

News in Brief

Prime Minister Hailemariam resigns

The Foreign Minister at the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS meeting in Kuwait

South Sudan parties initial the agreed articles in the ARCSS

AU Commission Chairperson visits China

Somalia's NSC reaches agreement on fishing resources and 2020 roadmap

Ministerial Review Conference of the AU-Turkey Partnership

Sudan and Egypt Foreign Ministers determined to boost cooperation

AU Peace and Security Council meeting renews AUHIP mandate

Former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair visits Ethiopia

News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, visited China last week (February 8-9) accompanied by the AU Commissioners for Peace and Security and for Social Affairs, as well as other AU officials. The delegation met Foreign Minister Wang Yi and other officials as part of the Strategic Dialogue consultations between the African Union Commission and China, providing an opportunity to review various aspects of the partnership. **(See article)**

The 2nd Ministerial Review Conference of the Africa Union-Turkey Partnership was held in Istanbul this week on Monday (February 12). Co-organized by the Turkish Foreign Ministry and the African Union Commission, the Conference reviewed the progress made in the partnership, ten years after Turkey was declared one of the African Union's strategic partners at the 2008 AU Summit. Further discussions covered strengthening cooperation between Africa and Turkey. **(See article)**

The second stage of the IGAD High-level Revitalization Forum on South Sudan that began on February 5 continued this week with the parties making progress in holding talks on Chapter I and II of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict on South Sudan (ARCSS). **(See article)**

IGAD launched a four-day national consultation workshop to discuss the free movement of persons within the IGAD region on Sunday (February 11) in Mogadishu. Similar consultations will be held in other IGAD Member States Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda, and IGAD will then formulate a Protocol on Free Movement of Persons. IGAD Representative, Dr. Ahmed Hassan Ahmed, said free movement would not only enhance regional integration but also boost economies and information sharing. The Deputy Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia, Simon Mulongo, emphasized AU's commitment to achieving the free movement of persons on the continent.

Ethiopia

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn, Prime Minister since September 2012, announced on Thursday (February 15) that he had submitted his resignation as Prime Minister and

Chairman of the ruling Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) and of the Southern Ethiopian Peoples' Democratic Movement (SEPDM), one of the four members of the ERPDF. In a televised address to the nation, he said he saw his resignation "as vital in the bid to carry out reforms that would lead to sustainable peace and democracy" in the country. He will stay as prime minister in a caretaker role until the House of People's Representatives accepts his resignation and names a new prime minister. **(See article)**

Former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, Executive Chairman of the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, met with Prime Minister Hailemariam this week. The Institute has been working to support Ethiopia in delivery of basic services and the program of industrialization since 2014. **(See article)**

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu headed the Ethiopian delegation to the ministerial meeting of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS held in Kuwait on Tuesday (February 13). The meeting was part of the series of international conferences that have taken place to build a formal coalition to destroy ISIS after it took over large areas of Syria and Iraq in 2014. **(See article)**

Foreign Minister, Dr. Workneh met with the Chairman of the Arab and International Relations Council (AIRC), Mohammed Jassim, on Tuesday (February 13) on the margins of the Global Coalition ministerial meeting. Dr. Workneh noted the importance of furthering people-to-people ties between Ethiopia and Kuwait and encouraged the AIRC Chairman to encourage engagement in construction and other investment sectors in Ethiopia.

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh held talks with the Foreign Minister of Australia, Julie Bishop, on the sidelines of the Global Coalition meeting in Kuwait on Tuesday (February 13).

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene, speaking at a reception to celebrate 120 years of Ethiopia-Russia relations on Thursday (February 15) noted Ethiopia and Russia have enjoyed strong and longstanding bilateral relations dating back to 1898, shortly after the victory of Adwa. The State Minister said the two countries shared a legacy of partnership and solidarity in a number of ways, with the setting up of the Balcha Hospital, fighting fascist aggression and cooperating at the United Nations. She highlighted the two countries' constantly growing cooperation on bilateral, regional and international platforms.

State Minister Mrs. Hirut met with Argentina's State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Pedro Villagra Delgado, on Tuesday (February 13), to discuss various aspects of bilateral and international issues of mutual concern.

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Aklilu Hailemichael took part in the Second Africa-Turkey Ministerial Review Conference held in Istanbul this week (February 11-12). **(See article)**

China has become Ethiopia's top export destination, with exports earning US \$44.5 million of goods and services in the first six months of the Ethiopian Fiscal Year 2017-18, which started July 9. This amounted to 17.3% of Ethiopia's total exports, overtaking Somalia which accounted for 14.3%, according to the Ministry of Trade. Third was the US with 11.9%. The total export earnings for the period were US1.35 billion.

12 textile garment companies and eight footwear companies from Ethiopia participated in the Annual Magic Textile and Footwear Sourcing Exhibition held this week in Las Vegas (February 11-14).

Kenya

Eleven western envoys, including those from the U.S. and Britain, urged Raila Odinga to recognize President Uhuru Kenyatta as the country's legitimately elected leader. A statement released on Sunday (February 11) said Mr. Odinga should accept Kenyatta is president "as the basis for the dialogue that it (the opposition) and many Kenyans want."

Somalia

The National Security Council finished a four-day meeting on Saturday evening (February 10). Chaired by Federal President Mohamed Abdullahi, the meeting was attended by Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre and leaders from the Federal Member States. Discussions covered National Security, the roadmap for One Person, One Vote Polls in 2020, the country's untapped fishing resources and troop integration. **(See article)**

United Nations Secretary-General Guterres has appointed Lisa Filipetto of Australia as Head of the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS). Ms. Filipetto, a long-time official of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade was Australia's Ambassador to Ethiopia, the AU, IGAD and Djibouti from 2010-2014, and has been Australia's High Commissioner to Kenya as well a number of other senior posts in Africa and elsewhere.

The Norwegian government, UNSOM and the Federal government co-hosted a three-day conference in Mogadishu on fostering peace and national reconciliation this week, starting on Sunday (February 11). The Colloquium on Peace and Reconciliation in Somalia brought together over thirty experts, researchers and academicians. It aimed to generate research that would enhance efforts at conflict prevention and reconciliation. The meeting was opened by UN Special Representative Michael Keating, and Federal Minister of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation, Abdi Mohamed Sabriye who said the government intended to make good use of the efforts and implement recommendations. The papers will later be published.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Abdulkadir Ahmed-Kheir Abdi, met this week with the Foreign Minister of Turkey, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, on the sidelines of the second Turkey-Africa Ministerial Review Conference in Istanbul, and discussed strengthening of bilateral relations and cooperation and activating signed agreements.

The International Court of Justice announced on Monday (February 12) that Somalia should file a response to Kenya after accepting Kenya's plea at the beginning of the month to file a second round arguments over their maritime border case. Somalia took Kenya to the ICJ in August 2014, arguing that the maritime border between the two countries should extend diagonally into the sea, south of Kiunga, and not due east as today. The Court said Somalia should respond to Kenya by June 18, after which Kenya will have six months to reply.

Government forces attacked and destroyed Radio Andulus, an Al-Shabaab radio station and other Al-Shabaab bases in Lower Shebelle on Monday (February 12). The attack came only a few days after President Mohamed Abdullahi announced new air and ground offensives against Al-Shabaab. The President told the BBC last week "We are planning to start new

offensives against Al-Shabaab. We have discussed plans of airstrikes against the group with the US. We also talked about means to reduce collateral damages during US air raids."

A ten-person delegation from the AU Peace Support Operations Division arrived in Mogadishu on Tuesday this week to assess peacekeeping activities as the transfer of responsibilities from AMISOM to Somali national security forces builds up. The four-day mission held talks with senior government, UN and AMISOM officials on peacekeeping activities and the challenges in securing Somalia and transferring responsibilities. AMISOM head, Ambassador Madeira, said the delegation would see how AMISOM was working, relations with Somali officials and how AMISOM was planning for the transition.

South Sudan

The IGAD High-level Revitalization Forum continued to make progress during the second week of the current session in Addis Ababa against a background of further accusations of violations of the ceasefire agreed in December. **(See article)**

A South Sudan court sentenced James Gatdet Dak, spokesman of the SPLM-IO (Riek Machar) to death by hanging, at the beginning of the week. Dak, a refugee in Kenya, was deported from Nairobi to Juba in November 2016, and faced treason and other charges.

Sudan

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Professor Ibrahim Ghandour, and the Chief of National Intelligence and Security Services, General Mohamed Atta Al Moula Abas, met with Egypt's Foreign Minister, Sameh Shukry, and General Abas Kamil, head of the Egyptian Security on Thursday last week (February 8). They underlined their strategic relationship and the need to cooperate and coordinate at the highest levels. **(See article)**

Foreign Minister Ibrahim Ghandour had a closed-door meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Ankara on Tuesday (February 13). He also met with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu on the sidelines of the Turkey-Africa Partnership Summit in Istanbul to discuss bilateral relations following the visit of President Erdogan to Sudan last December when a number of agreements were signed to boost the economic partnership between the two nations.

The AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) at its 750th meeting on Tuesday last week (February 6) after a briefing by Thabo Mbeki, Chairperson of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) for Sudan and South Sudan, renewed AUHIP's mandate to 31 December 2018. **(See article)**

The UN Security Council, meeting on Thursday last week (February 8), extended for 13 months, to March 12, 2019, the mandate of the Panel of Experts appointed to monitor the arms embargo, travel ban and asset freeze imposed on those impeding peace in Sudan's Darfur region. The Security Council expressed its intention to regularly review the measures on Darfur. Sudan's representative said that as the situation which prompted the measures was returning to normal, the Council should decide to implement a phased exit strategy for UN involvement.

Major-General Salah Abdallah Mohamed Saleh ‘Gosh’ was re-appointed head of the National Intelligence and Security Service, replacing Mohammed Atta al-Moula, on Sunday (February 11). Director of the NISS between 2004 and 2009, Saleh ‘Gosh’ was dismissed from the position of security adviser to the president in 2011.

A 12-person Consultative Mission of the African Development Bank's Executive Directors visited Sudan this week, holding meetings with President Al-Bashir and senior officials as well as making field visits to development projects. The Board, which represents the key decision-making mechanism for the financing of projects submitted to the Bank, held consultative meetings with economic and social sector ministers, the private sector, development partners and diplomatic missions.

Prime Minister Hailemariam resigns

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn announced on Thursday (February 15) that he had submitted his resignation as Prime Minister and Chairman of the ruling Ethiopian Peoples’ Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) and of the Southern Ethiopian Peoples’ Democratic Movement (SEPDM), one of the four members of the ERPDF. In a televised address to the nation, he said, "Unrest and a political crisis have led to the loss of lives and displacement of many," adding that he saw his resignation “as vital in the bid to carry out reforms that would lead to sustainable peace and democracy." He said he would stay as prime minister in a caretaker capacity until the ruling EPRDF and the House of People’s Representatives accept his resignation and name a new prime minister. The 180-member EPRDF Council is the body that will choose the party’s new chairperson and will name the party’s nomination as Prime Minister for endorsement by the House of Peoples’ Representatives, all of whose members are from the EPRDF.

Prime Minister Hailemariam took over as Prime Minister in September 2012 following the unexpected death of the former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. He had previously served as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister and held the position of Chairman of the African Union in 2013.

In his televised address, Prime Minister Hailemariam said: “Respected peoples of our country, in an effort to address the challenges currently facing the country in light of the public’s legitimate demands for development, democracy and good governance, the EPRDF and the government have commenced a number of reforms; reforms that are currently underway and that we are striving to successfully implement.

“On my part, in an effort to fulfil my responsibilities as a party to these reforms, I have officially tendered, of my own volition, my resignation from the leadership of both the EPRDF and the Government. As per the terms of my resignation letter, the SEPDM and EPRDF executive committees have thanked me for formally tendering my resignation in accordance with the constitution and have subsequently accepted my resignation. This resignation will receive a final decision from the EPRDF Council and it is my hope that this decision will be taken at the soon-to-be-held meeting of the Council. With regard to my post as Prime Minister of the Federal Government, the House of Peoples Representatives has also received my resignation from the premiership and it is my belief that they will subsequently accept my resignation.

“The main reason I have submitted my resignation is because I hold the firm belief that it was necessary for me to tender it as part of a solution aimed at ensuring lasting peace and guaranteeing democracy in our country going forward. The many questions and grievances that have been raised by the public require and demand answers. In the meantime, I will continue to serve in my current position. The EPRDF Congress, at its next meeting, will democratically elect a new chairperson to replace me in accordance with the Front’s rules and procedures. It is also my belief that the Front and the Government will work to ensure the peaceful transfer of power – a first in the history of our country. Accordingly, I anticipate that following this peaceful transition, a time will come when I will be referred to as the former Prime Minister.

“I wish to take this opportunity to urge the public, and especially our young people, to work towards the maintenance and advancement of our rapid economic development, the strengthening of our nascent democracy and party-system. For this, it is my firm belief that the reforms commenced by the EPRDF and the Government, which are currently underway, must be strengthened and advanced. Additionally, as poverty is the primary cause of the many problems we currently face, it must be confronted at every turn by continuing the good work we have started across the country. The situation our country currently finds itself in is cause for concern but in order to alleviate these concerns, I call on the public-at-large to maintain the togetherness of our society as has been practiced across generations and to continue to play their part in the development of our country.

“Once the peaceful transition of power receives a final endorsement by the House of Peoples’ Representatives, I will provide a further statement. However, at this juncture, it was necessary to keep the public updated of the current situation as it develops, in order to ensure the public’s stake in the resolution of these challenges and to emphasize its critical role in guaranteeing lasting peace, democracy and good governance in our country. I remain prepared to play my part in all ongoing reforms and processes for the time that I have left in office. I wish to again respectfully ask the people of Ethiopia for their continued efforts to safeguard the peace and advance the development of our country. Thank you.”

The Foreign Minister at the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS meeting in Kuwait

The Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS held a meeting at the level of foreign ministers on Tuesday (February 13) in Kuwait. The meeting was part of the series of international conferences that have taken place to build a formal coalition to destroy ISIS after it took over large areas of Syria and Iraq in 2014. Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu headed the Ethiopian delegation.

Opening the meeting, Kuwait’s Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al Hamad Al Sabah, noted that the efforts of Iraq and the other members of the Global Coalition had culminated in liberating Iraq from ISIS, but this wasn’t the end of the process. Kuwait, he noted, was also holding an International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq, taking place alongside the Global Coalition meeting, in order to preserve the stability, security, and unity, as well as territorial integrity, of Iraq. Equally, he pointed out, despite very positive developments and outcomes achieved on the ground, the international community continued to face direct threats by armed terrorist groups. This was

why, he said, it was important for the coalition to continue to coordinate international efforts to fight terrorism and to further develop the strategy set forth by the Global Coalition.

US Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, in a keynote speech told the conference it had been approximately three and a half years since the global coalition began its effort to defeat ISIS: “At the time we started our efforts, ISIS/Daesh was thriving. Today, ISIS/Daesh has failed.” However, he said, the end of major combat operations did not mean the Global Coalition had achieved the final defeat of ISIS. ISIS, he said, remained “a serious threat to the stability of the region, our homelands, and other parts of the globe.” He underlined that without continued attention on the part of coalition members, there was a real risk of the return of extremist groups like ISIS into liberated areas in Iraq and Syria and their spread to new locations. Mr. Tillerson said “Each of us must continue our commitment to the complete defeat of ISIS.” He said as ISIS continued to evolve, so must the coalition, adding that “we must keep up the pace of combating ISIS as it continually seeks to radicalize, recruit, and direct operations online.” He admitted this would remain difficult and said coalition partners must call on all international powers to eradicate this threat. Everyone must continue to adapt and strengthen the coalition, and “we must continue to deepen our partnerships in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS.” He said the US supported the revised guiding principles being presented which reaffirmed the common determination to continue efforts until ISIS was fully and lastingly defeated. And he repeated the opening of the guiding principle: “We are united in our determination to defeat ISIS/Daesh through a focused, sustained, and multifaceted effort.”

In his remarks, Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh noted Ethiopia had made the decision to join the Global Coalition because it also faced the threat of international and regional terrorism and extremism. Indeed, he noted, Ethiopia has been a target since the early 1990s of such terrorist elements as Al-Islam Al-Itihaad and then the so-called Union of Islamic Courts operating from inside Somalia to claim the lives of innocent people in Ethiopia. He also said that Ethiopia would never forget the 30 innocent Ethiopians horribly killed by ISIS in Libya in April 2015, noting that Ethiopia: “Strongly condemns such atrocities, whether they are Ethiopians or not”. Currently, he said, “the Al-Qaeda-affiliated terrorist group in Somalia, Al-Shabaab also remains a challenge to peace and stability in the region, launching indiscriminate attacks in Somalia and Kenya.”

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh said he strongly believed that the success of Ethiopia’s development efforts was closely intertwined with peace and stability in the region. He underlined, therefore, Ethiopia’s unwavering commitment to work together with all the Coalition members and to continue its work of pacifying the Horn of Africa region and beyond. He also emphasized with the region of the Horn of Africa continuing to bear the brunt of acts of terrorism, “Ethiopia stands as an exceptional oasis in maintaining its peace and stability and helping its neighbors as they struggle to defeat terrorist groups”. He noted this success was now being recognized and had gained traction from friends and allies near and far. This is why, he said, “many of our partners commend Ethiopia's contribution to the stability of the Horn of Africa’, describing Ethiopia as an anchor of peace in the region. He said Ethiopia’s social fabric, was characterized by living in peace and harmony, with traditional values of resolving conflict and a societal conscience about the benefits of national security contributing the country’s stability in a most unstable region.

Dr. Workneh said firmly: “Ethiopia has always been adamant about the need to fight terrorism in all its forms and shapes”, and he underlined its firm stance in fighting ISIS and

its strong determination to eliminate this global threat. He strongly condemned atrocities perpetrated by ISIS/Da'esh in Iraq and Syria. He expressed Ethiopia's commitment to the goals of eliminating the threat and the scourge that ISIS posed to global and regional peace and said Ethiopia was ready to contribute to the efforts of combating ISIS in every area. International terrorism, he emphasized, is unacceptable in any way and he stressed the importance of international coordination and cooperation to fight the scourge. Ethiopia, he said, would continue to strengthen its role in fighting terrorism and maintaining its role for international peace and stability. In conclusion, he said, there was no greater threat to the maintenance of international peace and security than ISIS and its terrorist acts. He called on all to stand in unison to defeat this threat, affirming Ethiopia's full commitment to work cooperatively with the Global Coalition and other actors in the maintenance of international peace and security.

South Sudan parties initial the agreed articles in the ARCSS

The second stage of the IGAD High-level Revitalization Forum on South Sudan that began last week on February 5 at the UNECA in Addis Ababa continued its second week with the parties making progress in holding talks on Chapter I and II of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict on South Sudan (ARCSS). The week witnessed a meaningful consensus of all participants in the process, initializing agreed articles of the ARCSS. Equally, following intensive deliberations on the Declaration of Principles all parties also signed the document with only one party merely agreeing to 27 of the 28 articles.

A Sub-Committee, set up to run the revitalization of Chapter II of the ARCSS, started holding talks over the Permanent Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements on Tuesday (February 13). The Sub-Committee has continued to work on Chapter II and is expected to finish its work on Friday and present its report to the plenary session. The first Sub-Committee has been working on the revitalization of Chapter I of the Agreement that is mainly on issues of governance. Following a consultation meeting, IGAD had with the Government, armed opposition groups, civil society organizations, faith-based groups, women and youth on governance issues, the parties held a plenary session on Thursday this week to take some final decisions. The committee is expected to finish its work tomorrow and present its report to the plenary.

On Monday, (February 12), Ethiopian State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene, on behalf of the IGAD Chairperson of the Council of Ministers, and the IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan, Ambassador Ismail Wais gave a media briefing on the progress made. State Minister Hirut commended all the parties for their cordial and constructive engagement in reviewing the relevant chapters of the ARCSS. She noted that the Revitalization process had witnessed steady progress since it was launched on December 18 last year by Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn, Chairperson of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

Mrs. Hirut mentioned that the First Phase of the Revitalization had resulted in the signing of an Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access on December 21. She also noted that the first week of the second phase had witnessed a huge step forward towards ensuring the final peace for South Sudan, pointing out that much

of the deliberation had been on one of the three core objectives of the Forum, the issue of Governance.

The issues of the Permanent Ceasefire and Transitional Security Sector Reform were to be the major topics for this current week. The final element of the agenda would be setting a realistic timeline for the implementation of agreement towards a democratic election at the end of the Transition Period. Mrs. Hirut underlined once again that peace in South Sudan highly depended upon the commitment of the South Sudanese parties. The role of IGAD and other Stakeholders was facilitation.

Special Envoy, Ambassador Ismail Wais, said the Forum would eventually bring about a meaningful revitalized agreement which would end the suffering of the People of South Sudan. He underlined that the talks offered a venue for all parties to the process to debate intensively and in detail, and to provide the opportunity to rejuvenate the August 2015 Agreement to bring about a lasting peace to South Sudan.

Meanwhile, South Sudan's Ambassador to Ethiopia, James P. Morgan in an interview on Wednesday (February 14) underlined the government's commitment towards inclusivity "of all the opposition groups whether they are armed or unarmed" in the process. He said: "We feel that it is very important to include them all into the government in order to stop the war." The Ambassador said the aim was to bring about a permanent cease fire and secondly, since the fighting is just a power struggle, then "in order to stop it everybody must be part and parcel of this government that is going to be formed." He said the government had always had a firm stance that all parties should be involved in the peace process. "At the end of the day it will be the people of South Sudan to choose," he said, adding, "but to stabilize the country and silence the guns they have to be accommodated for a period that will be agreed by all parties." Ambassador Morgan said that in order to have a comprehensive, democratic, fair and transparent election the whole country must be stable. Once peace and stability were restored there would be a population census to determine the number of constituencies to be created for all the political groups that are now fighting.

AU Commission Chairperson visits China

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, concluded a two-day visit to China at the invitation of the Chinese Foreign Minister, Mr. Wang Yi on Friday (February 9). Mr. Mahamat was accompanied by the AU Commissioners for Peace and Security and for Social Affairs, as well as other AU officials. During his visit, the Chairperson met with Foreign Minister Wang Yi, with Ms. Li Bin, Minister of National Health and Family Planning, and Mr. Wang Yong, Councillor, Council of State. Members of the delegation visited the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention and the Huawei Beijing Executive Briefing Centre.

The delegation also held Strategic Dialogue consultations between the African Union Commission and China, providing an opportunity to review various aspects of the partnership and agree on steps to enhance it. China, which established a Permanent Mission to the African Union in 2015, welcomed the planned establishment of an African Union Office in Beijing to ensure effective and timely follow-up of the China-Africa partnership. The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to promote multilateralism and the role of the United

Nations against the backdrop of evolving and complex global challenges. They expressed the conviction that their partnership was an example of solidarity among peoples based on mutual respect and benefits. Africa and China together represent more than one third of humanity and share a history of external domination. They agreed to work towards a better representation of Africa in the international system, including in the United Nations Security Council, as part of a new global governance system.

They discussed China's support to the African Union Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) launched last year. China agreed to expedite the construction and equipping of these and has committed RMB 500 million for this and other projects. The two sides commended the results achieved within the Forum on Africa - China Cooperation (FOCAC) and looked forward to the Fourth FOCAC Summit scheduled to take place in Beijing, in September this year.

They pledged to redouble their efforts to boost Chinese investments in Africa, placing particular focus on infrastructure projects at regional and continental scale, including railways, roads and aviation. The two sides agreed to finalize a list of regional and cross-border infrastructure projects as part of a five-year action plan within the framework of the Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa. This would allow high priority to investments in energy transmission corridors, industrialization, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and tourism. The AU Commission detailed its ongoing efforts to develop a pan-African Investment Code, as well the planned second phase of negotiations on the African Continental Free Trade Area. China welcomed the launch of the Single African Air Transport Market during the African Union Summit of January 2018, and agreed to support Africa's efforts, largely through investing in the development and operation of aviation infrastructure. They agreed on the need to significantly scale up air connections between China and Africa and to promote an open skies agreement, which would allow carriers of both sides wider access to their respective markets and support the increase in the number of Chinese tourists to Africa.

The AU Commission and China also exchanged views on peace and security issues and China pledged its full support to African-led initiatives to promote peace, security and stability, including the G5 Sahel Joint Force and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The AU Commission delegation welcomed the promised US\$25 million of Chinese equipment for the African Union Logistics Base in Douala, Cameroon, for use by the African Standby Force. This is part of the US\$ 100 million Chinese contribution in support of peacekeeping in Africa. China reiterated its commitment to continue supporting African positions at the UN Security Council, including the request for use of assessed contributions to finance African-led peace support operations undertaken with the consent of the Security Council. The two sides agreed to work towards establishing a consultation mechanism between the African members of the Security Council and China, to facilitate coordination of their positions.

Somalia's NSC reaches agreement on fishing resources and 2020 roadmap

The National Security Council finished a four-day meeting on Saturday evening (February 10). Chaired by Federal President Mohamed Abdullahi, the meeting was attended by Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre, deputy Prime Minister Mahdi Mohamed Guled, and leaders

from the Federal Member States, Puntland, Jubaland, HirShabelle, Southwest, Galmudug and the Benadir administration, and other officials. Discussions covered National Security, the roadmap for One Person, One Vote Polls in 2020, the country's untapped fishing resources and troop integration.

The Council agreed to speed up the training of regional Police and the paramilitary Darwish forces and their integration in accordance with the New Policing Model and the new National Security architecture. The NSC will now set up a technical committee drawn from Federal government and member states to implement training and integration of the forces. The Federal government will assist in weapons, training, stipends, and logistics to enable the units to cooperate the armed forces. The Council also agreed to expand the Danab Special Forces and integrate them at a national level before their training.

The Federal Government put forward a roadmap for "one person, one vote" elections in 2020 to which the Federal Member States and Benadir region agreed. The Prime Minister will appoint a 10-member committee drawn from the government and the regional administrations to work on the type of electoral system over the next month ahead of drafting electoral laws. The Council decided the constitutional review process should be completed by the end of 2018 and asked Somalia's Independent Electoral Commission to complete consultations with the public on the 2020 elections.

Agreement was also reached over sharing untapped marine resources. This allows regional administrations the authority to grant licenses to foreign fishing companies for the first 24 nautical miles in the Exclusive Economic Zone. The Federal Government will manage the EEZ beyond this and the Federal Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources will have representatives in the capital cities of the regional administrations. The Federal Government and the regional states will create a Somali Fisheries Authority in which the Federal Ministry and the regional fisheries ministries will be represented. This will be responsible for overseeing the fishing resources and their use. Fees from licenses, dependent upon the type of the fish in accordance with international standards for licenses, will be managed through a special account in the Central Bank, and Article 6 of the agreement details how the financial income will be managed and used. A meeting to finalize the fishing resources sharing agreement will be held in Baidoa at the end of this month.

In a statement on Tuesday, Somalia's partners, including the UN, the AU, EU, IGAD, Ethiopia, Italy, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States welcomed the decisions taken. It said the partners recognized the decisions taken over responsibilities for security, the electoral model, review of the constitution and resource and revenue sharing, including fisheries, as important and positive steps and urged the country's leaders to move forward with implementation. They welcomed the decisions reached on security and agreed that accelerated efforts to count, assess and reorganize police forces in the Federal Member States on a federal basis, as set out in the structures in the National Security Architecture and the New Policing Model, would be of utmost importance. The statement said it was "very encouraging that the NSC addressed fundamental issues such as responsibilities for security, the electoral model and resource and revenue sharing," but added: "The challenge now is implementation, so that Somalis benefit from these agreements."

Ministerial Review Conference of the AU-Turkey Partnership

The 2nd Ministerial Review Conference of the Africa Union-Turkey Partnership was held in Istanbul this week on Monday (February 12), four years after its last summit held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea in 2014. Co-organized by the Turkish Foreign Ministry and the African Union Commission, the Conference had the aim of reviewing the progress made in the partnership, ten years after Turkey was declared one of the African Union's strategic partners during the 2008 AU Summit. Further discussions covered strengthening cooperation between Africa and Turkey. The conference re-emphasized the centrality of the AU Agenda 2063, the AU's First Ten Year Implementation Plan and the UN's 2030 Agenda as guiding frameworks for the partnership. They also underlined the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development. These will guide future efforts and the commitment for effective implementation.

Ministers and representatives of 19 African countries, including Algeria, Chad, Gabon, Guinea, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, Madagascar, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Togo, Uganda as well as AU Commission and with Djibouti, Ivory Coast, Somalia, Sudan and Tanzania as observers, reviewed the Joint Implementation Plan of African Union-Turkey Partnership 2015-2019, and the Matrix of Key Priority Projects of African Union-Turkey Partnership 2015-2019 adopted at the Second African Union-Turkey Cooperation Summit. They also took note of the progress and outcomes achieved so far in diverse areas including trade, economy, agriculture, education and health as well as discussed steps to facilitate implementation.

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Aklilu Hailemichael, led the Ethiopian delegation to the Ministerial Review Conference. In his address to the conference, Dr. Aklilu acknowledged the efforts that are being made by the government of the Republic of Turkey to encourage Turkish investors in Africa and the various successful events organized in areas of trade, agriculture, education and other areas. He also stressed the importance of well-designed and stronger bilateral engagement of Turkey in Africa.

Prior to the Conference, Turkey's Permanent Representative to the African Union, Ambassador Fatih Ulusov, noted that Turkey has contributed \$1 million annually to the African Union, and it was committed to support key priority areas of the AU concerning the development and welfare of the African people. He said Turkey focused its contributions on the areas agreed together at the Malabo Summit including trade, investment, peace and security, youth empowerment and technological transfer, rural economy and agriculture, infrastructure, energy, human resources, science and technology as well as tourism and education. He also noted Turkey's contribution to AMISOM and to the Multinational Joint Task Force. Ambassador Ulusov said the trade volume between Turkey and Africa reached \$18.8 billion in 2017, an increase of 12% from the previous year. The Turkish EXIM Bank loans to Africa now stood at over \$800 million with Turkish contractors undertaking 1,150 projects in Africa, worth \$60 billion. According to the 2016 figures, Foreign Direct Investment from Turkey to Africa had reached \$6.2 billion. Ambassador Ulusov emphasized that much of the recent success in Africa-Turkey relations was possible because of the committed stance of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the driving force behind Turkey's Africa vision. Since he became President he has visited Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea, Uganda, Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania, Mozambique, Madagascar, Sudan, Chad and Tunisia.

The Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey has established business councils with 35 African countries and the first Turkey-Africa Economic and Business Forum was held in Istanbul on 2-3 November 2016. The first Turkey-Africa Agriculture Ministers Meeting was held in Antalya, Turkey, in April 2017. The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) currently operates 21 Program Coordination Offices in Africa. Turkey opened the Somalia-Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan Training and Research Hospital in Mogadishu in 2015, and the Nyala Turkish-Sudanese Research and Training Hospital is one of Turkey's biggest humanitarian projects in Africa. Under the leadership of President Erdogan, the Turkish Red Crescent in early 2017, launched a nationwide donation campaign "Umudu Ol" in Turkey to assist drought-ridden East African countries, and the Congress of Health in Africa was organized in Istanbul in July 2017. The Turkish Ministry of National Education hosted the first Turkey-Africa Education Ministers Conference in Istanbul on 19-21 October 2017 in cooperation with the Maarif Foundation. The Turkish Military Training Center in Mogadishu became fully operational at the end of September 2017 and it is providing training for personnel that will form the backbone of the Somali National Army. Turkish Airlines now flies to 51 destinations in 33 countries in Africa.

The Ministers, taking note of the ongoing interactions between the African Union and Turkey, as well as individual African countries and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), developing on the basis of mutual trust, respect and win-win cooperation, particularly noted the essential role played by the RECs in strengthening the partnership. They commended the momentum produced by numerous visits especially at Heads of State level. They noted the importance of trade and investment as key components of relations and reiterated their desire to further strengthen economic and commercial relations. In the context, they emphasized the possibilities of removing tariffs and non-tariff barriers to trade through the conclusion of Trade and Economic Partnership Agreements, based on an asymmetrical model enabling African countries to protect their sensitive sectors. They also took note of the progress made and effort undertaken by the AU to fast-track the establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area as an effective mechanism for boosting intra-Africa trade and broaden the links of Africa with the global economy.

The Ministers welcomed the Turkey-ECOWAS Economic and Business Forum, to be held February 22-23 in Istanbul and agreed such Fora should be organized biennially in Turkey and African Union countries alternatively. These would encourage the promotion of investment opportunities, through joint ventures in key priority sectors such as agro-industry, tourism, and the establishment of eco-friendly industrial parks and economic zones as well as initiatives for support in the fight against desertification, drought and land degradation. They also called for enhancing the efforts in terms of sharing know-how and experience on the Great Green Wall Initiative. Emphasizing on the right of all citizens to access affordable healthcare and the potential offered by both African and Turkish public and private healthcare sectors, the Conference welcomed the Congress of Health in Africa" along with commending "Turkey-Africa Scholarship Program as an important tool for further cooperation in higher education between Turkey and Africa.

The Ministers reiterated their support for peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict in accordance with the principles of international law and all relevant United Nations resolutions. They underlined their commitment to cooperate to fight and eliminate all forms and manifestations of terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization as well as deal with all forms of financial and operational supporting terrorist organizations and groups.

The Ministers commended the attention accorded to the annual May 25 Africa Day celebrations in Turkey as a channel to providing visibility to the African Union-Turkey partnership. They noted this as a vehicle to promote, maintain and increase awareness within the population of both Africa and Turkey. They committed themselves to establish and enhance Joint Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms of the partnership through regular consultations. Turkey and Africa have developed concrete projects in line with the AU Agenda 2063 and the AU's First Ten Year Implementation Plan. The conference noted the importance of the steady increase in development assistance from Turkey to Africa and encouraged the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency to be further engaged with the African Union on deliverable projects. They also noted the importance of considering cooperation between Africa and Turkey in the field of civil aviation in relation to advancing the Single African Air Transport Market as a priority AU flagship project.

In conclusion, the Ministerial Council also declared its full solidarity in support of: the legitimate and fundamental claim of rectifying an historical injustice through equitable representation of Africa in the UN Security Council; the fight against any form of unlawful attempts to overthrow constitutional authorities and of any form of armed violence; the promotion of democracy, justice, security and unity of the peoples. They also called on both sides to streamline efforts for the successful realization of the Third Africa-Turkey Summit to be held in 2019.

Sudan and Egypt Foreign Ministers determined to boost cooperation

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Sudan, Professor Ibrahim Ghandour, and the Chief of the National Intelligence and Security Services, General Mohamed Atta Al Moula Abas, met with Egypt's Foreign Minister, Sameh Shukri, and General Abas Kamil, head of the Egyptian Security last week.

A statement issued on Thursday underlined the strategic relations between the two countries and the need to cooperate and coordinate at the highest levels in ways that would reflect their deep relationship. The two sides agreed to reactivate the High-level Joint Committee and other mechanisms in various areas, improve political consultations at the ministerial level and in any other committees, while at the same time removing any hurdles that faced these committees. The statement said the two sides were determined to boost cooperation, making use of the respective expertise, in the fields of energy and electricity, land, air and maritime transportation and other infrastructure projects.

The two sides also stressed the importance of cooperation and coordination over the Nile waters. The statement said Sudan and Egypt should work to implement the outcome of the tripartite summit results between the Sudan, Egypt and Ethiopia, with regard to the GERD, reached in Addis Ababa and within the context of the Declaration of Principles reached in Khartoum in March 2015.

The statement underlined the need to address each other's concerns and to put a stop to inaccurate media reports, and ensure the media conveyed the correct image about the ties between the two sides. They agreed to work together to draft a media ethic that would do away with any abuse of officials or people on the other side. The two sides also agreed to

expand consultation on regional issues of mutual concern and to make an effort to ensure they had a closer view including on regional issues.

The two sides agreed to continue to boost military and security cooperation between the two countries and to convene the Joint Military Committee and the Security Commission as soon as possible. They also agreed to hold regular meetings of the Political and Security Consultation Panel that groups the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the heads of the security organs from the two countries. This would allow them to improve coordination on issues of mutual concern and to help resolve any concerns that might rise.

They agreed to hold the next High-level Joint Committee, headed by the two presidents, in Khartoum. The last meeting was held in Cairo in 2016.

AU Peace and Security Council meeting renews AUHIP mandate

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union at its 750th meeting held on Tuesday last week (February 6) considered the activities of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) for Sudan and South Sudan. The Council renewed the Panel's mandate until 31 December 2018. The meeting was briefed by Thabo Mbeki, Chairperson of AUHIP on the activities of the Panel and by the Permanent Representatives of Sudan and South Sudan, as well as by Ethiopia in its capacity of IGAD and an African Member of the United Nations Security Council and by Cote d'Ivoire also an African member of the UNSC.

The Council commended the work of the Panel and its members, former President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa; former President Abdulsalami Abubakar of Nigeria; and former President Pierre Buyoya of Burundi, and their support staff. It commended the Chair of IGAD, Prime Minister Haile Mariam Desalegn of Ethiopia, for his continued engagement and support and welcomed the appointment of the AU High Representative for Silencing the Guns, Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Algeria, as a new member of AUHIP.

The PSC welcomed the unilateral declarations of a ceasefire and cessation of hostilities respectively by the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) in respect of the Two Areas, and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudan Liberation Movement- Minni Minawi (SLM-MM) in respect of Darfur. It also welcomed the Joint Statement on Unilateral Ceasefire, Cessation of Hostilities and Completion of Negotiations, signed on 4 February, by the Government and the SPLM-N, committing themselves to sustain their unilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, to continue efforts to resolve outstanding issues and reconvene at the invitation of the Panel to complete negotiations on a formal Cessation of Hostilities. It urged the parties to continue their search for the necessary compromises to reach agreement at the next round of negotiations, to allow formalization of an agreement and delivery of humanitarian assistance. It requested the Government and the armed movements in Sudan to sustain and renew all unilateral declarations of ceasefire and cessation of hostilities. It urged the Government and SPLM-North to continue their preparations to resume the adjourned cessation of hostilities negotiations by March 6 when, the PSC said, it expected the parties to reach a formal cessation of hostilities agreement.

The PSC noted the Sudan National Dialogue, called by President Al Bashir in January 2014, was concluded in Khartoum in October 2016 with the adoption of a National Document of recommendations, and the establishment of a High Implementation Committee to oversee the next phases of the Dialogue, which would include preparations for elections, and the making of a new Constitution for the Republic of Sudan. It reiterated its conviction that the principles of the Roadmap Agreement, requiring inclusive processes for overseeing electoral processes and drafting a new constitution, remained relevant for democratic transformation of Sudan. It urged the Government of Sudan and the Sudanese opposition parties to renew their commitment to inclusive national political processes, as envisaged in the Roadmap Agreement, and requested AUHIP to continue its consultations with Sudanese interlocutors to identify ways of enhancing inclusivity in the next phase of Sudan's political processes. It appealed to all Sudanese parties, particularly the Government, to create necessary conditions for the participation of Sudanese political actors in the national political processes, and for the authorities to exercise restraint in their response to public dissatisfaction with regard to the economic situation.

The Council welcomed improvement of the situation in the Abyei area thanks to the continued deployment of the UN Interim Force for Abyei (UNISFA). It commended Sudan and South Sudan for the implementation of previous decisions of the PSC concerning cooperation on security issues. It also welcomed the Extraordinary meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism on February 4, facilitated by the AUHIP, during which key decisions were reached to address all concerns expressed by the UN Security Council. It acknowledged the significant improvement in the relations between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities in Abyei and noted the extraordinary meeting of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC) in November last year, alongside a meeting of traditional leaders of the two communities but underlined that this had not been able to reach agreement on the establishment of the interim institutions. Equally, no progress had been made in resolving the final status of Abyei. The Council requested the Presidents of Sudan and South Sudan to continue their discussions on the basis of AUHIP's Proposal on the Final Status of Abyei Area of 21 September 2012. It also urged them to mandate their representatives in AJOC to discuss and take decisions on the establishment of the Abyei Area interim institutions, in accordance with the Agreement on Temporary Administrative and Security Arrangements for the Abyei Area of June 2011.

The PSC called upon the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan to implement the decisions they took during the Extraordinary Joint Political and Security Mechanism meeting (February 4) relating to the implementation of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zones and the commencement of the work on border demarcation, and requested the AUHIP to intensify its engagement with the Parties to encourage implementation.

The Council encouraged AUHIP to extend its support to AU engagement in support of IGAD efforts towards the resolution of conflict in South Sudan and to renew its efforts, together with other AU mechanisms, to work for the democratic transformation of South Sudan with particular reference to the implementation of the Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan of August 2015 (ARCSS).

The PSC also requested AUHIP to urgently implement the recommendations of the Khartoum Consultation of October last year when the Panel brought together senior policymakers, scholars and civil service leaders to assist in developing a holistic approach to

the challenges of peace, security, stability and development in the region, and to facilitate and conduct further research and consultation to inform proposals for action.

Former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair visits Ethiopia

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn received the former Prime Minister of the UK, Tony Blair (1997-2007) on Monday this week (February 12). The Prime Minister briefed Mr. Blair currently the Executive Chairman of the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change (TBIGC), a non-profit organization that aims to make “globalisation work for the many, not the few”, on the ongoing economic developments in Ethiopia. Despite the ecological challenges posed by the effects of the Pacific Ocean’s El Niño and La Nina climate cycles, and the droughts such as the one in 2015, caused by these, Prime Minister Hailemariam underlined that Ethiopia continued to expand and keep its track record of fast, double digit, economic growth over the past decade.

Among the topics of discussion between the Prime Minister and Mr. Blair were industrialization through the creation of industrial zones, job creation especially for the youth who make up the majority of the country’s population, and the national effort to provide universal provision of electricity, potable water and quality education.

Extolling the economic strides Ethiopia has been making, in spite of impending climatic challenges, Mr. Blair told Prime Minister Hailemariam that, “Despite all the challenges and issues, Ethiopia’s economy is still growing strongly, still attracting a lot of foreign investment.” Indeed, he said, the Tony Blair Africa Governance Initiative (TBAI), the antecedent of the current Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, had attested to the act of the ambitious development narrative. According to a commentary published in July 2015 by the then country head of the TBAI working on a program for Effective Governance in Ethiopia, Sebastien Frenedo, “with the focused work of the Government of Ethiopia’s Industrial Parks Development Corporation (IPDC) investors have begun to get a grip on the opportunity Ethiopia’s ambition presents.”

Acknowledging the effort the Government has put into the creation of jobs through industrial park schemes, the provision of a proper education, and the delivery of basic amenities such as electricity and potable water, and making a significant difference to Ethiopian lives, Mr. Blair reiterated his Institute’s continued backing for these high priority areas of intervention. The discussions with the Prime Minister concluded with agreement on ways of further heightening the ongoing support the TBIGC has been providing Ethiopia since 2014. It was therefore in the light of several years of close monitoring and observation that Mr. Blair made the remark: “For those who watched Ethiopia for several decades, it is always important to remember how far Ethiopia has come today from where it was back in the 1980’s.” Commending Ethiopia’s unremitting efforts to improve the lives of its citizens, he added that, “I think this is important to recognize.”

During his last visit in May 2016, Mr. Blair visited the Bole Lemmi Industrial Park and made similarly encouraging remarks about Ethiopia’s efforts to attract world-class foreign investors and companies into the industrial parks as a springboard to a higher level of development.