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**Africa and the African Union**

The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, Moussa Faki Mahamat, issued a statement on Wednesday (February 20) emphasizing that he was closely following the situation in Ethiopia. He recalled that Ethiopia was not only home to the African Union Headquarters, but also an important member of the Union. The statement said the Chairperson was confident in the ability of the Ethiopian authorities and people to overcome the challenges at hand and to consolidate the remarkable progress made in the socio-economic development of the country. The stability of Ethiopia, he said, was crucial for the well-being of its people, the region and Africa as a whole. **(See article)**

Speaking at the briefing session to the diplomatic community on the declaration of state of emergency in Ethiopia on Tuesday (February 20), Ambassador Kwesi Quartey, the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission and representative of AUC Commissioner Moussa Faki Mahamat, voiced the position of the AUC on the current state of affairs in Ethiopia. Ambassador Quartey stressed that the African Union was confident in the ability of the Ethiopian authorities and people to overcome the challenges at hand and to consolidate the remarkable progress made in the socio-economic development of the country.” Ambassador Quartey underlined “The Government of Ethiopia, like any other Government in Africa and elsewhere in the world, has the responsibility to protect citizens and their property, as well as public infrastructure.” **(See article)**

The African Union deployed election observers Djibouti this week. The AU Mission is led by Anicet-Georges Dologuélé, former Prime Minister of the Central African Republic and the Mission is composed of 38 members, including ambassadors accredited to the AU in Addis Ababa, pan-African parliamentarians, heads of institutions in charge of elections and members of organizations of the African civil society. **(See article)**

About 860 peacekeepers from the 17th Motorized Battalion of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) received the UN Medal Awards on Monday (February 19) in recognition of

their tireless service and sacrifice to support peace efforts and to maintain security in Abyei Area. The UN Medals were presented as the UN's gratitude and appreciation of the troops' commitment, sacrifice, and hard work.

The African Road Maintenance Funds Association (ARMFA) held its Annual General Assembly in Addis Ababa this week under the theme "Preserving our road asset for realizing Agenda 2063". ARMFA President Rashid Mohammed said scaling up and accelerating road development is key to realize the pursuit of Africa's economic growth. Poorly maintained and impassable roads have kept rural farmers in many African countries poor despite their hard work, he said, adding that "Africa's sustainable economic growth is contingent on the development of reliable road infrastructure, coupled with proper maintenance and preservation"

## **Ethiopia**

President Dr. Mulatu Teshome received the President of Equatorial Guinea, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, who is on a three-day official visit to Ethiopia. Dr. Mulatu noted that the visit of the President of Equatorial Guinea to Ethiopia will essentially impact the bilateral relations between the two countries, underling that the visit would have a momentous impact on trade, investment and other arrays of cooperation. **(See article)**

Speaking at the celebration of "Nile Day," President Dr. Mulatu Teshome said that Nile riparian countries need to cooperate for the equitable utilization of the waters of the Nile for the prosperity of their peoples. "Nile Day" was celebrated this week on Thursday (February 22) in Addis Ababa under the theme: "The Nile: Shared River, Collective Action." The day is a commemoration of the establishment of Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) on February 22, 1999.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn met with President of Equatorial Guinea, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo on Thursday (February 22). Prime Minister Hailemariam noted that Ethiopia and Equatorial Guinea have a long standing diplomatic relationship, which he said, was based on the principles of Pan-Africanism and sense of brotherhood. The two sides further agreed to augment the existing bilateral cooperation, and to this effect, three cooperation agreements on bilateral consultation, Defense Sector and Workers' Recruitment were inked. **(See article)**

Prime Minister Hailemariam received the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat on Wednesday (February 21). The Chairperson expressed his confidence in Ethiopia in managing its own internal affairs and appreciated the briefing made to the diplomatic communities on February 20 on the current situation in the country. The two sides further discussed on the peace process in South Sudan and the upcoming Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Troop Contributing Countries of the African Union in Somalia (AMISOM) due to be held in Kampala on March 2, 2018.

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu briefed the diplomatic community on the current situation in Ethiopia on Tuesday this week (February 20). The Minister provided a general overview of the current state of affairs in Ethiopia together with the recent declaration of a State of Emergency by the Council of Ministers. He assured the diplomatic community that "the Government is undertaking reforms and concrete measures in a bid to move the county forward

in terms of ensuring sustainable peace, national security, and widening of the political space.” Speaking of the recent declaration of the State of Emergency, Dr. Workneh underlined that security disruptions in some parts of the country had posed “threats to the constitution and the constitutional order” that “could not be contained through the regular law enforcement mechanisms”. This had necessitated the State of Emergency. **(See article)**

Dr. Workneh opened the Ethio-Equatorial Guinea Joint Ministerial meeting on Wednesday (February 21). The Minister emphasized the strong and longstanding relations between the two countries and their shared insight on various areas of mutual concerns. He said, “This Joint Ministerial Commission meeting is a historic one since it further advances the ties between the two countries to a higher level.” **(See article)**

Dr. Workneh exchanged a congratulatory message with his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, as part of the ongoing celebrations of the 120th anniversary of the longstanding multifaceted bilateral relations between Ethiopia and Russia.

Minister of Transport, Ahmed Shide, addressed the Annual General Assembly of the African Road Maintenance Funds Association (ARMFA) on Monday (February 19), underlining that roads were among the most important public assets in Africa and timely maintenance of these roads brings immediate and dramatic benefits to road users. The Minister added that it was important to optimize the effectiveness of the money spent on maintaining this asset.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene opened a training session for young Ethiopian diplomats on Monday (February 19). The training was organized by the United Nations Political Affairs Department in collaboration with Horn of Africa Liaison Team of the Department of Political Affairs of the UN. State Minister Hirut thanked the organizers for setting up such an important platform, which she said, was instrumental at enhancing the multilateral diplomacy skills of the ministry's young diplomats.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Aklilu Hailemichael received Finnish Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ambassador Helena Airaksinen on Friday (February 23), and expressed his hope that the upcoming visit of the Finnish Minister of Trade and Development to Addis Ababa would create a chance for Finnish companies to explore business opportunities in Ethiopia, adding: “Ethiopia is keen to draw lessons from Finland and looks forward to aspects of technology transfer from Finnish companies.” The State Minister further called for more Finnish investors in Ethiopia.

An Ethio-Equatorial Guinea Business Forum opened on Wednesday (February 21) at Hilton Hotel, in Addis Ababa, which aimed to strengthen trade and investment ties between the two countries highlighted key investment opportunities in a range of sectors. **(See article)**

Machinery manufacturing and importing companies from Ethiopia and Turkey held a consultative forum in Addis Ababa on Tuesday (February 20). The meeting attracted more than 60 local and 15 Turkish companies, including Turkish agricultural machinery producers and exporters. **(See article)**

The Ethiopian Patriots Association has called on the youth of Ethiopia to uphold the peace and stability of the country. Lij Daniel Jote Mesfin, President of Ethiopian Patriots Association, laying a wreath at the Martyrs' Monument, to commemorate the 81st Martyrs' Day and the massacre of up to 30,000 Ethiopians in Addis Ababa by Italian occupying forces on 19 February 1937, called on the youth to eradicate poverty and uphold the long-standing values of peace and stability.

## **Djibouti**

Djibouti's legislative elections are taking place on Friday (February 23) and they will determine the next composition of the Djiboutian National Assembly. The Assembly is made up of 65 seats, and the last national elections for the Assembly took place in 2013 when the ruling political coalition, the Union for the Presidential Majority (Union pour la Majorité Présidentielle, UMP), a coalition led by President Ismail Omar Guelleh, won 43 seats. **(See article)**

Prime Minister Abdoukader Mohamed welcomed the initiative of the African Union to send a strong delegation to observe the elections in Djibouti and expressed satisfaction with the political maturity of the Djiboutian politicians who have carried out peaceful election campaigns.

## **Kenya**

Kenya has announced the nomination of lawyer Charles Nyachae, the former Chairman of the Committee for the implementation of the Constitution, as a judge of the East African Court of Justice. State House Spokesman Manoah Esipisu said Nyachae would be sworn-in at the conclusion of the East Africa Community Summit being held in Uganda.

## **Somalia**

The AU Peace and Security Council met to consider the political stabilization process in Somalia and the activities and exit strategy of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) on Thursday last week (February 15). **(See article)**

Turkish Deputy Prime Minister, Hakan Çavuşoğlu arrived in Mogadishu on Thursday (February 22) on an official visit to Somalia and visited the newly inaugurated Turkish Military base at Jazeera, south of Mogadishu; and is scheduled to meet with Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed and Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre.

The newly appointed Chief of National Intelligence and Security Agency [NISA], Hussein Mohamed Hussein took formally his oath of office on Wednesday (February 21). The new security chief assumed power during a handover ceremony held at the NISA Headquarters, with attendance of MPs and Government officials, including the Security Minister, Mohamed Abukar Islow alias 'Duaale'. During a special meeting in Mogadishu on Monday, the Cabinet approved the appointment of Hussein Osman Hussein to become director of the National Intelligence and

Security Agency (NISA) and General Bashir Abdi Mohamed to be the commissioner of the police.

The Somali government dismissed a Human Rights Watch accusation that Somali authorities are unlawfully detaining and prosecuting in military court, children with alleged ties to Al-Shabaab. The Spokesman of the ministry of security, Abdiaziz Hildhibaan described the report as baseless and over exaggerated.

Puntland authorities disclosed on Tuesday (February 20) that several members of the militant group Al-Shabaab were killed in a fresh operation in Dhadhaabo and Eeldibir in Galgala mountains, and a number of Al-Shabaab militants were also injured in the raid while two others were captured alive and taken to Bosaso.

### **South Sudan**

In a Joint Statement issued on Friday last week (February 16), the South Sudanese Parties and Stakeholders attending the High-Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF) pledged to continue vigorous engagements to conclude the revitalization efforts being undertaken in the hope of ensuring a lasting peace to South Sudan. **(See article)**

South Sudan President Salva Kiir attended the 19th ordinary summit of the East Africa heads of states in Kampala, Uganda on Thursday (February 22). The spokesperson for South Sudan's presidency, Ateny Wek Ateny said it will be the first time Kiir is attending the summit as head of state since South Sudan joined the East African Community (EAC) in 2016.

### **Sudan**

The hybrid peacekeeping mission in Darfur has started the second phase of its reconfiguration, with further reductions in UNAMID personnel. The UNAMID reduction plan is based on the improvements in the security and humanitarian situation in Darfur. According to government sources, large numbers of refugees and internally displaced Persons (IDPs) have begun to return to their villages following the improvement of the security situation in Darfur.

The Government of Sudan released dozens of activists and political detainees on Sunday (February 18); those released include the leaders of the Sudanese Communist Party (SCP) and Sudanese Congress Party (SCoP).

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### ***The President of Equatorial Guinea on an official visit to Ethiopia***

The President of Equatorial Guinea, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo arrived in Addis Ababa for a three-day official visit on Wednesday (February 21). Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn, Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu and other ministers and senior government

officials, welcomed President Teodoro Obiang Nguema on arrival at Bole International Airport. The high-level visit was primarily aimed to strengthen bilateral ties between Ethiopia and Equatorial Guinea in the fields of education, agriculture, tourism, trade and investment. Three cooperation agreements and one agreed minute were discussed and signed during the visit.

During the first day of his visit, President Dr. Mulatu Teshome received President Teodoro Obiang Nguema at the National Palace. During their discussions, the leaders deliberated on bilateral and issues of common interest. Dr. Mulatu underlined that the visit of the President of Equatorial Guinea to Ethiopia would expand bilateral relations between the two countries and certainly have a momentous impact on trade, investment and other relationships. President Mulatu also urged the importance of working in close collaboration to further strengthen bilateral ties. On this note, President Teodoro Obiang Nguema expressed Equatorial Guinea's desire to have strong cooperative relations with Ethiopia.

Prime Minister Hailemariam held talks with President Teodoro Obiang Nguema on the second day of the visit. Ministers and high-level officials of the Ethiopian government were also present. The Prime Minister noted that Ethiopia and Equatorial Guinea had long standing diplomatic relations based on the principles of Pan-Africanism and their sense of brotherhood. Ethiopia and Equatorial Guinea established diplomatic relations in 1970. Prime Minister Hailemariam underlined that as both countries were currently serving as non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council representing Africa, both had a responsibility to promote and defend African common interests and positions on peace and security issues at UN Security Council.

The Prime Minister expressed his hopes that Ethiopia and Equatorial Guinea would further bolster their bilateral relations in a wide range of areas including investment, trade, tourism and agriculture. President Teodoro Obiang Nguema expressed Equatorial Guinea's strong desire to have robust cooperative relation with Ethiopia. The two sides agreed to augment their existing bilateral relations and cooperation. They signed three agreements on bilateral relations, the defense sector and workers recruitment.

Earlier, Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu opened the Ethio-Equatorial Guinea Joint Ministerial Commission Meeting. The Equatorial Guinea delegation was headed by Simeón Oyono Esono Angüe, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea. Other Ministers, senior government officials, Ambassadors and experts drawn from both countries also attended the meeting. Dr. Workneh emphasized the strong and longstanding relations of the two countries and their shared insights on various areas of mutual concerns. He extended his appreciation on behalf of the Government of Ethiopia to Equatorial Guinea for the close collaboration achieved in numerous areas, underlining that Ethiopia attached a great deal of importance to the relationship between the two countries. He said Ethiopian Airlines' daily flights to Equatorial Guinea would help to further strengthen the relations between the two nations. The Minister, who noted that President Teodoro Obiang Nguema's visit would help implement the agreements previously signed between the two countries, said, "This Joint Ministerial Commission meeting is a historic one since it further advances the ties between our two countries to a higher level." Referring to multilateral issues, Dr. Workneh also noted that the two countries should continue to promote and defend African positions at the United Nations.

Ambassador Simeón Oyono Esono Angüe, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Equatorial Guinea agreed with Dr. Workneh that Ethiopia and Equatorial Guinea could now move to a higher level in further strengthening the two countries' bilateral relations. He emphasized Ethiopia and Equatorial Guinea should continue to work together further in the areas agreed at the experts' meeting: trade, investment, agriculture, education and air services. He emphasized that Equatorial Guinea wanted to emulate Ethiopia's experience so as to diversify its economy.

An Ethio-Equatorial Guinea Business Forum was also held on Wednesday (February 21) at Hilton Hotel, aiming to strengthen trade and investment ties between the two countries and highlight key investment opportunities in a range of sectors. Speaking at the opening of the Forum, Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations President, Melaku Ezezew said the forum would help to explore a number of important issues that affect the relations between the two sides. It could be considered as opening a new chapter for economic relations between the two countries, he added. Chamber of Commerce of Equatorial Guinea President, Gregorio Boho Camo said the Equatorial Guinea delegation was there to see the business opportunities in the country and to work with Ethiopian business people. The cooperation between the two sides needs to be developed to continental level, he said, adding that they could learn a lot from Ethiopia as it is one of the biggest countries in Africa. The Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations and the Chamber of Commerce of Equatorial Guinea have signed MoU that would enable them to implement the previous several agreements signed to enhance cooperation in the fields of air transport services, trade, agriculture, investment, and experience sharing.

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***Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh briefs the Diplomatic Community on the current situation in Ethiopia***

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu briefed resident Ambassadors and other invited guests on the current situation in Ethiopia on Tuesday this week (February 20). Dr. Workneh opened his remarks by extending his gratitude to distinguished members of Diplomatic Corps in Addis for their “concerns and your desire to engage with us at this critical time.”

Dr. Workneh provided a general overview of the current state of affairs in Ethiopia together with the recent declaration of a State of Emergency by the Council of Ministers. He assured the diplomatic community that “the Government is undertaking reforms and concrete measures in a bid to move the county forward in terms of ensuring sustainable peace, national security, and widening of the political space.” Speaking of the recent declaration of the State of Emergency, Dr. Workneh underlined that security disruptions in some parts of the country had posed “threats to the constitution and the constitutional order” that “could not be contained through the regular law enforcement mechanisms”. This had necessitated the State of Emergency.

Underlining the detailed and rigorous procedures and methods employed, including principally a series of consultations and evaluations of the security situation in the country, before taking such

a decision, Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh said the State of Emergency was targeted at “maintaining the wellbeing of the public, protecting the economic installations from destruction and safeguarding the country’s peace and security” as well as “protecting the constitution and the constitutional order, ensuring security and stability of the country and protecting the freedom of movement of citizens.”

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene, provided the details of the State of Emergency, particularly the powers and functions of the Command Post established to supervise its orderly execution. The Command Post, which is headed by the Prime Minister, will have a presence at all levels of the government through ancillary organs it will establish on an *ad-hoc* basis. State Minister Hirut underlined that “The overall implementation of the State of Emergency Proclamation as well as the measures taken for its implementation will be monitored by the Inquiry Board established under the Proclamation.” The Inquiry Board will be composed of Members of Parliament and legal experts appointed by the House of People’s Representatives. The State Minister said that its main duty would be to “watch the legality of measures taken and make sure they comply with Human Rights laws.” Mrs. Hirut reassured the Diplomatic Corps in Addis that during the months where the State of Emergency would be in effect, “The privileges and immunities of the diplomatic missions will continue to be observed as per the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.”

Speaking at the briefing session, Ambassador Kwesi Quartey, the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission and representative of AUC Commissioner Moussa Faki Mahamat, voiced the position of the AUC on the current state of affairs in Ethiopia. Ambassador Quartey stressed that the African Union was confident in the ability of the Ethiopian authorities and people to overcome the challenges at hand and to consolidate the remarkable progress made in the socio-economic development of the country.” Ambassador Quartey underlined “The Government of Ethiopia, like any other Government in Africa and elsewhere in the world, has the responsibility to protect citizens and their property, as well as public infrastructure.” He laid emphasis on the fact that “it is up to the Government of Ethiopia, on the basis of its own analysis of the situation, to take the measures it deems appropriate” and that “the international community should act in manner that strictly respects the sovereignty and the independence of African countries”. Ethiopia is no exception.

After the briefing, Dr. Workneh responded to questions raised by various Ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps.

Details of the State of Emergency have now been released. The State of Emergency Command Post, as stated in the Proclamation, has preventive and corrective powers and functions. Under its preventive duties, the Command Post is authorized to prohibit the preparation, publication and circulation of materials and symbols and gestures that are meant to agitate and cause an atmosphere of baseless suspicion and proclivity for disturbance among people. Apart from that, the Command Post is legally sanctioned to arrest without warrant individuals suspected of committing gross misdemeanor such as initiating, leading, organizing, violating, or in any way participating in crimes against the constitution and the constitutional order. If need be, the Command Post also has the authority to search a residence, land, and vehicles in order to seize suspicious items that might be used to commit crimes. Depending on the security situation in a



particular region, the Command Post can also invoke its power to determine the circumstances whereby a curfew may be decreed, designate locations where weapons (guns, blades and incendiary devices) are prohibited in the interest of public safety, unless and otherwise stated.

Under the corrective powers provided to it, the Command Post has the primary duty of reinstating the damage caused during the prevailing unrest in different parts of the country. That being the case, the Command Post undertakes measures that are meant to indemnify those who suffered damage, by re-establishing administrative structures that were destroyed due to ongoing conflict; facilitating the return and rehabilitation of displaced populations and provide security for businesses, service delivery establishments and other public institutions; as well as ensuring the safety, security and proper distribution of basic goods and services.

Meanwhile, the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, Moussa Faki Mahamat, issued a statement on Wednesday emphasizing that he was closely following the situation in Ethiopia. He recalled that Ethiopia was not only home to the African Union Headquarters, but also an important member of the Union. As such, Ethiopia played a key role in promoting regional peace and security, as well as in the pursuit of the continental agenda. The statement said the Chairperson was confident in the ability of the Ethiopian authorities and people to overcome the challenges at hand and to consolidate the remarkable progress made in the socio-economic development of the country. Last month, he welcomed the steps taken by the Ethiopian authorities to widen the political and democratic space. He was encouraged by the Government's willingness to persevere on this path. He stressed the need for all concerned stakeholders to display a spirit of responsibility and refrain from any acts likely to undermine peace and stability. He said these were precious and without these neither prosperity nor democracy was conceivable. The Chairperson also stressed that the African Union was, as always, at the disposal of its Member States to assist them, whenever necessary and in the manner deemed to be most appropriate, to address the challenges that necessarily arise in any endeavor to deepen democracy and advance development. He concluded by looking forward to the strengthening of the steps taken to respond to the concerns expressed by segments of the population in a spirit of dialogue, mutual tolerance and commitment to Ethiopia's best interests that transcend all political and other differences. The stability of Ethiopia, he said, was crucial for the well-being of its people, the region and Africa as a whole.

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### ***South Sudan Parties and Stakeholders pledge to continue engagement***

In a Joint Statement issued on Friday last week (February 16), the South Sudanese Parties and Stakeholders attending the High-Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF) pledged to continue vigorous engagements to conclude the revitalization efforts being undertaken in the hope of ensuring a lasting peace to South Sudan.

The Joint Statement was issued at the conclusion of the IGAD-led Second Phase Revitalization Forum on the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, 2015 (ARCSS) held over the previous ten days. The First Phase of the High-Level Revitalization Forum concluded on December 21, 2017, with the signing of an Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection

of Civilians and Humanitarian Access. The parties initialed these areas of agreement, attached to this Joint Statement.

The Joint Statement said that during the Second Phase the Parties had engaged intensively and deliberated diligently, with the help of the facilitators, enabling them to reach a broad consensus on a number of issues, including key principles for guiding the deliberations of the Forum. It also noted, based on consultations with the parties, that the Facilitation presented two consolidated texts of adjustments to Chapter I and Chapter II of the ARCSS, upon which the Parties will continue their deliberations. The Forum itself will resume on a later date. This, noted the statement, will enable the Parties to continue their intensive engagement and consultations on all outstanding issues, especially on responsibility-sharing and the key security arrangements necessary for ending the conflict.

The statement said the Chairperson and Members of IGAD Council of Ministers will, in the days ahead, engage the South Sudanese Parties and intensify their efforts to assist the Parties to make the necessary compromises that will resolve outstanding issues. Specific missions related to such actions will be undertaken by the IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan, Ambassador Ismail Wais and the IGAD Facilitators.

On the basis of the progress witnessed during the Second Phase of the High-Level Revitalization Forum, the Parties and Stakeholders to the Process made important recommendations that included a strong and urgent need to honor all their commitments and to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access. They also strongly called on all parties to submit their compliance to scrutiny. It was noted that the Parties would continue their cooperation with the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism as it monitors and verifies the implementation of the cessation of hostilities.

Mentioning the realization of the Parties' of the need to bring an end to the suffering of the people of South Sudan, the statement stressed that the Parties had reaffirmed their commitment to the Revitalization of the ARCSS and had pledged that they would refrain from any actions that might undermine the successful completion of the Revitalization process.

The High-Level Revitalization Forum was launched on December 18, 2017 by Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn, Chairperson of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government, in the presence of Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission and Festus Mogae, Chairperson of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (JMEC). All the Parties have pledged that they would continue to cooperate with IGAD in their urgent quest for lasting solutions for South Sudan.

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### ***Djibouti's National Assembly elections***

Djibouti's legislative elections are taking place on Friday (February 23) and they will determine the next composition of the Djiboutian National Assembly. The Assembly is made up of 65 seats, and the last national elections for the Assembly took place in 2013 when the ruling

political coalition, the Union for the Presidential Majority (Union pour la Majorité Présidentielle, UMP), a coalition led by President Ismail Omar Guelleh, won 43 seats. Under amendments to the electoral law, introduced in December 2012, an element of proportionality was brought in. Previously, the electoral list which won the majority of the votes took all seats in each constituency. From the 2013 election, the winning list is entitled to 80% of the seats and the remaining 20% of the seats are allotted proportionally to other lists which obtain at least 10% of the valid votes.

According to the Djiboutian Ministry of Interior, in addition to the UMP, several other parties are fielding candidates including the Center for United Democrats (CDU); the Union for Democracy and Justice (UDJ) and the PDD (Democratic Party of Djibouti), which have merged their list of candidates; and the Republican Alliance for Development (ARD). The number of voters registered to take part in the elections is estimated at over 192,000 (20% of the total population of 940,000).

The African Union deployed election observers Djibouti this week. The AU Mission is led by Anicet-Georges Dologuélé, former Prime Minister of the Central African Republic and the Mission is composed of 38 members, including ambassadors accredited to the AU in Addis Ababa, pan-African parliamentarians, heads of institutions in charge of elections and members of organizations of the African civil society. The Members of the Observation Mission are drawn from 22 African countries, including, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Mauritania, Central African Republic, Republic Democratic Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Somalia, Chad, Togo and Tunisia. As part of their preparations, the AU Election Observers Mission was given a background presentation of the political context of the February 23 legislative election; the state of preparations and perspectives, presented by the Independent National Electoral Commission and the security situation prevailing in the country presented by the Representatives from the Ministry of National Security.

The main purpose of the mission is to provide “an honest, independent and impartial observation and assessment of the organization and conduct of the elections.” The mission has been meeting with Djibouti’s political, administrative and judicial authorities, the institutions in charge of elections; the national actors involved in the electoral process and the representatives of the international community; and will be deployed in all the regions and districts. It is due to present a preliminary report on Monday (February 26), highlighting its observations and recommendations to the political authorities and other stakeholders.

Mr. Dologuélé met with Mr. Abdi Ibrahim Absieh, President of the Constitutional Council of Djibouti on Monday (February 19) to discuss the state of preparedness of the legislative election. The Constitutional Council ensures the regularity of the major political consultations in the country and whether laws passed by the National Assembly are in compliance with the provisions of the Constitution. It also examines and settles all disputes relating to elections as well as proclaims the results of the elections. The AU Mission head also met with Mr. Dini Mohamed Bourhan, President of the Independent National Electoral Commission of Djibouti, the body responsible for the successful organization of the elections including voting cards, ballots, and the time allocated for the opening of the pooling stations.

Mr. Dologué held another meeting with Ambassador Adam Kulach, Chief of the European Union Delegation to Djibouti and IGAD. They agreed that the new provision to grant a 25% quota for the participation of women as candidates in the legislative elections would make a difference to this year's results as well as send out a good message for other countries to emulate. Ambassador Kulach said he appreciated the willingness of the government to open the registration of voters on the list for a longer period to give enough time to all voters to register and take part in the elections. Both the AU and the EU have emphasized they would like to see an inclusive elections to enhance democracy. In a meeting with Mrs. Barbara Manzi, Resident Coordinator of the United Nation Development Program (UNDP) and UNFPA Resident Representative in Djibouti, Mr. Dologué underlined the need to encourage civic education of the population and the role of the media to raise awareness and sensitize the population on the need to fully take part in the electoral processes of their country so that they can chose their representatives to defend their interest at the level of the parliament and beyond.

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***AUPSC underlines need for coordinated training for Somali Security Forces***

The AU Peace and Security Council met to consider the political stabilization process in Somalia and the activities and exit strategy of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) on Thursday last week (February 15). The Council was briefed by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui, and the IGAD Special Envoy for Somalia, Dr Mohamed Ali Guyo and heard statements from the Permanent Representatives of Somalia; Ethiopia, in its capacity as the Chair of IGAD and African Member of the UN Security Council; Cote d'Ivoire in its capacity as A3 member, and Djibouti in its capacity as a Troop Contributing Country, as well as by the representatives of the League of Arab States, the United Nations and the European Union.

The Council took note of the progress made in the political process due to the political space and enabling environment created by AMISOM working in collaboration with the Somali Security Forces, particularly in regard to relations between the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Member States. It commended the passing of key legislation, the adoption of the National Security Architecture, which provides a broad framework for the building up of the Somalia National Security Forces (SNSF), as well as the recent agreement on a Roadmap on Inclusive Politics, which calls for a constitutional review process, a new electoral model for elections under universal suffrage by 2020, and for reconciliation.

The Council emphasized that it was imperative to build up the capacity of the Somali security forces in readiness for the take-over from AMISOM. Equally, it underlined the importance of coordinated and harmonized training for Somali Security Forces to avoid confusion among the forces and other institutions in the country, "to avoid mixed messages to the SNSF and other institutions in this critical stage of stabilizing the country". Several countries are involved in the training of various military and intelligence units including the UAE, Turkey, the US and the UK. Both Turkey and UAE operate training academies in Mogadishu, and AMISOM itself also conducts capacity training for the national army and the police. In fact, the new National

Security Architecture developed last year proposes a unified training curriculum for the formation of an 18,000 strong Somali National Army backed by 4,000 Special Forces. A further 32,000 strong police force will be made up of both federal and state government units.

Overall, the Council underlined “the importance of a coherent and comprehensive approach towards the transition process in Somalia”. This included the urgent need for capacity building for Somali administrative institutions to enable them effectively to occupy the areas liberated by AMISOM. It also stressed the importance of regular convening of the National Security Council meetings between the Federal Government and the Federal Member States as a forum for dialogue, consensus building, and decision making on critical political and security issues.

The Council emphasized the need for the timely commencement of the Operational Readiness Assessment of regional forces, and to speed up discussions on the integration of regional forces into the SNSF as well as support identification of SNSF elements responsible for the Somalia Transition Plan. It called for the Plan to be completed by the end of March, reiterating the importance of stabilization activities and supporting the SNSF, to ensure it has the necessary capacity to take over security responsibilities. It underlined in particular the importance of a coherent and comprehensive approach towards the transition process. The Council said the AMISOM transition plan must be based on a realistic timeframe and the attainment of the key security conditions suggested by the AU-UN Joint Review. It requested the AU Commission, working in close collaboration with the Federal Government to operationalize the Joint Task Force on Somalia, to enhance coordination and harmonization of all activities in Somalia and all support being provided to Somalia. It called on the Commission to establish a platform for political dialogue with the AMISOM Troop and Police Contributing Countries, IGAD, and concerned AU Member States to ensure a coherent and unified political approach of the situation in Somalia. Overall, the Council reiterated its call to all actors in Somalia to coordinate and harmonize their support to Somalia, including the training provided to the SNSF, to avoid mixed messages to the SNSF and other institutions at this critical stage of stabilizing the country.

The Council specifically underlined the importance of implementing the Juba Valley Corridor Operational Plan, in order to facilitate the neutralization of Al-Shabaab in Jamane, Jilib, Buuale and Sakow, setting conditions for SNSF control of Jubaland. It requested the AU Commission to expedite the development of a new AMISOM Concept of Operations, to continue to develop its administrative capacity in its Peace Support Operations as recommended by the Report of the Independent Panel of Experts on Verification and Confirmation of the Africa Standby Force Pledged Capabilities, and to develop, in close cooperation with the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms and the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA), a draft mechanism for naming and shaming of suppliers, financiers and recipients of illicit weapons.

The Council also reiterated its concerns over the need to address AMISOM’s funding gaps and financing the SNSF to take-over from AMISOM, and the necessity for predictable and sustainable funding for AMISOM, particularly from UN assessed contributions. It emphasized the importance of replenishing the AMISOM Trust Fund to facilitate AMISOM’s training of the SNSF. In this context it thanked partners for the pledges made during the London Conference in

May 2017 but also appealed to them to fully honor those pledges as well as support AMISOM troops with force multipliers and enablers.

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### *Ethiopian Turkish manufacturing consultation forum*

Machinery manufacturing and importing companies from Ethiopia and Turkey held a consultative forum in Addis Ababa on Tuesday (February 20). The meeting attracted more than 60 local and 15 Turkish companies, including Turkish agricultural machinery producers and exporters

Opening the forum, Wube Mengist, Deputy Secretary-General of the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Association, said the event would help the Turkish companies to identify the business and investment potential in Ethiopia. It would also help to encourage technology transfer in machinery and balance the trade volume between Ethiopia and Turkey. Ethiopia imports metals and metal products, electronics, electrical devices and spare parts, machinery and technologies from Turkey while exporting agricultural products, including vegetables, sesame, oil seeds, animal products, leather and leather products, and textiles. Deputy Secretary-General Wube Mengist said: “Thus far, the trade volume favors Turkey”. He noted that Turkey was an important partner for Ethiopia and the largest private employer, adding “And Ethiopia is working on becoming an industrial hub; this will be an opportunity for both sides.” So far, more than 187 Turkish companies have an investment of nearly \$3 billion and have created more than 10,000 jobs. According to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the volume of trade between the two countries continues to rise, and “Exports from Turkey to Ethiopia was \$439.73 million while imports from Ethiopia to Turkey amounted to \$35.31 million in 2016.”

The Central Anatolian Exporters’ Association Secretary-General, Ozkan Aydin, told the Forum that Turkish machine producers and exporters planned to enter the promising Ethiopian agro-industrial market. Addressing the Ethiopia-Turkey business-to-business meeting, he said the meeting gave an opportunity to explore and expand into new markets in Ethiopia and in Africa. He said: “We are here in Ethiopia with 10 big Turkish agricultural machinery producers and exporters to explore the Ethiopian market and introduce them to the Ethiopian business community.” Mr. Aydin also noted, “Ethiopia is a door to Africa and the region’s agricultural market, which is developing ...and this is why we brought agricultural machinery producers and exporters.”