparations to hold the IGAD High-level Revitalization Forum for the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan later this month continue to move ahead. Dr. Festus Mogae, who heads the Joint Evaluation and Monitoring Commission overseeing the implementation of the 2015 peace accord, the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS), has called for “the revitalization process to address the current political realities in South Sudan, and seek ways in which key actors can be identified and engaged or re-engaged.” The series of consultations carried out by IGAD has now been completed, and as we noted last week, IGAD’s Council of Ministers meeting in Abidjan laid out a possible timetable. It proposed the next meeting of the IGAD Council of Ministers and an Extraordinary IGAD Summit should be December 15-16 in Addis Ababa and that these should be followed immediately by the launch of the High-Level Revitalization Forum at the same venue.

The members of the "Troika" (Norway, United Kingdom and United States) released a statement on Thursday last week (November 30) underlining their support for the High Level Revitalization Forum

The Troika, whose members recently traveled to South Sudan, Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya in support of the efforts of IGAD to convene the Forum, said it remained "appalled by the dire economic, security, human rights and humanitarian crisis being inflicted" on the South Sudanese people as a result of the nearly four-year conflict that their political leaders had generated and fueled. It said the Forum was a critical opportunity to make urgent progress, adding that all parties had a responsibility to the citizens of South Sudan “to participate constructively and be open to real compromise.”

The Troika said as a first priority all parties must end hostilities as a sign of commitment to the Forum, as they had pledged to do. The statement said, “The Government of South Sudan, in particular, must cease its pursuit of military victory and make good on its promise to end all obstruction of humanitarian assistance.” The Troika also called on the armed opposition to end all military activity and lift any barriers to humanitarian access.

The statement said the Troika strongly supported the calls that it heard from voices across South Sudan and the region for the High-level Revitalization Forum “to be inclusive, reflecting the interests of all parties, regions, and groups in South Sudan, including young people and women.” It emphasized that all parties to the conflict must negotiate in good faith and work to best reflect the reality of conditions in South Sudan, particularly those related to power sharing, timelines, and transitional security arrangements. It said a key goal for the Forum should be “monitored,

effective security arrangements durable enough to stop the conflict, improve the human rights and humanitarian situation, and support a political process that produces an agreed path to viable elections.” It added “there must also be clear consequences for those who violate the agreement.”

The statement added that alongside regional and international partners, the Troika would continue to identify and hold responsible “those who work against peace, including through economic and other sanctions”. Its members would also act against those who use their positions to fuel conflict and steal from the South Sudanese people and those who facilitate their illicit financial activities.”

Others have underlined the importance that expectations from the Forum should be determined and owned by South Sudanese, and that they must also be realistic. The outcomes of the Forum therefore need to include a number of specific areas. Reform of security arrangements should address most areas of conflict and ensure these can last the remainder of the transitional period. Any extension to the transitional period should be tied to firm commitments to key governance, economic and humanitarian reforms. The progress to elections should be conditional on the creation of a satisfactory environment with improved security and humanitarian conditions. The oversight mechanism for the peace process must be fully empowered to follow-up on implementation and to take action if obligations are not complied with. Equally, the essential reforms and transitional justice commitments laid out in the Agreement must be kept.

In addition, the Forum will need to offer a realistic timeline for implementing the peace deal and measures must be put in place to popularize the agreement. The government’s own national dialogue becomes important in this respect. As the Troika underlined, security arrangements, power sharing and transitional justice, are the major areas of importance for the revitalization process. Equally, the government must show clear political will to demonstrate its determination to bring peace to the country and show it is willing to take every measure to succeed in this aim.