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Africa and the African Union

The highly successful Forum for China-Africa Cooperation's Summit in Beijing at the beginning of this week (September 3-4) brought together African Heads of State and Government. They heard China's President Xi Jinping call for China and Africa to forge a stronger comprehensive and strategic partnership, promising China would engage with Africa on a principle of sincerity and real results and said that no obstacle would be allowed to hold back their 'joint march'. The Forum adopted a joint declaration on "Building a Closer Community with a shared future between China and Africa" and the Beijing Action Plan of FOCAC. President Xi announced 60 billion dollars for Africa's development as part of a series of new measures to strengthen China-Africa links, much of it to be channeled to the Belt and Road Initiative and covering telecommunications, construction of roads, bridges and sea ports, energy, and human capacity development. The funding will be provided through different mechanisms such as government grants (\$15 billion), interest free loans (\$15 billion), credit lines (\$20 billion) and financing imports from Africa (\$5 billion). (See article)

The Universal Postal Union (UPU), a UN special regulatory agency, has been holding a five-day Extraordinary Congress in Addis Ababa, its first in Africa, this week. Opening the congress on Monday (September 3), President Dr. Mulatu Teshome said Africa needed to improve quality of service and provide a modernized postal industry for sustainable development. He said an "integrated postal development is aligned with Ethiopia's growth and transformation plan." The Congress has discussed reform of the UPU, contributions to it and its sustainability. The Minister of Communications and Information Technology, Ubah Mohamed said the event was crucial for the future of the postal sector, adding that the postal sector in Africa required more effort to utilize ICT.

Policymakers and experts from Ethiopia and Djibouti last week underlined the need to tackle the cross-border security-related challenges and threats in the Horn of Africa. An IGAD Security Sector Program organized conference considered a report on the "Mapping and Analysis of the Cross-Border Security Threats in the IGAD Region: a case study of the Dewele-Tog Wajaale corridor". (See article)

Ambassador Rahmat Allah Mohamed Osman of Sudan has been appointed Permanent Representative of the AU to China, residing in Beijing. The Head of the African Union Commission Moussa Faki Mahamat has announced his appointment on Sunday (September 2) when inaugurating the AU office in Beijing.

Ethiopia

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy arrived in Eritrea at Assab on Wednesday (September 5) where he was welcomed by President Isaias. He visited the port and travelled the 71km long road from Assab to the border town of Bure. They then visited Massawa where Dr. Abiy could see the 12,000-ton Ethiopian ship “Mekele” which had arrived earlier to collect a cargo of zinc from the Bisha Mine. It was the first Ethiopian ship to dock at Massawa port in 20 years. Dr. Abiy described the implementation of the Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship signed by Eritrea and Ethiopia as a New Year gift for the peoples of both countries. His discussions with President Isaias also covered the continued implementation of the peace deal signed in July following which the two sides agreed to regularize their ties with the opening of embassies, free travel of people, airline links, direct international telephone connection and use of ports.

The Ethiopian Embassy in Asmara was officially re-opened on Thursday (September 6) when president Isaias handed over the keys to Prime Minister Dr. Abiy and the two leaders raised the Ethiopian flag before the Embassy compound.

Eritrea and Djibouti have agreed to normalize relations after years of diplomatic stalemate. Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu who has been to Djibouti on Thursday (September 6) to such a cause], described the end of the stalemate between Eritrea and Djibouti as “a historic diplomatic achievement”. **(See article)**

The Ethiopia Somalia Joint Committee, set up to establish a long-term cooperative relationship based on mutual respect and good-neighbourliness, held its first meeting in Addis Ababa on Friday (August 31). State Minister Mrs. Hirut Zemene headed the Ethiopian delegation. Discussions covered cooperation in the areas of security, economy and water and other issues relating to the regional and international situation. Somalia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the formation of the joint committee was an important step to develop bilateral relations.

State Minister Professor Aferwork Kassu held discussions with Kentaro Sonoura, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister of Japan on Saturday (September 1). They discussed ways of advancing the bilateral relationship. Professor Aferwork noted Japan’s support in infrastructural development, human resource development and the industrial policy dialogue, and added that Ethiopia wanted to learn from Japanese experience in scientific-technical training. Mr. Sonoura said Japan welcomed the reforms happening in Ethiopia and stressed that it would strengthen its support to the IGAD mechanism to help bring lasting peace in the region as well as consider support to address problems related to refugee management.

State Minister Professor Aferwork met Turkish Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ambassador Faith Ulusoy, on Thursday (September 06), and the two sides stressed on the need to further enhance the bilateral cooperation. Professor Aferwork commended the longstanding diplomatic relations

between Ethiopia and Turkey, and added that Turkish companies have done a lot in creating job opportunities and facilitating technology transfer in Ethiopia, adding that Turkish investments in Ethiopia have shown significant rise recently. He also emphasized the need to enhance the existing economic cooperation.

State Minister Professor Afework on Monday (September 3) received Ambassador Sahle-Work Zewde of Ethiopia, newly appointed Special Representative to the African Union and Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union at the level of Under-Secretary-General. Ambassador Sahle-Work is the first woman to assume such a position. The two sides discussed on the need for closer cooperation between Ethiopia and United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU).

Professor Afework met Mrs. Ana Elisa Santana Afonso, UNESCO's Liaison Office Director on Wednesday (September 05), and discussed on ways to strengthen cooperation on areas of culture, education, science and bioshepher reserves.

Professor Aferwork met with Swiss Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ambassador Daniel Hull, on Wednesday (September 05), during which he underlined that Ethiopia wants to intensify its cooperation with Switzerland. He commended the longstanding diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Switzerland and took note of the developmental support Switzerland has been extending to Ethiopia. The two countries are working closely in the areas of technical cooperation, including institutional partnerships, research on public health, refugee management among others, he said.

State Minister of Professor Afework received copies of the credentials of the newly appointed Norwegian Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ambassador Merete Lundemo on Thursday (September. 06). They discussed on ways of further strengthening the bilateral cooperation between the two countries. Commending the strong diplomatic relationship between the two countries, the State Minister said Norway is contributing a lot for Ethiopia's developmental endeavors. He added that Norway's effort in resolving conflicts in the Horn of Africa and bringing lasting peace is commendable. Professor Afework also called on for increased bilateral collaborations and stressed the need to work on private sector engagements.

Ethiopia and the Global Green Growth Institute signed a Host Country Agreement on Tuesday (September 4). State Minister, Professor Afework underlining Ethiopia's significant efforts to build a climate-resilient green economy, welcomed the Global Green Growth Institute's decision to open its regional office in Addis Ababa. The Global Green Growth Institute is a treaty-based international organization headquartered in Seoul, South Korea, and with 27 member countries it is dedicated to supporting and promoting strong, inclusive and sustainable economic growth in developing countries.

Professor Aferwork met with Mr. Anton du Plessis, Executive Director of Institute for Security Studies (ISS) on Wednesday (September 05). The State Minister asserted that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia is ready to work closely with ISS on contemporary issues pertinent to Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa region. Taking note of the relevance of research outcomes of

ISS, Professor Aferwork said “We would continue to cooperate with ISS on issues which are priority to Ethiopia”.

State Minister Professor Aferwork briefed the local press on the Ministry’s achievements during the budget year of 2017/18 on Monday (September 3). He said the Ministry had enjoyed outstanding diplomatic successes and been effective in accomplishing the tasks it planned at the beginning of the year. It had been making use of studies to assess strategic partners that would support Ethiopia’s development efforts as well as conducting a series of high-level visits to maximize the country’s national interest. It had embarked on bilateral and multilateral diplomatic instruments to promote peace, stability, and economic integration in the Horn of Africa, recording substantial successes. Professor Aferwork also noted that new Embassies, Consular offices and Honorary Consulates were opened in different countries to enhance Ethiopia’s representation overseas.

State Minister Dr. Aklilu Hailemichael led an Ethiopian delegation that included Ambassador Professor Admasu Tsegaye, Ambassador to Indonesia and Malaysia and Singapore, to the 3rd Singapore Sub-Sahara Africa High Level Ministerial Exchange Visit (August 27-28) and 5th Africa-Singapore Business Forum (August 28-29). **(See article)**

An Ethio-German Business Forum was organized in Frankfurt on Friday last week (August 31) by the Ethiopian Consulate General in Frankfurt in collaboration with the Frankfurt Chamber of Commerce (IHK Frankfurt AM MAIN). State Minister Dr. Aklilu gave a keynote speech explaining the huge opportunities and enabling environment available for investment in Ethiopia.

The latest update report from the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET) was published on Friday last week (August 31), covering current conditions regarding food security in Ethiopia. **(See article)**

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), a grand national project geared toward intensifying the fight against poverty, as well as an instrument to ensure mutual benefits for all the peoples of the riparian countries, is continuing to be addressed seriously despite recent delays. At his first press conference at the end of last month, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy reiterated that the construction of the Dam would continue in a more vigorous and efficient manner. **(See article)**

Ambassador Girma Temesgen, Ethiopia’s Ambassador to Turkey, presented a copy of his letter of credence and held discussions with Ambassador Ahmet Reza Demirer, Director General for Africa at the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at the end of last week. They noted the progress made in bilateral cooperation in recent years and confirmed their readiness to continue working together to further strengthen the strategic partnership between the two countries.

Ethiopia and South Sudan have agreed to form a joint border security force “to clear or dismantle anti-peace elements and illegal business moving around the border areas.” The agreement, signed last week, allows Ethiopia to open a liaison office in Boma State to foster cooperation between the Murle of South Sudan and the Anyuak of Ethiopia. It also calls for Boma State to exert more efforts to recover those children still missing after the Murle raid last year in which over 200

people died. The agreement was signed by the Governor of South Sudan's Boma state and the President of Ethiopia's Gambella Region State.

Ethiopian Airlines has announced the opening of a new route for its cargo services connecting Africa with South and North America. The twice-weekly service to the Colombian capital, Bogota, from the Spanish city of Zaragoza with a stopover in Miami in the United States, started on Wednesday August 29 and will be flown by B777-Freighter. Tewolde Gebremariam, Group CEO of Ethiopian Airlines, said: "We are very pleased to see Zaragoza, Miami and Bogota joining our fast-expanding freighter network in the Americas."

A 44 strong delegation of the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions conducted a working visit in Eritrea from September 1-4. The Chairman of the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions, Mr. Kasahun Follo met and held talks with Mr. Tekeste Baire, Chairman of the National Confederation of Eritrean Workers, and other officials to discuss development of bilateral relations between the confederations. The delegation visited factories and developmental sites in Massawa, including Massawa Plastic Factory, NCEW Training Center in Massawa, Sahaba historical Mosque, Gurgusum beach and the Gahtelai Dam. The delegation also visited the Zaer Textile Factory and the Tekera and Misilam dams as well as attending the National Festival 2018.

Djibouti

President Ismail Omar Guelleh met with Chinese President Xi Jinping on Sunday (September 2) ahead of the FOCAC Summit. President Xi said China supports Djibouti in pursuing a development path in line with its national conditions, and was ready to expand exchanges between their governments, legislative bodies, political parties and local regions. He said he believed the signing of cooperation documents on jointly building the Belt and Road will inject new impetus into their cooperation. China, he said, was willing to strengthen communication and coordination with Djibouti on international and regional issues such as climate change, to better safeguard their common interests. President Guelleh said Djibouti was a trustworthy friend of China and expressed sincere gratitude for China's support and confidence in the Djibouti-China partnership. He said Djibouti was willing to actively participate in the building of the Belt and Road Initiative to usher in a new era of Djibouti-China cooperation. The two leaders also witnessed the signing of bilateral cooperation documents.

A joint high-level delegation led by the Foreign Affairs Ministers of Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea visited Djibouti on Thursday (September 6) to hold talks with Foreign Minister Mahmoud Ali Youssouf. The aim was to advance dialogue between Eritrea and Djibouti and the ministers also met President Ismail Omar Guelleh. Foreign Minister Osman Saleh conveyed President Isaias's greetings to President Guelleh and underlined that "this is the season for peace in the Horn of Africa and this peace should be inclusive to all". Eritrea's Information Minister said that President Guelleh had thanked President Isaias and said that Djibouti was ready for reconciliation and normalization of its ties with Eritrea." After the talks, Djibouti and Eritrea agreed to normalize relations after many years of diplomatic engagement.

Eritrea

President Isaias, Ethiopia's Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed and Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi signed a Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation in Asmara on Wednesday (September 5). **(See article)**

Eritrea's Foreign Minister Osman Salah and Presidential Adviser Yemane Gebreab had a three-day working visit to the Russian Federation at the end of last week (August 30 to September 1), holding talks with the Russian Federation Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sergey Lavrov. Discussions covered the setting up of a logistics center at one of Eritrea's ports as well as bilateral relations. **(See article)**

The 57th Anniversary of the armed struggle for Eritrea's independence was observed on Saturday (September 1) with musical performances and musical dramas highlighting the failed attempts of the successive colonial powers to obliterate and or eradicate the identity of the Eritrean people as well as the unity and resilience of the Eritrean people against the enemy conspiracies. The previous day, President Isaias opened the Eritrea Festival 2018 held under the theme, "Peace for Sustainable Development". The festival lasts until September 8 and features a range of children's programs, exhibitions, educational and entertainment programs, and other activities.

Kenya

President Uhuru Kenyatta met China's President Xi Jinping for bilateral talks during the FOCAC Summit in Beijing and signed a number of agreements strengthening their partnership. President Kenyatta said: "It is my ambition that we shall continue to strengthen our strategic and comprehensive partnership." He hailed Kenya's "strategic and comprehensive partnership" with China and highlighted the Chinese-built Standard Gauge Railway. He said Kenya appreciated the commitment to develop, "jointly with the Railway Training Institute, the appropriate vocational and technical skills to ensure optimal management of the rail network on a sustainable basis."

Somalia

President Mohamed Abdullahi, speaking at the FOCAC Summit in Beijing, said Africa and Somalia could learn much from Chinese successes through platforms such as FOCAC which promotes knowledge and experience. He said China's Belt and Road Initiative and Agenda 2063 of the African Union complemented Somalia's National Development Plan, which itself was in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. With the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative and its reserves of untapped resources, Somalia had the potential to become a driving force for regional connectivity and prosperity. He said his government had made tremendous progress towards achieving peace, security, stability and development and he invited fellow African heads of states to invest in his country. Somalia, he said, welcomed all forms of investment and was committed to help investors realize their business objectives.

Among his side-line meetings in Beijing, President Mohamed held talks with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. He also had discussions with Zhao Leji, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China, and met with heads of Chinese business companies interested in investing in Somalia. He visited the Beijing Briefing

Center of *Huawei*, a leading global provider of information and communications technology infrastructure, and said he looked forward to seeing Huawei contribute to a digitalised Somalia. He expected Huawei's active involvement in construction of Somalia by leveraging the power of ICT, to contribute to economic and social development of Somalia.

The Military Operations Coordination Committee (MOCC) for AMISOM met in Nairobi at the beginning of last week (August 27). Attended by the Chiefs of Defense Forces/Staffs or representatives of AMISOM Troop and Police Contributing Countries, the meeting considered progress on implementation of the Somalia Transition Plan as well as AMISOM's Operational Readiness Assessment, mentoring the Somali National Army (SNA), and steps taken to implement the Pilot Phase 1 of the Transition Plan. **(See article)**

The latest report from the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit for Somalia (FSNAU) and the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) says that there has been a significant improvement in the overall food security situation in Somalia since the first half of the year, but 1.5 million people continue to need serious humanitarian assistance. **(See article)**

Regional state leaders arrived in Kismayo for a three-day meeting of the Council of Inter-state Cooperation at the beginning of the week on Monday (September 3). On the agenda were relations with the Federal Government and political activities ahead of next year's regional presidential elections.

South Sudan

Chinese President Xi Jinping pledged to support South Sudan economically and to defend its interests with the international community during a meeting with President Salva Kiir on the side-lines of the FOCAC Summit. He said: "China will always consider it a priority to help South Sudan to realize national stability and development". He also stressed China would continue to offer support for the South Sudan mediation mechanism. President Kiir said South Sudan was willing to strengthen pragmatic cooperation with China in political exchanges and energy, and closer communication and coordination in international and regional affairs. He signed two financial and economic memorandums of understanding within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative.

During his visit to Beijing, President Kiir also met Chinese Vice-President Wang Qishan who expressed Beijing's willingness to "work with South Sudan to explore new areas of cooperation, and advance their relations towards all-dimensional, multi-level and wide-ranging orientation".

The South Sudanese parties resumed their discussions on the matrix for the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (RACSS) in Khartoum on Sunday (September 2). **(See article)**

Sudan

President Omer al-Bashir, in Beijing to attend the FOCAC Summit in Beijing, held talks with China's President Xi Jinping on Sunday (September 2). President Xi said, "China would

cooperate with Sudan to overcome its economic difficulties and challenges.” He announced a \$58 million grant and a \$24 million interest free loan to Sudan and said China would consider extending the grace period on China’s debt to Sudan. He said it was keen to remove obstacles and create favorable conditions for cooperation between the two countries.

President Omer al-Bashir and Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi have agreed to develop an implementation matrix for joint projects agreed between the two countries. Meeting on the side-lines of the FOCAC Summit in Beijing on Sunday (September 2) they said details should be approved at the Egyptian-Sudanese Higher Committee meeting in Khartoum next month. The two leaders discussed the ongoing work of their joint committees, expressing determination to develop and enhance bilateral relations. They also agreed to implement joint projects in meat production, transformative industries, river transport, railways and the joint agricultural area. They also discussed recent regional developments, stressing the need to continue coordination between the two countries on all areas.

Vice-President Hassabo Mohamed Abdel-Rahman, head of the Higher Committee to Combat Human Trafficking (HCCHT), addressed the opening session of a forum on human trafficking in Khartoum on Tuesday (September 4). The forum was held under the title “Human Trafficking: Modern Slavery and Profitable Business”. In July the HCCHT announced it would be developing a national anti-trafficking strategy as well as activating existing laws to counter the phenomenon in accordance with the established international standards. Parliament approved an anti-human trafficking law four years ago when the government, together with the AU, UNHCR and the IOM, organized the Khartoum conference on human trafficking in the Horn of Africa.

The United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sudan, Gwi-Yeop Son, has acknowledged significant improvement in security situation in Darfur. Meeting with the acting governor of North Darfur State on Tuesday (September 4), Ms. Son praised the progress made and called on the Sudanese government to determine its priorities and needs in Darfur during the next period. The acting governor said the security situation in North Darfur was calm and stable and 80,000 IDPs families had returned to their original areas. He called on the UN to press the holdout rebel groups to join the national dialogue.

An Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea Summit in Asmara

Ethiopia’s Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed and Somalia’s President Mohamed Abdullahi arrived in Eritrea on Wednesday (September 5) on their return to the region from the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC).

The same evening, they issued a Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation between Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea. The declaration highlighted the need to foster comprehensive cooperation among the three countries.

The three leaders continued their discussions over the next two days with the border dispute between Eritrea and Djibouti high on the agenda. The leaders agreed to initiate a dialogue between the two sides, and on Thursday (September 6) the Foreign Ministers of Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea travelled to Djibouti as the first initiative of the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation. Accordingly, Eritrea and Djibouti have agreed to normalize relations after years of diplomatic stalemate. Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu attended the Djibouti meeting, and described the end of the stalemate between Eritrea and Djibouti as “a historic diplomatic achievement”.

This had been seen as the final element that needs to be resolved to restore durable peace in the Horn of Africa, following the peace agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the joint declaration on brotherly relations and cooperation signed between Eritrea and Somalia at the end of July. In fact, both Somalia and Ethiopia have been actively working to achieve the normalization of relations between Djibouti and Eritrea. Ethiopia had conducted what it called fruitful and useful discussions with the Djibouti Foreign Minister, and Somalia’s President Mohamed Abdullahi visited Djibouti last month. Indeed, the agreement between Eritrea and Djibouti offers tremendous opportunity to the promotion of regional peace and prosperity.

The three leaders also discussed efforts to consolidate gains made at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation by facilitating the prospect of a tripartite agreement on economic integration between the countries of the Horn. According to a statement from Villa Somalia, President Mohamed’s vision is to promote free trade flow and mutual economic cooperation among all the countries of the Horn of Africa. Somalia seeks to play a key role in the economic and social integration of the region to foster trade and investment and to improve connectivity between the people and businesses of the Horn. It would like to take the lead in facilitating a robust Horn of Africa trade bloc that would foster stronger economic stability and development for the region.

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy attends the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Summit...

The 7th Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) opened in Beijing on Monday (September 3) under the theme: “Win-win cooperation and joining hands to build a closer community with a shared future for China and Africa.” The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, as well as numerous Heads of State and Government from across Africa attended, including the Presidents of Egypt, Sudan, Kenya, Djibouti and Somalia. Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed headed the Ethiopian delegation.

The Summit was preceded by the 7th Ministerial Conference of the Forum on Sunday (September 2). Co-chaired by Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Chinese Minister of Commerce Zhong Shan with South Africa’s Ministers of International Relations and Cooperation, Lindiwe Sisulu, and of Trade and Industry, Rob Davies, foreign ministers and ministers or representatives responsible for foreign economic and trade affairs from 53 African members and senior representatives of the African Union Commission were present. The high-level Ethiopian delegation was headed by Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu. High on the agenda was discussion on how the Forum had performed since

the adoption of the Johannesburg Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Action (2016-2018) at the last Summit in South Africa in 2015.

Opening the Summit, Chinese President Xi Jinping, in a speech themed as the "walk together towards prosperity," elaborated on building a stronger China-Africa community with a shared future. He called for the building of a China-Africa community that could assume joint responsibility, pursue win-win cooperation, deliver happiness for all, enjoy cultural prosperity, ensure common security, and promote harmony between man and nature. This would set a model for the building of a community with a shared future for humanity. President Xi said China and Africa should increase political dialogue and policy communication at various levels, enhance mutual understanding and support on issues involving each other's core interests and major concerns, as well as boost coordination on major international and regional issues. He called for the alignment of the Belt and Road construction with the implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the development strategies of various African countries.

President Xi said the two sides should make the enhancing of people's livelihoods, which he said, was the foundation for the development of China-Africa relationship, adding that China would do more to help Africa alleviate poverty, increase employment and income, and better the lives of its people. He called on the two sides to enhance exchanges, mutual learning and harmonious co-existence of Chinese and African civilizations, and to expand personnel exchanges on culture and art, education and sports, think tanks and the media, as well as women and youth. He said China championed a new vision of security featuring common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, and would firmly support African countries and the African Union as well as other regional organizations in Africa in solving African issues in the African way. China would also strengthen exchange and cooperation with Africa on climate change, clean energy, prevention and control of desertification and soil erosion, as well as the protection of wild animals and plants.

President Xi Jinping offered another 60 billion dollars in financing for Africa to include 15 billion dollars of aid, interest-free loans and concessional loans, a credit line of 20 billion, a 10 billion special fund for China-Africa development, and a \$5 billion special fund for imports from Africa. He said Chinese companies will be encouraged to invest no less than \$10 billion in the continent in the next three years, but he also warned against "vanity projects". At the last summit in Johannesburg, three years ago, China also pledged 60 billion dollars as a development fund to African countries. On Monday, he promised development that people on the continent could see and touch, but that would also be green and sustainable. He said: "China-Africa cooperation must give Chinese and African people tangible benefits and successes that can be seen, that can be felt." The President made it clear he expects China's cooperation with Africa to target major bottlenecks to development. He also hopes that "our entrepreneurs will act to fulfill social responsibilities and respect local culture and tradition," and has told Chinese business leaders that they should "do more in staff training and bettering lives for the local people and put more emphasis on the environment and resources."

President Xi Jinping also announced that China would exempt certain African countries from outstanding debts incurred in the form of interest-free Chinese government loans due to mature

by the end of 2018. The exemption would be granted to Africa's least developed countries, heavily indebted and poor countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing countries that have diplomatic relations with China.

The speech was widely welcomed by participants, political observers and experts alike as pointing the direction for African countries' participation in building the Belt and Road jointly and joining hands with China to build a stronger China-Africa community with a shared future.

This year's summit will strengthen Africa's role in the Belt and Road Initiative to link China by sea and land with Southeast and Central Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Africa through an infrastructure network modeled on the old Silk Road. The President said that China stands ready to strengthen comprehensive cooperation with African countries to build a road of high-quality development, suited to national conditions, inclusive and beneficial to all. The Initiative, for which Beijing has pledged 126 billion dollars, is providing more resources and facilities for Africa and will expand shared markets. It has already offered African countries diversified choices on their paths of development, provided more opportunities to countries in aspects of capital and experience, and strengthened linkage between Africa and China in trade and investment. In Ethiopia, the building of industrial parks, the Addis Ababa's light railway, the expansion of Addis Ababa's Bole International Airport and the new railway to Djibouti have all benefited from the Initiative. The building of interconnectivity assists in the alleviation of poverty and moves toward modernization, as well as encouraging Chinese companies to go abroad. China also understands that each country has its own national conditions and must adopt its own political system. No one can impose their own political system and development path upon another.

....and holds talks with Chinese leaders and bilateral meetings with African leaders

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy met a number of Chinese leaders including President Xi Jinping, Prime Minister Li Keqiang, National People's Congress Standing Committee Chairman, Li Zhanshu, and the Chairperson of the China EXIM Bank, Madam Hu Xiaolian as well as different African leaders and representatives of UN agencies present at the Forum.

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy met Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the Forum. Underlining that China was Ethiopia's "leading development partner", he emphasized that Ethiopia would like to share China's experience of administrative practices. He expressed gratitude for what China has been doing for Ethiopia in recent years and stressed that Ethiopia would be an active participant in China's Belt and Road initiatives. President Xi said China was willing to continue to support projects that ensured mutual benefit for both countries and pointed out that the relationship between the two countries had now been elevated to the level of strategic partnership. He requested the Ethiopian Prime Minister to work in cooperation on regional and international matters. The two leaders also discussed on a number of other issues ranging from human resource development to Foreign Direct Investment, from agro-business and manufacturing to oil and natural gas. China is one of the leading FDI investors in Ethiopia providing nearly 20 % of Foreign Direct Investment in the country.

Dr. Abiy met Prime Minister Li Keqiang ahead of the Summit. Prime Minister Li, noting that Ethiopia was both an important African country and an important partner of China in Africa, said the China-Ethiopia comprehensive strategic and cooperative partnership had gained in-depth development. He said China encourages its enterprises to invest in Ethiopia, to expand human resources development and cooperation, and promote construction of transport infrastructure and support major projects. Dr. Abiy said Chinese enterprises were playing an increasingly important role in Ethiopia's economic and social development, adding that Ethiopia was willing to strengthen its human resource, energy and infrastructure cooperation with China, improve the business environment and would welcome more Chinese companies' investment. The two leaders witnessed the signing of a number of cooperation documents.

Li Zhanshu, Chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, China's top legislator, met the Prime Minister on Sunday (September 2) at the Great Hall of the People. He emphasized that China would continue to strengthen cooperation with Ethiopia in infrastructure, including railways, water supply and airport development, as well as finance, trade and investment, and would further elevate the two countries' comprehensive strategic and cooperative partnership to a new level. Dr. Abiy noted that the FOCAC Summit would become a new milestone in Africa-China and Ethiopia-China win-win cooperation.

In his meeting with Madame Hu Xiaolian, Chairperson of China's EXIM Bank, the Prime Minister discussed ways to strengthen cooperation and partnership on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). About 400 Chinese investment projects with a combined capital of 4 billion US dollars are now fully operational in Ethiopia. Out of these, over 100 have been established through joint ventures with Ethiopian partners. The Chairperson, who made it clear she appreciated Ethiopia's recent economic reforms, agreed to look into restructuring Ethiopia's loans.

Among the bilateral meetings the Prime Minister met the Presidents of Egypt, Rwanda, Somalia and Sudan. The discussions with President Omar Hassan al-Bashir covered the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and other bilateral issues of mutual interest, including ways to elevate bilateral cooperation and relations to a new level. The Prime Minister and President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi exchanged views on bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual concern to the peoples of both countries. After his meeting with President Kagame, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy said "We had a very important discussion," adding that "the discussion focused on how to defend the interests of Africa." Dr. Abiy also met Somali President, Mohamed Abdullahi and exchanged views on bilateral, regional and global issues as well as security cooperation. The Somali President's Office said later that: "Economic cooperation and integration in the Horn of Africa is key to more investment opportunities and paves the way for a more secure, connected and safer region."

South Sudan peace talks continue to make progress

The South Sudanese parties resumed their discussions on the matrix for the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (RACSS) in Khartoum on Sunday (September 2). The previous day, the mediators formed three

subcommittees to discuss and initial the implementation matrix designed to identify what needs to be done to implement the chapters of the Agreement, the timelines involved and those to be tasked with the execution.

One committee covered chapter one on governance, chapter three on humanitarian aid and recovery, and chapter five on transitional justice. On Monday, this committee initialed the implementation matrix of the revitalized chapter one related to the governance and power-sharing. The second committee was tasked with the implementation matrix of chapter four on resource, economic and financial management, chapter six on the permanent Constitution-making Process and chapter eight on the supremacy of this Agreement and Procedures for Amendment of the Agreement. The third committee dealt with the security arrangements and the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, promptly signing the implementation matrix. It held a workshop on the Permanent Ceasefire Transitional Arrangement on Monday attended by delegates from all the parties and stakeholders.

Several issues remained outstanding from last week's talks including the number and boundaries of the states and the constitution-making process, both of which are to be referred to the next meeting of the IGAD Council of Ministers. On responsibility-sharing between the President and the First Vice-President a compromise agreement was reached. The agreement stated that neither the President nor the First Vice-President would be directly coordinating or overseeing the implementation of the agreement. An independent Ministry of Peace Building will be established under the Governance Cluster which will take that responsibility. The Ministry will be part of the Cabinet Council of Ministers. Other oversight responsibilities will be collective responsibility of the Presidency. Five new ministerial portfolios are being established: the Ministry of Peace Building; the Ministry of East African Community Affairs; the Ministry of Culture, Museum and National Heritage; the Ministry of Labor; and the Ministry of Investment.

Additional points of disagreement included the opposition's demand for the majority vote threshold or decisions by the Presidency, the Council of Ministers and the Legislature to be 75% rather than the 67% in the draft. They also wanted the quorum for the Council to be 27 rather than the suggested 23. Another opposition request concerned the deployment of Ugandan and Sudanese forces to South Sudan as guarantors of the agreement. Last week, Sudan's Foreign minister El-Dirdeiry said one of the important guarantees the parties agreed to was formation and training of a national army drawn from government and opposition forces. He said "Sudan will particularly supervise this process to ensure that the troops only have loyalty to the Republic of South Sudan." Under the draft revised agreement, the warring parties will form a High-level Technical Integration Committee within 30 days of the final signing of agreement, and this will set eligibility criteria for candidates to the national army, national security, police, prison, fire brigade and wildlife services. The formation of one army will be completed within 12 months of the signing of the peace agreement. Sudan and Uganda, as guarantors of the revised peace agreement, will be tasked with the implementation process. The SPLM-IO and SSOA called for the Sudan and Uganda forces to be part of the Regional Protection Force and for Ethiopian and Kenyan forces to be included. It was only after President al-Bashir met Riek Machar and promised him the points of disagreement would be referred to the IGAD Council that the SPLM-IO initialed the elements agreed last week. Both groups, however, continue to insist they wouldn't sign the final text of the revised agreement unless the IGAD Heads of State and

Government address their concerns. This week President al-Bashir and President Museveni, the guarantors of the Khartoum round of talks, discussed the South Sudan peace process on the sidelines of the FOCAC Summit in Beijing which they both attended.

The next stage is for the IGAD Council of Ministers to adopt the agreement and the implementation matrix. The documents will then be presented to an Extra-Ordinary Summit of IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government to discuss the remaining points of the opposition parties and address these directly. Once this has been done, a final signing of the Revitalized Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan by all the parties will take place in the presence of IGAD leaders.

Eritrean Foreign Minister's working visit to the Russian Federation

Eritrea's Foreign Minister Osman Salah and Presidential Adviser Yemane Gebreab had a three-day working visit to the Russian Federation at the end of last week (August 30 to September 1), holding talks with the Russian Federation Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sergey Lavrov in Sochi on the Black Sea on Friday (August 31).

Speaking after the talks, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that with the "profound positive changes in the Horn of Africa over the past few years, especially between Eritrea and Ethiopia, we believe it is necessary, on the practical level, to begin removing those sanctions that were imposed on Eritrea by the UN Security Council". He said, "We welcomed the process of normalizing the Eritrean-Ethiopian relations that began in June, welcomed the resumption of direct contacts between the parties, which made it possible to move towards removing all mutual concerns. We noted that this became possible thanks to the good will of the two countries' leaders." The Minister also stressed Russia supported the positive changes in relations between Eritrea and neighboring countries and was ready to assist in normalizing the atmosphere throughout the Horn of Africa. He said: "we will be ready to render every assistance in normalizing the atmosphere throughout the Horn of Africa" This would allow deepening regional economic integration as well as political stabilization. He said: "We will promote such processes and are ready to encourage Russian companies to participate in prospective multilateral projects."

Minister Lavrov said discussions had covered setting up a logistics center at one of Eritrea's ports. He said: "A negotiation process is under way regarding the creation of a logistics center to boost our bilateral trade," adding that the center would advance "promising joint projects involving shipments to Eritrea of specific transport agricultural equipment" as well as "help Russian businesses establish contacts in the country". Minister Lavrov said his government would be encouraging Russian companies to take part in African projects, including building regional transportation corridors and cross-border pipelines. Eritrea, he said, presented "excellent opportunities" for "economic integration" with Russia.

Opening their meeting, at which Foreign Minister Lavrov presented the Medal of the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation to Eritrea's Foreign Minister Osman Saleh for his

contribution to the advancement of relations between the two countries and for international diplomacy, Minister Lavrov said he was glad to welcome the Eritrean delegation to Sochi. He said he well-remembered their talks in Moscow one and a half years earlier, and now they could again discuss foreign policy cooperation and bilateral relations, “where it is necessary to build up the trade and economic component and to promote good humanitarian, educational and cultural contacts.” He said Eritrea’s assessment of what was happening in the Horn of Africa was of particular interest because of the “highly positive” changes. He noted that this was the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Russia and Eritrea and they had achieved “a very high level of political cooperation and mutual understanding.” Mr. Lavrov said Russia set great store by the fact that Minister Osman was the first among high-ranking foreign representatives to visit the Crimea after the peninsula’s reunification with the Russian Federation. He also noted that Eritrea’s ties with Crimea have been developing actively, with Eritrean delegations attending the Yalta International Economic Forum and the Friends of Crimea Forum this year. He thanked the delegation for the close coordination of approaches at the UN and other international venues and underlined Russia’s interest in promoting cooperation.

A briefing by the Russian Foreign Ministry before the talks said the ministers were planning to discuss the prospects for increasing investment partnership in trade and the economy, including joint projects in the energy sector and development of mineral deposits in Eritrea, the construction of infrastructure facilities, plans to train Eritrean professionals at Russian universities and to strengthen the legal framework necessary for multifaceted cooperation. It also emphasized that “due to similar or matching views on major international and African issues, Moscow and Asmara are actively developing a political dialogue [and] are also engaged in close coordination within the UN and other multilateral formats.”

Singapore Africa Ministerial Exchange visit and Business Forum...

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aklilu Hailemichael, led an Ethiopian delegation that included Ambassador Professor Admasu Tsegaye, Ambassador to Indonesia and Malaysia and Singapore, to the 3rd Singapore Sub-Sahara Africa High Level Ministerial Exchange Visit (August 27-28) and 5th Africa-Singapore Business Forum (August 28-29). Singapore Foreign Minister, Dr Vivian Balakrishnam opened the Ministerial Exchange Visit, welcoming participants from 12 African countries. He noted Singapore enjoyed warm relations with Africa and was keen to promote more regular interaction through bilateral visits and meetings on the side-lines of multilateral events. With over half of Africa’s population set to be urbanized by 2050, he underlined this would provide opportunities as well as challenges for many governments. He applauded the hardworking and disciplined pioneers of Singapore who had built a beautiful and magnificent city.

After the opening session, participants visited the Institute of Technical Education, the Urban Redevelopment Authority, Singapore’s Aviation Academy and the Botanical Gardens. The idea of the Ministerial Exchange Visit was initiated by Singapore to open up for partnership geared towards sustainable development with an emphasis on human capital development, development of residential cities and sustainable management of water resources. At each Institute, participants met with top management and discussed Singapore’s experiences in addressing the

challenges facing their own countries. They were able to appreciate Singapore's experience in building a skilled workforce that could respond to dynamic economic and industry changes, by offering diversified and industry-relevant education with the emphasis on technical and vocational education. Singapore's in urban planning could help countries to plan basic housing and public services including health care, education and public safety, in densely populated urban areas.

The 5th Africa-Singapore Business Forum (ASBF) opened on Tuesday last week (August 28) with an address from Png Cheong Boon, CEO of Enterprise Singapore and a keynote address from Minister of Trade, Chan Chan Sing. The Forum is a premier platform for promoting business exchange and leadership between Africa and Asia and brings together over 600 business and government leaders from 30 countries to develop opportunities and partnerships. The Forum addressed critical issues and identified opportunities in key sectors, including real estate, oil and gas, digital economy and manufacturing. It also considered the important question of financing. The plenary discussion topics covered Africa 2025 - Positioning for Growth; Consumerism - Capturing Africa's rising consumption; Oil and Gas - Engaging Africa's energy sector; Digital economy - Entering the digitalization race in Africa; Africa's urban opportunities; Manufacturing - Positioning for Africa's manufacturing boom; and Navigating the finance ecosystem.

Dr. Aklilu presented details of the business and investment opportunities, incentives, government policies, facilities and available support as well as identifying the priority areas for foreign investors in Ethiopia. He stressed, "Ethiopia, with untapped natural resources and a high proportion of active working-age population, cheap electricity, and a very high government commitment, offers abundant opportunities for international companies that wish to engage in various investment sectors including textiles and garments, leather and leather products, pharmaceuticals and chemicals, agriculture and agro-processing, livestock, meat and dairy products, metal and engineering, mining and energy, construction materials, and IT. During his visit, Dr. Aklilu Hailemichael met with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore and exchanged views on bilateral cooperation in trade and investment. The Prime Minister noted that trade and investment between Singapore and Ethiopia had grown with the involvement of Singaporean Companies in Ethiopia and the exchange of visits by their respective Deputy Prime Ministers. Singapore's economic resilience, he said, had grown in recent times, by diversifying its links with other countries because of moves by the west towards greater protectionism and isolationism. Dr. Aklilu highlighted the long and close cooperation between the two countries in investment and trade. He stressed that Ethiopia, with untapped natural resources, a high proportion of active working-age population, cheap electricity and a strong government commitment, had attracted many foreign companies to invest.

Dr. Aklilu also met with Dr. Vivian Balakrishnam, Singapore Minister of Foreign Affairs. He said the two events would help countries to learn from Singapore's experiences in addressing some of the challenges facing developing countries as well as strengthening and accelerating ties between Africa and Asia, especially Singapore. Dr. Aklilu appreciated the Singapore's government role in sharing its developmental experiences with Ethiopia through visits and training programs under Singapore cooperation program and study visits. He said the Ethiopian Airlines flights to Singapore facilitated trade and investment as well as connecting African

countries with South East Asia. He also emphasized the continued need to organize business conferences and visits to would help to sensitize Singaporean companies to business opportunities in Ethiopia. Dr. Balakrishnam noted Singapore enjoyed warm relations with Ethiopia and was keen to promote more regular interaction to promote trade and investment. He applauded Ethiopia's rapid economic growth and its role in bringing peace and security in the region. He also appreciated the part Ethiopian Airlines was playing in the development of air transport in Africa.

The delegation's meetings with high government officials and its bilateral discussions allowed both sides to evaluate their past performance and pave the way to discuss strengthening future cooperation in trade and investment. It looked at the experience of Singapore in addressing youth unemployment through Technical and Vocational Education and Training and the development of sustainable 'smart cities' as experience to help solve unemployment and protect the environment. The delegation also met with a number of companies to highlight the investment potential and opportunities in Ethiopia, including the management of Temasek Holdings and CrimsonLogic. Temasek is a holding company owned by the Government of Singapore and it owns and manages a net portfolio of \$308 billion covering a broad spectrum including financial services, telecommunications, media and technology, transportation and industrials, life sciences and agribusiness, consumer and real estate, energy and resources, as well as multi-sector funds. CrimsonLogic is a leading provider of e-government products and services headquartered in Singapore. A number of business leaders showed keen interest to visit Ethiopia and assess the trade and investment potentials on the ground as well as identify local partners.

A meeting of AMISOM's Military Operations Coordination Committee

The Military Operations Coordination Committee (MOCC) for AMISOM met in Nairobi at the beginning of last week (August 27). The meeting was attended by the Chiefs of Defense Forces/Staffs or designated representatives of AMISOM Troop and Police Contributing Countries (Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, and Uganda) as well as Somalia's National Security Advisor and its Chief of Defense Forces. Also present were the Head of the UN Support Office for Somalia (UNSOS) and representatives from the EU, UK and US. The meeting was chaired by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui.

The meeting heard briefings from AMISOM's Special Representative, its Force Commander (FC) and the Acting Police Commissioner on the political and security situation and progress on implementation of the Somalia Transition Plan. Other briefings covered AMISOM's Operational Readiness Assessment, possible options for the reconfiguration of AMISOM, the re-sectorization of AMISOM Area of Responsibility (AOR) and its role in mentoring the Somali National Army (SNA), and the progress made by Federal Government, inclusive politics, reconciliation efforts and the constitutional review process, as well as the steps taken to implement the Pilot Phase 1 of the Transition Plan.

The meeting emphasized the transfer of security responsibility from AMISOM to the Somali National Security Forces (SNSF) was dependent on enhancing SNSF capacity. It called for greater attention to the political risks and for a collective effort to provide coherent partner support for the transition. It instructed AMISOM to work closely with the Federal Government to assess the operational readiness of Somali troops for the operations of the first phase of the Transition Plan. It also pointed out the need for enhanced capacities and capabilities for AMISOM and SNSF to allow effective joint operations for the Transition plan and effectively implement UN Security Council resolution 2431 (July 30, 2018). It called for synergy and coordination between for the Operational Readiness Assessment. It looked forward to the final report to be submitted to the AU Peace and Security Council. It urged the SNA to identify training requirements and submit these to the AU to coordinate them with Troop Contributing Countries and other stakeholders.

The meeting said combat mentoring required additional capacities and capabilities to enhance the combat readiness of the SNA troops. It considered the modalities and implications of the drawdown of 1000 AMISOM troops by the end of February, and urged AMISOM to study the implications in terms of its reconfiguration, the reduction in the number of Forward Operating Bases, and their handover to the Somali National Army. In terms of AMISOM reconfiguration, the meeting affirmed the need to establish an AMISOM Mobile Force under command and control of the Force Commander with increased military ground and air capability. It said AMISOM's enhanced civilian component, to be deployed in strategic locations of AMISOM's Area of Responsibility, should focus its efforts to support the political and stabilization process and the Transition Plan, in coordination with the Federal Government, Federal Member States and other stakeholders. The Committee agreed that AMISOM's current sector boundaries should be maintained during its re-sectorization, and it urged continuing consultations that could be reflected in the review of CONOPS. It called for qualified and experienced staff officers to be available for the establishment of multinational Sector Headquarters.

“GERD will continue more vigorously and efficiently”

At his first press conference at the end of last month, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy reiterated that the delays faced by the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) project would be addressed seriously and the construction of the Dam shall continue in a more vigorous and efficient manner.

GERD remains a grand national project geared toward intensifying the fight against poverty, as well as a viable instrument for ensuring mutual benefits for all the peoples of the riparian countries. The realization of the GERD project is a step towards creating a prosperous Ethiopia, and the Dam, which will be the biggest hydroelectric power project in Africa when complete, was among the mega projects that will contribute towards the country's poverty eradication campaign. Indeed, the decision to commence the construction of the GERD in 2011 has changed the whole development game in the Nile Basin. This was underlined by the Agreement on the

Declaration of Principles on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Project, signed by Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia leaders on 23 March 2015.

Ethiopia, without any obligation or any customary practice in the Nile Basin, to enhance confidence and build trust among the three countries, also initiated the establishment of the International Panel of Experts whose mandate is to review the design and study documents of the GERD. The Panel was composed of 10 experts, two each from the three Eastern Nile riparian countries (Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt) and four international experts, one each from Britain, South Africa, Germany and France. The Panel in its findings identified the Dam was being constructed, based on international standards, founded on very strong rock, and would benefit all the riparian countries. It recommended two studies, a Hydropower/Water Resources System Simulation Modeling and a Socio-Economic and Environmental Impact Assessment, to be conducted by the three countries.

Ethiopia has accepted the recommendations of the Panel and has been working steadily to implement the studies. To oversee the implementation of the recommendations, the three countries have also continued engagement at different levels, leadership, ministerial and technical. Ethiopia further initiated the establishment of a National Independent Scientific Research Group (NISRG) to discuss means of enhancing the level of understanding and cooperation among the three countries with regard to GERD. This is focusing on the filling and operation of the Dam. The NISRG has so far conducted four meetings. Ethiopia will continue its efforts to encourage NISRG to successfully complete its assignment.

GERD is under construction in accordance with an international engineering procurement construction contract and following international standards. The civil work is being done by an Italian company, Salini and electro-mechanical work was being carried out by the Ethiopian company METEC, though this has now been dismissed after unsatisfactory delays. Engineering supervision is being carried out by an internationally renowned consultant, Tractebel Engineering and Electro-Consultant Company.

Ethiopia and Djibouti review cross-border security threats

Experts drawn from Ethiopia and Djibouti met last week to review, evaluate, improve and validate the findings and suggested recommendations of a report on the “Mapping and Analysis of the Cross-Border Security Threats in the IGAD Region: A Case Study of the Dewele-Tog Wajaale corridor”. The conference brought together representatives and officials from border agencies, the judiciary, law enforcement, academia, regulators, financial intelligence units, and lawyers to help bridge the critical knowledge gap on the scale, extent, causes and impact of Transnational crimes carried out in the border areas between Dewele and Tog Wajaale, between Djibouti, Ethiopia and Somaliland. The project supported by Sweden and facilitated by the IGAD Security Sector Program will also carry out a series of similar assessments and research to respond to emerging and evolving crimes in the IGAD Region.

Dewele is a rail and road border crossing between Djibouti and Ethiopia while Tog Wajaale is a road crossing of the border between Ethiopia and Somaliland connecting to Hargeisa and the port of Berbera. However, the report, in addition to the formal border crossing points, also considered the towns and villages, the informal crossing areas and other places along the border which have allowed easy movement of people and provided easy operation for transnational crimes like smuggling, human trafficking and even terrorism to flourish.

In his welcoming remarks, Mr. Daoud Alwan, Pillar Head of Counter-terrorism at IGAD's Security Sector Program urged participants to contribute to the report by considering the overall picture of regional security threats in a way to add value for the benefit of IGAD Member States. He underlined the importance of collaboration and coordination, information sharing and strengthening capabilities. This, he said, was vital to successfully prevent and deter transnational crimes. IGAD has been engaged in the assessment of border security and management along all the international borders of its Member States, focusing on formal border crossing stations. In 2014, it carried out comprehensive regional transnational organized crime threats and vulnerability assessments, to help identify the major organized criminal activities across the region.

The Mapping and Analysis Report revealed that most of the borders in the IGAD region were poorly managed and controlled, and that made them vulnerable to various forms of transnational security threats including but not limited to terrorism and violent extremism; insurgencies; trafficking of humans, weapons, fauna and flora; illicit smuggling of migrants; smuggling of goods, including livestock, khat, food items, textile/clothes, electronics, precious stones, spare parts, hygienic products, household utensils and other commodity items; illegal cross-border cash flows and other serious criminal activities.

Ethiopia's belg harvesting improves food security and stabilizes prices

The latest update report from the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET) was published on Friday last week (August 31), covering current conditions regarding food security in the country. As *belg* harvesting has begun in some areas, food availability is beginning to increase, food prices stabilize and the outcome in most parts of the country improve. This signals that the replenishment of household food stocks has begun.

FEWS NET noted that in the *belg*-growing areas of Eastern Amhara and southern Tigray, the *kremt* rains (June to September) started on time except in a few localized areas. The amount and distribution were also normal except for a dry spell from mid-July through early August. The rainfall was sufficient to support overall average production. Some 74% out of 205,227 hectares of land were planted. Staple food prices since March have seasonally increased due to the depletion of household stocks and delays in the *belg* harvest, but the nutrition status for children under five years of age and pregnant and lactating women has remained stable or marginally improved since last year.

In Northern pastoral areas, the summer *Karan/Karma* rains generally started on time, and pasture and browse continue to improve to normal levels over most northern pastoral areas. Water points have largely been replenished. Livestock prices have been showing an increasing trend due to improved body conditions and a low supply of livestock in local markets. According to the report, the nutrition status for children under five years of age remained stable despite the slight deteriorations observed in some areas where milk production remained below-average, following consecutive poor seasons.

In southeastern pastoral areas of Dollo, Jarar, Korahe, Liben, and Shebelle zones of the Somali Regional State, the dry season which lasts from June to September is ongoing, but pasture and browse remains at above-normal levels. The main water sources, such as *berkas* and deep wells, are fully replenished, though the IOM says less water is available for IDPs in Dollo and Jarar zones. Livestock body conditions remain average, and there have been no reported unusual livestock migration or livestock disease outbreaks. Staple food prices have increased due to low supply of grains from central markets and recent unrest. Malnutrition has increased in some areas because of the absence of camel milk and displacements have left large numbers of people entirely dependent on humanitarian assistance.

FEWS NET reports that in the lowlands of East and West Hararghe of Oromia Region the rains started on time except though there was a long dry spell in most lowland woredas of East and West Hararghe zones in July. The *belg* are fully mature and being harvested. According to FEWS NET projections the harvest, overall, will be average but higher than last year. Staple food prices have increased because of the current low supply in local markets and transportation costs. Livestock prices have also risen due to improved body conditions and higher numbers of livestock traders.

According to the FEWS NET report the large numbers displaced along the borders of Somalia and Oromia Regional states and between the Gedeo and West Guji zones have disrupted seasonal crop production and pastoral activities. The IOM in July said 1.2 million had been displaced between Oromia (52%) and Somali (42%) regions, and OCHA reported that in mid-August the numbers of displaced in Gedeo zone had fallen slightly to 695,000 while over 189,000 were displaced in West Guji. The displaced are highly dependent upon humanitarian assistance. According to the latest OCHA funding update (August 10), only 38% of the emergency food and non-feed requirements identified under the 2018 Humanitarian and Disaster Resilience Plan has been funded.

Significant improvement in food security but millions still need support in Somalia

The latest report from the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit for Somalia (FSNAU) and the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) on September 1 finds despite improvements in food security, humanitarian needs remain “pressing.” It estimates 1.5 million people will face Crisis or worse (IPC Phases 3 or higher) between now and December and nearly 300,000 face severe malnutrition and 50,000 severe malnourishment. This represents a significant improvement in the overall food security situation in Somalia when compared to the

2.7 million people projected to be in Crisis or worse in the first half of the year. The report notes this improvement in reduction of food insecurity was achieved by the concerted efforts of the government and other involved stakeholders. The report notes the Government of Somalia along with other stakeholders has made considerable efforts to achieve food security. The results from 30 separate nutrition surveys conducted by FSNAU and partners between in June and July 2018 show the overall nutrition situation in Somalia has continued to improve due to a combination of improved food security conditions, reduced outbreak of diseases and sustained humanitarian interventions.

The report notes the average to above average *Gu* rainfall between April and June. This contributed to seasonal improvements to food and income sources and market conditions and the positive impacts of sustained and large-scale humanitarian assistance. A recent forecast issued by the Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum, indicates a greater likelihood of normal to above normal 2018 *Deyr* (October-December) rains across the country. As a result, pasture and water availability, crop cultivation, livestock reproduction, access to agricultural employment, water and food prices are all expected to continue to improve between now and December. However, increased rains may also be expected to cause flooding in low-lying and riverine areas.

Despite these improvements, acute food insecurity remains prevalent among people who lost most of their animals and who became destitute during the exceptionally severe drought 2016-2017, those who were affected by flooding in April and May this year, and among the hundreds of thousands of others affected by large-scale and protracted displacement due to a combination of conflict and natural hazards. These population groups continue to face large food consumption gaps and to need humanitarian assistance to prevent further deterioration of their food security and nutrition situation.

Overall, the report estimates that there will be 1.5 million people needing urgent humanitarian assistance and livelihood support and another 3.1 stressed and needing livelihood support for the rest of the year, bringing “the total number of people facing acute food insecurity across Somalia to 4.6 million.” Despite all efforts, a high level of malnutrition continues among several population groups and in the 13 main IDP settlements. The report concludes that urgent treatment and nutrition support will be needed for approximately 294,200 acutely malnourished children, including 55,200 who will be severely malnourished, between now and December. It calls for integrated support interventions to be sustained to maintain recent improvements as well as prevent further deterioration in the nutrition situation. The report emphasizes that acute malnutrition, conflict, flooding and natural hazards remain significant drivers of food crisis in 2018 affecting Somalia.