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News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

The AU and EU held the first of a series of annual joint ministerial meetings in Brussels this week (January 21-22). The meeting brought together Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the EU and the AU as well as EU and AU Commissioners. **(See article)**

The third round of IGAD-EU consultations took place on the margins of the AU- EU ministerial meeting on Tuesday (January 22). **(See article)**

IGAD Council of Ministers held a coordination meeting on the side-lines of the EU-African Union Ministerial Meeting which took place in Brussels. The meeting was chaired by Mrs. Hirut Zemene, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, representing IGAD's Chair, Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu.

Ethiopia

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed made an official visit to Rome on Sunday (January 20) where he held talks with President Mattarella, Prime Minister Conte, His Holiness Pope Francis and the heads of WFP, IFAD and FOA. **(See article)**.

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy addressed the World Economy Forum in Davos on Wednesday (January 22). **(See article)**

On the third leg of his European visit, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy met with the President of the EU Commission Jean-Claude Juncker and other officials in Brussels on Thursday (January 24). **(See article)**

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu at a Panel on "Dialogue on the Horn of Africa" at the World Economic Forum in Davos praised the bold visionary moves of the leaders of Ethiopia and Eritrea and the commitment of regional leaders for engagement and cooperation. He said negotiations were well underway on ways to strengthen people-to-people relationships, boost

intra-border trade relationships, smooth immigration processes and create legal frameworks to sustain hard-won gains.

Foreign Minister, Dr. Workneh met South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung on Wednesday (January 23). She expressed South Korea's continued support to Ethiopia's development efforts and her confidence in the Ethiopian Government to invite Korean investments in infrastructure. Dr. Workneh thanked KOICA for its contributions in health and education. He underlined the importance of continued engagement to ensure sustainable peace in the Korean Peninsula.

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh met Swiss Foreign Minister, Ignazio Cassis on Tuesday (January 22) in Davos. Dr. Workneh underlined the importance of enhancing bilateral economic cooperation, particularly in areas of trade and investment. Mr. Cassis pledged to encourage the Swiss private sector to invest in Ethiopia. They agreed to finalize an agreement on avoidance of double taxation and to continue bilateral political consultations.

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh held talks with several Italian company CEOs in Rome on Monday (January 21), including the CEO of Carvico group currently investing US \$100 million at the Kombolcha Industrial Park.

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh met with Georgian Foreign Minister David Zalkaliani on Wednesday (January 23) and discussed on various bilateral issues including on how to strengthen economic and technical cooperation.

A business delegation led by Finance Minister, Ahmed Shide and the Governor of the National Bank visited Saudi Arabia last week. They met the Ministers of Finance, Agriculture, Environmental Protection and Water Resources and officials of the Saudi Development Fund, and agreed to boost bilateral economic and investment ties, focusing on economic partnership in agriculture, infrastructure development, energy, manufacturing industries and trade.

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mrs, Hirut Zemene met with German Minister of State, Mrs. Michelle Muntefering, on Tuesday (January 22) on the margins of the EU-AU Ministerial meeting in Brussels this week. German President Steinmeier arrives in Ethiopia on Sunday (January 27) at the head of a German business delegation.

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut met in Brussels with Ms. Harriett Baldwin, UK Minister of State for Africa at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Minister of State for International Development. Mrs. Hirut welcomed the UK's productive engagement in the Horn of Africa and briefed Ms. Baldwin on Ethiopia's economic and political reforms.

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut met with Romanian State Secretary, Mrs. Monica Gheorghita to discuss ways to strengthen the bilateral relations. Mrs. Hirut expressed Ethiopia's interest to strengthen relations with Eastern Europe countries and its readiness to work with Romania during its presidency of the EU. Mrs. Gheorghita said Romania planned to upgrade its mission in Addis to Ambassadorial level.

During a panel discussion with Diplomats at the Foreign Service Training Institute (FSTI) on Thursday (January 24), State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Birtukan Ayano said, “Diplomats are the face and soul of Ethiopia demonstrating positive country image abroad. A diplomat should be well-attired, well-versed, trustworthy and disciplined to ensure career-long success proudly as Foreign Service officer representing Ethiopia in different international venues.”

The House of People’s Representatives adopted significant revisions in the existing refugee law on Thursday last week (17 January) producing “one of the most progressive refugee policies in Africa”. **(See article)**

The Ethiopian Embassy in China organized an “Ethiopia - China Pulses, Oilseeds and Spices Sellers-Buyers Matchmaking Seminar” in Beijing and an investment forum promoting opportunities in agriculture and livestock processing on Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, this month. **(See article)**

An “Invest in Ethiopia” was held in Doha last week, organized by the Ethiopian Embassy in Qatar. Ethiopia’s Ambassador Metasebia Tadesse and Qatar Chamber of Commerce First Vice-Chairman Mohamed bin Ahmed bin Towar Al Kuwari, attended the meeting together with Qatari and Ethiopian businessmen. A Qatari-Ethiopian Business Forum is due to be held next year to enhance business links.

Somalia

The Federal Government and aid agencies launched the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan on Monday (January 21), calling on donors to provide \$1.08 billion to support to 3.4 million Somalis in need. **(See article)**

Foreign Minister, Ahmed Issa Awad, on Sunday (January 20) held talks with Kuwait Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al-Hamad on the side-lines of the 4th Arab Economic and Social Development Summit.

A US airstrike, Jubaland and National Army troops, and Ethiopian forces with AMISOM cause significant casualties to Al-Shabaab.

More than 25 representatives from foreign businesses in Europe, mostly from Finland arrived in Mogadishu last weekend to attend an investment conference jointly organised by the Federal Government and Finland.

South Sudan

President Kiir, during his two-day visit to Cairo last week, urged Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi to encourage regional and international donors to contribute to the funding of the

peace implementation process in South Sudan. The two leaders discussed the implementation of the revitalized peace process signed last September.

The government officially resumed production in the Unity oil fields on Sunday (January 20) by pumping 15,000 barrels a day. Minister of Petroleum, Ezekiel Lol Gatkuoth, said the Toma South Oilfields were producing 20,000 barrels a day, and by the end of 2019, production would double to reach 70,000 barrels a day.

Sudan

President Omar al-Bashir arrived in Qatar on Tuesday (January 22) his first visit abroad since the wave of anti-government protests over the price of bread that started last month. He met with Emir Tamim bin Hamad on Wednesday.

The Prime Minister in Europe: on an official visit to Rome...

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed arrived in Rome on Sunday (January 20) for an official visit at the invitation of Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte. The two Prime Ministers held a press conference after their talks which Dr. Abiy described as productive. He said: “The comprehensive discussion which I had with Giuseppe Conte was important to take the bilateral relationship between the two nations to the next level.” He called enhanced cooperation between Ethiopia and Italy in the areas of development, peace, and tourism, and said Italy had agreed to finance the first stage of a feasibility study for a railway to link Addis Ababa to the Eritrean port of Massawa. As Eritrea’s Minister of Information, Yemane Gebre Meskel, tweeted later: “Implementation will depend on feasibility study/concurrence of the parties.” Italy also agreed to support projects to tackle food insecurity of school-aged children and rehabilitate Ethiopian soldiers who returned from Ethio-Eritrea border following their rapprochement.

During his visit, Dr. Abiy paid a courtesy visit to President Sergio Mattarella and expressed his appreciation of the changes taking place in Ethiopia and its role in regional integration. The historic relationship has developed into an excellent, exemplary cooperation in all spheres of economic, political, and development cooperation. Prime Minister Conte visited Ethiopia in October last year; and President Mattarella came to Ethiopia in March 2016. The Prime Minister hailed Ethiopia’s strategic partnership with Italy and called for further strengthening of partnership between the two countries especially in economic and cultural cooperation. President Mattarella expressed his immense appreciation of the Wind of Hope, the Wind of Harmony blowing across the Horn of Africa producing a “new sense of optimism for regional peace and stability.”

Prime Minister Abiy also met separately with the heads of World Food Program (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) which are all based in Rome. FAO Director General, Jose Graziano da Silva commended reforms being undertaken during the past nine months and their significance for peace, normalcy and development Dr. Abiy welcomed FAO's work in Ethiopia and highlighted

the need to tackle poverty, food security and development in a concerted and synergized manner to realize Ethiopia's transformation agendas and the Horn region as an integrated economy for holistic regional growth. In his meeting with Gilbert Houngbo, President of The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Prime Minister emphasized the need for strengthening irrigation and food security interventions. IFAD's support to Ethiopia is centered on the Government's commitment to the poorest communities through enhancing the productivity of smallholder farmers, pastoralists and agro-pastoralists. They agreed to continue building on collaboration in irrigation and rural financing. In his talks with WFP Executive Director Mr. David Beasley, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy acknowledged the work of WFP and the crucial role it has been playing in supporting food security, nutrition and capacity building.

During his visit to Rome, the Prime Minister visited the Vatican and had an audience with His Holiness, Pope Francis. According to the Vatican, their "cordial talks" emphasized "important initiatives underway for the promotion of national reconciliation and for the integral development of Ethiopia". The talks also focused on the "role of Christianity in the history of the Ethiopian people". Dr. Abiy also held talks with the Secretary of State of the Holy See. He visited the Church of St Stephen of the Abyssinians where he was received by Cardinal Berhane Yesus. The church, built in the early 5th CE, is the oldest surviving church in Vatican City.

....at the World Economic Forum in Davos...

The World Economic Forum in Davos opened on Tuesday (January 22), and this year's theme was "Globalization 4.0: Shaping a New Architecture in the Age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution." The Forum comes at a time when the IMF believes the "cyclical forces that propelled growth may be weakening faster than we thought." The IMF has cut its forecasts for global growth. The world economy is now expected to grow 3.5% in 2019 and 3.6% in 2020. In other words, it is expecting rising risks and slowing growth, and calls on policy-makers to resolve trade disagreements cooperatively and quickly. Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, Professor Schwab said: "The combination of climate change, income inequality, technology and geopolitics pose an existential threat to humanity." He added, "while the international community's capacity for concerted action appears constrained, the overwhelming desire of the global public is for leaders to find new ways to work together that will allow them to cooperate on these critical shared challenges we all face."

In his address to the Forum on Wednesday, Prime Minister Dr Abiy told participants about the nationwide reforms undertaken during the past nine months and the economic growth registered in the country. He underlined the practical outcomes and the progress of the sweeping reforms Ethiopia is undertaking in good governance, democratization, opening up political space and most importantly, efforts to ensure regional peace, stability and integration in the Horn. "Ethiopia today is among the fastest growing economies in the world, consistently averaging growth of over 9%. Poverty has been halved and education enrolment has markedly increased," he said. The gross domestic product had multiplied 10-fold in 25 years. The Prime Minister said investment in infrastructure had contributed a lot to the growth and attracted Foreign Direct Investment, making Ethiopia one of the leading FDI destinations in Africa.

At the same time, “Our challenges however, remain formidable,” and they included the need to sustain the level of growth, and especially to find jobs for a rapidly expanding young population. In order to ensure the continued upward trajectory and achieve even more rapid and sustainable growth, Ethiopia had embarked on a comprehensive reform process since April, he said. And this was deeply rooted in the philosophy of “medemer”, an Amharic word for coming together. “Medemer” is people-centered and has three interdependent pillars, vibrant democracy, economic vitality and regional integration and openness to the world. The Prime Minister pledged to make it easier to do business for everyone who wished to invest in Ethiopia, and he called on investors from across the world to take advantage of the huge investment and business potentials available in the country. He emphasized that his government was committed to opening up the economy to international investors in telecommunications, logistics, energy, aviation, railways, and industrial parks. It would also continue to foster public private partnerships.

On the side-lines of the Forum, the Prime Minister convened an Investment Strategy Dialogue with selected CEOs of multinational corporations to highlight the progress that is becoming evident in Ethiopia and the improvements that are tangible despite challenges and setbacks. A robust discussion showcased untapped investment opportunities and policy priorities in Ethiopia. The Prime Minister stressed Ethiopia, one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, was located in the crossroads between Africa, the Middle East and Asia with enormous untapped investment opportunities in agriculture, textile, agro-processing, infrastructure and various segments. He briefed the CEOs on the great strides Ethiopia is taking with its Growth and Transformation Plan, becoming the embodiment of the ‘Africa rising narrative’. This was principally attributable to the Government actively promoting private sector investment with attractive incentive packages, coupled with major government projects aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals as Ethiopia aims to become a middle-income status by 2025.

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy met various international development partners on the margins of the Forum as well as holding numerous bilateral meetings. He held talks on bilateral issues with Charles Michel, Prime Minister of Belgium, and discussions with the Interim President of the World Bank Group, Kristalina Georgieva. Dr. Abiy commended the Group’s robust and strong technical and financial support to Ethiopia and asked for this support to be sustained. They shared views on new pipeline projects that have both regional and national dimensions. The Prime Minister met with Bill Gates, co-Chairman of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and thanked him for the work of the Foundation in health, agriculture and state capacity building. They agreed to enhance cooperation in agriculture, irrigation and technology.

The Prime Minister discussed the importance of “a collaborative approach among governments, the private sector and civil society in addressing key global challenges” with Professor Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum. They agreed that Ethiopia should host the African meeting of the World Economic Forum in Addis Ababa in 2020. He also had a meeting with George Soros, Head of the Open Society Foundation, who praised the progressive measures taken in Ethiopia and the speed with which they are being delivered, mentioning particularly reforms in enabling civil societies and the progressive refugee law. They shared views on electoral integrity, challenges of democratization, access to justice and economic inclusion, institutional and regulatory reforms. The Prime Minister expressed his

desire to work for the exchange of ideas and experiences with the Open Society Foundation to enhance Ethiopia's electoral integrity, and address major challenges of democratization, institutional and regulatory reforms for economic inclusion and holistic country growth.

The Prime Minister also met and held discussions with Mohammed Al Shaibani, CEO of Investment Corporation of Dubai, a US\$200 Billion Sovereign Fund. The ICD has said it is keen to invest in the hospitality and agro-business industries in Ethiopia. He had what was described as a 'very productive discussion' with Jack Ma, Chairman of the Alibaba Group on the future of disruptive technologies on markets and society. Mr. Ma agreed to consider potential investment in a technology city in Ethiopia that will impact the daily lives of the people in the region.

... and to Brussels for meetings with the EU Commission

Following his successful visit to the World Economy Forum at Davos, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy moved on to Brussels for meetings with EU Commission leaders. He held talks with Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker on Thursday (January 24). EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said that he was pleased to welcome the Prime Minister in Brussels; he also welcomed Ethiopia's courageous reforms and said he shared the Prime Minister's ambition for an even stronger EU-Ethiopia partnership. Ethiopia is one of the EU's important partners on the African continent. They share a common vision for a peaceful, safe and stable Horn of Africa, a precondition for the political, economic and social development of the region as a whole. The two sides are also looking at ways of maximizing the social and economic impact of development cooperation while ensuring sustainability. This includes improved alignment of EU donors with Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan II and its Climate-Resilient Green Economy Strategy.

During their discussions, Prime Minister Abiy and EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker witnessed the signing of three financing agreements. The agreements, worth Euros 130million, were signed by Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu and EU Commissioner for International Cooperation, Neven Mimica. They cover sustainable energy initiatives, establishment of agro-industry parks and job creation.

The Prime Minister also met with the president of the European Council, Donald Tusk, and the High Representative/Vice President Federica Mogherini. Ms. Mogherini expressed the EU's whole-hearted support for the Prime Minister's progressive agenda. They discussed implementation of the EU-Ethiopia Strategic Engagement signed in June 2016, and their dialogue and co-operation on social and economic development, investment and trade, governance and human rights, as well as regional peace and security. They agreed on the importance of expanding this close partnership – the High Representative is visiting the Horn of Africa next month. They also exchanged views on regional issues, including the tripartite agreement between Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somali, the prospects for regional integration and economic co-operation.

AU-EU Foreign Affairs Ministers meet in Brussels...

The AU and EU held the first of a series of annual joint ministerial meetings in Brussels this week (January 21-22). The meeting brought together Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the European Union and the African Union. It was co-chaired by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Ms. Federica Mogherini, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Rwanda and Chair of the African Union Executive Council, Richard Sezibera. EU and AU Commissioners also attended. The Ethiopian delegation was led by State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene.

This was the first EU-AU ministerial inter-summit meeting, and it focused on implementation of the outcome of the 5th AU–EU Summit held at Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire in November 2017 under the theme of “Investing in Youth” as well as on the Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs. The meeting covered three broad themes: political covering peace, security and governance; economic, including trade, investment, and economic integration; and multilateralism, the strengthening of cooperation in support of a rules-based global order.

The Ministers reiterated the importance of the meeting to strengthen the partnership between the two continents and to promote common interests and address common challenges in a spirit of shared ownership, responsibility and mutual accountability and transparency. They welcomed sub-regional cooperation and integration initiatives. On economic cooperation, they agreed to enhance and mobilize investments in agriculture, infrastructure, industry, energy, air transport and digitalization. Ministers were updated on the European Union External Investment Plan to deploy €4.1 billion to leverage €37 billion in private investments in both continents.

They agreed to work together in combating terrorism, piracy, radicalization, violent extremism, the illegal arms trade and organized crime. In order to support African efforts to promote lasting peace, security and stability, participants reaffirmed their continued support to crisis-affected parts of the continent including Somalia, South Sudan, Libya, the Great Lakes Region and the Sahel. They also welcomed the positive steps towards regional peace and stability, particularly the Ethio-Eritrean rapprochement and its wider impact for peace and security in the Horn of Africa, and agreed to support the process.

State Minister Hirut stressed the reforms in Ethiopia had ushered in a new era of peace, hope and prosperity in the immediate neighbourhood and the peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea had unlocked the door for peace throughout the whole of the Horn of Africa. She underlined that peace, security and governance were critical for Africa’s development. It was essential to further enhance the current cooperation programs in peace, security and governance (including the African peace and security architecture and the AU peace fund). It was also vital to focus on post conflict, reconstruction and peace building including security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, stabilization, transitional justice and mediation.

Mrs. Hirut emphasized that Ethiopia’s efforts to fight poverty and create a nexus between trade and investment needed partnership between the State and the private sector. Similarly, Africa’s quest to transform its economy through investment and trade needed partnership at global,

continental and local levels. Accelerating industrial development in Africa required guarantees and mobilization of loans in the form of investment de-risking, with specific attention for entrepreneurship and innovation of young people and women; including those living in rural and remote areas. It was, therefore important to strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) and to encourage a structured dialogue with European and African private sectors and relevant stakeholders for job creation. Equally, the efforts to create a stable and resilient system supported by strong institutions, and the problems of dealing with trans-border issues such as terrorism, climate change and migration, were issues which required engagement with partners at high level.

...and IGAD and EU consultations

The third round of IGAD-EU consultations took place on the margins of the AU- EU ministerial meeting on Tuesday (January 22). The meeting was chaired by Ethiopia's State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene and Ms. Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security. The two sides welcomed the "historic developments in the Horn of Africa with the normalization of relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia, the tripartite agreement between Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia, as well as the engagement of Eritrea and Djibouti and Eritrea and Sudan towards normalization of relations". This offered major new openings for regional cooperation and economic integration and the EU expressed its readiness "to accompany this process in close coordination with other actors."

The two sides strongly condemned last week's terrorist attack in Nairobi, Kenya and expressed support for the reform agenda in Somalia, and underlined the need for implementation of the political, security and economic reforms. The EU reiterated its commitment to support Somalia's Recovery and Resilience Framework, AMISOM and the Somalia Transition Plan. The two sides also reiterated their support for the peace process in South Sudan and the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, underlining the importance of implementation in full and according to the agreed timescale. IGAD requested the EU to consider further support to the South Sudan Pre-transition activities.

IGAD Ministers expressed their appreciation for EU's continued constructive role in the region, and welcomed high level engagement. Both sides emphasized a desire for regular dialogue. They encouraged future engagements on deliverables for the region's priority agenda such as job creation. They highlighted opportunities for strengthening the gains made through advancing an integration agenda while underlining the importance of continuing cooperation in fighting terrorism and threats to peace and security. They agreed to promote regional cooperation, training and capacity building and to use all opportunities to strengthen inclusive regional and cross-regional cooperation and dialogue across the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea, covering trade, migration, climate change, food security, peace and security and maritime security.

The EU underlined the importance of sound economic strategies and long-term political will in sustaining "current positive dynamics in the region". It said it was preparing further substantial support to economic integration and trade, in the context of the EU Africa Alliance for

investment and jobs. It reiterated its commitment to the region as a whole and underlined its support to the IGAD framework of cooperation.

More rights for refugees in Ethiopia

Ethiopia’s House of People’s Representatives adopted significant revisions in the existing refugee law on Thursday last week (17 January), giving the country what UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, described as “one of the most progressive refugee policies in Africa”. The new law allows refugees to obtain work permits, access education and health services, obtain drivers’ licenses, legally register life events such as births and marriages and opens up access to national financial services, such as banking. The passing of the law came only a few weeks after the UN General Assembly agreed to the Global Compact on Refugees (December 17) which focuses on ensuring refugees have the opportunity to be self-reliant and can contribute to local economies in a way that can also benefit their hosts.

In a press statement, the UNHCR said: “The passage of this historic law represents a significant milestone in Ethiopia’s long history of welcoming and hosting refugees from across the region for decades,” adding, “By allowing refugees the opportunity to be better integrated into society, Ethiopia is not only upholding its international refugee law obligations, but is serving as a model for other refugee hosting nations around the world.” The UNHCR said the law would help refugees feel included and that they could contribute to society. Ethiopia's Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs said it strongly believed that the new law would enhance the lives of refugees and host communities.

The new law also supports the “The Jobs Compact”, a \$500 million program funded by the World Bank, DFID, the European Investment Bank and the EU, to create 100,000 jobs, in support of Ethiopia's pledge to provide work for refugees within the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework which it launched in November 2017. The program, which also allows for the improvement of the regulatory framework for refugees, will support sustainable industrialization, and provide employment and jobs for Ethiopians and refugees. 30% of the jobs will be allocated to refugees.

Ethiopia currently hosts over 900,000 refugees, Africa's second largest refugee population after Uganda, primarily from neighbouring South Sudan, Somalia, Sudan and Eritrea, as well as smaller numbers of refugees from Yemen and Syria.

Investment opportunities for Chinese companies in pulses and livestock

This month the Ethiopian Embassy in Beijing organized an “Ethiopia - China Pulses, Oilseeds and Spices Sellers-Buyers Matchmaking Seminar” on January 11 and a few days later in Hohhot, capital of the autonomous region of Inner Mongolia, an investment forum promoting opportunities in agriculture and livestock processing in Ethiopia.

The seminar in Beijing was planned in collaboration with China’s Chamber of Commerce of Import and Export of Foodstuffs, Native Produce and Animal By-Products (CFNA). 10 major exporting companies from Ethiopia, led by Anteneh Zegeye, Chairman of the Ethiopian Pulses, Oilseeds and Spices Processors and Exporters Association (EPOSPEA), participated. Ato Anteneh gave details of Ethiopia’s pulses and oilseeds and areas for development and cooperation. Mr. Bian Zhenhu, President of CFNA, emphasized the importance of Ethiopia for China-Africa cooperation, and said the bilateral trade would benefit from the Eight Major Initiatives announced at the FOCAC Beijing Summit last September. He said Ethiopian exporters and Chinese importers should make good use of China’s economic development, its increasing market demands, upgraded consumption and the further opening-up.

The Ethiopian delegation had fruitful business-to-business discussions and also visited Qingdao where they held talks with the heads of two major Chinese oilseeds and pulses importing and processing companies Yihai Kerry Oilseeds and Grains (Qingdao) Ltd. and Qingdao Bolan Group Co. Ltd. These companies are the largest buyers of Ethiopia’s sesame, oilseeds and pulses. Ethiopia is China’s biggest sesame supplier and the fourth largest supplier of agricultural products. A new market in soybeans is currently opening up.

The Forum on Investment Opportunities in Agriculture and Livestock was held on January 16 in collaboration with the Foreign Affairs Office of Inner Mongolia. The forum attracted representatives from the Bureau of Commerce, Department of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, and corporate leaders from over 30 enterprises engaged in agriculture and livestock sector in Inner Mongolia. Mr. Si Qing, Director-General of Port Office of Inner Mongolia, said Ethiopia’s agricultural resources and its relevance for animal husbandry development, are aligned with Inner Mongolia’s excess capability in agricultural modernization and integrated livestock processing. He expressed the readiness of the regional government and its enterprises to cooperate in modern agriculture, animal husbandry, manufacturing and infrastructural development. While the Embassy detailed strategic investment areas, economic incentives, the investment environment and infrastructural development in Ethiopia, the Forum offered discussion of the opportunities in milk processing, leather tanning, animal medicine and vaccine manufacturing, breeding and feed processing.

During the visit to Hohhot, the Embassy delegation, led by Charge d’Affaires, Ephrem Bizuayehu, visited Jinyu Bio-Technology Company, one of the largest animal health companies in the world, with its state-of-the-art animal medicines and vaccines manufacturing park, as well as the China Mengniu Dairy Company. It met Director-General of the Foreign Affairs Office of Inner Mongolia, Mr. Fu Yongchun; they agreed to forge a “sister regions’ partnership” and institutional twinning to enhance people-to-people relations.

Somalia’s Humanitarian Response Plan for 2019

The Federal Government of Somalia and aid agencies launched the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) on Monday this week (January 21), calling on donors to provide sufficient and early funding to sustain aid operations in Somalia in 2019. The response plan seeks \$1.08 billion to support to 3.4 million Somalis affected by conflict, climatic shocks, and displacement. It noted

that improvements in the food security situation due to good 2018 *Gu* rain, a sustained humanitarian response throughout 2018 and a more focused definition of needs have resulted in a 32% decline in the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance, from 6.2 million to 4.2 million. Nevertheless, over 1.5 million people, mainly IDPs and rural populations, face acute levels of food insecurity (IPC 3 and above) and require immediate assistance. Malnutrition rates across the country have remained persistently high and there were over 2.6 million internally displaced persons, highly vulnerable and in need of multiple basic services and protection.

Hamza Said Hamza, the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management said the response plan clearly articulated the government's position that humanitarian needs in Somalia cannot be addressed by the delivery of life-saving assistance alone. He called on donors to prioritize programs that tackle structural and chronic development challenges in Somalia. He said: "We are committed to work with all partners to move ahead with implementing durable solutions through the Resilience and Recovery Framework for Somalia, while the humanitarian response plan focuses on the immediate needs of the most vulnerable." Peter de Clercq, the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia said, "I urge the international community to continue providing early and sufficient humanitarian funding. Alongside life-saving support, a substantial investment in resilience-building and development solutions will be critical to ultimately end need and allow people to fend for themselves with dignity."

Last year, despite operational challenges, insecurity and restraints on access, aid agencies reached an average of three million people every month with assistance. The Humanitarian Response Plan aims to target 3.4 million people, or 81% of those in need of assistance; and it will focus on four core strategic objectives: providing life-saving assistance, nutrition, protection and resilience support to the most vulnerable.