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News in brief

Africa and the African Union

The Fifth African Union - European Union (AU-EU) summit took place this week from 29-30 November 2017 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, under the theme "Investment in Youth for Accelerated Inclusive growth and sustainable development". The Summit was preceded by meetings of the AU Permanent Representatives Committee, of Senior Officials and of Foreign Ministers. Priorities at the Summit were investing in people, strengthening resilience, peace and security, and governance, mobilizing investment for Africa as well as Libya, migration and mobility. **(See article)**

President Akinwumi Adesina of the African Development Bank Group (AfDB) launched a nine person Presidential Youth Advisory Group to provide insights and innovative solutions for job creation for Africa's youth, as outlined in the Bank's Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy, on Monday (November 27),. The strategy aims to create 25 million jobs and impact 50 million youth over the next ten years. The advisory group, all under the age of 40, have made significant contributions to the creation of youth employment. The AfDB is implementing its strategy through three key pillars: innovation, integration and investment. It is partnering the International Labour Organization to strengthen the capacity to harmonize Youth Employment into national policies; it's Youth Entrepreneurship and Innovation Multi-Donor Trust Fund has had initial support of US\$4.4 million from Denmark and Norway, and it has also developed an Enabling Youth Employment Index to measure youth employment and enabling policies at country levels.

A report by the Famine Early Warning Systems Network issued in Nairobi this week warns that about 76 million people will require emergency food assistance across 45 countries mainly in Africa during 2018. Four of these countries, South Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria and Yemen, it says, face a credible risk of famine. It identifies drought in Somalia and the Somali region of Ethiopia, and conflict in Yemen, South Sudan, and northeast Nigeria as the main drivers of acute food insecurity. It calls on governments and the international community to increase efforts to resolve conflict, ensure humanitarian access, and make more resources available for emergency response to help save lives.

A Field Training Exercise for the Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF), "Mashariki Salaam II," is taking place in eastern Sudan. The exercise, involving units from 10 countries: Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda, started on November 25 and lasts until December 3. **(See article)**

Ethiopia

President Dr. Mulatu Teshome met with a business delegation of South Korea headed by Mr. Kim Sang Jin, Chairman of INNOBIZ and Honorary Consul for Ethiopia in Korea's Busan Province. The delegation also participated in an Ethiopian-South Korean Business Forum. **(See article)**

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn attended the Fifth African Union - European Union (AU-EU) summit in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire (November 29-30). **(See article)** During the Summit the Prime Minister held talks with Italian Prime Minister, Paolo Gentiloni and Polish president, Andrzej Duda. Discussions with Prime Minister Gentiloni focused on bilateral diplomatic and technical cooperation. On regional issues of common concern, the Revitalization of the South Sudan Peace Process was the main point of discussion. They agreed on the importance of the international community speaking with an undivided voice and offering collective support to the process was the way forward for lasting peace in South Sudan.

Prime Minister Hailemariam also met with the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security of the European Union, Ms. Federica Mogherini in Abidjan. They had a fruitful discussion on the South Sudan Revitalization Process progress and expressed their satisfaction at the level the peace process had reached, with the last pre-forum consultation meeting of the IGAD Council of Ministers before the convening of the High-Level Revitalization Forum this month.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn announced a US\$375 million "Light for All" program to raise access to energy in the country on Monday (November 27). The program, funded by the World Bank, and implemented over the seven years is expected to reach rural areas with no access to electricity.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn and Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu sent condolence letters to President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt and Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry, following the appalling tragedy of the extremist attack on a mosque in the Sinai Peninsula on Friday last week (November 24). They strongly denounced the monstrous attack and called for the international community to take concerted actions in the fight against terrorism. They stressed that all Ethiopia shared the pain and sorrow of the Egyptian people, their Government and of the families of the bereaved and those injured in the attack.

A delegation of the EPRDF, led by Demeke Mekonnen, Deputy Chairman of EPRDF and Deputy Prime Minister, attending the World Political Parties High-level Meeting, being held from November 30 to December 3, has held discussions with Song Tao, Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China's Central Committee on ways to strengthen relations between the two parties. They discussed intra-party democracy, disciplinary supervision and inspection as well as the decisions taken at the 19th National Congress of the CPC. Song Tao noted that strengthening intra-party democracy was one of

the decisions taken at the Congress and said the CPC was keen to share experiences with the EPRDF.

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, on the sidelines of 5th AU-EU Summit in Abidjan, held talks with a number of Foreign Ministers including the UK and Lithuania. **(See article)**

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Aklilu Hailemichael, met with the South Korean Business delegation this week and also held discussions with the an Australian and New Zealand business delegation. He also attended the Ethiopian-Australian and New Zealand Business Forum. **(See article)**

The 12th Senior Officials Meeting of the Forum for China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was convened in Beijing on Friday (November 24). It was attended by Senior Officials from China, 52 African countries and the African Union Commission. Mr. Tsegab Kebebew, Director General of Asia and Oceania of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs led the Ethiopian delegation. **(See article)**

The World Bank Group on Tuesday (November 29) unveiled its strategic plan for Ethiopia, which will guide the Bank's operational plan and support the country for the coming five years. The Bank will be supporting the government's efforts to build resilience and inclusiveness, enable institutional accountability and confront corruption. **(See article)**

Ethiopia launched the Comprehensive Refugee Response Program aiming at transforming the lives of refugees and making them productive citizens this week on Tuesday (November 28). Ethiopia currently hosts nearly 900,000 refugees from Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan and other African countries. **(See article)**

Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie, Ethiopia's Ambassador to Egypt, held a roundtable discussion with members of the Egyptian-Ethiopian Business Council on Tuesday (November 28). The discussion was co-chaired by Ahmed ElSewedy and attended by more than twenty Egyptian businesspeople. Ambassador Taye briefed potential investors about the opportunities in Ethiopia and discussed the upcoming Ethio-Egyptian business forum. He underlined the role improved business relations could play in strengthening the overall relationship between Egypt and Ethiopia. Mr. ElSewedy, a pioneer Egyptian investor in the manufacturing sector in Ethiopia, emphasized enhanced business ties would support strengthened overall relations between the two countries.

Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie, Ethiopia's Ambassador to Egypt, met with Professor Elsayed Felyfel, Chairman of the African Affairs Committee of the Egyptian Parliament and members of the African Affairs Committee on Monday (November 27) during a visit to the Egyptian Parliament. Discussions covered issues of mutual concern including ways to reinforce the relationship between Egypt and Ethiopia and the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. Ambassador Taye emphasized GERD would not harm Egypt's interests and underlined Ethiopia's keenness to continue negotiations with Egypt and Sudan. They also discussed Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn's forthcoming visit to Cairo later this month during which the Prime Minister is expected to address the Egyptian Parliament as well as hold talks with President El-Sisi.

Director-General of Diaspora Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Demeke Atinafu, said on Tuesday this week (November 28) that more than 1,300 citizens had been expelled from Saudi Arabia in “recent days”, after the warning for undocumented migrants to voluntarily leave had finally expired. He stressed: “The government is working with Saudi Arabia to safely return our citizens home.” The national committee was been exerting every effort to return undocumented citizens and more than 70,000 people have returned home since Saudi Arabia ordered all undocumented migrants to leave in March. The amnesty which ended last June was extended three times and a considerable of migrants remained. Those who haven’t left now face forced deportation and a range of fines.

Ethiopia formally launched the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework on Tuesday this week (November 28) to provide refugees with more employment and educational opportunities. This effectively paves the way for the implementation of the nine pledges made at the Leaders’ Summit on Refugees in September 2016 and incorporated in the New York Declaration. **(See article)**

A delegation from the Ethiopian Investment Commission led by Commissioner Fitsum Arega last week a 2017 United Nations Awards for Promoting Investment in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)’s 9th Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission in Geneva. **(See article)**

On November 27, UNESCO received Ethiopia’s instrument of ratification of the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. This follows State Minister of Culture and Tourism, Ramadan Ashenafi’s commitment at a Ministerial Roundtable to Strengthen Synergies for the Protection of Cultural Property in Eastern Africa, in Mauritius in July. The Convention was adopted to combat the looting of archaeological sites and illicit trafficking of museum collections around the world. The property protected is widely defined, but has to be explicitly designated by the State as important for its archaeology, prehistory, history, literature, art or science. It is only applicable to cultural objects stolen or illicitly exported after the date of entry into force of the Convention.

The Norwegian Embassy in Addis Ababa and the Norwegian Forestry Group last week signed a grant agreement for the implementation of the Forest Landscape Restoration Program in the Amhara Regional State. Norway has committed NOK 51 million (US \$6.2 million) to support implementation of the Forest Landscape Restoration Program until 2020. The NFG will implement the program in close collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, the authorities of the Amhara regional state and other local and international partners.

The Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund, managed by the UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has allocated US\$11.35 million under its Reserve Allocation as a bridging response to the critical requirements identified until early 2018. The Fund has dedicated the current round of allocation for Oromia and Somali regions to provide impactful response. In 2017, the Fund allocated more than \$82.4 million for 106 projects, with financial contributions from seven donors, Germany, Ireland, South Korea, Switzerland, Sweden, UK and US. There is still an overall funding gap of US\$248.7 million for humanitarian requirements to the end of the year.

The Global Fund on Wednesday (November 29) announced its first debt to health (D2H), swap since 2011, with a triple swap. Spain will waive debts owed by Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Cameroon in exchange for investments in domestic health programs supported by the Global Fund. Under the deal, Spain will cancel outstanding debts allowing Ethiopia to invest 3.2 million euros (\$3.8 million) in initiatives to strengthen its health system.

The newly appointed Honorary Consul of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to Azerbaijan, Jeyhun Alakbarov, presented his credentials to the Head of the State Protocol Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ambassador Parvin Mirzazade, this week. His appointment follows the official visit of Azerbaijan Foreign Minister, Elmar Mammadyarov to Ethiopia last month.

The 2017 TOTAL Great Ethiopian Run 10km race, the largest road race in Africa, was held in Addis Ababa on Sunday (November 26) for some 44,000 participants, as well as 500 elite athletes and 400 foreign runners. The men's race for the elite athletes was won by Ethiopia's Solomon Berega, winner of the 3000m title at the World Under 18 Champion ships in Nairobi in July; and the women's race winner was Ethiopia's Zeyneba Yimer, a cross-country bronze medalist at the World Under 20 Championships. The run, in its seventeenth year, attracts thousands of observers and tourists, and has become a major street festival. Next year, the organizers plan to increase numbers of participants to 50,000. The Great Ethiopia Run was started in 2001 by long-distant running legend, Haile Gebreselassie, the current president of the Ethiopian Athletics Federation. In addition to Addis Ababa, the Great Ethiopian Run will be organizing 14 races in Addis Ababa and the different regional states this year.

Eritrea

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in a statement last week expressed concern over threats made against its Special Rapporteurs in Eritrea, Burundi and the Philippines. In the case of Eritrea, the UNHCR said: "The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, Ms Sheila Keetharuth, has faced considerable hostility in conducting her work, including a personal attack by the Eritrean Ambassador during her interactive dialogue at the Human Rights Council session in June. The Ambassador referred to her as a 'naked Empress with no clothes' and accused her of acting like a "Viceroy over Eritrea," and carrying out a witch-hunt. It must be stressed that Ms. Keetharuth has been faithfully carrying out the mandate given to her by the UN Human Rights Council, and she should not be subjected to this type of vitriolic personalized attack by Government officials."

Kenya

President Uhuru Kenyatta and Deputy President William Ruto were sworn-in ceremony for a second term of office at the Kasarani Stadium in Nairobi on Tuesday (November 28). Nine Heads of State and other leaders, past and present, from Africa attended and other envoys from around the world, as well as tens of thousands of Kenyans. The President promised to devote his time and energy to build bridges to unite and bring prosperity to all Kenyans. **(See article)**

The Ministry of Transport has signed an agreement with Lamu Road Consortium of South Africa to finance the construction of the 530 km Lamu-Garissa-Isiolo road at a cost of

US\$620 million. This will be the first section of the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) corridor to link Kenya to South Sudan. Construction should start in mid-2018 and take four years to complete. The road will be built under a public-private-partnership in which the LRC will finance construction and charge users a fee for a period of 25 years, before the road reverts to government ownership.

The government plans to raise US\$1 billion by listing its National Oil Corporation at home and on the London Stock Exchange by early 2019, on order to buy a share of two oil blocks held by Tullow and its partners. Andrew Kamau, the principal secretary for petroleum at the Ministry of Energy said this was to raise money for its back-in rights. Kenya discovered oil in 2012 and small scale production is due to start next 2018, with full production in 2021 after the completion of an oil pipeline to the proposed port of Lamu. The two oil blocks are in Turkana County in the north of the country and are jointly owned by Tullow Oil, Africa Oil and A.P. Moeller Maersk.

Somalia

President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed this week attended the inauguration of President Kenyatta in Nairobi on Tuesday before travelling on to the two-day African Union-European Union Summit in Abidjan on Wednesday.

President Mohamed Abdullahi commissioned the first batch of 600 police recruits for public defense on Saturday (November 25). He hailed the recruits for responding to call to the youth to defend their country, following the October 14 terror attack in Mogadishu. He said they were the future of Somalia, adding that “every country in such a situation is being saved by its young people.”

Prime Minister, Hassan Ali Khayre fired Religious Affairs Minister, Iiman Abdullahi Ali, on Sunday (November 26). He gave no reasons for the dismissal. Humanitarian and Disaster Management Minister Dr. Maryan Qassim Ahmed resigned two weeks earlier citing "confusion and disorder within the government", and Defense Minister, Abdirashid Abdullahi Mohamed, resigned from the government for personal matters in October.

Prime Minister Khayre appointed Mr. Mohamed Mursal as the new defense Minister on Sunday (November 26). Mr. Mursal has been an MP and held ministerial positions in previous governments as well as being Ambassador to Turkey.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yusuf Garaad Omar, and Lithuania’ Foreign Minister, Linas Linkevičius, signed a Joint Communiqué on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries on Thursday (November 30). Lithuania has participated in the EU’s counter-piracy Operation Atalanta off the coast of Somalia since 2013.

The first batch of 2,400 troops from the federal member states were integrated into the National Army on Thursday (November 30). The troops from Puntland officially joined the national army in a ceremony held in Garowe attended by the Federal State Minister of Defense, Mohamed Ali Haggaa. The National Security Architecture provides that each regional state will contribute 3,000 troops to the National Army.

Zobe Rescue Committee, set up by the federal government to establish a more accurate death toll from the twin bomb blasts in Mogadishu on October 14, has said it has confirmed that

512 people were killed in the atrocity and another 316 were injured. The impact of the first of the two explosions was worsened by it exploding next to a fuel tanker, leaving many bodies being burnt or mutilated beyond recognition. Al-Shabaab, as on other occasions when its bombings have provoked public horror, has refused to claim responsibility, but the method and type of attack makes clear its guilt.

The Qatar Development Fund has pledged to support US\$200m worth of projects in infrastructure, education, and economic empowerment. The agreement was signed this week by Jamal Mohammed Hassan, Minister of Planning, Investment and Economic Development, and Khalifa bin Jassem Al-Kuwari, Director General of the Qatar Development Fund. The projects include construction of the Mogadishu-Jawhar road for 90 km, the Mogadishu-Afgoy road for 30 km, rehabilitation of the Prime Minister's office, rehabilitation of the Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development and of the Mogadishu municipality as well as building the Diplomatic Institute and supporting the Silatech Foundation to empower unemployed youth through vocational and technical training projects.

A high-level meeting on Comprehensive Approaches to Security, co-chaired by the Federal Government and Sweden, on Wednesday (November 29) adopted the revised national strategy in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism ahead of next week's Security Conference in Mogadishu. The meeting attended by representatives of the Federal Member States also set out a working plan for the next six months to implement the Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism strategy.

Brigadier General Anand Pillay, AMISOM Police Commissioner, ended his three year tour of duty with AMISOM this week, after overseeing an elaborate capacity building plan for the Somali Police Force. This included screening, recruiting, training and mentoring over 3,500 Somali police officers. During his tenure, AMISOM Police extended services to newly recovered areas and expanded operations to the state capitals of Southwest and HirShabelle, states as well as to Dhobley and Kismayo in Lower Juba region and Belet Weyne in Hiiraan.

A five-day workshop to train 20 Somali officials on Countering Violent Extremism and the Process of Reintegrating Defectors has been taking place in Nairobi this week. At the end of the workshop the trainees should be in a position to identify actors and institutions involved in countering violent extremism. According to the Director of the Defector Rehabilitation Program at least two-thousand defectors have already been successfully reintegrated into society, since the program which operates under five pillars, outreach, reception of the defectors, screening, rehabilitation and reintegration, began five years ago.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) on Wednesday (November 29) congratulated Muse Bihi Abdi on his election as president of Somaliland, after the results were confirmed by the Supreme Court on Tuesday. It commended the political and traditional leaders in Somaliland for resolving election-related disputes and urged the new administration "to continue to advance inclusive politics and consolidate democracy, peace and stability among Somalilanders." UNSOM said it looked forward to building on the existing relationship with Somaliland based on the agreed roadmap for United Nations support to Somaliland and Somaliland's Development Plan II. It was "stands ready to support the resumption of dialogue between Somalia and Somaliland."

South Sudan

The IGAD Council of Ministers, chaired by Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, Ethiopia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, met in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire on Wednesday (November 29) to discuss progress towards convening the High-Level Revitalization Forum. It decided the next meeting of the Council and an IGAD Extraordinary Summit should be held in mid-December in Addis Ababa, and this should be followed immediately by the launch of the High-Level Forum. **(See article)**

The UN Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Ms. Bintou Keita, told the UN Security Council on Tuesday this week (November 28) that there was a danger of more fighting and this would undermine the political process and cause additional civilian casualties and displacement. **(See article)**

South Sudan's National Dialogue Committee issued a statement on Sunday (November 26) urging President Kiir to release political prisoners to encourage reconciliation and forgiveness. The statement said the Committee "is engaging the government to release all political prisoners, open up spaces for free media and freedom of speech and create an atmosphere conducive for a comprehensive national dialogue." The committee, formed by the President in May, is also engaging with IGAD and the parties to negotiate a permanent ceasefire. It said the progress made by its steering committee had shown it was an independent body determined to reach out to all South Sudanese for an inclusive, credible and impactful dialogue."

Sudan

President Omer Al-Bashir made a three-day official visit to Russia last week (November 22-24) at the invitation of President Vladimir Putin. He headed a delegation which Foreign Minister, Professor Ibrahim Ghandour and the Minister of National Defence, Lt. General Awad Iba-Oaf. The President held talks with President Putin and Prime Minister, Dmitry Medvedev. **(See article)**

AU-EU Summit 2017 held in Côte d'Ivoire...

The fifth African Union - European Union (AU-EU) summit under the theme "Investment in Youth for Accelerated Inclusive growth and sustainable development", took place from 29-30 November 2017 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

The Summit preliminaries began on Sunday (November 26) with the opening of the two day Permanent Representatives Committee and Senior Officials meetings where draft agendas and programs were prepared for endorsement by the meeting of the Ministers. The pre-summit Senior Officials meeting was attended by Ambassadors of the African Union Member States, high officials from the AU Commission and representatives from the European Union Member States.

The Representative of the European Union, Mr Koen Vervaeke, Managing Director, Africa European External Action Service (EEAS) and Mr. Stefano Manservigi, European Commission's Director General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) both underlined the importance of the summit to the AU and EU Member States and

emphasized the expectations that the Summit would take concrete commitments in the best interest of their respective populations to help face current socio-economic and political challenges.

Addressing the Senior Officials on behalf of the AU Commission, Alex Ratebaye, Deputy Chief of Staff in the Bureau of the AUC Chairperson, underscored the importance of their meeting, stressing it would help shape discussions on the various priority thematic issues during the summit, notably youth development, the fight against terrorism, good governance, and integration.

The Chairperson of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC), Mrs. Sidibe Fatouma Kaba, recalled the historic ties between Africa and Europe which explained why both continents were interested to improve the living conditions of their populations within the context of the AU-EU Strategic Partnership. She noted that, in line with the African Union Theme for 2017, “Harnessing the Demographic Dividend Through Investments in Youth,” given that 60% of the African population is under the age of 25, the focus of the 5th AU-EU summit was on matters related to enhancing the opportunities for youth and offering concrete answers to the various initiatives and programs aimed at fostering youth development in both continents.

Among the sideline meetings in Abidjan was a NEPAD meeting which highlighted the need to use a multi-spectrum approach in addressing women and youth economic empowerment. NEPAD underlined the role that the private sectors could play in creating job opportunities to address the demand of youth has also been noted. It also emphasized the importance of Public-Private Producer Partnerships to economically empower women and youth.

The Joint AU-EU Ministerial Meeting opened with Foreign Ministers of African and European nations endorsing the draft agendas produced by the Senior Officials for the meeting of Heads of States. This was also attended by AU Commissioners, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security, and other high officials from the AU and the EU.

In his opening remarks, Deputy Chairperson of the AU Commission, Ambassador Dr. Kwesi Quartey, said “The African Union (AU) and its Member States strive to create economic opportunities through regional integration, trade facilitation, and provision of an enabling investment environment.” He noted that the geographic proximity and long historical relationship between Europe and Africa could be of great strategic advantage to the joint AU-EU partnership. The 5th AU-EU Summit’s theme, he said, reinforced the theme of the African Union for the year of 2017 "Harnessing the demographic dividend through investing in youth. He underlined Africa could achieve the goals it had set and benefit from partnerships such as the one with EU by embracing good governance, the rule of law and democracy. The Chair commended the pledge made by EU to mobilize Foreign Direct Investment worth 40 billion euros and the G20 Compact with Africa aimed to promote private investment and investment in infrastructure. Using the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES), Ambassador Quartey said, “we will focus on four key priority areas of cooperation: Investing in people, Strengthening resilience, Mobilizing investment and Migration and Mobility”.

Ms. Frederica Mogherini told the meeting that the summit would offer a key opportunity to strengthen political and economic ties between the two continents as well as exchange views

on investing in youth for a sustainable future. She said the summit would provide a platform for both parties to take stock of the achievements and challenges regarding the implementation of the priority areas stipulated in the joint strategic partnership. She said the Summit would open a new chapter for the growing ties of the two continents, and emphasized it was a good platform where “we could share and react to global and regional agendas.” The Summit was of high importance, she said, coming at a critical and challenging time when multilateralism and multilateral institutions were facing challenges.

The two-day Heads of State and Government Summit opened on Wednesday (November 29). Among those attending were the Secretary General of the United Nations, António Guterres; Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission; Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission; Chairperson of the African Union, Alpha Conde; and Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security. Heads of State and Governments from both Africa and Europe included German Chancellor Angela Merkel; Ethiopian Prime Minister, Hailemariam Dessalegn; French President Emmanuel Macron; South African President Jacob Zuma; Spanish Prime Minister, Mariano Rajoy; Rwanda's Paul Kagame and Ghana's Nana Akufo-Addo as well as other leaders.

Libya, and the situation of migrants, was high on the agenda, and the Summit condemned in strongest terms the alleged crimes perpetrated in Libya. The meeting commended an initiative by the AUC Chairperson along with IOM and the Presidential Council and the Government of National Accord of Libya, and the Summit pledged its full support. Leaders committed themselves to work together with the AU, UN, EU, the Libyan government and countries of origin and transit, to find lasting resolution to the issue of African migrants. The meeting underlined that the issue was closely linked to addressing the root causes of the problem and required a political solution to the persistent crisis in Libya. The Summit stressed the imperative need for coordinated action involving all the stakeholders concerned, especially the African Union, the United Nations, the European Union and the League of Arab States.

The United Nations Secretary General, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, the President of the European Commission, and the EU High Representative met on the margins of the Summit to discuss concrete steps. They agreed to put in place a joint EU-AU-UN Task Force to save and protect lives of migrants and refugees along the routes and in particular inside Libya, accelerating assisted voluntary returns to countries of origin, and resettlement of those in need of international protection. This will build on, expand and accelerate the ongoing work done by countries of origin, and the IOM. The work of the Task Force will be closely coordinated with the Libyan authorities and be part of the overall joint work that the African Union and the European Union, and the United Nations, will intensify to dismantle traffickers and criminal networks, and to offer opportunities of development and stability to countries of origin and transit, tackling root causes of migration.

The other strategic priorities of the Summit included: Investing in people, through education, science, technology, and skills development; Strengthening Resilience, Peace, Security, and Governance; Migration and mobility and Mobilizing investments for African structural sustainable transformation. This last priority is seen by many as having the potential to transform Africa in the way that the Marshal Plan rebuilt Europe after the Second World War. This Summit is the third to be held in Africa and the first in sub-Saharan Africa.

Participants discussed progress made in the implementation of the 2014-2017 action plan adopted at the previous Brussels Summit and the way forward for defining the Africa-EU Joint Strategy in the light of the new issues facing both continents.

...and Foreign Minister Dr Workneh's sideline meetings at the 5th AU-EU Summit

Foreign Minister Dr Workneh Gebeyehu held talks with a number of African and European Foreign Ministers during the AU-EU Summit in Cote d'Ivoire this week in addition to attending the Ministerial meeting of the two continental bodies on Tuesday (November 28) to adopt the draft joint declarations on the migrant situation in Libya and on investing in youth for accelerated inclusive growth and sustainable development as well as the program of work of the Summit.

After the conclusion of the Ministerial meeting Dr. Workneh met with the Foreign Ministers of Belgium and Lithuania, as well as the Danish Minister for Development and Trade. The meeting with Belgian Foreign Minister, Didier J.L. Reynders, mainly focused on bilateral and multilateral matters of common interest. Brussels as the seat of the European Union Commission and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization holds a key position in multilateral affairs. Addis Ababa, as the seat of the AU and other international multilateral institutions, shares a similar position in the global political arena. This highlights the value of strengthening bilateral and multilateral cooperation between the two countries.

The Foreign Minister in his meeting with Lithuanian Foreign Minister, Linas Linkevičius, discussed his visit to Lithuania, a Political Consultation and Economic Cooperation Agreement and EU/UN multilateral cooperation. Lithuania has shown interest to cooperate with Ethiopia in education and ICT, life sciences and financial technology. The two sides have agreed on the opening of an office of an Honorary Consul of Lithuania in Ethiopia.

On Wednesday (November 29), Dr. Workneh also met with the Foreign Ministers of the UK, Sudan, Croatia and Austria. Dr. Workneh stressed to the UK Foreign Minister, Boris Johnson, that Ethiopia would like the UK "to support South Sudan Revitalization Process and assist in rallying the International community behind the cause". The two sides had a fruitful discussion on the progress of South Sudan peace process, bilateral consular and multilateral cooperation issues. Dr. Workneh noted the IGAD Council of Ministers had been working tirelessly to reach to the present level of progress in South Sudan Revitalization Process. He underlined the need to speak with one voice and the need for increased support from the international community. He stressed the Revitalization Process through the undivided attention of the leaders and ministers of IGAD had shown encouraging progress. He emphasized the IGAD High-Level Revitalization Forum would be held later in December. Mr. Johnson assured Dr. Workneh of the UK's full support for the IGAD Revitalization Process. He commended the level of cooperation between Ethiopia and the UK on multilateral matters of common interest.

South Korea, Australian and New Zealand Business delegations in Ethiopia

This week has seen visits by business delegations from South Korea, and from Australian and New Zealand companies, to Addis Ababa, and the holding of Business Fora with both delegations.

President Dr. Mulatu Teshome met with the business delegation of South Korea headed by Mr. Kim Sang Jin, Chairman of INNOBIZ and Honorary Consul for Ethiopia in Korea's Busan Province, at the National Palace on Monday (November 27). While commending the government of South Korea for its significant contribution to the ongoing economic boom of the country, President Mulatu noted the role of INNOBIZ was also critical in further bolstering business to business ties and people-to-people relations between the two countries. He urged South Korean companies to explore the enormous investment opportunities Ethiopia offered. He pointed out the huge benefits the companies could obtain if they entered into joint ventures with their Ethiopian counterparts. Dr. Mulatu said the government looked forward to see more companies from South Korea engaging in agro-processing, textiles, apparel, renewable energy, information communication technologies, biotech, pharmaceuticals, and other sectors.

As part of the visit, an Ethio-South Korea Business Forum, aimed to further enhance the historic bilateral ties between the two countries, also took place in Addis Ababa on Monday (November 27). State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Aklilu Hailemichael, noted the government was vigorously working to expand light manufacturing industries, with particular emphasis on textiles, garments, agro-processing and similar sectors. Dr. Aklilu noted the visit by the South Korean Business delegation would further bolster not only the business ties of the two countries but also people-to-people relationship. Mr. Kim Sang Jin, Chairman of INNOBIZ, emphasised that Ethiopia had what was needed to be a hub of manufacturing: a trainable work force, attractive investment incentives and untapped natural resources. The two sides underscored the need to further scale up growing ties on technology transfer and capacity building on trade to fast-track their steadily increasing ties. At the end of the Forum, Ethiopia's Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations and Innovative-Business (INNOBIZ) signed a Memorandum of Understanding.

The Australian and New Zealand business delegation met State Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Aklilu on Tuesday (November 28). Representatives from Australia and New Zealand companies discussed the investment environment, priority investment sectors and market opportunities of Ethiopia as well as ways to expand Australia and New Zealand investment in Ethiopia. State Minister Dr. Aklilu emphasized that as economic diplomacy was now a central factor of Ethiopia's foreign policy, Ethiopia would like to see the economic ties with Australia and New Zealand further strengthened and expanded in such areas as agriculture, textile, sustainable energy, pharmaceuticals and information and technology transfer. He explained the need for Australia and New Zealand investment in Ethiopia, noting the various investment opportunities and significant potential in Ethiopia, not least from its huge population.

The Australia and New Zealand business delegation showed their interest in economic and business cooperation with Ethiopia and discussed matters which could enhance economic cooperation and increase the two countries' investments in Ethiopia. Noting the impressive economic developments and activities in the country, the delegation pledged to encourage other investors from Australia and New Zealand to come to Ethiopia.

The Ethio- Australia and New Zealand Business Forum, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, Australia and New Zealand embassies, was held on Monday (November 27). Ethiopia's Minister of Trade, Dr. Bekele Bulado, gave a keynote speech emphasizing the three countries enjoyed strong and longstanding bilateral relations. Dr. Bekele said there was

now a “need to translate these links to foster the three countries’ all-round cooperation and further enhance economic and business ties.” He noted that, “Ethiopia presents strong internal market opportunities to Australia and New Zealand investors and businesses”, and underlined the “various opportunities and economic sectors that are of interest to Australia and New Zealand investors, ranging from infrastructure, transport, mining, renewable energy, and agriculture to the textile sector.”

Ambassador Mark Sawers, Australia’s Ambassador to Ethiopia, reiterated the importance of the event which, he said, “underscores the growing relationship between Ethiopia and Australia, through a growing partnership and cooperation on development, trade and investment.” He said the Forum was a manifestation of the interest to forge a strong economic partnership between Ethiopia and Australia. He underlined the importance of trade and commerce in boosting relations between the two countries and emphasized the way trade could be an important agent of change in empowering people. The Ambassador underlined his appreciation of the growing commercial relations between Australian and Ethiopia and added that Australia was ready to share its experiences for Ethiopia in the areas of agriculture, renewable energy, infrastructure and mining.

Ethiopia honoured for promoting investment in the SDGs

Last week, agencies from Ethiopia, Mauritius and Spain, have received the 2017 United Nations Awards for Promoting Investment in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)’s 9th Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission held on November 20 in Geneva. The Awards are presented to the world's best-practice inward and outward investment promotion agencies and institutions to recognize their exceptional achievements in promoting and facilitating foreign direct investment that contributes towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The investment promotion awards have been presented annually since 2002 as part of UNCTAD’s investment promotion and facilitation program.

Opening the session, Ms. Isabelle Durant, UNCTAD Deputy Secretary-General, said “the ambition of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is gigantic. It is enormous. It is for this reason that to achieve it we must mobilize, at all costs, financing – the numbers are dizzying if we want to achieve the entirety of the Sustainable Development Goals – and for that reason it is very important that we work on the manner in which we can galvanize investment.” Mr. James Zhan, Director of Investment and Enterprise of UNCTAD, said at the awards ceremony, “The award-winning agencies have demonstrated that leading inward and outward investment promotion agencies are acting proactively on the SDGs and achieving noteworthy results.” He added, “Developing countries face an annual investment gap of US\$2.5 trillion in SDG-oriented investment, and foreign direct investment can play a critical role in filling this shortfall.”

A delegation from the Ethiopian Investment Commission led by Commissioner Fitsum Arega received the award, in the presence of Ambassador Negash Kibret, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Switzerland.

In giving the Award, the Director for Investment Division of UNCTAD said Ethiopia won based on the criteria of effectiveness of its investment promotion strategy in promoting and facilitating FDI projects, evidence of positive results from the promotion and facilitation services, and contribution of its FDI projects to the realization of the SDGs. In particular, the Commission was recognized for its instrumental role in facilitating the development of Hawassa Industrial Park as an eco-friendly textile and apparel facility with efficient use of water and energy, waste treatment, and renewable energy. The Commission attracted high-quality investments to the park, which employs more than 12,000 people, over 80% of which are young women who can use onsite social facilities, including health care and education services, using a targeted investor recruitment strategy that resulted in the attraction of leading global firms in Hawassa Industrial Park and the facilitation provided to the firms was highly commended as exemplary for other countries. Ethiopia's deliberate policy choice to promote labour-intensive industries such as textile and apparel that provide job opportunities for youth and create equal opportunities for women; its compliance with high social and environmental standards on the development and operation of industrial parks; and its dedicated effort in establishing the OSS and other investor-friendly reforms all contributed to the decision to grant this award to Ethiopia.

COFIDES (Compañía Española de Financiación del Desarrollo) of Spain received the award for providing critical finance for the expansion and modernization of a coffee cultivation and processing project in Colombia that empowers hundreds of women farmers through purchase price premiums and the spread of sustainable farming practices. The Board of Investment of Mauritius, which won for its role in setting up, together with other government entities and the private sector, a smart city scheme and for its support to the large-scale Unicity project that combines quality education, affordable housing, a business park and social services within a clean environment.

Ethiopia also recently received the 2017 Star Reformer Award from the World Bank Group for its outstanding performance on investment policy reform and promotion. Such recognition from the two leading global development organizations is a clear testament that Ethiopia is indeed on the right course in realizing its vision of becoming a leading manufacturing hub in Africa by 2025. This clearly demonstrated that Ethiopia genuinely strives to be the hub of light manufacturing industries in Africa, placing an ambitious plan to develop world class industrial parks with fascinating hard and soft infrastructure. The strategic plan provides the overall framework in terms of the industrialization vision, goal, strategies and programs that need to be implemented in the coming years as to support the country's progress towards becoming a middle-income country by the year 2025.

Kenya's President Kenyatta inaugurated for a second term

President Uhuru Kenyatta and his Deputy William Ruto's swearing-in ceremony took place at the Kasarani Stadium in Nairobi on Tuesday (November 28). The occasion was historic and colorful, attended by nine Heads of State and other leaders, past and present, from Africa and special envoys from around the world, as well as tens of thousands of Kenyans who witnessed President Kenyatta take his second and final oath of office.

Those attending included Presidents Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, Salva Kiir of South Sudan, Paul Kagame of Rwanda, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed of Somalia, Edgar Lungu of

Zambia, Ian Khama of Botswana, Ismail Omar Guelleh Muhammed of Djibouti, Ali Bongo Ondimba of Gabon and Hage Geingob of Namibia. Among heads of government were prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn of Ethiopia, and the Prime Ministers of Senegal, Guinea and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Former Presidents Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, as well as the Vice Presidents of Nigeria, Tanzania, Burundi were also present to show support for President Kenyatta who was re-elected with 98% of the vote in the re-run election on October 26, after his success in the original vote on August 8 was annulled by the Supreme Court on grounds of irregularities. The opposition boycotted the second vote.

The event was also attended by various ambassadorial representatives and special envoys from around the world including China, Japan, the United Kingdom, and others. The US government, in a written statement of congratulation on the President's inauguration, said it looked forward to strengthening and renewing its bilateral partnership with Kenya in the years ahead. The statement encouraged all Kenyans to come together "at this critical moment and to work together peacefully and uphold the constitution." Highlighting common ground between the two countries, the US said it would continue to work with all Kenyans committed to building democracy, advancing prosperity, and strengthening security.

In his inauguration speech, President Kenyatta said his presidency would aim to unite Kenyans, heal the country and establish lasting peace and justice under the law. He said: "I undertake to be the custodian of the dreams of all and to be the keeper of the aspirations of those who voted for me and those who did not." He said: "We may have chosen different candidates and different visions, but each one of us voted for a better life," adding, "To my competitors, and in the spirit of inclusivity, I will endeavor to incorporate some of their ideas. The election was not a contest between a good dream and a bad dream. It was a contest between two competing visions." He went on: "I will devote my time and energy to build bridges to unite and bring prosperity to all."

Overall, the President said he intended to: "Strengthen the ties that bind us as Kenyans at every level of our society. It is time for us as a people to learn that it is fine for us to agree to disagree". He aimed to provide 100% universal healthcare coverage for all Kenyan households, increase access to affordable mortgages and boost manufacturing by reducing power tariffs to manufacturers by 50% during daytime. He also announced that any African would be eligible to receive a visa at the port of entry to Kenya, though he also added there should be reciprocity. However, in referring to citizens of the East African Community, he said: "from today, you will be treated like Kenyans. Like your Kenyan brothers and sisters, you will need only your identity card" on arrival in Kenya, without any condition for reciprocity. He said: "You can now work, do business; own property, farm and if you wish, and find a willing partner, you can marry and settle in Kenya. And this commitment we make with no conditions for reciprocity but driven by our desire for deeper regional integration." The EAC countries are Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Sudan's President Al-Bashir's official visit to Russia

President Omer Al-Bashir made a three-day official visit to Russia last week (November 22-24) at the invitation of President Vladimir Putin. President Bashir, whose delegation included the Deputy Chairman of Relations with the BRICS group, Dr. Awad Ahmed Al-Jaz, the

Minister of National Defence, Lt. General Awad Iba-Oaf, and Foreign Minister, Professor Ibrahim Ghandour, held talks with President Putin and with Prime Minister, Dmitry Medvedev.

Speaking at the start of his meeting with President Putin, President Al-Bashir accused the U.S. of fomenting conflict in Sudan and said Sudan needed protection from U.S. “aggressive actions”. He also held talks with Russian Defense Ministry Sergei Shoygu, and said subsequently he had asked for Russian weapons because Sudan wanted to modernize its armed forces. It also needed trainers and advisers. He said he had asked for fighter planes as well as radars and complete missile systems and for patrol boats, missile boats and minesweepers. He described the meeting as “very good” adding that they had agreed that Russia would offer assistance.

President Al-Bashir also stressed the possibility of helping Russia develop contacts with other African nations to president Putin. The two Presidents discussed the development of trade and economic cooperation, including joint projects in energy, industrial production, agriculture and other areas. President Al-Bashir said that his government was looking forward to cooperating with Russia in oil exploration, as well as transport and agricultural sector. President Putin noted the prospects for cooperation in the energy sphere. He mentioned that Sudan has been a large importer of Russian grain, voicing hope that shipments will increase.

At his meeting with President Al-Bashi, Prime Minister Medvedev noted that Russia and Sudan were marking 60 years of diplomatic relations. He said the Sudan is an important partner for Russia among Arab and African countries and Russia’s relations with the countries in the region were intensifying in recent years. He said the two governments could make a contribution to expanding our relations, and noted that the Russia-Sudan intergovernmental commission would be meeting in Khartoum next month. President Al-Bashir said his visit was evidence of the friendship and mutual understanding that had developed between the two countries and which was growing stronger. He said Sudan strongly desired to advance relations to the strategic level, and thanked Russia for its support for the Sudanese national dialogue.

Following the talks with the Prime Minister, a number of agreements and MoUs were signed. There were agreements covering Visa-Free Travel by the Holders of Diplomatic Passports and on Cooperation in the Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy. The Memorandums of Understanding covered: Cooperation in Higher Education; Cooperation in Agriculture; and Cooperation in the Oil and Gas Industry; as well as an MoUs between Rosgeologia JSC and the Sudanese Ministry of Petroleum and Gas and an Agreement on the assignment of license blocks for geological exploration purposes between Kush for Exploration and Production Co. Ltd. and the Sudanese Ministry of Minerals, and a Concession agreements on gold mining between Russian company M Invest and the Sudanese Ministry of Minerals.

UN Security Council supports the High-Level Revitalization process for South Sudan...

The UN Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Ms. Bintou Keita, told the UN Security Council on Tuesday this week (November 28) that the arrival of the dry season in South Sudan could lead to more fighting that would undermine the political process and

cause additional civilian casualties and displacement. Briefing the Security Council on the Secretary-General's 30-day report relating to South Sudan, Ms. Keita said obstacles to the free movement of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) were being erected against a backdrop of a continuously dire humanitarian situation, she said, noting that 4 million people had been displaced and 6 million faced food insecurity, including 1.7 million living on the brink of famine. President Salva Kiir had issued a new order on November 9, calling for unhindered humanitarian access, but a genuine and concerted effort must ensure that the decree trickled down to levels on the ground where obstructions frequently occurred. To address those concerns, she asked the Council to urge the Government to end the restrictions and adhere to its obligations to the status-of-forces agreement. She expressed concern about the Government's push to assert military dominance across the country, notably when faced with continued resistance by armed opposition groups. "New military offensives would seriously undermine the political process and cause further civilian casualties and displacements," she stressed.

Ms. Keita stressed the conflict in South Sudan could only have a political solution and urged the international community to provide "unified and unconditional" support for the peace process. Ms. Keita encouraged the Security Council to "unanimously express its support to the urgent revitalization of the peace process so that the suffering of all South Sudanese civilians can come to an end." She noted that the IGAD Regional Protection Force was getting ready for deployment, and making good progress, with the main body of Rwanda's battalion expected to be completed by the end of 2017 and the Ethiopian battalion's advance company completing its deployment on 22 October. She requested that the Council impress upon the Government that it should end restrictions and uphold its obligations under the status-of-forces agreement.

On the political process, she said subnational consultations continued in the Government-controlled areas of Central Equatoria, Northern Bahr El Ghazal and the Upper Nile, with plans to soon reach other parts of the country. The national dialogue must be transparent and genuinely inclusive of all political viewpoints. Ahead of the IGAD revitalization forum, opposition forces had agreed to participate in the process with a unified delegation and a common position. As the Forum entered its final phase of preparations, all groups had stated their unconditional support for the initiative, but raised a number of procedural and substantive questions to influence outcomes, which could, she said, make discussions difficult. Ms. Keita noted the IGAD Council of Ministers was meeting in Abidjan during the week to draft recommendations to be discussed formally during a meeting December 11-12, prior to the Forum's opening.

Council members voiced support for the IGAD efforts and its High-level Revitalization Forum, and shared their concerns about the fragile security and humanitarian situation and the necessity for an immediate cessation of hostilities by the Government and all armed groups.

Ambassador Tekeda (Ethiopia) noted a sustainable peace agreement was the only viable way forward and IGAD presented the opportunity to pursue lasting stability. He stressed the support of the international community was essential for the IGAD process; there was no "magic wand to create miracles in South Sudan". He encouraged the United Nations and IGAD to forge ahead with their ongoing initiatives. Additional progress would be made with the deployment of a Regional Protection Force, he said, noting that Ethiopia's battalion was ready to be deployed as early as December.

Members of the Council expressed strong support for the IGAD Revitalization Forum, urging all parties to “leave behind political games”, looking forward to concrete results and a revised time frame for the implementation of the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. This represented a unique window of opportunity and also a last chance for parties to truly achieve peace and stability. They underlined a lasting solution must lie in a credible political process and inclusive dialogue in line with the 2015 Peace Agreement. The Revitalization Forum was the only tangible alternative on the table, and the fact that it had been able to maintain consultations with all the stakeholders was a good sign. This offered an opportunity to restart the peace process. There was agreement that only a political solution could resolve the conflict. The legitimacy and success of the Revitalization Forum would be strengthened by ensuring that the process was transparent and inclusive, with the effective participation of women and civil society. Speakers also underlined that all parties must allow free access to deliver humanitarian assistance to affected civilian populations. Human rights violations whether perpetrated by Government or opposition groups were condemned. It was a pressing priority for the international community to continue moving the political process forward, actively encouraging all parties to participate in the relevant processes.

...and IGAD offers a timetable for the High-Level Revitalization Forum

Meanwhile, the Chairperson of the IGAD Council of Ministers Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, Ethiopia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs chaired a consultation meeting of the IGAD Council of Ministers in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire on Wednesday (November 29) to discuss progress towards convening the High-Level Revitalization Forum. Representatives of Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan, Somalia and Uganda participated. The meeting was briefed on recent progress related to the revitalization process, and considered a report of pre-forum consultations, and discussed the way forward. The IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan, Ambassador Dr. Ismail Wais, gave a detailed account of the key findings of the pre-forum consultations conducted with the Parties to the Agreement, estranged groups and other stakeholders in the South Sudan’s peace process. Council Members endorsed the Pre-Forum Consultations Report as submitted by the Special Envoy and instructed him to proceed with preparations for the convening of the Forum.

The Council noted that proposed date of December 11-12 for the next meeting of the IGAD Council of Ministers and a proposed Extraordinary IGAD Summit overlapped with an International Climate Change Conference scheduled to take place in Paris, France. It therefore suggested the meeting should be rescheduled to December 15-16 in Addis Ababa, and that it should then be followed immediately with the launch of the High-Level Forum at the same venue. The Council also proposed to the IGAD Heads of State and Government that the Extraordinary Summit be convened immediately following the Council meeting at that time. Once approved by the Heads of State and Government, the Summit will follow the Council of Ministers meeting on December 15, and the meetings will be followed by the opening of the High-Level Forum.

Council Chairperson, Dr. Workneh, commended the Special Envoy for the progress made so far. He welcomed the endorsement of the report as a milestone in the revitalization process and thanked all his colleagues for supporting the collective undertaking. He noted that the Council continued to speak with one voice and was united in their determination to make the revitalization process succeed.

Senior Officials Meeting of FOCAC held in Beijing

The 12th Senior Officials Meeting of the Forum for China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was convened in Beijing on Friday (November 24). It was attended by Senior Officials from China, 52 African countries and the African Union Commission. Representatives from major African sub-regional organizations, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the League of Arab States and the African Development Bank also participated as observers. Ethiopia was represented by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation, and the delegation was led by Mr. Tsegab Kebebew, Director General of Asia and Oceania of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In his opening address, Mr. Chen Xiaodong, Co-Chair of the Chinese Follow-Up Committee of FOCAC and Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that President Xi Jinping had given important instructions on implementing the summit outcomes immediately after the 2015 FOCAC Summit in Johannesburg. He also noted that the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, guided by Xi Jinping's "Thoughts on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era", had identified goals for "major country" diplomacy. On relations with Africa, he emphasized that China and Africa had always been "a community with a shared future and a community of common interests and win-win cooperation."

A written message from Nomaindiya Mfeketo, Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa, Country Co-Chair of FOCAC, was read by Professor Anil Sooklal, South African FOCAC Coordinating Senior Official. In his message the Deputy Minister underlined Africa's willingness to join the development path of economic cooperation with China to build a prosperous society in the continent. He said that since FOCAC was established, there had been continuous improvement in China-Africa relations. He gave his assurances that greater efforts would be made to ensure that the outcomes of the 2015 FOCAC Summit were implemented.

The Senior Officials Meeting was co-chaired by senior officials from China and South Africa. The meeting reviewed the implementation of outcomes of the FOCAC Johannesburg Summit and discussed the preparations for the 2018 FOCAC Conference. During the 2015 Johannesburg FOCAC Summit, President Xi Jinping had announced "Ten Cooperation Plans" and pledged US\$ 60 billion for implementation. A "Declaration of the Johannesburg Summit" and a "Johannesburg Action Plan (2016-2018)" were also issued. These are collectively known as the Johannesburg Summit Outcomes.

The meeting heard progress reports from the Chinese side on implementation of the Johannesburg Summit Outcomes. Since the Summit, 22 Chinese party and state leaders including President Xi Jinping have visited Africa, and 22 Heads of State and Government from Africa have visited China. Gambia and Sao Tome and Principe have joined the FOCAC family. The Foreign Ministry of China has appointed an Ambassador for FOCAC affairs.

On economic and financial issues, and in particular under the China-Africa Industrialization plan, China has signed contracts for the establishment of trade and economic cooperation zones with five countries including Ethiopia. China has trained 150,000 technical personnel locally and provided 30,000 training opportunities in China. Under the China-Africa

agricultural modernization plan, China has also carried out 106 agricultural development projects for improving rural living standards.

On infrastructure, a total of 180 transportation, power and telecommunications infrastructure projects have been completed, are under construction or in preparation for construction. Among completed projects are the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway and the Mombasa-Nairobi Railway. It was also reported that by October 2017, China had disbursed US\$40.9 billion out of the US\$60 billion pledged during the Johannesburg Summit. Good progress had also made in implementing cooperation plans for poverty alleviation, livelihood improvement, environmental protection and people-to-people exchanges.

African representatives commended the concerted efforts of both the Chinese and African sides in coordinating implementation of the FOCAC Johannesburg Summit Outcomes during the past two years. They also noted that work still needed to be done for fully-fledged implementation. The Ethiopian delegation emphasized its appreciation of the Chinese Follow-up Committee of FOCAC for its tireless work to implement the Johannesburg Summit Outcomes. It expressed its hope for the strengthening of the Committee's cooperation with Africa in the areas of industrialization, infrastructure, modernization of agriculture and poverty alleviation.

In his statement, Ato Tsegab, the head of the Ethiopian delegation stressed that Ethiopia considered FOCAC as an important mechanism for the development of Africa. He said that the gradual but positive transformation of FOCAC into an effective platform of dialogue and cooperation through the years was also reflected in the relations between Ethiopia and China, noting that this had recently been elevated into a Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership. "Ethiopia," he said, "is committed to strengthening this relationship and FOCAC for mutual benefit."

Concluding, the meeting recommended that the 2018 FOCAC Conference, which will be held in China, should be upgraded to summit level in order to maintain the strong development momentum and put forward a new blueprint for China-Africa partnership.

Ethiopia launches its Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework.

Ethiopia formally launched the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework on Tuesday this week (November 28) to provide refugees with more employment and educational opportunities. This effectively paves the way for the implementation of the nine pledges made at the Leaders' Summit on Refugees in September 2016 and incorporated in the New York Declaration. These include the civil registration package for refugees, granting work permits to refugees, strengthening access to education, allowing a significant number of refugees to reside outside of refugee camps and to locally integrate long-staying refugees, the statement indicated.

Through these pledges, offering a vehicle for implementing the CRRF, Ethiopia aims to promote refugees' self-reliance through an improved and sustainable response that combines wider support to host communities, furthering peaceful coexistence and inclusion of refugees into national development plans. Ato Solomon Tesfaye, State Minister at the Office of the Prime Minister, underlined the government's commitment to a gradual transition from a

camp-based protection model to supporting refugee directly within host-communities. He said, “The government, while maintaining its doors open to refugees, envisages to gradually put an end to the encampment policy in the next ten years and progressively advance the out of camp and local integration options.” It called on the international community “for its renewed firm commitment to maximize its support for the realization of the nine Pledges”.

In support of the pledge to issue work permits and other vital documents to refugees and allow them to engage in gainful employment, the government is going to provide job creation in its industrial parks. Fitsum Arega, Commissioner of the Ethiopian Investment Commission, said particular emphasis is being given to helping significant number of refugees through job creation at three of the industrial parks currently under construction. The UK, the EU and the World Bank will be contributing to the costs of creating employment opportunities for close to 100,000 people, of whom a third will be drawn from refugee communities in Ethiopia.

The civil registration package for refugees includes the registration of refugees' vital life events, including birth, death, marriage and divorce, directly with national authorities. Civil registration offices are being established in each of the 26 refugee camps in Ethiopia, as well as in seven locations with a high concentration of refugees in the country, so as to accommodate the civil registration package. According to UNHCR, this civil registration package for refugees is a "historic first and a ground-breaking development for refugee protection in Ethiopia, not previously realized over decades." More than 70,000 refugee children born in Ethiopia over the last decade have not had their births registered and will now be issued with birth certificates. Children born before the new law came into force can also obtain a birth certificate retroactively, it was noted.

Mr. Daniel Endres, UNHCR’s Director of the CRRF Task Team, said CRRF has already started transforming the lives of refugees in Ethiopia as witnessed by the increase in the overall school enrolment rate of refugees and the issuing of vital documents including birth certificates to refugee children. “The pledges Ethiopia made and the actions it’s taking today are exemplary and inspire many African States,” he said and added that the country needs to be supported to realize its ambitious objectives.

Representing the donor community, Ambassador Michael Rayon, US Ambassador to Ethiopia, described the launch of the CRRF as a significant milestone and pledged on behalf of the US government and the donor community to support the government and UNHCR in their effort to implement the pledges. The launch at the Hilton Hotel was attended by representatives of a wide range of stakeholders, including refugees, government ministries, diplomatic missions, humanitarian and development organizations as well as UN agencies.

Ms. Eziakonwa-Onochie, UN Resident Coordinator in Ethiopia, congratulated the Government and UNHCR for successfully launching the CRRF as a vehicle for implementing the government’s pledges. She said “Ethiopia’s practical pledges are proof of the fact that generosity has little to do with wealth but it only needs a big heart,” and she pledged support and commitment on behalf of the UN in Ethiopia.

Working under the overall supervision of the Office of the Prime Minister, the government has developed a road map to guide the implementation of the pledges and a Steering Committee has been set up to oversee the process. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs co-chair the Steering

Committee together with UNHCR. Ethiopia currently hosts some 890,000 refugees, mainly from South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan. In the first ten months of this year it received 103,263 new refugees, mainly from South Sudan, Eritrea and Somalia.

Application of the CRRF has been a major part of the agenda of the 5th Annual Humanitarian Symposium on Global Compact on Refugees and the Comprehensive Refugee Response framework being held in Nairobi this week (November 25-28). The CRRFV, Annex 1, of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants adopted in September 2016 is in line with AU Agenda 2063. The Symposium has been considering innovative approaches to the application of the CRRF with particular focus on promoting the self-reliance for refugees and provision of support to host countries and communities as well as the protection and needs of refugees. It also considered the role to be played by the Regional Economic Communities in application of the CRRF.

World Bank unveils new strategic plan for Ethiopia

The World Bank Group unveiled its strategic plan for Ethiopia on Tuesday (November 28). This will guide the Bank's operational activities and support to Ethiopia over the coming five years, 2018-2022. The plan is aligned with the Ethiopian government's second five-year Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP-II), which runs from 2016 to 2020 and has the overall goal of attaining lower middle-income status by 2025. The Country Partnership Framework is an operational plan and the main tool guiding the Bank's support to Ethiopia.

Ms. Carolyn Turk, World Bank Country Director for Ethiopia, said at the launch that the primary focus area of the Bank in Ethiopia was to promote structural and economic transformation through increased productivity. According to Ms. Turk, Ethiopia's success in achieving structural and economic transformation would depend on sustaining the economic growth rates of the past decade. This could be realized by boosting productivity and competitiveness through finding sustainable solutions for infrastructure financing. She said supporting the Ethiopian government's endeavors in building resilience and inclusiveness, enabling institutional accountability and confronting corruption were also major targets of the Bank under this strategic plan. This was due to the fact that the demand for government accountability in Ethiopia is rising, the Country Director stressed. Although the government had established several formal feedback mechanisms at local levels and for specific services, additional investment in accountability and transparency mechanisms is needed, said Ms. Turk.

The Country Director pointed out that the Bank aspired to help achieve a lot of change during the Plan period. This included expected goals set in the framework of the Plan: agricultural productivity increase by 23% for female-headed households, protection of 14 million people from food insecurity, and an increase in number of people with access to improved water sources and basic sanitation by 20% and 43%, respectively.

Eastern Africa Standby Force holds a Field Training Exercise in Sudan

The Field Training Exercise of Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF), "Mashariki Salaam II," is being carried out at from the Gebeit military base in eastern Sudan between November 25 and December 3. Units from 10 eastern African countries: Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda, are taking part.

The Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF), formerly the Eastern Africa Standby Brigade (EASBRIG), is one of the five regional forces for Peace Support Operations (PSOs) of the African Standby Force. It includes military, police and civilian components. EASF constitutes the regional operational arm of the peacekeeping elements of the African Peace and Security Architecture, put in place by the 2002 Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

This exercise is planned to take place in a multidimensional environment involving all EASF's three components, civilian, police and military. It will provide a key benchmark to test the Standby Force's ability to respond to crisis' situations in the region and beyond, when tasked or mandated to do so by the African Union. All such exercises are designed to offer real and life-like simulated scenarios, with carefully planned scenes aimed to catch the players themselves by surprise. They involve every imaginable element of a crisis situation and the response to such, and the responses are under the scrutiny of highly trained umpires and exercise evaluators. Exercise outcomes are later analyzed and an objective audit determines whether the Standby Force passed the litmus test or not. Gaps identified are then dealt with to enhance the Standby Force's required Full Operational Capability.

Since EASF was established officially in 2004, it has conducted a number of Field Training (FTX) and Command Post Exercises (CPX). The first was the 2008 CPX in Kenya, followed by 2009 FTX in Djibouti, 2011 CPX in Sudan, 2013 FTX in Uganda and 2014 CPX in Ethiopia.

Addressing the opening ceremony of Mashariki Salaam II, Sudan's Deputy Chief of Staff and Chair of the EASF Committee of Chiefs of Defence Staff, Lt. General Yahya Mohamed Khair said "This exercise will help the EASF to complete its readiness to carry out its assigned tasks, namely with regards to peacekeeping". Lt. General Khair promised all necessary assistance from the Sudanese army to ensure the success of the exercise. Abdillahi Omar Bouh, Director of EASF, also highlighted the importance of the military exercise, noting the exercise would "enhance the awareness of the ESAF within the region and beyond as well as maintain and enhance regional cohesion and cooperation".

Meanwhile, Defense Ministers from six east African countries, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda, met in Uganda last week, and agreed to strengthen regional cooperation in defense affairs, as well as implement protocols on security and peace to deal with the insecurity in the region. Adolf Mwesige, Uganda's Minister of Defense and Veteran Affairs, said strengthened cooperation in defense affairs would promote lasting peace, security and stability in the six partner states of the East African Community (EAC). "The EAC defense sector needs all the support necessary to strengthen its capacity in different areas given that it is on the right path to deal with insecurity in our region" said Mr. Mwesige in closing the five-day meeting on Friday last week (November 24). He said the continued insecurity and conflict in South Sudan, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Somalia continued to plague the region, noting in particular that the ongoing

conflict in South Sudan posed a serious concern in the region. According to the UN, as of October, the number of South Sudan refugees fleeing the country was estimated at 2,073,105. He said: "Conflict is at our door step as a region. We need to re-align our strategies to emerging conflict situations and scenarios. This includes enhancing the early warning systems, which may help prevent conflict and identify mechanism and interventions at various stages."

Ambassador Mfumukeko Secretary General of the EAC, said security remains one of the primary concerns for the region given the prevailing situation in Somalia. He added: "I am happy to note that through your cooperation we have been able to minimize external threats of Al Shabaab and through your interventions, the group has been disenfranchised and normalcy is slowly coming back in Somalia." He also noted the defense sector has recorded significant progress in widening and deepening cooperation by having all the partner states ratifying the protocol on cooperation in defense affairs, bringing the community closer to the fulfillment of the long awaited ambition of having a mutual defense pact.