

News in Brief

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News in brief

Africa and the African Union

Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari officially launched 2018 as the “African Anti-Corruption Year”, following the theme of the 30th AU Summit: “Winning the fight against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa’s Transformation”. Appointed as the AU Champion to deal with the theme, President Buhari made a solemn vow to the AU Assembly to do his best to ensure that the anti-corruption agenda received the attention it deserves and make the necessary impact in 2018 and beyond. **(See article)**

The second phase of the IGAD-led High-level Revitalization Forum for South Sudan opened on Monday (February 5) in Addis Ababa. The focus for this session, due to last for two weeks, is on matters of Governance, interim arrangements, a permanent ceasefire and security arrangements. The first phase of the Revitalization Forum ended successfully on December 21 with signing of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities and on unhindered delivery of humanitarian access. The session was opened by Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, Ethiopia’s Foreign Minister and Chairperson of the IGAD Council of Ministers, together with the AU Commission Chairperson. **(See article)**

Ethiopia

Speaking at an event marking the inauguration of the new premises of the Hungarian Embassy on Wednesday (February 7), State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene noted the re-opening the Embassy signalled the firm commitment of the Hungarian government to further strengthen the long standing ties of friendship between the two countries. She said existing strong people-to-people relations were being enhanced through the number of Ethiopians who have studied in Hungary.

An Ethiopian Business Diplomacy Delegation, led by State Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Aklilu Hailemichael took part in two Ethiopian Business and Investment Seminars, held in the cities of Kobe and Nagoya in Japan this week (February 6 and 7) as well as visiting a number of companies and holding talks with local officials. **(See article)**

Ethiopia’s Ambassador to the People’s Republic of China, Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos says that China-Ethiopia ties represent the best type of relationship that two nations can have. He described them as an excellent example for Africa and for the rest of the world. **(See article)**

In a press briefing on Thursday (February 8), Meles Alem, Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Ethiopia and Russia will be celebrating the 120th anniversary of their diplomatic relations. The two countries established diplomatic relationship in 889, during the reigns of Emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia and Tsar Nikolai II of Russia. The celebrations will include various cultural festivities in both Addis Ababa and Moscow.

Dr. Engineer Seleshi Bekele, Minister for Water, Irrigation and Electricity headed a delegation to the UK last week to exchange best practices with British companies on renewable energy. Dr. Seleshi signed a Memorandum of understanding to develop a project to supply off-grid solar energy to hundreds of villages in Ethiopia. **(See article)**

UN Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Mark Lowcock visited Ethiopia last week (January 27-29) to look at the ‘New Way of Working’ under which humanitarian and development actors collaborate to build climate-resilient communities and at the camps for internally displaced people.

The Federal Attorney General announced pardons for 746 suspects and prisoners, including Eskindir Nega and Andualem Arage, on Thursday (February 8), following a decision by the Executive Committee of EPRDF.

The House of People’s Representatives has appointed Ambassador Samia Zekaria as Chairperson of the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia. The House also appointed a Deputy Chairman and seven members of the Board. Ambassador Samia was previously Director General of the Central Statistical Agency and most recently the Ambassador of Ethiopia to Nigeria.

Ethiopia has assumed the chairmanship of the Nairobi Chapter of the Group of 77 and China Group of Developing Countries. The Ambassador of Ethiopia to Kenya, Ambassador Dina Mufti, who received the chairmanship from Pakistan, pledged to reinforce the group’s efforts in letting the voices of developing countries being heard in global diplomacy.

Ethiopia is hosting the next Regional Nile Day on February 22, the annual commemoration of the establishment of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) in 1999. The event brings stakeholders and policy makers from the Nile Basin member states, Ethiopia, Burundi, DR Congo, Egypt, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda, with Eritrea as an observer. It provides an opportunity to celebrate the benefits of Nile cooperation, and exchange experiences, views and ideas on topical issues related to the cooperative management and development of the shared Nile Basin water and related resources.

A \$500,000 project for the preservation of Bete Golgotha Mikael Church in Lalibela was launched on Saturday (February 3) by U.S. Ambassador Michael Raynor and Minister for Culture and Tourism, Dr. Hirut Woldemariam. The work is being funded by a grant from the U.S. Embassy through the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP), with matching funds from the World Monuments Fund.

Ethiopian Airlines announced last week that it had signed an Agreement with Guinea Airlines, for strategic partnership in management, maintenance and training. Ethiopian Group CEO Tewolde Gebre Mariam said the partnership is in line with the recently launched African Single Air Transport Market. He said it was a trilateral partnership with Guinea, ASKY Airlines and Ethiopian Airlines to fill an air connectivity vacuum. He added: “The

time has come for Africans to join hands as one and reclaim our rightful place in the global aviation industry.”

Ethiopian Airlines has announced that it is launching a 3rd daily flight between Johannesburg and Addis Ababa from April. It will also start direct flights from Addis Ababa to Chicago effective as of June 2, 2018. Chicago will be the Airline’s 4th destination in the U.S. and the 7th in the Americas.

The 2018 FIFA World Cup trophy tour will arrive in Addis Ababa on February 24, which gives Ethiopian fans the chance to experience football's most prestigious prize. Junedin Basha, President of the Ethiopian Football Federation said the occasion would be a big draw for the country’s youth. The 2018 FIFA World Cup trophy tour kicked off last September in host country Russia, and will visit more than 50 countries, ten in Africa, travelling 126,000 kilometers in the nine months before the tournament, being held June 14 to July 15, in Russia. The trophy, which will arrive in Ethiopia from Sudan, will stay two days in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia will host the next Championship of African Nations (CHAN) tournament scheduled for 2020. The Total African Nations Championship (or CHAN) is played between the best national teams of African countries, exclusively featuring players active in the national championships and qualified to play in the ongoing season. Expatriate players, regardless of where they play, are not qualified. The Championship alternates with the African Cup of Nations (AFCON).

Djibouti

The Djibouti Ambassador to Somalia, Dr. Aden Hassan Aden met with the new Governor of Benadir and Mayor of Mogadishu, Abdirahman Omar Osman (Engineer Yarisow) on Tuesday (January 6). Dr. Aden said Djibouti would assist rebuilding roads and other infrastructure in Mogadishu, adding that plans were underway to link the cities of Djibouti and Mogadishu as development partners. The Governor invited the Mayor of Djibouti to visit Mogadishu to discuss more possible assistance and partnership in the future.

Eritrea

At the beginning of this week, the Israeli government issued deportation notices to 20,000 male asylum seekers, from Eritrea and Sudan, giving 60 days to leave the country for an unnamed African country in exchange for \$3500 and a plane ticket. Those who do not accept will be imprisoned indefinitely. President Isaias said all those who wished to return home "have every right to do so," but said migrants from Eritrea and Sudan had paid a “high price” to human traffickers to reach Israel and said they needed fair compensation to start a new life in their home country, \$50,000, rather than \$3,500

Kenya

President Kenyatta, inaugurating a Sh28.3 billion cement clinker plant, in Kajiado country on Wednesday (February 7) called on all politicians to get down to work and focus on serving Kenyans. He said the time for "empty politicking" was over and leaders must embark on serious work to avoid short-changing the electorate. The elections are over, he said: “The people of Kenya have chosen their leaders. They now expect you to set aside distractions, games, and sideshows and focus your efforts on building our nation." The President also

announced plans for new cement and steel factories in Nakuru and Mombasa in the next four years.

President Kenyatta, speaking at the passing-out parade at the military Recruits Training School in Eldoret, praised the Kenya Defence Forces for their efforts in fighting Al-Shabaab. He said the troops in Somalia and those deployed to Boni Forest in Lamu County had been able to neutralise the terrorist group's plans in Kenya and in the region: "Our engagements have indeed degraded Al-Shabaab's ability to attack in Kenya and elsewhere."

Somalia

President Mohamed Abdullahi presided over the 6th meeting of the National Security Council this week (February 6-8) in Mogadishu. Those attending included Regional State Presidents and other senior officials from the Federal government, the Regional States and the Benadir Administration. The meeting was briefed on the security situation in the regional states and the agenda covered ways to stabilize the country before the 2020 general elections, the strengthening of cooperation between federal and regional security agencies and reforming the security sectors as well consideration of the building of the Somali National Army.

President Mohamed Abdullahi met the UAE Ambassador to Somalia Mohammed Ahmed Othman Al Hammadi on Wednesday (February 7) to discuss relations between the UAE and Somalia and ways to develop and strengthen their common interest. President Mohamed expressed his thanks to the UAE for its continued support to Somalia.

Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf of Somalia has been elected President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Judge Yusuf has been Vice-president of the ICJ since February 2015 and a judge at the court since 2009. He is one of the founders of the African Foundation for International Law, as well as chairperson of its Executive Committee. The International Court of Justice is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. Established in June 1945, the court settles, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by states and gives advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by duly organs and agencies of the United Nations.

The Federal Finance Ministry said this week that the government needed US\$60 million to print the new Somali currency to replace the old dilapidated notes currently circulating in the local markets. Finance Minister Abdirahman Duale Beyle said the government was working with the World Bank to meet the expense. The new currency will be printed "in the coming months"

South Sudan

The US declared an arms embargo on South Sudan on Friday (February 2) last week, and the EU also imposed sanctions on Friday last week on three current and former South Sudanese officials. All have already been sanctioned by the US. **(See article)**

The Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM) of Sudan and South Sudan agreed on Sunday (February 4) to finalize the activation of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone and withdraw any remaining troops by the end of the month. The delegations, headed by South Sudan Defence Minister Kuol Manyang Juuk and Chief of Joint Staff of the Sudan Armed

Forces Emad al-Din Adawi, discussed operationalization of the border zone, border monitoring operations, and border crossing border points. It decided the Joint Technical Border Corridors Committee (JTbcc) would meet on February 19, and agreed to activate the Ad-Hoc Committee for the 14 Mile Area, tasking UNISFA to organize the first meeting.

More than 300 child soldiers, 87 of them girls, were released by the South Sudan National Liberation Movement (SSNLM) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Opposition (SPLA-IO) on Thursday this week. More are expected to be freed in the coming weeks. The children will receive counseling and psycho-social support as part of the reintegration program implemented by UNICEF and partners. UNICEF welcomed the development, the largest release of children in nearly three years. UNICEF says an estimated 19,000 children continue to serve in the armed forces and groups more than four years after conflict erupted in December 2013.

UNESCO, UNDP, the Government of Japan and the JMEC, supported the Community Empowerment People Organisation and the Association of Media Development in South Sudan in a two-day training workshop on "the role of media in peace-building" for 50 journalists in Juba at the beginning of the month.

Sudan

The Central Bank announced a devaluation of the Sudan pound on Sunday (February 4), from 18 to 30 against the dollar. This is the second devaluation this year. The central bank called on commercial banks for better coordination in order to put foreign currency in "good use to help import essential items." Trading on the foreign exchange market has been volatile since October 12 when the US lifted its 20-year-old trade embargo on Khartoum.

The latest round of AUHIP facilitated talks between the Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (al-Hilu) held in Addis Ababa at the end of last week failed to make progress on a Cessation of Hostilities.

Foreign Minister Professor Ibrahim Ghandour met with the Italian Foreign Minister, Angelino Alfano on Tuesday (February 6) in Rome, on the sidelines of the Joint Responsibility and Objectives Conference on Illegal Immigration and Human Trafficking. They discussed bilateral relations and Professor Ghandour said Sudan looked forward to a greater Italian role after the end of US economic sanctions. Professor Ghandour also addressed the Joint Responsibility and Objectives Conference explaining Sudan's key role in combating illegal immigration and human trafficking.

Foreign Minister Professor Ghandour and Lt. General Mohamed Atta, Director-General of the National Intelligence and Security Service, started a two -day official visit to Egypt on Wednesday (February 7). They held a series of meetings with their Egyptian counterparts to draw up a roadmap to address all outstanding issues between the two countries. The visit comes as a result of the bilateral summit between President Al-Bashir and President E-Sisi on the sideline of the recent AU Summit.

The Armed Forces and the Rapid Intervention Forces (RIF) have underlined the stability of the security situation along Sudan's eastern border with Eritrea. General Mahmud Hemat, Commander of the 11th Division in Kassala, said Sudan would not be invaded through "the

Eastern gate.” General Abdul Rahman Al-Jaalil (RIF) said his forces came to maintain security and stability in the state.

The 4th International People's Friendship Festival opened on Monday (February 5) at the International Garden in Khartoum. The Festival, organized by the International People's Friendship Council, was opened by Lt. General Abdul Rahman al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, Assistant to the President of the Republic of Sudan. 86 countries, including Ethiopia, are participating in the Cultural Exhibition and Music; the festival continues until Saturday February 10.

Second Round of the South Sudan High-level Revitalization Forum...

The second phase of the IGAD-led High-level Revitalization Forum for South Sudan opened on Monday (February 5) in Addis Ababa. The focus for this session, following the first phase of the Revitalization Forum which ended successfully on December 21 with signing of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities and on unhindered delivery of humanitarian access, is on matters of Governance, interim arrangements, a permanent ceasefire and security arrangements.

This session of the Forum has brought together delegates representing the government, political parties and oppositions, former detainees and Civil Society organizations along with estranged groups. Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, Ethiopia's Foreign Minister and Chairperson of the IGAD Council of Ministers, the African Union Commission Chairperson, the IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan, the JMEC Deputy Chairperson, representatives from the United Nations, the European Union, the Troika (Norway, UK, and USA), China, and the IGAD Partners Forum (IPF) all attended the opening session.

This second phase of the High-level Revitalization Forum is seen as absolutely crucial for bringing an end to the on-going violent conflict in South Sudan. Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh in his opening remarks underlined that the representatives of the South Sudanese parties must think of the people they represent, not consider themselves as individuals striving for power. The parties have had numerous opportunities to change direction, he said, and they had repeatedly failed, adding that “this really is the very last chance for you to accept your responsibilities and take the necessary actions.” The Minister said: “No breakthrough in a peace process happens merely as a result of wishful thinking or chance; rather it requires determination, hard work and most of all the genuine commitment of all parties.”

Dr. Workneh thanked all those groups and entities that have been showing support to the peace process in South Sudan as well as those South Sudanese delegations actively participating in the revitalisation process. He pointed out that the IGAD Member States, the African Union, the international community, and the South Sudanese people themselves had all had high hopes after the signature of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement a few weeks ago. Nevertheless, within hours of the signing, he noted there have been allegations and counter-allegations of violations reported by the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM). Dr. Workneh made it very clear that all violators of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement would be held accountable. He urged all parties to fully adhere to the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement of December 21 and

concluded by underlining that High-level Revitalization Forum was a golden opportunity to bring peace and prosperity to South Sudan.

AU Commission Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat, underlined that the African Union and its member states could no longer wait for an end to South Sudanese belligerence. Stating that at least 1.2 million South Sudanese, 85% of them women and children, were now displaced, he said, “It is more than high time to prove your promises to your fellow South Sudanese.” He said that demonstration of strong and determined political will and actions as per the agreed and achieved results of the peace process would “close the very sad chapter of South Sudan in no time”. Quoting Mahatma Gandhi, Chairperson Moussa Faki said: “Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of mankind.” Naming the conflict as “a daring insult to human values”, Moussa Faki expressed his hope that all the stakeholders to the process would transcend their egos and selfish desires and commit themselves to the ongoing peace process.

Nicholas Haysom, the UN Special Envoy to South Sudan, underscored the critical importance of inclusivity and called for a comprehensive security arrangement mechanism and strong oversight and monitoring mechanism to fast track the peace process. Alex Rondos, EU Representative to the Horn of Africa, noted that the dialogue could not be a mechanical exercise but would be part of a very important effort towards ensuring viable peace in South Sudan. Troika Representative, Chris Trott, strongly supported the IGAD decision to take action against any violators of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. Ambassador Lt. General Augustino Njoroge, Deputy Chairperson of JMEC, underlined that peace was achievable and “what is needed is now a sense of comradeship and the same spirit that was witnessed in the first phase of the HLRF.”

As participants of the Forum hold the talks aiming to provide the people of South Sudan with a final peace, the country’s religious leaders have stressed the need to exercise restraint, forgiveness, love and reconciliation to ensure a successful outcome, to restore a permanent ceasefire and achieve full and inclusive implementation of the Agreement of the Resolution on the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) of August 2015.

This week the parties have begun considering substantive issues arising from the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict on South Sudan (ARCSS) that was signed in August, 2015. Discussions covered issues ranging from the Transitional National Legislative Assembly and the Council of States, and from the Judiciary to the Transitional Institutions and Mechanisms stipulated under Chapter I of Article 11, 12 and 14 of the Agreement. A consensus was reached on Wednesday on Article 2 of Chapter I of the August 2015 Agreement, concerning the mandate of the Transitional Government of the National Unity (TGoNU). Following discussions on Thursday on the provisions of the Declarations of Principles to provide guiding principles for the main Agreement and serve as the basis for ongoing talks, these will be open for signature on Friday (February 9).

...with growing international pressure for a real and urgent peace agreement

The United States of America imposed an arms embargo on South Sudan last week, and urged the United Nations and other countries to do the same. In a statement released on Friday (February 2) the State Department, saying it was "appalled" by the continuing violence that had defied the agreed cease-fire, announced that the U.S. was restricting all

sales of defense equipment and services to any and all of the parties to South Sudan's conflict. The arms restriction is limited to US jurisdiction and does not directly affect weapon flows from other countries. The State Department also called on South Sudan's neighbors to implement similar arms restrictions and urged the U.N. Security Council to support a global embargo on any arms to the country. The statement said: "The message must be clear. The United States, the region and the international community will not stand idly by as innocent South Sudanese civilians are murdered."

Following the State Department statement, the South Sudan government recalled its ambassador to the United States. Ambassador Garang Diing Akuong was ordered back to Juba. First Vice-President Taban Deng Gai said the U.S. move would negatively impact on efforts to peacefully resolve the conflict in his country.

The European Union also imposed sanctions on Friday last week (February 2) on three current and former South Sudanese officials allegedly implicated in human rights violations and obstructions of their country's peace process. Former army Chief of Staff General Paul Malong, Deputy Chief of Defense and Inspector General Malek Reuben Riak and Information Minister Michael Makuei Lueth , already sanctioned by the US, are now also subject to sanctions by all EU member states, effective immediately. The sanctions include assets freezes and a ban on travel to EU countries. Britain's Minister for Africa, Harriett Baldwin, welcomed the sanctions and pledged UK support to ending violence in South Sudan. She said: "It is more vital than ever that those undermining the peace process recognize the price of their actions," adding, "it is right that we are taking tough action against those who continue to act against the interests of the South Sudanese people."

It is clear that international frustration and concern over the continued violence and humanitarian crisis is rising. The latest cease-fire, which went into effect on Dec. 24, was violated within a matter of hours. Both sides have been accused of restricting the delivery of aid to millions across the impoverished country, including an estimated 1.5 million people near famine. The six-month report of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) to the AU Assembly in Addis Ababa last month noted that about 2 million people were internally displaced while 2 million others were refugees in neighboring countries owing to the ongoing fighting in South Sudan. The U.N. secretary-general warned of the imposition of "consequences" over the ongoing fighting; the African Union has also joined the calls for further sanctions on those blocking the path to peace.

Last week, IGAD, the AU and the United Nations (UN) held a joint consultative meeting on South Sudan and reaffirmed their readiness to take all necessary actions against individuals and groups that took actions to spoil or derail the revitalization process from moving forward. They called on the Transitional Government of National Unity and all South Sudanese parties to focus on the higher goal of the national interest and securing the future of South Sudan. They also reaffirmed their belief that there can only be a political solution to the conflict in South Sudan and underlined that the parties must demonstrate the political will to negotiate a permanent ceasefire and update the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan in order to end the appalling suffering inflicted on the South Sudanese population. In opening the session of the IGAD High-level Revitalization Forum on Monday this week, Ethiopia's Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh, in his capacity as the chair of IGAD's Council of Ministers underlined the determination of the international community to see that a real and lasting agreement was reached.

An Ethiopian Business Diplomacy Delegation in Japan

An Ethiopian Business Diplomacy Delegation, led by State Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Aklilu Hailemichael took part in two Ethiopian Business and Investment Seminars, held in the cities of Kobe and Nagoya in Japan this week (February 6 and 7) as well as visiting a number of companies and holding talks with local officials. Co-organized by the Ethiopian Embassy in Tokyo, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), UNIDO's Industry and Technology Promotion Office in Tokyo, and the city governments of Kobe and Nagoya, the seminars aimed to provide Japanese investors with relevant information regarding investment opportunities in Ethiopia, to attract strong and competitive industries especially those working in priority manufacturing sectors. They presented a clear view of the current status of the development of industrial parks along with Ethiopia's investment policy and its attractive incentives. Encouraging Japanese investors to invest in Ethiopia and benefit from the incentives package, the seminar gave a platform for the Ethiopian delegation to show why Ethiopia is a preferred destination for manufacturing investment and a chance for prospective investors to share experiences with Japanese investors already investing in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian delegation included Ambassador Cham Ugala, Ambassador of Ethiopia to Japan, Ato Zelalem Birhan, Director General of Business Diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as Ato Teka Gebreyesus, Deputy Commissioner of the Ethiopian Investment Commission and other officials from the Commission and the Industrial Parks Development Corporation. Ambassador Shinichi Saida, Ambassador Japan to Ethiopia, also participated along with senior officials from JICA and JETRO. The two-day seminar, held in the cities of Kobe and Nagoya, home for many major Japanese companies and institutes, brought together more than 120 company representatives and invited guests.

Dr. Aklilu in a keynote speech emphasized the growing relationship between Ethiopia and Japan marked with high level visits covering a wide range of interests in the sectors of education, health, agricultural projects and infrastructure development. He expressed Ethiopia's commitment and interest in enhancing relations with Japan and widening the scope to a new level of investment cooperation with proper use of development assistance through different development frameworks, such as TICAD (Tokyo International Conference on African Development) and the High-level Industrial Policy Dialogue. Dr. Aklilu noted that Ethiopia, with the aim to become the leading manufacturing hub in Africa in 2025, was developing industrial zones as a top priority to attract leading companies in the world. He underlined the different opportunities Ethiopia was offering to potential investors and encouraged them to seize the comparative advantage and assortment of investment incentives. It was important to invest in Ethiopia, he stressed, as it was a gateway to many regional and international markets. The Ethiopian Investment Commission also presented investment opportunities in Ethiopia, including the different tax incentives, the huge and vibrant productive labor force, and massive infrastructure development including cheap power, all of which made Ethiopia an excellent destination for Japanese foreign direct investment.

The delegation, during its six days in Japan, made a number of company visits and held meetings with senior officials including State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Masahisa

Sato, the Vice-Minister for the Economy, Trade and Industry, Mr. Daisaku Hiraki, the Deputy Mayor of Kobe City and senior officials of JICA and JETRO.

State Minister Dr. Aklilu discussed bilateral relations and economic cooperation with Mr. Sato who underlined the importance of such seminars to encourage more Japanese investors to Ethiopia. He underlined the importance of concluding the Bilateral Investment Treaty which he said was key to enhancing trade and investment ties. Mr. Sato acknowledged the huge potential Ethiopia offered in terms of human resource and praised the development of industrial parks. Dr. Aklilu noted the importance of creating an enabling environment for Japanese investors. He stressed the importance of establishing of special industry zones. He also mentioned the importance of the Kaizen business philosophy that encouraged work efficiency and increased the quality of production in many institutions in Ethiopia. He also appreciated the role Japanese organizations like JICA and JETRO were playing in promoting Japanese FDI in Ethiopia.

Dr. Aklilu and Toshiro Tamada, Deputy Mayor of Kobe, underlined their commitment to expand business ties between Ethiopia and Japan at a meeting on Tuesday (February 6). Dr. Aklilu expressed his keen interest in promoting business opportunities for Japanese investors in Ethiopia. He noted that Kobe city was a hub for major Japanese companies and he urged the Kobe City Government to encourage Japanese investors to invest in Ethiopia and look for market opportunities for Ethiopian products. He called for collaboration between Kobe city and Addis Ababa. Deputy Mayor Tamada warmly welcomed the Ethiopian Delegation and thanked members for visiting Kobe, one of the major port cities in Japan and a gateway in terms of culture and economy. He noted the place of the Kobe Institute of Computing, a Graduate University which has a considerable number of African students under the 'Abe Initiative', among them ten Ethiopian students studying Masters' programs. Mr. Tamada noted that the Kobe City Government was also offering the Ethiopian Athletics team the option of using Kobe for a pre-game training camp for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic and Olympic Games. Mr. Tamara said the Kobe City Government would continue to encourage and support private business opportunities and hoped the visit would be a catalyst for further cooperation between Japan and Ethiopia.

Prior to the seminar, the delegation visited the Rohto Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd in Osaka on Monday (February 5). Members of the delegation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Business Diplomacy Directorate General, the Ethiopian Investment Corporation and the Embassy of Ethiopia in Tokyo, held talks with the company's Chairman and CEO Mr. Kunio Yamada along with Executive Vice President Dr. Lekh Juneja, discussing issues of business and investment opportunities in Ethiopia. Dr. Aklilu detailed the positive incentives provided for investors, the availability of a competitive labour force and of a young and productive population as well as the economic development and political stability of the country. These were all factors, he emphasized that made Ethiopia a highly suitable place for Foreign Direct Investment.

During the visit to Nagoya city, Dr. Aklilu met the Honorary Consul of Ethiopia to Nagoya, Mr. Sadamichi Matsumoto, on Wednesday (February 7) to discuss ways to expand the partnership between Ethiopia and Japan. Mr. Matsumoto is an advisor of the Japanese Cleft Palate Foundation (JCPF) and together with Mr. Nagato Natsume, Executive Director of the JCPF and Professor at Aichi Gakuin University, the discussions focused on medical cooperation, as well as economic and cultural exchanges, airline industrial interests and academic research and collaboration. Mr. Matsumoto noted the support provided to Addis

Ababa Science and Technology University as well as the scholarship offers to Ethiopian students. They also took note of the efforts of the Japanese Cleft Palate Foundation and the Japanese Medical and Dental Network in providing better treatment to Ethiopian children affected with cleft lip and pallet.

The Ethiopian Delegation also visited to Brother Industries Ltd, a leading producer of industrial sewing machines, in Nagoya on Wednesday (February 7). Brother Industries is at the forefront of product innovation, delivering superior and innovative sewing and printing technology worldwide. Dr. Aklilu noted the fact that there are now at least a hundred companies currently operating in the textile and garment sector in Ethiopia, all there was a substantial need for heavy duty industrial sewing machines as well as maintenance for accessories. He urged the company to open a manufacturing plant in Ethiopia, adding, "Producing in Ethiopia is not only meeting the needs of the Ethiopian market, but also meeting the requirements of the African market".

China-Ethiopia ties are an example for all of Africa

Ethiopia's Ambassador to the People's Republic of China, Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos says that China-Ethiopia ties represent the best type of relationship that two nations can have. They are, he said, an excellent example for Africa and for the rest of the world of how two sides can work on a win-win basis. In an interview with China Daily Africa Weekly, Ambassador Berhane described China's engagement in Africa as positive, noting that Africa was changing rapidly and China was contributing to the changes taking place in the South in general, and in Africa in particular. China, indeed, was playing an important role in Africa's development in infrastructure, manufacturing and agriculture as well as its poverty-reduction and modernization efforts. The results, he said, were beneficial for everybody, "for China's growth and Africa's rise.

Ambassador Berhane noted that the relationship between China and Ethiopia was defined as a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership in May 2017 during the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation when Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn visited China. One element of the cooperation between the two countries was the emphasis on building industrial zones to fuel Ethiopia's economy. Three such zones have been established and 15 more are being built by the Ethiopian government and Chinese companies. This wasn't enough, however, said Ambassador Berhane. "We need to do more. We are working very closely with China." Ethiopian people welcome Chinese companies and "we need to expand cooperation."

Part of Ethiopia's sustainable development and poverty relief program was the Eastern Industrial Zone near the capital of Addis Ababa which has attracted more than 20 Chinese companies since it was launched in 2007, including Huajian International Shoe City and Great Wall Packing Material. Another industrial zone, built by the China Civil Engineering Construction Corp in Hawassa, began operations in 2016, and aims to offer 50,000 jobs and generate \$1 billion a year. Ambassador Berhane emphasized Ethiopia aims to become an industrial hub in Africa. China, he said, has been very supportive, encouraging companies to go to Ethiopia, where "We offer good conditions, including land, infrastructure and everything they need in one place." There are also companies from Turkey, India, Brazil and other parts of the world in the industrial zones, but the number of Chinese companies has

been growing significantly since the Johannesburg Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in 2015.

Ambassador Berhane, noting that China was moving to a higher phase of development, in technology and innovation, said: “Chinese companies have a good understanding of our situation. They see things properly and get engaged strongly.” He added: “In fact, in terms of fundamental outlook, China and Ethiopia share the same views, especially when it comes to development. So, sharing experiences between the two countries becomes easier.” He believed other African countries could learn from China-Ethiopia cooperation. China had done marvellously well in achieving modernization and any nation that wanted to improve, to reduce poverty, to advance, had a great deal to learn from China. Now, as Ethiopia is making progress, other countries were looking at Ethiopia's experiences. He noted Ethiopia's double-digit economic growth for the past 14 years, the reduction of poverty by 55%, and the 17 million people in education. He pointed out that factors that have contributed to success, in addition to China's support, included development strategies and policies, and people's commitment to development.

Ambassador Berhane said that much had been achieved so far. Everybody was getting the benefit, and there were growing ties and understanding. The results arising from the Belt and Road Initiative showed a comprehensive harmonization of policies, financial cooperation and a growing people-to-people relationship between China and Africa. Now, he said, was the time to cooperate fully with the Belt and Road Initiative, “to improve what we have laid down and to work for the realization, already showing impressive advance and success.”

UK-Ethiopia solar energy co-operation

An Ethiopian government delegation has visited UK to exchange best practices concerns and information with British companies in renewable energy and increase energy sector investment. Dr. Engineer Seleshi Bekele, Minister for Water, Irrigation and Electricity and Engineer Azeb Asnake, CEO of Ethiopian Electric Power made a joint working visit to the UK last week (January 31- February 2). The visit was organized by the UK Department for International Trade to highlight UK expertise in renewable energy and provide the opportunity for Minister Seleshi to meet relevant UK companies and stakeholders. During the visit, Minister Seleshi signed a Memorandum of understanding with Winch Energy to develop a project to supply off-grid solar energy to 700 villages in Ethiopia.

Minister Dr. Seleshi and Engineer Azeb, accompanied by Ambassador Hailemichael Abera, Ethiopian Ambassador to the UK, met with Mr. Jeremy Lefroy MP, the UK Prime Minister's Trade Envoy for Ethiopia. They also met other UK government officials and British companies in the renewable energy sector, to discuss areas in which the UK and Ethiopia could deepen their energy sector investment relationship. Minister Dr. Seleshi and Engineer Azeb also attended a roundtable chaired by the Trade Envoy and hosted by British renewable energy company Globeleq. A number of other UK companies made presentations covering their areas of expertise. Dr. Seleshi shared Ethiopian experience on the energy sector including the plans to generate 17,000MW of power by 2020.

Mr. Lefroy said he was delighted to welcome the minister and EEP's CEO to the UK. He noted that the government of Ethiopia had ambitious plans to increase its generation capacity

and expand electrification to provide for the poorest to access energy. He said the UK was already supporting those initiatives through projects such as Corbetti Geothermal, which included significant development and private finance from the UK, he hoped the visit would , encourage more British investment into Ethiopia’s energy sector.

Dr. Seleshi emphasized that renewable Energy was at the heart of Ethiopia’s plans to reach middle income status by 2025. He underlined that creating millions of new on- and off-grid connections would ensure better lives for all Ethiopians; improving health and education outcomes; and supporting the creation of new businesses and jobs. Productive and sustainable use of Ethiopia’s abundance of clean energy, he said, would also allow the country to share energy with our neighbors. This would provide revenue for Ethiopia and also to help to bring light and power to millions of people in East Africa. British companies, he emphasized, were key partners for Ethiopia in this.

Engineer Azeb welcomed the level of interest from British companies and developers in Ethiopia’s energy sector. She said there were many challenges to universal access in Ethiopia, but she hoped that recent reforms to the market, including “new PPP provisions and incentives for innovative renewable energy companies” would help Ethiopia develop a world class grid that was 100% clean, reliable and allow millions more people to access power.

Corruption: Top of the Agenda at the 30th AU Summit

The theme of the 30th AU Summit, held last month in Addis Ababa, was “Winning the fight against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa’s Transformation”. Dedicating the year 2018 as the “African Anti-Corruption Year”, the continental campaign was officially launched by Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, on Sunday (January 28).

President Buhari, appointed as the champion to advocate inculcation of the concept in African institutions, expressed his gratitude to the Assembly of the Union, “for entrusting me with the responsibility of serving as the Champion of the Theme of the Year;” and President Buhari made a solemn vow to do his best “to ensure that the anti-corruption agenda will receive the attention it deserves and make the impact we all hope for, during 2018 and beyond.”

According to estimates from the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Africa loses about \$50 billion dollars every year to continental-wide clandestine chains of illicit financial flows, making it one of the continent’s most urgent current concerns. Ms. Vera Songwe, Executive Secretary of the UNECA, while praising the initiative of the African Union to uphold the fight against corruption said firmly: “Corruption has held Africa back for far too long and it's time to nip it in the bud.” UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres also expressed UN determination to work with national anti-corruption institutions to curtail the curse of corruption and bring perpetrators to justice. The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, under *Goal 16*, calls on all countries to promote and develop accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, notably, by reducing bribery and corruption. The Secretary-General told the AU Assembly that combating corruption, tax evasion and illicit financial flows required an unimpeachable commitment to transparency and accountability. He stressed: “together we can end this menace and make sure that public funding and investments go where they are needed most.”

Referring to the appalling impact of this “global epidemic”, President Buhari told the AU Assembly that “Corruption is indeed one of the greatest evils of our time. Corruption rewards those who do not play by the rules and also creates a system of distortion and diversion thereby destroying all efforts at constructive, just and fair governance.” Commenting on the reasons behind the adoption of corruption as the theme of this year, he said: “Fifteen years after the adoption of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption, 2018 provides a good opportunity to take stock on progress made so far, assess what still needs to be done and devise new strategies that appropriately address new corruption challenges.” President Buhari was clear. Merely accepting the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC) or signing it into law in a country was not the answer to the undesirable spill-over effects of corruption. Indeed, the “the adoption of the legal and policy frameworks has not had the desired success in tackling this evil.”

Indeed, Agenda 2063’s Aspiration 3, promising the people of Africa that, “Corruption and impunity will be a thing of the past”, recognized that the overwhelming and continuing adverse effects of the ‘corruption pandemic’ over the years have overshadowed advances made in various areas. It also notes that corruption erodes the development of a universal culture of good governance, democratic values, gender equality, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of the law. Corruption has had a devastating impact on marginalized communities especially the youth, women and children. Corruption breeds unequal societies, renders vulnerable groups prone to human trafficking, as well as recruitment into armed groups and militia. In effect, corruption deprives our young citizens of opportunities to develop meaningful livelihoods.

Despite the sustained growth seen in Africa over the past two decades, public confidence has been eroded by the focus on short-term priorities and payoffs, propelled by corruption, which too often leaves projects uncompleted and promises unfulfilled. In this context, corruption and its effects have many facets and can pose real threats to national security, unity and survival of the State and people. He emphasized that one example of this has been the continuing and ever-falling public confidence in governments at all levels. The failure to deal with the ‘Corruption Industrial Complex’ has stripped citizens of any trust in government.

President Buhari underlined: “Strong institutions are a necessary condition in any society which aims to fight corruption.” The building of such robust and integral institutions at all levels of the government ensures the sustainability of “good governance, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law” in Africa, as part of *Aspiration 3* of Agenda 2063. Equally, they serve as a bulwark against menaces such as corruption that threaten the very existence of the State, let alone a continental union that strives to serve and satisfy all its “children” under its wings. They also further ameliorate the condition of relegated sections of the society “especially the youth, women and children.”

A Judiciary which stands firm against arbitrariness and injustice by the executive is a vital pillar in the anti-corruption fight, and President Buhari stressed, “As leaders, we must build synergy between the Executive, Legislative and Judicial arms of government in order to entrench good governance, transparency and accountability.” In building strong national and regional institutions, he said, “we must adequately empower our national anti-corruption agencies and insulate them from political influence. We have to encourage increased

institutional collaboration between Law Enforcement Agencies and anti-corruption Agencies in order to win this fight.”

President Buhari presented three major initiatives as a basis for the AU’s fight against corruption. The first was to organize African Youth Congresses against Corruption, in order to sensitize and engage youth in the fight against corruption; the second: to mobilize all African Union Member States to implement the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption; thirdly, to advocate for the strengthening of the criminal justice system across Africa through exchange of information and sharing best practices in the enforcement of anti-corruption laws.

The African Union Advisory Board on Corruption should be strengthened in order to play a more proactive role in the anti-corruption fight, and important actors such as parliamentarians, women associations, the media, the business community, faith-based groups, the youth, educational institutions and traditional leaders, should all be brought into the fight.

Referring to the Report of the AU High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa, chaired by Thabo Mbeki, former President of South Africa, he noted the causal relationship between corruption and illicit financial flows and the corrosive role that tax havens and secrecy jurisdictions play in concealing ill-gotten assets. The African Union, he underlined, must do more to stop the continuous assault on economic and financial resources by multinationals in collusion with citizens. It was important that one of the goals of this year’s theme should be the development of a Common African Position on Asset Recovery.

In conclusion, President Buhari returned to the point that manifestation of corruption in Africa was a reflection of the need for stronger leadership and oversight institutions. Equally, he said, tackling corrupt acts and greed required a reorientation of attitudes and perceptions. To win the fight against corruption, a change of mind set was necessary, requiring “a greater awareness as a means to instill better and more transparent values in the political class and the citizenry, especially people in positions of trust.” He reminded the Assembly that “fighting corruption is not going to be a straightforward task and that corruption does fight back. While we may face some setbacks, we should remain resolute. Our common goal is to eradicate corruption in the best interest of our societies.”