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News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

The African Union Peace and Security Council issued a statement on Monday (April 15) condemning the military takeover in Sudan as an unconstitutional change of government, and demanding the military hand over power to a transitional civilian-led political authority within 15 days. Failure to do so, the Peace and Security warned, would result in Sudan's suspension from participation in all African Union activities until constitutional order was restored. The Council said a "military-led transition would be completely contrary to the aspirations of the people of Sudan".

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, met a delegation from Sudan headed by Lieutenant-General Jalal Alsheikh Altayeb, a member of the Military Transitional Council (MTC) on Tuesday (April 16) bringing a written message from Lt. General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, Chairperson of the MTC. The Commission Chairperson reiterated African Union's commitment to work with all the Sudanese stakeholders towards a consensual and inclusive transition that meets the aspirations of the people and ensure the stability of the country.

U.N. Secretary-general António Guterres has appointed Special Adviser Nicholas Haysom to support the African Union's mediation efforts in Sudan. He told Moussa Faki Mahamat, the chair of the African Union Commission, on Monday that Mr. Haysom would be there to support the AU in whatever way he could over Sudan.

The African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Transport, Transcontinental Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism (STC-TTIET) met in Cairo this week (April 14-18). The meeting organized by the AU Commission and the Government of Egypt considered strategies for developing smart infrastructure to boost Africa's continental transformation and integration. **(See article)**

The Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Amb (Eng.) Mahboub Maalim has sent a message of congratulations to Mr. Gedu Andargachew on his appointment as the new Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. "I warmly welcome your well-deserved appointment", stated Amb Maalim in a letter, adding that he looks forward to working with Hon. Gedu Andargachew in his new critical role as Chairperson of the IGAD Council of Ministers. The IGAD Executive Secretary further assured the Minister of his full support. Amb. Maalim praised Ethiopia's continued leadership in the advancement of IGAD's regional peace, security, and development and integration agenda.

Ethiopia

President Sahle-Work Zewde met Ms. Ivanka Trump, White House Advisor to US President Donald Trump, on Monday this week (April 15). Ms. Trump was on a two-day working visit to Ethiopia to discuss ongoing activities being undertaken to promote women empowerment and equality. Ms. Trump also met with Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed to reaffirm U.S. support for Ethiopia's progress on reforms towards inclusive democracy, broad-based prosperity, and lasting stability. **(See article)**

President Sahle-Work Zewde met the members of a political and business delegation from the German state of Bavaria Monday (April 14). The delegation also participated in an Ethiopian-German Business Forum at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Addis Ababa. **(See article)**

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed met members of Sudan's new military council on Monday this week (April 15) when General Jalal Alsheikh Altayeb led a delegation to Addis Ababa. The delegation briefed Dr. Abiy about the latest developments and urged the Prime Minister to continue its long-standing support for Sudan. Dr. Abiy reaffirmed the support of the Government of Ethiopia to the people of Sudan, stressing that this support is based on respect for Sudan's sovereignty and on the principles of non-intervention.

The House of Peoples' Representatives on Thursday (April 18) approved the appointment of Gedu Andargachew as the new Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia. The House also approved the appointment of Mr. Lemma Megersa as the Minister of Defense and Engineer Aisha Mohammed as Minister of Urban Development and Construction.

Minister of Finance Ahmed Shide led the Ethiopian delegation to attend the annual World Bank, IMF and the International Finance Corporation Spring Meetings in Washington earlier this month. **(See article)**

A New Zealand Parliamentary delegation, led by Trevor Mallard, Speaker of the House of Peoples Representatives of New Zealand visited Ethiopia this week, holding talks with Tadesse Chafo, Speaker of the House of Peoples' Representatives of Ethiopia and Mohammed Rashid, Deputy Speaker of the House of Federation and other senior officials. The delegation also met Ambassador Mahlet Hailu, Permanent Secretary for Europe, America, Asia and Multilateral Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. **(See article)**

Ethiopia has completed its year as chair of the Nairobi Chapter of the Group of 77 and China and handed over the role to Palestine after a year in which it has coordinated the Group during the United Nations Environment Assembly held in Nairobi in March. **(See article)**

Minister of Science and Higher Education Mrs. Hirut Woldemariam, met Mr. Mikhail Kotyukov, Science and Higher Education Minister of the Russian Federation in Moscow last week, to exchange views on ways of deepening the over 120 years of cooperation and diplomatic relations.

Ethiopia and Rosatom of the Russian Federation have signed an implementation roadmap to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes at the 11th ATOMEXPO, taking place in Sochi,

Russia this week (April 15-16). The agreement, under which Ethiopia will use nuclear technology for energy as well as to produce isotopes for health, agriculture and industry applications, was signed by Dr. Getahun Mekuria, Minister of Innovation and Technology and Alex Liknachev, Director General of Rosatom.

Minister of Agriculture Oumer Hussein and USAID Deputy Administrator Bonnie Glick signed a declaration of partnership for the U.S. government's new five-year Feed the Future strategy to invest in food security, build resilience, and accelerate economic growth opportunities on Friday last week (April 12). This renews U.S. government agriculture, nutrition, and food security-related commitments through 2024. Ethiopia is one of 12 partner countries worldwide participating in the new phase of the Feed the Future initiative.

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene met a South Sudanese delegation led by Mr. Gabriel Changson, Chair of the National Pre-Transitional Committee, on Saturday (April 13). Mrs. Hirut reiterated Ethiopia's strong support to the successful implementation of South Sudan's Revitalized Peace Agreement. Mr. Changson said there were encouraging results, but the process was facing challenges including a lack of the required finance, not all parties had yet signed the agreement and there were concerns over finalizing work before the deadline.

State Minister Mrs. Hirut Zemene met Mrs. Hanna Serwaah Tetteh, Under Secretary General of the United Nations Office of African Union (UNOAU) on Wednesday (April 17). Mrs. Serwaah praised the reform measures underway in Ethiopia, emphasizing that empowering women at higher executive level, democratization and respect for human and democratic rights of citizens had impacted the entire continent.

A Framework Arrangement between Ethiopia and the Republic of Korea was signed on Tuesday by Admasu Nebebe, State Minister of the Ministry of Finance and Ambassador Lim Hoon-min, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Ethiopia. The agreement was signed to implement high priority projects to be financed by concessional loans for \$300 million for the years 2019-2020, and will be used to support the establishment of 5 Centers of Excellence for the Adama Science and Technology University, the Addis Ababa Bus Rapid Transit Line project and other projects now under consultation.

Ethiopia and European Union (EU) on Wednesday signed a €10 million Euros grant agreement for the Ethiopian Social Accountability Program III (ESAP3), to be implemented in the next five years as a multi-donor trust fund through close collaboration with the Ethiopian government. The agreement was signed between State Minister of Finance, Admasu Nebebe and the EU Head of Delegation, Erik Habers. State Minister Admasu said the program will now be advanced to over 500 districts and contribute towards productive engagement and dialogue between citizens, service providers and government in deepening participatory process and promoting social accountability.

Ambassador Mahlet Hailu Permanent Secretary to Europe, America, Asia and Multilateral Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told a National Reintegration Workshop on Tuesday (April 16) that for "sustainable reintegration to succeed, it must be comprehensive, holistic and needs-based." The Workshop, organized by the Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs, the EU, the IOM and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, aimed to exchange good practices, identify challenges and lessons learned, as well as looking to see what more can be done to achieve sustainable reintegration of migrants returning from various countries.

The Permanent Secretary took note of the principle of burden/responsibility sharing through different mechanisms, including provision of financial assistance and resettlement opportunities in a concerted manner to prevent re-migration.

More than 40 Ethiopian coffee-exporting companies, producers and cooperatives attended the Specialty Coffee Expo, held in Boston in the US, April 11-14. Organized by the Specialty Coffee Association, this is the leading trade show and networking platform for the coffee industry with over 3,900 exhibitors and 9,000 attendees. State Minister of Trade and Industry, Misganu Arega, led the Ethiopian delegation of senior officials and leading coffee exporters and coffee farmers and cooperatives. During the Expo, an MoU was signed with the Alliance for Coffee Excellence to hold the coffee competition Cup of Excellence in Ethiopia in 2020.

Somalia

President Mohamed Abdullahi in a visit to Benadir Police headquarters called on members of the Somali Police Force to adhere to human rights prescriptions in their efforts of maintaining peace, law and order. He also stressed the need for close cooperation with members of the public as well as the need to intensify security operations.

Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre held talks with US Deputy Secretary of Defense, David Norquist, in Washington at the end of last week, on ways to enhance bilateral cooperation and Somalia's security sector reforms. The Minister praised the US government for its role in the war against t Al-Shabaab and ISIS and expressed immense gratitude for its actions.

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Ambassador Ahmed Isse Awad, held talks with Russia's Foreign Minister, Mr. Sergey Lavrov in Moscow on Monday (April 15) on ways of strengthening bilateral relations as well as on a number of regional and international issues of common interest. The minister was in Moscow to attend the fifth session of the Russian-Arab Cooperation Forum which began on Tuesday.

159 Sierra Leonean officers from the Formed Police Unit stationed in Jubaland State were awarded medals for their contribution by AMISOM after completing a one-year tour of duty. Deputy Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (DSRCC) for Somalia, Simon Mulong, praised the excellent and professional performance of their duties, laying down a firm foundation for the transformation of Jubaland Police into a formidable force. The UN Security Council under resolution 2372 of 2017 authorized 1,040 AMISOM Police personnel and five Formed Police Units to help establish a strong police force.

Sudan

The Chairman of the Transitional Military Council, Lt. General Abdul-Fattah Al-Burhan, received a written message on Wednesday (April 17) from President Salva Kiir, dealing with the support of South Sudan State and its president to the Transitional Military Council. The TMC Chairman briefed the South Sudanese delegation on the situation in Sudan and stressed that power in Sudan will be transferred to the people as soon as possible.

A spokesperson for China's Foreign Ministry said on Friday last week no matter how the situation in Sudan changed, China would continue to maintain and develop friendly cooperative relations with Sudan. He said China always adhered to the principle of non-

interference in other countries' internal affairs and believed Sudan was capable of handling its internal affairs and safeguarding national peace and stability. A day earlier, the Russian parliament's International Affairs Committee, said Russia would continue its cooperation with Sudan.

US Presidential Advisor, Ms. Ivanka Trump Visits Ethiopia

President Sahle-Work Zewde received Ms. Ivanka Trump, White House Advisor to US President Donald Trump, on Monday this week (April 15). Ms. Trump was on a two-day working visit to Ethiopia to discuss ongoing activities being undertaken to promote women empowerment and equality. President Trump launched the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative (W-GDP), a "whole-of-government" approach that aims to promote women's economic empowerment across the globe two months ago. President Sahle-Work said the initiative was a good beginning to empower women and will get global recognition as far as it centered and targeted women worldwide. She noted Ethiopia was moving on a new path to build up the capacity of women, particularly addressing gender-based challenges of female students at higher education institutions. It was also committed to work in partnership with non-governmental organizations to empower women.

Ms. Trump also met with Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed to reaffirm U.S. support for Ethiopia's progress on reforms towards inclusive democracy, broad-based prosperity, and lasting stability. Ms. Trump welcomed the Prime Minister's proactive approach to increasing the number of women in leadership positions in the government and discussed ways Ethiopia and the United States could partner each other to advance their shared goal of increasing women's economic empowerment in Ethiopia and worldwide. Appreciating the transformational process in Ethiopia, Ms. Trump applauded the measures taken by Ethiopia to promote gender equality, citing the gender parity in the cabinet. She reiterated US support for the changes. She said: "Fundamentally we believe that investing in women is a smart development policy and it's smart business. It is also in our security interests because women when they are empowered they foster peace and stability and we have seen this play out time and time again."

Framed as a component of the US National Security Strategy, the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative (W-GDP) builds around three core pillars. The first pillar, "women prospering in the workforce," advocates workforce development, vocational and skills to increase women's participation in the labor force. The second, "women succeeding as entrepreneurs," supports expanding access to capital, markets, and networks to help women create and expand small businesses. The third pillar, "women enabled in the economy," seeks to remove legal, regulatory and cultural barriers that inhibit women's equal participation in the economy. President Trump proposed the establishment of a \$50 million fund to be overseen by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to support new projects in line with the W-GDP agenda. The initiative aims to reach 500 million women by 2025 and is seen as a positive step by the US administration to promote Women's Empowerment and Equality, aligning with what leading research suggests, that women's economic participation and empowerment matter greatly for economic growth and poverty reduction.

Ms. Trump and Overseas Private Investment Corporation Acting President and CEO, David Bohigian, on Monday (April 15) launched OPIC2X Africa at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. Also present were Ethiopia's President Sahle-Work Zewde and Giovane Biha, Deputy Executive Secretary of the ECA. OPIC2X, an initiative, of the W-GDP aims to directly invest \$350 million to help mobilize \$1 billion in capital to support women-owned, women-led, and women-supporting projects in Sub-Saharan Africa. OPIC's 2X Women's Initiative, launched last year, has already invested more than \$1 billion supporting women's economic empowerment.

Accompanied by USAID Administrator Mark Green, Ms. Trump met with members of the Ethiopian Women's Coffee Association in Addis Ababa to discuss the opportunities and challenges that women entrepreneurs face in Ethiopia. Ms. Trump underlined United States' support for improving the opportunities for women to start and expand their businesses in Ethiopia; and at the conclusion of the meeting, she announced a W-GDP award to help the owner of Azalech Coffee Roasting, Grinding and Packaging expand her business. Ms. Trump also toured the facilities at Muya Ethiopia, a leading textile and handicrafts export company founded by Sara Abera, which started with the assistance of USAID, and announced a W-GDP award to expand the business.

During her visit, Ms. Trump visited the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Addis Ababa and paid tribute to the 157 victims of the recent Ethiopian Airlines tragedy at a special church ceremony, laying a wreath to the dead.

Visit of a New Zealand's Parliamentary delegation to Ethiopia

A New Zealand Parliamentary Delegation led by Mr. Trevor Mallard, Speaker of the New Zealand's House of Representatives, visited Ethiopia this week, April 15-17. The delegation, which included parliamentarians who are members of opposition parties in New Zealand's House of Representatives, met Ato Tadesse Chafo, Speaker of the House of Peoples' Representatives of Ethiopia and members of Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs Standing Committee of House of Peoples' Representatives, Mohammed Rashid, Deputy Speaker of the House of Federation and other senior officials. The delegation also met Ambassador Mahlet Hailu, Permanent Secretary for Europe, America, Asia and Multilateral Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mr. Mallard explained that this was the first such visit ever made to Africa by a New Zealand parliamentary delegation; he noted that the reforms in Ethiopia and Ethiopia's significant role in the African Union were the main reasons for the visit.

House Speaker Tadesse briefed the delegation on the political and economic reforms being carried out since Dr. Abiy Ahmed became Prime Minister a year ago. On the political side, Ethiopia had released thousands of political prisoners, enabled the return of exiled politicians, opened up the political space, ensured media freedom, and was working on the reform of democratic and security related institutions and the revision of restrictive laws. Ato Tadesse added that half of the Prime Minister's cabinet are women and some of the government's key positions including the Presidency, the Federal Supreme Court, the and Electoral Board are occupied by women. This has placed the country among the very few which have a gender-balanced cabinet.

The Speaker also noted that the Prime Minister's Diaspora outreach visits in Europe and North America had been instrumental in boosting the confidence of the Diaspora in their home country and in increasing their interest and determination to serve their country and to become beneficiaries of the developments in Ethiopia. This was one of the most positive results of the reforms so far. The Speaker also elaborated on the ongoing economic reforms, including the studies to liberalize wholly or partially state-owned enterprises such as Ethio-Telecom, Ethiopian Airlines, and the Sugar Corporation as. Speaker Tagesse said all this was providing great opportunities for investment and New Zealand companies should consider and use the possibilities. He also underlined the importance of strengthening the inter-parliamentary partnership between the two countries.

The Deputy Speaker of the House of Federation, Ato Mohammed Rashid, also briefed the delegation on the powers and functions of the upper house, the House of Federation. He also discussed the newly found freedom of operation for civil societies and charity organizations, and the achievements in enrolment and participation of girls and women in the education sector. He elaborated the causes of the current problems of internal displacement and the government's efforts to create awareness and collaboration with different stakeholders for the rehabilitation of those displaced.

During the visit to the Parliament, Mr. Mallard emphasized that liberalization was a sustainable way for development, agreeing that state owned enterprises should be liberalized cautiously. This was demonstrated by the experience of New Zealand. Ethiopia could benefit from the support of the international community, including New Zealand, in providing expertise and technical support. He expressed New Zealand's readiness to share its experiences in multi-party and proportional representation, pointing out that countries transiting to democracy, including New Zealand, all faced such challenges at some time or other.

Permanent Secretary Ambassador Mahlet Hailu at the Foreign Ministry told the delegation that the rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea was one of the results of the reform process in Ethiopia. The peace call made by Dr. Abiy Ahmed to Eritrea and the positive response from Eritrea resolved the 20 year-deadlock in a way that is benefiting not only both countries but also the whole of the Horn of Africa region. The internationally acclaimed peace process was bringing a new chapter of peace and security to the region. Ambassador Mahlet underlined Ethiopia's readiness to speed up the regional integration process and stressed that the regional body, IGAD, was monitoring peace and security developments in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea region. Ambassador Mahlet also briefed the delegation about the macro-economic measures underway including the work on debt restructuring, increasing foreign exchange reserves, and striving to create job opportunities to the burgeoning youth population. She noted youth unemployment was a critical but prioritized problem that would be solved in the reform process.

Ambassador Mahlet expressed Ethiopia's wish to enhance cooperation with New Zealand in a number of areas, including agriculture, tourism and manufacturing. The New Zealand delegation also expressed their willingness to share their experiences in geothermal energy. New Zealand is one of leading countries in the world specializing in geothermal energy.

A business delegation from Germany in Addis Ababa

Markus Soder, Minister-President of the German Free State of Bavaria led a delegation to Ethiopia this week. The delegation, which arrived on Sunday (April 14), was made up of representatives from sixty companies, and the focus of its visit was economic cooperation as well as issues of climate change and migration. It met with President Sahle-Work Zewde, government officials and representatives of the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations.

At a meeting with President Sahle-Work Zewde, the Minister-President emphasized that Bavaria was very keen to strengthen its relations with Ethiopia and open up new business avenues. He noted that Bavaria had opened an Africa Office in Addis Ababa to foster stronger business ties and develop cooperation between Ethiopia and Bavaria. Welcoming the delegation at the National Palace, President Sahle-Work said the relations of Ethiopia and Germany showed excellent momentum and the visit of the Bavarian officials and business people was a sign that the relationship was going in the right direction. She said: “I am very happy to see such a high-level delegation, and is a great pleasure receiving you. There is a lot where we can work together.” The German football club Bayern Munich has opened a Football Academy in Addis Ababa, and Minister-President Markus Soder handed over a Bayern Munich’s Jersey with “Sahle-Work 1” on the back to President Sahle-Work.

At a meeting with officials on Monday, the delegation signed five Memoranda of Understanding covering various issues including the establishment of a Center for Technology Excellence aiming to enable the Ethiopian youth to develop work capacities in their area of operation with the objective of job creation.

AU Technical Committee on Transport, Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism meeting

The Second Ordinary Session of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Transport, Transcontinental Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism (STC-TTIET) took place this week from April 14-18, in Cairo. The meeting was organized by the African Union Commission in collaboration with the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt to consider strategies for developing smart infrastructure to boost Africa’s continental transformation and integration. The meeting was attended by 38 member states and regional economic communities, regional and continental institutions, and international organizations. An experts’ meeting on Sunday and Monday (April 14-15) preceded the ministerial meeting which considered and adopted the recommendations presented by the experts. Mrs. Dagmawit Moges, Minister of Transport, led the Ethiopian delegation to the meeting which observed a minute’s silence for the lives lost in the crash of Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 to Nairobi on March 10.

The meeting considered the nexus between transport, energy and tourism and its relevance for Agenda 2063 and implementing the Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA). Taking note of the progress made in establishment of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), the meeting affirmed the need for an overall continental transport policy. With regard to the transcontinental and interregional infrastructure, it took note of the implementation status of PIDA, the Plans of Action of the STC-TTIET of PIDA and recommended member states to ensure strong ownership of PIDA’s Priority Action Plan

projects and include them in their national budgets and plans. It further recommended member states to increase local employment opportunities through an integrated multi-sectoral corridor approach.

On the energy sector, the meeting considered the outcome of the First Meeting of the STC Sub-Committee on Energy, held in March last year in Nouakchott. It took note of the progress made in the implementation of the AU Commission's program on bio-energy development in Africa as well as the progress achieved by the African Energy Commission in developing the African Energy Information System and making it available for use by member states, RECs and specialized institutions. The meeting recommended member states to provide support to the implementation of the AU Commission Initiatives on five programs.

On tourism, the meeting noted the AU Agenda 2063 ten-year implementation plan and the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the inclusion of tourism; AU Development Agency and NEPAD tourism action plans and the 2014 Seychelles tourism communiqué; the Morocco 2016 African Charter on Sustainable and Responsible Tourism and the Declaration on Tourism and Climate issues in Africa; as well as the challenges facing tourism development in the continent. It requested the AU Commission to undertake a feasibility study for the establishment of an African tourism body to speed up tourism development across the continent. It also encouraged the AU Commission to support the strengthening of tourism infrastructure with adequate resources and to effectively link it with the transport and energy sector considerations.

The meeting concluded urging member states, the African Union Commission and Regional Economic Communities to strengthen intra-African and continental cooperation in the infrastructure sectors. It urged member states to mainstream climate change into infrastructure planning and implementation. It appealed to member states to formulate harmonized policies and regulations for infrastructure development to create local jobs particularly for the youth; to strengthen African Small and Medium Enterprises and ensure technology transfer through vocational training. It called for member states to speed up ratification of pending legal instruments related to infrastructure, including the Maritime Charter, the Single African Air Transport Market, and the AFREC Convention and Road Safety Charter. It also called on key regional and international partners including the African Development Bank, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa the World Bank and the European Union, to continue to support the Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa.

In her remarks to the meeting, Transport Minister Mrs. Dagmawit Moges expressed her thanks for the tribute paid by AU Member States over the lives lost on March 10. She took the opportunity to express the deep condolences of the Ethiopian people and of herself to the peoples and governments of Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe for the lives lost and properties destroyed by Cyclone Idai.

Minister Dagmawit noted investment in the transport, energy and tourism infrastructure was a crucial component of Africa's accelerated growth and sustainable development. These sectors had great potential to create jobs, generate income and enhance economic development. Some of the flagship projects towards realizing Agenda 2063 were key components of these sectors; however, they were still not properly contributing their fair share of the continent's development and growth. It was important to put in place the necessary structural, institutional, legal, financial and human resources, she said. Minister Dagmawit pointed out

that Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan were part and parcel of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063, and the Plan was giving special focus to the development of these sectors in a bid to accelerate growth and serve as a vehicle towards continental integration. She stressed that the Plan mainstreamed gender, and women and youth, which she said, were at its heart, noting also that Small and Medium Enterprises were important engines of development for low income families and groups. In addition, the private sector had an irreplaceable role in the GTP, and Ethiopia was now in process of privatizing telecom and airlines services to speed up development and growth. Overall, the transport, energy and tourism sectors contribute immensely to GDP, she said, and "if we double our efforts, the revenue they generate will impact our growth and development significantly."

The Minister said Ethiopia's determination to encourage and support the establishment of the Single African Air Transport Market, and the full realization of PIDA and AUDA/NEPAD programs and plans of action, was a testimony to its commitment to Africa's integration. She noted Ethiopia had just ratified and deposited the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement with a view to enhancing continental integration. In conclusion, Minister Dagmawit assured the meeting that Ethiopia would do everything in its capacity to strengthen inter-African cooperation in the transport, energy and tourism infrastructure sectors. The journey might not be smooth or easy, and immense challenges remained, but "with the necessary political will and commitment there is no doubt that we will meet the demands of our peoples."

The Minister of Finance attends the World Bank Spring meetings in Washington

Minister of Finance Ahmed Shide led the Ethiopian delegation to attend the annual World Bank, IMF and the International Finance Corporation Spring Meetings in Washington earlier this month. The meetings discussed progress of the work of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund and the sessions, panel discussions, seminars, regional briefings, and press conferences, focused on the global economy, international development, and the world's financial markets. The WB/IMF Spring Meetings, some of which are closed or ministerial level sessions, were attended by approximately 2,800 delegates from member countries, and 350 observer organization representatives as well as several hundred accredited civil society members who also participated in meetings and panel sessions.

At a Finance Ministers' Panel, Finance Minister Ahmed underlined the critical support that the IMF and other international financial institutions need to do to help create the necessary provision of jobs for the rapidly growing numbers of youth in Ethiopia, and in Africa. He also emphasized the importance of reversing the declining trend in concessional loans.

The Ethiopian delegation successfully concluded its attendance at the Spring Meetings at the beginning of this week, having had a series of useful and fruitful meetings with leaders of the World Bank, the IMF and the International Finance Corporation. These allowed the delegation to provide briefings on Ethiopia's reforms as well as offering opportunities for increased cooperation and investment. The IFC has now said it will consider making up to equity investments of up to 1 billion dollars per year in Ethiopia.

The delegation also held a number of meetings with US-based companies on the side-lines of the Spring Meetings. Ethiopia's Ambassador to the United States, Ambassador Fitsum Arega, said Minister Ahmed met with companies that were "interested in green energy investment for which Ethiopia is well known and in other sectors like healthcare and aviation."

Ethiopia completes its turn as chair of Nairobi Chapter of the Group of 77 and China

The Group of 77 was established in June 1964 by the signatories of the "Joint Declaration of the Seventy-Seven Developing Countries" issued at the end of the first session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in Geneva. Three years later, the Group adopted the Charter of Algiers, establishing an institutional structure with headquarters in New York and chapters in Nairobi, Geneva, Vienna, Rome, Paris, and Washington. Over the years, its membership has increased to 134, but the Group has retained its original name to maintain the symbolism.

Ethiopia is a founding member of the Group and an active advocate of its values and principles of the Group. In January 2018, the Group of 77 elected Ethiopia to lead the Nairobi Chapter and Ambassador Dina Mufti, Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations Offices in Nairobi, became the first Ethiopian ambassador to assume the chair of the Nairobi chapter.

The Nairobi Chapter of the G77 is tasked to articulate and promote the collective environmental, social and economic interests of developing countries, enhance their joint negotiating capacity on matters of the environment and human settlement and to promote South-South cooperation for environment and development. Ethiopia has had an excellent track record in the promotion of the interest of developing countries in environmental issues, and its election as chair of the Nairobi Chapter was not mere coincidence but the result of a pragmatic assessment of the importance of the environmental and human settlement agenda for 2018-19.

2018 indeed was expected to be challenging for a number of other reasons as well: governance reform at the United Nations Human Settlements Program, preparation for the Fourth United Nations Environment Assembly, successive meetings of the Global Pact for the Environment, and the Sixth Global Environment outlook. Ethiopia's primary responsibilities as chair of the Nairobi Chapter was to promote the interest of the Global South and enhance the joint negotiating capacity of the Group, despite the difficulties in finding a common position on some issues and even potential threats to the unity of the G77 in moving forward. Ethiopia, capitalizing on its diplomatic skills in multilateral forums refined since the early days of the League of Nations, demonstrated its ability to deliver on its mandate and achieve tactful consensus building. Its successful chairmanship also gained substantially from the unflinching support of all Members of the Group.

In its capacity as the Chair of the Group of 77 and China in Nairobi, Ethiopia pledged to consolidate the functions of the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Program as per the outcome document (paragraph 88) of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, providing a crucial role for the UNEP. Consolidation of the functions of the UN Environment Program, the only UN headquarters in the developing south, provides for an important element of the environment pillar in the context of sustainable development.

Ethiopia made clear its determination to strengthen the United Nations offices in Nairobi. Its efforts paid off when all members of the Group and development partners agreed to work on a clear action plan to implement paragraph 88 of the outcome document reaffirming and supporting a crucial role for UNEP.

The conference, of course, critically examined the important role of science, innovation and research for the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda, and ways forward for solving global problems related to sustainability, offering new methods and approaches to suit new challenges and opportunities, calling for different and appropriate ways of doing things, of organising differently. In its capacity as Chair of the Nairobi Group, Ethiopia strongly believes that the success of its tenure as chair should be seen as the success of every member of the Group.

In February this year, Ambassador Dina Mufti was succeeded by Ambassador Meles Alem who continued the legacy of his predecessor and coordinated the Group during the Conference on Sustainable Development, the Second Substantive Session of the Meeting on the Global Pact for the Environment. The successful delivery of the mandate of the Chair by two successive Ambassadors offered a clear manifestation of Ethiopia's commitment to the principles, values and aspirations of the Group of 77 and China. After successful chairing the Nairobi Chapter of the strongest and largest multilateral negotiating block for a year, Ethiopia handed over the role to the representative of the Asia-Pacific Group, Ambassador Hazem Shabatt, Ambassador of the State of Palestine to the Republic of Kenya.