

A Week in the Horn 24.07.2020

News in Brief

'African solutions to African problems' is the way to go, say African Leaders following Latest Negotiation over GERD

The Bureau of the African Union Assembly Convened a follow-up Extraordinary Meeting over GERD

Ethiopia Celebrates the first phase of the filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

PM Abiy Ahmed pays a two-day visit to Eritrea

The Government of Ethiopia reaffirms commitment to assist and support Ethiopian citizens residing abroad and endangered by the COVID- 19 pandemic

Africa and the African Union

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) on Monday (July 20) said that locusts continue to be a serious threat to food security in parts of East Africa, India and Pakistan as a result of changing climate conditions that can be linked to human activity. WMO said that extreme weather events and climatic changes such as increases in temperature and rainfall over desert areas, and the strong winds associated with tropical cyclones, provide a new environment for pest breeding, development and migration.

The UN Secretary-General on Monday (July 20) spoke at the General Assembly's commemoration of Nelson Mandela Day. The Secretary-General recalled that Nelson Mandela had said: "As long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality persist in our world, none of us can truly rest." Similarly, the Secretary-General added, high and rising levels of inequality threaten our well-being and our future. Inequality damages everyone. The answer, he said, lies in a new social contract. A new social contract within societies will enable young people to live in dignity, he asserted. It will ensure that women have the same prospects and opportunities as men. And it will protect the sick, the vulnerable, and minorities of all kinds.

Ethiopia

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gedu Andargachew and the Undersecretary General and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Dr. Songwe Vera on Thursday (July 23) signed a supplementary agreement to the 1958 Headquarters Agreement of the UNECA. The agreement is a testament to the high regard Ethiopia attaches to UNECA's activities.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gedu Andargachew & his Rwandan counterpart Vincent Biruta on Thursday (July 23) exchanged a phone call to reaffirm commitment to cooperate on issues of mutual interest in bilateral & multilateral forums. They've discussed current circumstances surrounding the GERD following Mr. Gedu's briefing.

Ethiopia on Thursday (July 23) reported 409 new COVID-19 cases that take the total tally to 11,933. The cases have been identified from 6,898 laboratory tests conducted over the last twenty four hours, the Ministry of Health disclosed. It is also stated that 9 more patients have passed away from the disease, taking the country's death toll to 197.

The city Administration of Addis Ababa on Thursday (July 23) has introduced a new COVID 19 prevention project that aims to protect more than 1. 2 million people in the capital from the pandemic. The project that will run for the next six months under the theme "Our Health Is in Our Hands" has been jointly initiated by Dalberg Group, Roha Group and a team of Charity Organizations and public and private institutions, according to Press Secretariat of Mayor Office. Out of the total project budget, 1 Million US Dollars has been raised by Roha Group while the remaining is contributed by several donor organizations, it is indicated on the occasion.

The follow-up Extraordinary Meeting of the Bureau of the African Union Assembly, convened by South African President and African Union Chair, Cyril Ramaphosa, was held virtually on July 21, 2020 on the ongoing negotiations between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt with regards to the first filling and annual operation of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. The Office of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia has issued a statement regarding the meeting. (See article)

African leaders have convened on Tuesday (July 21) to discuss the filling of Ethiopia's giant hydropower dam on the Blue Nile after the failure of talks between the three riparian countries at the ministerial levels. Following their meeting, the leaders described the results of the latest round of the GERD negotiation as fruitful and a testament to Africa's capability to look for solutions to its own problems. (See article)

The news that announced the successful completion of the first filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam has brought satisfaction and joy for Ethiopians across all walks of life. Senior Government officials have expressed their satisfaction and offered their opinions regarding the aspirations Ethiopians should develop for further achievements. (See article)

Ministries of Agriculture and Innovation and Technology on Tuesday (July 21) have signed Memorandum of Understanding in a view to advance the coffee trade system. The Agriculture Minister Omer Hussien and the Innovation and Technology Minister Dr. Abrham Belay have signed the MOU representing their respective Institutions. It is stated on the occasion that the MoU aims to develop a digital platform that directly links coffee farmers with consumers and enhances the competences of Ethiopian coffee trade at a global level.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia on Tuesday (July 21) issued a statement detailing the assistance the Government of Ethiopia has been offering to Ethiopian citizens who live abroad, especially in the Middle East and neighbouring countries, and found to be more vulnerable due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The statement also reaffirmed that it would be better to support Ethiopians in the countries of their residence as per the UN resolution and the AU's recommendation that urge to restrict unrestricted movement of people and forceful mass deportations. Regarding what the Government has been doing for the voluntary returnees, the statement said that repatriation is not the final objective but establishing a sustainable system of resettlement for them in the country. (See article)

The export earnings of Ethiopia during the concluded budget year has increased by 13 percent surpassing the achievement registered during the previous year. The Ministry of Trade and Industry on Tuesday (July 21) stated that Ethiopia has secured more than 3 billion US Dollars of which 77 percent is generated from agricultural commodities export. Income from the export of coffee, flower, cereals, oil seeds, Khat, fruits and vegetables has contributed to the increment.

Urban Development and Construction Ministry has unveiled a plan to build four million residential homes in urban areas over the next ten years. Urban Development and Construction Minister, Aysha Mohammed, discussed the ten-year master plan of the ministry with experts and stakeholders of the sector on Sunday (July 19). Experts who took part in the discussion reportedly remarked that establishing an organized information management system is necessary for equitable and fair distribution of houses.

Eritrea

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed arrived in Asmara earlier on Saturday (July 18) for a two-day working visit to Eritrea. President Isaias Afwerki accorded a warm welcome to the Prime Minister and his delegation upon arrival at Asmara International Airport. The two leaders discussed ways and means of further consolidating the warm bilateral ties between the two countries as well as the enhancement of regional cooperation. Prime Minister Abiy was accompanied by State Minister Ambassador Redwan Hussein and Speaker of Parliament Tagesse Chaffo. (See article)

Kenya

The UN announced on Wednesday (July 22) that it is supporting the Government of Kenya's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including contact tracing, case management, community mobilization and health promotion. Hundreds of sets of personal protective equipment to support healthcare workers have been distributed and the UN has also provided infection prevention and control materials to nearly 600 health facilities. The UN and its humanitarian community announced that they have launched an emergency appeal, as part of the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan, seeking nearly \$260 million.

Somalia

According to reports released on Thursday (July 23), the U.S. launched a drone strike in northern Somalia that killed at least seven Islamic State operatives. Though the kill count has not yet been confirmed by an independent source, the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) announced it deployed the drone in concurrence with autonomous regional security forces against an ISIS-Somalia contingent on July 21. It said no civilian casualties occurred as a result of the military action.

Somalia is set to benefit from new UK funding to tackle this year's unprecedented locust outbreaks across Africa and Asia. The UK's International Development Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan on Thursday (July 23) announced a further £18 million in response to the crisis. She made the announcement during a visit to British company Micron Group, which supplies pesticide sprayers to the United Nation's Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO).

About 5.2 million Somalis including three million children are in need of humanitarian assistance due to the triple threat of floods, locusts and COVID-19, the UN children's fund (UNICEF) said on Thursday (July 23). Jesper Moller, deputy representative of UNICEF Somalia said the Horn of Africa nation is one of the most fragile nations in the world, a country that has experienced decades of conflict, cyclical drought and floods and he called on the international community to act swiftly to avert the crisis.

Djiboutian and Ethiopian troops serving under AMISOM on Thursday (July 23) delivered a second batch of medical supplies to the Administration of Hiran region to benefit local communities, following a donation made to Beletweyne General Hospital two weeks ago.

The government of Somalia announced on Wednesday (July 22) \$500,000 to help thousands of victims affected by floods. Flooding has caused mass displacement, shortages of food and clean water and is worsened by an invasion of desert locusts which have fed on green plants that could be used for food. Somalia state television reported that President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo urged joint relief efforts to assist and rescue families and those affected by the Shabelle river floods in Afgoye in southwestern Somalia.

Mogadishu-Afgoye road has resumed after months of closure due to insecurity on Saturday (July 18). Turkish engineers on Sunday moved into the site as lorries transporting construction materials were spotted. The Qatar funded project which runs for 120 kilometers once completed is billed as a major reconstruction project undertaken by the current administration.

Somali National Army (SNA) backed by Jubaland state forces killed six al-Shabab extremists on Saturday (July 18) in a security operation on the outskirts of Kismayo, a military officer confirmed on Sunday. Aden Mohamed Ibrahim, commander of Jubaland state army told journalists that the joint operation conducted by SNA's 43rd Unit and Jubaland state army started when the forces got intelligence from the public of the militants' presence in the area.

South Sudan

A fresh outbreak of fighting in the troubled Jonglei region of South Sudan has forced thousands of families to flee their homes and seek sanctuary next to the United Nations base in Pibor. The sudden influx of 6000 displaced people came after the village of Likuangole, about 30 kilometers north of Pibor town, was attacked by armed groups on Wednesday (July 22). The UN said tensions remain high in Pibor on the next day following the attack with the prospect of many more families seeking protection from the violence.

The UN on Monday (July 22) announced that the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is helping to train community leaders in Upper Nile State on how to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus. The mission is also distributing leaflets, as well as hundreds of face masks.

Sudan

The Sudanese Prime Minister, Abdallah Hamdok, formed a higher committee to follow-up the ongoing negotiations on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) under his chairmanship and the membership of some ministers. According to a decision issued on Thursday (July 23), the committee includes the Minister of Cabinet Affairs, Omer Monis, the Minister of Justice, Nasr al-Din Abdel-Bari, the Minister of Irrigation and Water Resources, Yasir Abbas, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in charge, Omer Gamar Al-Din, the Director of the General Intelligence Service, Jamal Abdel-Majid, and the Director of the Military Intelligence. The inter-ministerial committee is entrusted with the follow-up of negotiations on the GERD to enhance Sudan's strategic interests, support and help the negotiating committee to perform its duties.

The U.S. House of Representatives on Tuesday (July 21) passed a bill aimed at providing support to the transitional government in Sudan. The "Sudan Democratic Transition, Accountability, and Fiscal Transparency Act of 2020" was initially introduced last March by the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Eliot Engel.

A Sudanese court postponed the trial of the former President Omer al-Bashir over his coup d'état 30 years ago for three weeks to allow the preparation of a bigger hall. "We decided to postpone the trial session to 11 August as we need a bigger hall to guarantee social distancing, put different arrangements in place and ensure that the entire defendants have lawyers and other rights," said the judge.

The Higher Council for Peace on Monday (July 20) agreed on a joint position on the security arrangements that the Sudanese government negotiating team will adopt in the talks with the armed groups in Juba. The agreement was announced in a statement released by the Sovereign Council after the second meeting by the peace council on the security arrangements in less than a week.

At least 3 people were killed and others injured following bloody tribal clashes in El Geneina, capital of West Darfur State, on Sunday (July 19) evening. Shooting began at about 06.00 pm in the Al-Jebel neighbourhood for unclear reasons, while witnesses said that unknown men detonated a hand grenade on Sunday triggering fighting between Arab and Masalit gunmen.

The Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) on Sunday (July 19) approved the temporary appointment of civilian governors before signing the peace agreement, paving the way for Sudanese Prime Minister Abdallah Hamdok to replace the military governors. The appointment of civilians governors has been expected as part of the changes that Hamdok pledged in response to the Sudanese street at the end of last June. But some SRF leaders renewed their opposition to this step before signing the peace agreement, stressing that they should be involved in the entire selection process.

The Sudanese government has developed a solid plan to protect civilians in the Darfur region after the withdrawal of the African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) by the end of the year, said a senior official on Saturday (July 18). "The country's leadership has the political will and the firm determination to lay down a solid plan to protect civilians in Darfur (five) states after the exit of UNAMID. This plan involves all the state's military and civil agencies, in line with international standards for the protection of civilians," said Omer Monis the minister of cabinet affairs.

The UN announced on Monday (July 20), in support of the Transitional Government of Sudan, that it has launched a supplement to the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan to respond to help millions of people affected by the health and humanitarian consequences of COVID-19. With the pandemic having triggered a further economic slowdown, more than \$280 million is urgently needed to help the Government provide aid to more than 6.7 million Sudanese people. According to the UN more than 9.6 million people — which is nearly a quarter of the entire population — are facing severe hunger, the highest figure ever recorded in Sudan.

'African solutions to African problems' is the way to go, say African Leaders following Latest Negotiation over GERD

African leaders have convened on Tuesday (July 21) to discuss the filling of Ethiopia's giant hydropower dam on the Blue Nile after the failure of talks between the three riparian countries at the ministerial levels. Following their meeting, the leaders described the results of the latest round of the GERD negotiation as fruitful and a testament to Africa's capability to look for solutions to its problems.

Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Dr. Abiy Ahmed Ali tweeted that he had participated in a fruitful meeting on the GERD facilitated by Cyril Ramaphosa in the endeavors to strengthen African Solutions to African Problems. "I appreciate my brothers Sudan Prime Minister Hamdok & Alsisi for common understanding reached on continuing technical discussions on filling," he added. In a statement issued later, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said his country fully supports the AU-led process to resolve the conflict adding that his country looks forward to a comprehensive agreement that will earn all parties to the dispute a win-win outcome.

Following the meeting, South Africa President and Chair of the African Union for 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa wrote on his Twitter page saying, "The Bureau of the AU Assembly has just concluded a constructive Extraordinary Meeting on issues relating to the GERD." "The trilateral negotiations remain on track, and I wish to thank all the parties involved for their commitment to finding African solutions to African problems," the president added.

Abdalla Hamdok, Prime Minister of Sudan on his part said that he had held promising discussions at the brief African Union Summit on Tuesday, with Abiy Ahmed Ali, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, Chairman of African Union Commission, Moussa Faki and AU Chair for 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa on the GERD. He said, "We reached an understanding to continue negotiations that aim to finalize the GERD filling and operating agreement."

Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat said: "It is absolutely necessary that Egypt, Sudan & Ethiopia, with the support of the African Union come to an agreement that preserves the interest of all parties, adding, "the Nile is the source of life and development for all 3 countries and should remain a source of peace."

President Uhuru Kenyatta has issued a statement commending the progress made towards the resolution of the stand-off between Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia on the utilization of the Nile River water. The President said the African Union (AU) led mediation process, in which Kenya holds observer status, has shown that Africa can find homegrown solutions to its challenges. "This process has vividly shown that 'African solutions to African problems' is the way to go. We can resolve our disputes through negotiations and mediation within the framework of the African Union," he said.

The meeting was also addressed by Presidents Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta of Mali.

The Bureau of the African Union Assembly Convened a follow-up Extraordinary Meeting over GERD

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

July 21, 2020

Addis Ababa

Press Release

The follow-up Extraordinary Meeting of the Bureau of the African Union Assembly, convened by South African President and African Union Chair, Cyril Ramaphosa, was held virtually on July 21, 2020 on the ongoing negotiations between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt with regards to the first filling and annual operation of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed commended the African Union led process for supporting the three countries address differences and arrive at agreements. He appreciated the resolve to African Solutions to African Problems undertaken through existing regional mechanisms and reiterated Ethiopia's commitment to continued equitable and reasonable utilization of Abbay River waters, without significant harm to Egypt and Sudan.

Current rainfall and runoff situation in the region have made it conducive to fill the dam. In the negotiations on the first filling and annual operation of the GERD, Ethiopia is committed to a balanced and win-win negotiation that ascertains the Abbay River will benefit all the three countries. It has become evident over the past two weeks in the rainy season that the GERD first year filling is achieved and the dam under construction is already overtopping.

The Extraordinary Meeting undertaken at the Heads of State and Government level concluded with all parties reaching a major common understanding which paves the way for a breakthrough agreement. Accordingly, Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan agreed for further technical discussions on the filling to continue in the AU led process and proceed to a comprehensive agreement.

Ethiopia Celebrates the first phase of the filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

The news that announced the successful completion of the first filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam has brought satisfaction and joy for Ethiopians across all walks of life. Senior Government officials have expressed their satisfaction and offered their opinions to the aspirations Ethiopians should strive to achieve.

President Sahle Work Zewde said, July 19, 2020, is a historic day to Ethiopia and Ethiopians as well. “Congratulations! We are translating our dreams into reality,” she said applauding the completion of the first phase of the filling of the GERD. The President recalled that Ethiopians and leaders of the previous generations of Ethiopians have expended efforts to utilize the Nile waters but failed due to innumerable obstacles. “Despite failures,” she said, “they were rightfully hopeful that future generations of Ethiopians will one day build a dam on the river.” The current generation carried the responsibility on its shoulders and fulfilled the dreams of its forefathers, she added. “Those who were doubtful have seen the results today. Nature witnessed it too. As long as we utilize our resources and potential with unity and commitment, nothing would be impossible to achieve. If we cooperate and stand together, nothing is impossible.”

According to the president, Ethiopia has never had a selfish policy. She reiterated that Ethiopia has continued to be faithful to the principles that constitute the formation of the United Nations and the African Union (formerly known as OAU). “As we repeatedly say,” she said, “our utilization of the Nile waters creates an opportunity to further strengthen cross-border relations among neighbouring countries and will not be a source of mistrust and unfair competition.” “We have now proved that the development of the dam has reached no point of return. This is a triumph for all stakeholders who have been trying hard to build peace and ensure security in the region. It is good news for the other riparian countries too.” The president concluded her statement saying, “We should not forget that we have got a lot to do to achieve our dreams of development. Let us think big and aim to shoot to the stars.” “Let us focus on the right way that elevates us to development. No challenge stands for long if we are united and work together.”

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Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed on his part has congratulated Ethiopians on the occasion of the completion of the first year filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). In his message, the Prime Minister said, "I would like to congratulate all Ethiopians for taking our dam to this level through our joint efforts." "On this day, we Ethiopians knew how to execute and achieve nationally focused projects," he said, adding "the completion of the first year filling of the dam is a historic day for Ethiopians." "I think the world will surely understand that the dam is a turning point to Ethiopia's move to stand on its own two feet and beat poverty," he added. "We conducted the filling of the dam without causing harm to anyone," he said and added, "the dam will benefit the lower riparian countries rather than causing harm to them." The Prime Minister reiterated that Ethiopia has no intention of harming Sudan and Egypt during the construction and operation of the dam. He finally extended his gratitude to those who raised funds, participated in negotiations and to the former Ethiopian Prime Ministers, for their contribution to the success of the dam.

Former Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn said the first phase of GERD filling has overcome injustices that were against the nation's rights on the Nile River. The current historic filling of the dam is a reward bestowed upon Ethiopia in return to its longstanding diplomatic endeavors characterized by its fair and reasonable stance regarding the utilization of the River Nile Waters, the former premier underscored.

Minister of the Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, Gedu Andargachew was among senior government officials who expressed pleasure upon the news of the completion of the first filling of the dam. "Congratulations! We have subjugated the river Nile and it has now come to be a lake too," he said adding that Ethiopia has got an option now to utilize the water source for its development needs. "We can truly say, now the Nile River truly belongs to us too," he added.

Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy of Ethiopia, Dr. Eng, Seleshi Bekele was among the first government officials who have congratulated Ethiopians on his Twitter page. According to Bekele, the first phase of the filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam was completed letting the reservoir hold the required 4.9 billion cubic meters of water that flow from the top of the dam. He said: "This was achieved without interrupting the continuous flow of water to the lower basin," adding, "This is a major milestone that will enable us to generate two turbines next year.

PM Abiy Ahmed pays a two-day visit to Eritrea

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed arrived in Asmara earlier on Saturday (July 18) for a working visit to Eritrea. President Isaias Afwerki accorded a warm welcome to the Prime Minister and his delegation upon arrival at Asmara International Airport. The two leaders discussed ways and means of further consolidating the warm bilateral ties between the two countries as well as the enhancement of regional cooperation.

In their extensive discussion, President Isaias Afwerki and Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed reviewed the progress achieved and obstacles encountered in the past two years in the implementation of the historic Declaration of Peace and Friendship agreement signed between the two countries in July 2018. The two sides agreed to further bolster the prevailing, all-rounded, cooperation between the two countries. They also agreed to work together to enhance regional cooperation in the Horn of Africa firmly aware that this is pivotal for nurturing robust ties anchored on mutual complementarity.

On the second day of the official visit, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed and his delegation toured agricultural development projects in the environs of Kerkebet Dam in Gash Barka region. The Prime Minister and his delegation were accompanied by President Isaias Afwerki and senior Government officials during the visit. The delegation also inspected, during their stop-over at Sawa Airport, graduation-parade rehearsals of the 33rd Round of the National Service.

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed and his delegation departed home in the later afternoon hours on Sunday (July 19) after the two-day fruitful working visit. The Prime Minister was accompanied by State Minister Ambassador Redwan Hussein and Speaker of Parliament Tagesse Chaffo.

The Government of Ethiopia reaffirms commitment to assist and support Ethiopian citizens residing abroad and endangered by the COVID- 19 pandemic

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia

Press Release:

July 21, 2020

Addis Ababa

The COVID-19 pandemic is posing unprecedented challenges to the world. Arguably it is one of the greatest threats to human beings after World War II.

Following the outbreak, the Government of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia noted that Ethiopian citizens residing abroad, especially those who live in the Middle East, have been facing various problems.

In this regard, the Ethiopian Government has been actively engaging in joint initiatives with the Governments of hosting countries, Ethiopian Missions, members of the Ethiopian community, and Aid Organizations aiming at supporting Ethiopian citizens that were gravely affected by the scourge.

To this end, these joint efforts have been proved successful in providing shelter, food, medical care, and other necessities to the most vulnerable Ethiopians who reside in various Middle East and neighboring countries.

One of the illustrations that demonstrated the success of these endeavors is the unyielding support the Government of Ethiopia, through its Consulate in Beirut and together with IOM, ILO, IGAD, Doctors Without Borders and the government in Lebanon, has been providing to the Ethiopian citizens stranded in Lebanon due to the outbreak which is exacerbated by the weakened Lebanese economy.

The Government of Ethiopia is committed to collaborate with various Middle East governments and institutions to ensure that the safety and health of its citizens in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and other Middle East countries are well protected too.

According to the UN Security Council Resolution A / RES / 73/195, a recommendation of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and a statement issued by the African Union Commission regarding the movement of people during the COVID-19 pandemic, forcible deportations and unrestricted movement of people from one country to another would compromise the health and safety of individuals and put unnecessary pressure on the recipient countries. Thus, countries are urged to refrain from endangering the safety of people by engaging in such actions.

Notwithstanding such concerns and warnings of international organizations, the Government of Ethiopia, under the coordination of the FDRE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in collaboration with the relevant ministries, private institutions, volunteers that have been working under the auspices of the Ministry of Peace, has helped 30,087 of its citizens to return to their home since the COVID-19 outbreak. Of these returnees, 656 were from Beirut, 72 from Abu Dhabi, 3539 from Saudi Arabia, 1023 from Kuwait, and 24, 797 across the border.

The Government believes that in terms of its citizen-centered diplomacy, repatriation is not the final objective. The Government wants to make sure that a sustainable system of resettlement for the returnees has been established in the country and citizens who have not been returned home are living secured in their countries' of residence. To this end, the relevant Government and private institutions are working together in identifying illegible Ethiopians for repatriation and in creating employment opportunities to Ethiopians wherever they are and in exposing imposters and criminals that need to enter into the country exploiting this opportunity. This has been stressed in H.E. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's recent address to the parliament.

Regarding the Ethiopian citizens stranded in Yemen, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has begun talks with the United Nations agencies in Addis Ababa. These talks are expected to bridge the information gap created in Yemen due to the war and provide the necessary assistance to Ethiopians there.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs would like to express its gratitude to members of the Ethiopian community in various countries, to the governments of the countries where Ethiopians are residing in, to the Aid Organizations, to the public and private institutions and volunteers who have worked with the ministry to support Ethiopians living abroad and challenged by the COVID-19 outbreak.