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News in Brief

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Africa and the African Union

The African Union Commission Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat said the tripartite meeting held between Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) was productive. Ministers of Water and Foreign Affairs of the three countries have met on Tuesday (October 27) to discuss on GERD and agreed to resume the AU-led negotiations, he stated. "I participated in a very productive Ministerial Meeting on the GERD with Ministers of Foreign and Water Affairs of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan under the strong leadership of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa where all parties agreed to resume AU-led negotiations," the Chairperson twitted.

In related news, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa has issued a statement on Wednesday (October 28) about the Virtual Ministerial Meeting of the Negotiating Parties of the Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) held on 27 October 2020. **(See article)**

The COVID-19 pandemic, rising levels of hunger and malnutrition, and growing swarms of locusts were the backdrop for the 31st Session of the Regional Conference for Africa, that kicked off on Tuesday (October 27), convened by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. More than 80 Ministers and deputy Ministers from more than

45 countries took part, as well as representatives from observer countries, donor organizations, civil society and the private sector. Hundreds of delegates joined the three-day Zoom sessions and many more have watched the live webcast. FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa Abebe Haile-Gabriel made a call for bold action during his opening remarks.

The first meeting of the Coordinating Council under the Secretariat of the Russia-Africa Partnership Forum was held in the format of a videoconference on Tuesday (October 27). The event was attended by the special representative of the President of the Russian Federation for the Middle East and Africa and other senior Russian government officers. The progressive development of multidimensional relations with African states as per the decisions of the first summit Russia – Africa, held in Sochi in October 2019, and issues of preparation for the next Russian-African summit in 2022 were discussed.

The African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) and the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (UNPBC) held a virtual informal consultative meeting last week on Friday (October 22). The meeting was focused on ways of further enhancing cooperation between the two bodies in support of peace building in Africa. **(See article)**

Ethiopia

Recently President of the United States of America, Donald Trump, accused Ethiopia, among other things, for not accepting a deal that was brokered by him in Washington over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), which Ethiopia has rejected due to various legitimate concerns. “It’s a very dangerous situation because Egypt is not going to be able to live that way,” Trump said during his phone conversation with the Prime Ministers of the State of Israel and Sudan on the normalization of relations between the latter two. “They’ll end up blowing up the dam. And I said it and I say it loud and clear — they’ll blow up that dam. And they have to do something,” he added. The president’s remark caused a huge public outcry and compelled many national and international institutions to react quickly condemning the wordings of the president that appeared to give a green light to Egypt to solve outstanding issues over the dam through military action. Renowned politicians and individuals have also shown their anger at the outrageous comments of the President.

The joint forum that was established to tackle challenges of Foreign Direct Investment in Ethiopia held its regular meeting on Wednesday (October 28) in the premises of the Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia. Gedu Andargachew, Minister of the Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, and Ambassador Girma Biru, macroeconomic advisor to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed led the discussion. The meeting thoroughly discussed the challenges that foreign investors are facing in the country. At the occasion, State Minister, Tsion Teklu has presented some case studies on the challenges of doing business for foreign investors in Ethiopia. Lelise Neme, Commissioner of the Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) has also tabled a paper regarding the overall investment situation in Ethiopia.

The Addis Ababa city administration on Wednesday (October 28) signed a \$15 million cooperation agreement with Bloomberg Initiative for Global Road Safety (BIGRS) to reduce traffic fatalities and injuries. Speaking at the five-year cooperation agreement signing ceremony, Adanech Abiebie, deputy mayor of the city said the assistance from BIGRS would contribute a lot to the implementation of road safety works in the capital. Bloomberg Philanthropies Program Director, Kelly Larson, said “she is happy to work with Addis Ababa, one of the 30 cities participating in BIGRS project that aims to reduce traffic injuries and fatalities.

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Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt on Tuesday (October 27) resumed negotiation on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). Ministers of Foreign Affairs, as well as Water Affairs from the three countries, attended the meeting held virtually under the auspices of the African Union (AU). The countries are expected to discuss and finalize in the coming seven days the way forward and the workable timeline for the negotiation and to narrow gaps on outstanding issues.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has inaugurated on Thursday (October 29) the Dire Dawa Industrial Park built at 150 ha of land. The industrial park constructed with an outlay of 150 Million US Dollars has so far created jobs for around 1000 people in its garment and textile factories. Four Companies engaged in garment and textile production are said to have started operations so far in fifteen working sheds in the industrial park. According to ENA, Dire Dawa Industrial Park is expected to

facilitate 20,000 additional jobs for citizens when it goes fully operational in the time to come.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed along with various high ranking government officials has visited on Thursday (October 29) the Gode Irrigation Dam constructed in the Shebele River, Somali Region. Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen, President of Somali Region, Mustafa Omuer and President of Oromia Region, Shimelis Abdisa accompanied the premier in the visit. The premier stated that 2,000 hectares of lowland wheat has been cultivated as part of the prioritized lowland agricultural practices underway in the country. In addition to the wheat cultivation, vegetables, fruits, and oilseeds are also widely grown. On the same day the premier launched a 300 Km road Project in Somali Region.

Ethiopian Muslims celebrated on Thursday (October 29) the 1495th Birth of Prophet Mohammed with various religious events across the nation. Religious leaders and a number of Muslim faithful have congregated at the Grand Mosque in Addis Ababa and attended the Maulid prayers. The Grand Mufti Haji Oumer Idris, President of Ethiopian Islamic Supreme Council has presided over the religious event at the Mosque and extended his Maulid an-Nabi Greetings to all Muslims.

Exports in the first quarter of the fiscal year 2020 compared to in the previous fiscal year, export revenue increased by 115.6 million USD or 16 percent and a total of US \$ 838.6 million was earned, said the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI) on Tuesday (October 27). The mining sector has achieved 300 percent of the plan and 205 million USD earned. The industrial sector earned 95 percent and 94 million USD, while agricultural products earned 73 percent and 541 USD respectively, said MoTI.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed paid a visit on Tuesday (October 27) to Were BaboWoreda of the South Wollo Zone of Amhara State, which is among the most severely affected areas in the country by the invasion of the desert locust. Stating that the desert locust swarm has caused a significant amount of crop losses in some parts of the country, the Premier indicated that the government has executed several efforts over the past months to mitigate the impact. “And now as we are yet again confronted with a second round of invasion, various activities are

being undertaken to control the invasion.” During the field visit, Abiy learnt the farmer’s immediate challenges and vowed that the government will support them. In a related development, the PM commenced the construction of the Hayk-Bistima-Chifra asphalt road project in the Amhara State, budgeted at 2.1 billion Birr.

A consultative discussion focused on telecom sector reform activities took place at the Prime Minister’s office on Monday (October 26). Chaired by Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, the discussion reviewed the process carried out so far to open the sector for competition through partially privatising the sector. The Prime Minister set a direction for the continuation of the reform activities by taking into consideration the feedback given by stakeholders in previous consultations.

In a related development, two new international telecom operators will enter into the Ethiopian market until April 2021 once the due process of competitive bid evaluation is completed, according to Ethiopian Communication Authority. Briefing journalists on the telecom reform progress on Monday (October 26), Director-General of the Authority Balcha Reba said the official disclosure of the two qualified bidders will begin within the coming 15 days. Highlighting the significance of identifying the well qualified and standardized internationally proven operators, Balcha said financial and technical requirements are crucial alongside other equally important issues like security.

Every year, October 24 is celebrated as a UN Day marking the entry into force of the United Nations Charter after the majority of its signatories, including the five permanent members ratified it. The day is celebrated worldwide with a series of commemoration events. What makes this year’s celebration special is it marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. The commemoration of this historic milestone revolved around three important dates. **(See article).**

Eritrea

Effort is underway to put under control desert locusts that have and continue to infest various localities in the Northern Red Sea, Anseba, Central and Southern Regions, according to the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry of Agriculture stated that thanks to the concerted operations by EDF units, the public and professionals since 23 October, hoppers that hatched in and were stretched over 1400 hectares in

several sub-zones of the Northern Red Sea Region, particularly Qrora, Afabet, and Shieb were put under control.

Djibouti

The first container ship of the Djibouti Shipping Company, which will exclusively operate between Turkey, Djibouti and Somalia, was launched during a ceremony last week on Friday (October 23). The new sea route will reduce shipping time from 35 to 50 days to just nine to 10 days, Djibouti's Ambassador to Turkey Aden Houssein Abdillahi stated. "This new logistics initiative, which enables to deliver goods in nine to 10 days instead of 35 to 50 days is a game-changer that will increase the trade volume between Turkey and the Horn of Africa," Abdillahi said.

Somalia

The United Nations on Wednesday (October 28) condemned the killing of two of its humanitarian workers in Somalia by assailants from Islamist group al Shabaab and urged all combatants in the country's warring sides to respect civilians. In a statement, the international body said the two victims, both Somalis, were working with an ongoing polio vaccination campaign by the UN agencies UNICEF and the World Health Organisation (WHO). They were killed on Tuesday in the Somalia capital Mogadishu.

Police said on Tuesday (October 27) that suspected al-Shabaab extremists killed a local government official and his companion in Somalia's capital before detonating a car bomb that killed three other people. The gunmen ambushed the city official and his female passenger in their car in eastern Mogadishu and shot them dead, said Omar Mohamed, a district police official.

Security sector reform and economic recovery are key priorities for a post-COVID-19 Somalia, according to the latest World Bank economic analysis. The 5th edition of the Somalia Economic Update, Impact of COVID-19: Policies to Manage the Crisis and Strengthen Economic Recovery, says three decades of armed conflict have contributed to poor economic outcomes and the marked decline in quality of life, destroying infrastructure and interrupting public service provision.

The Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Somalia Mohamed Hussein Roble on Monday (October 26) received in his office the United Nations Special Representative for Somalia, Ambassador James Swan. Prime Minister Roble and Ambassador James Swan discussed electoral issues, security and co-operation between Somalia and the international community.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has issued an alert on fresh desert locust invasions in Somalia that pose a huge threat to food security. In its desert locust situation update, FAO said more swarms will be seen in the next few days or weeks in southern Somalia, Xinhua reported. "Immature and mature swarms are present in the northwest between Boroma and Hargeisa while mature adult groups and swarms are present and breeding in the northeast and in central areas of Mudug and Galgaduud," said the UN food agency in an alert released on Monday (October 26).

At least four al-Shabab militants were killed on Sunday (October 25) in a fierce fighting in QansahDhere town in the southern region of Bay, an official said on Monday (October 26). AbdiRisakAbdullahi Ibrahim, governor of QansahDhere said the militants ambushed a convoy carrying government forces who were advancing from a military base in the town, sparking a fierce clash. "We killed four al-Shabab fighters during the confrontation. We lost one soldier while two others got injured," Ibrahim said.

South Sudan

South Sudan's President SalvaKiir and the head of the United Nations Mission in the country (UNMISS), David Shearer met in the capital, Juba on Wednesday (October 28) to discuss the status of the implementation of the revitalised peace agreement. During the meeting, the presidency said in a statement, Shearer briefed President Kiir on the activities of UNMISS in the young nation.

Sudan and South Sudan agreed to open the 10 border crossing points along the 2,000-kilometre (1,200-mile) boundary, said the Sudanese defence minister on Tuesday (October 27). Following the independence of South Sudan in 2011, the two countries closed border and accused each other of supporting rebel groups from both sides affecting traders and communities on both sides. However, during recent years, the two

Sudans felt the need to work together to bring peace and stability on the two sides and create a conducive environment for cooperation.

The Egyptian Prime Minister, Mostafa Madbouly on Monday (October 26) met South Sudan's Irrigation and Water Resources minister, Manawa Peter Gatkuoth to discuss water issues. Speaking during the meeting held in the Egyptian capital, Cairo, Madbouly said Egypt would support South Sudan in various fields, with a particular focus on South Sudanese students currently in Egypt. The minister lauded Egypt's support for South Sudan in the field of education, citing the establishment of industrial schools in South Sudan and its government's decision to increase the number of scholarships for South Sudanese students studying at Egyptian universities.

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) said on Saturday (October 24) it evacuated some 32 humanitarian workers following threats and violent attacks by youth groups in Renk town of Upper Nile State. The humanitarian staff, UNMISS said in a statement, are currently safe and under its protection.

International donors strongly condemned attacks on aid workers in Renk and urged the South Sudanese government to provide the needed protection to humanitarian groups. Last week on Friday (October 22), a youth group looted a store of Medair organization in Upper Nile State before to set it on fire. They also vandalized the group's vehicles. Local youth had demanded the Catholic aid group, earlier this month, to assign jobs for them instead of staff members. This week they insisted that the aid groups should leave the area without their assets.

Sudan

Members of the Transitional Sovereignty Council, Lt. Gen. Shams-Eddin Kabbashi, and Mohamed Hassan Al-Taayeshi on Thursday (October 29) left for Juba, South Sudan State, in the context of the arrangements of South Sudan mediation to continue the negotiation with the People's Movement – North led by Abdul-Aziz Al-Hillo. The delegation accompanying the members of the Transitional Sovereignty Council included the Minister of Justice, Dr. Nasr-Eddin Abdul-Bari, and the Federal Government Minister, Dr. Yousif Adam Al-Dhai.

Prime Minister, Dr. Abdalla Hamdok, Wednesday (October 28) received two phone calls from the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and the Vice President of the United Arab Emirates, Prime Minister and Governor of Dubai Emirate, Sheikh Mohamed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. They congratulated the Prime Minister and the Sudanese people on the removal of Sudan from the list of countries sponsoring terrorism, and the signing of Sudan peace agreement in Juba last month. The Prime Minister expressed his appreciation for the continuous support of the leadership of the United Arab Emirates to Sudan to achieve peace, stability and development.

The Sudanese government on Wednesday (October 28) officially took control of the gold mines in Jabal Amer area of North Darfur, operated by the Rapid Support Forces (SRF) leader and his family. Following continued criticism of the control of the gold mines and large involvement of the Sudanese military in the national economy, al-Junaid Company announced the handover of gold mines to the transitional government.

Sudan's foreign minister said on Wednesday (October 28) that his country would determine which kind of normalization his country will opt for during the upcoming talks with the Israeli delegation. Omer Gamar Eldin told Sky News Arabia on Wednesday that the two countries agreed in principle to normalize relations but it will be effective once the deal is endorsed by the legislative council.

U.S. President Donald Trump Monday (October 26) formally notified the Congress of his decision to remove Sudan from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism. "Pursuant to the Constitution and the laws of the United States, (...) I hereby certify, with respect to the rescission of the determination of August 12, 1993, regarding Sudan that:" "(i) the Government of Sudan has not provided any support for acts of international terrorism during the preceding 6-month period; and" "(ii) the Government of Sudan has provided assurances that it will not support acts of international terrorism in the future". The Congress now has 45 days to pass a resolution rejecting Sudan's delisting, otherwise, it will become definitive by the end of this delay in December 2020.

The Sudanese government has begun implementing a national plan to protect civilians in the Darfur region, ahead of the withdrawal of the hybrid operation UNAMID by the end of the year, the foreign ministry said on Sunday (October 25). The tripartite mechanism on the UNAMID held a meeting at the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the participation Jean-Pierre Lacroix, U.N. Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, SmailChergui, AU Peace and Security Commissioner.

The United States announced on Friday (October 23) that Sudan has agreed to normalize ties with Israel following a conference call between leaders of U.S., Sudan and Israel. The announcement follows months of speculation and reports that the US has been quietly pressing Sudan to normalize relations with Israel in return for an expedited path to getting off the list of states that sponsor terrorism.

In related news, the agreement to normalize relations with Israel will enter into force once it is ratified by the legislative body said Sudan's Foreign Minister on Friday (October 23). Omer GamarEldin confirmed to the official news agency SUNA that the transitional authority – represented by the cabinet and the Sovereign Council – agreed to normalize relations with Israel as it was announced in a joint statement released by the White House in Washington on Friday.

AU Statement on the Virtual Ministerial Meeting of the Negotiating Parties of the Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) held on 27 October 2020

At the behest of His Excellency, Mr. Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa and Chairperson of the African Union, Dr. Naledi Pandor, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, and Chairperson of the African Union Executive Council hosted a virtual meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Ministers of Water and Irrigation Affairs of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) Negotiating Parties, namely, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Republic of Sudan, on Tuesday, 27 October 2020.

Also in attendance at the meeting were the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, His Excellency, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Observers from the African Union (AU), European Union (EU), United States of America (USA), and African Union Experts on the GERD matter.

The GERD Negotiating Parties reaffirmed their sincere commitment to the AU-led process and agreed to immediately, and unconditionally resume negotiations. They undertook to develop a clear work-plan with time frames and deliverables. The Parties also agreed to continue negotiations on the remaining technical and legal issues. In this regard, the Parties will report back at a follow-up Ministerial Meeting in seven (7) days.

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Minister Pandor welcomed the positive and fraternal spirit displayed by the GERD Negotiating Parties during the meeting, and commended them for their positive and constructive input. She reassured the Parties of the AU's continued support as they resume a critical phase of the negotiations process.

President Trump's Remarks over the GERD draw Criticisms

Recently President of the United States of America, Donald Trump, accused Ethiopia, among other things, for not accepting a deal that was brokered by him in Washington over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), which Ethiopia has rejected due to various legitimate concerns. "It's a very dangerous situation because Egypt is not going to be able to live that way," Trump said during his phone conversation with the Prime Ministers of the State of Israel and Sudan on the normalization of relations between the latter two. "They'll end up blowing up the dam. And I said it and I say it loud and clear — they'll blow up that dam. And they have to do something," he added.

The president's remark caused a huge public outcry and compelled many national and international institutions to react quickly condemning the wordings of the president that appeared to give a green light to Egypt to solve outstanding issues over the dam through military

action. Renowned politicians and individuals have also shown their anger at the outrageous comments of the President.

Following President Trump's remark, a question was forwarded to UN Spokesperson on the UN's Noon Briefing on Monday: "is the Secretary-General at all concerned that Egypt might be planning to blow up the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam?" He said, the Secretary-General, supports the ongoing efforts of the Chairperson of the African Union, Cyril Ramaphosa, who is encouraging the parties to reach a mutually beneficial agreement. "The Secretary-General calls on all concerned countries to take concrete steps to finalize an agreement in the spirit of goodwill, consensus, and compromise," he said adding, "The dam can become an important instrument of cooperation and partnership between Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan as they strive towards a peaceful, prosperous future for their own people."

High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission, Josep Borrell has also issued a statement lauding the possibility of solving outstanding issues over the dam through dialogue. "An agreement on the filling of the GERD is within the reach of Ethiopia, Sudan, and Egypt," he said, "Now is the time for action and not for increasing tensions." The statement further said the Union fully supports the efforts of South Africa, current Chair of the African Union, to bring the parties to a negotiated solution.

The Prime Minister office of Ethiopia has issued a statement, though not as a direct response to President Trump's comments, saying, "The negotiation with the lower riparian states has shown significant progress since the AU seized of the matter as a manifestation of Africa's capability to respond to its own problems. Nonetheless, occasional statements of belligerent threats to have Ethiopia succumb to unfair terms still abound. These threats and affronts to Ethiopian sovereignty are misguided, unproductive, and clear violations of international law." The statement expressed Ethiopia's commitment to a peaceful resolution of the matter on the GERD based on cooperation, non-interference, mutual trust, and the principle of equitable and reasonable utilization. However, the statement continued "Ethiopia will not cave-in to aggressions of any kind, nor do we give recognition to a right that is entirely based on colonial treaties."

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, Gedu Andargachew also summoned the United States Ambassador Mike Raynor Saturday (October 24) to seek clarifications on the remarks of President Trump. Minister Gedu underscored the statement on the GERD and the negotiation process as misleading and wrong as the GERD doesn't stop the flow of the Nile waters. He said, "The incitement of war between Ethiopia and Egypt from a sitting US president neither reflects the longstanding partnership and strategic alliance between Ethiopia and the United States nor is acceptable in International Law governing interstate relations." The Minister further informed the Ambassador that Ethiopia has never and will not in the future succumb to threats to its sovereignty and will be committed to continuing the trilateral negotiations under the framework of the African Union.

The Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), a caucus made up of mostly African American members of the United States Congress, termed President Trump's comment as "reckless and dangerous" and urged the US to remain impartial in the negotiations over the dam. Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr. on Wednesday (October 28) said, "We all know that he [Trump] fully supports Egypt over Ethiopia with regards to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). He demonstrated that by cutting aid to Ethiopia and lobbied the World Bank to do likewise." Various public figures like Former Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn, Tony Blinken, former Deputy Secretary of State and former Deputy National Security Advisor under President Barack Obama and Congressman Ed Perlmutter, U.S. House of Representatives from Colorado's 7th district wrote on their Twitter page that the President's remark is not constructive and will put the US' neutrality over the GERD negotiations.

Ethiopia participates in the celebration of the United Nations Day

Every year, October 24 is celebrated as a UN Day marking the entry into force of the United Nations Charter after the majority of its signatories, including the five permanent members ratified it. The day is celebrated worldwide with a series of commemoration events. What makes this year's celebration special is it marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

The commemoration of this historic milestone revolved around three important dates. The first one was June 26 which marks the date when the UN Charter was signed. A virtual event was organized in New York to allow member States to “take stock of both the successes and lessons learned in implementing the United Nations Charter over the last 75 years, as well as to look ahead and examine how best to collectively overcome current and upcoming challenges”.

The second one was the High-Level Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations held on 21 September 2020 under the theme “The Future We Want; the UN We Need: Reaffirming our Collective Commitment to Multilateralism”. A record number of world leaders participated at the High-Level Event which culminated with the adoption by member States of a concise, substantive, forward looking and unifying Declaration reaffirming their commitment to multilateralism and to the United Nations and their shared vision for a common future.

The third one is the celebration of UN day on 24th October. Two days before, a concert under the theme “Reimagine, Rebalance, Restart: recovering together for our shared humanity”, was held in New York. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the concert was pre-recorded and screened at the General Assembly Hall. There was also another event held on 26 October which “highlighted UN voices from the field – showcasing work of the UN and its agencies around the globe – and insiders’ perspectives of UN’s work and the future of the organization”.

The commemoration of the UN Day was observed here in Addis Ababa on 23 October at the UNECA compound in the presence of the UN family under the theme “Shaping our future together”. Ms. Ann Allen Encontre, UNHCR Representative in Ethiopia, who spoke on the occasion on behalf of the UN country team in Ethiopia is quoted as having said: “I am very glad to be here for this momentous occasion in Ethiopia, one of the founding members of the United Nations and a staunch supporter of multilateralism.” She further stated in her remarks that, “As we move forward, the timeless values of the UN Charter must remain our guide and unite our strength to serve ‘we the peoples.’ Ethiopia was represented by H.E. Ambassador Tesfaye Yilma, Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the African Union and UNECA.

In his video message on the commemoration of the UN Day, H.E. Ato Gedu Andargachew, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia congratulated the UN family on the celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations. Minister Gedu highlighted the particular significance of this event for Ethiopia as a founding member of the United Nations and an ardent supporter of multilateralism and the principles and purposes of the UN Charter not only in words but in deeds. He took the opportunity to reaffirm Ethiopia's commitment to uphold these principles as the world continues to grapple with the new and emerging challenges.

The Minister said, "We in Ethiopia consider the United Nations as a dependable and valuable partner in our efforts to meet the needs and aspirations of our people for peace, democracy and prosperity". He expressed hope that the United Nations and its various specialized agencies, funds and programmes will maintain and strengthen their support and cooperation with Ethiopia in the years ahead.

AU Peace and Security Council, UN Peace Building Commission hold Informal Consultative Meeting

The African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) and the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (UNPBC) held a virtual informal consultative meeting on 23 October 2020. The meeting was focused on ways of further enhancing cooperation between the two bodies in support of peace building in Africa.

They recognized the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the countries and regions under the consideration of the Peacebuilding Commission, namely West Africa and the Sahel, Central Africa, Lake Chad Basin, and the Great Lakes. They both underscored the crucial role of women and youth in helping to address those challenges, as well as in implementing the African Union's flagship project of "Silencing the Guns" in Africa.

The two bodies stressed the need to work more closely together with closer collaboration and information sharing between the United

Nations and the African Union on peace building and Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development activities to tackle the root causes of instability. They also underlined the need for effective partnership with relevant Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) and concerned stakeholders at the local, national, regional, and international levels, while ensuring that the Women Peace and Security agenda is mainstreamed in those activities.

The two bodies stressed the need to ensure complementarities and coordination between different financial mechanisms of the United Nations and the African Union. They recognized that trilateral cooperation between the United Nations, regional/sub-regional organizations, and international financial institutions has proved to be productive, particularly, in some of the peace building interventions in Africa. They encouraged similar approaches in support of countries emerging from conflict or going through complex transitions. They also welcomed the new UN Peacebuilding Fund Strategy for 2020-2024, which aims at strengthening the UN's strategic cooperation with regional organizations, including the African Union, on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

The AUPSC and the PBC members commended the African Union's Initiative on "Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020" and the theme of the year of the African Union for 2020 "Silencing the Guns: creating conducive conditions for Africa's development", which underscores the interdependence between good governance, peace, security, and development. Members welcomed ongoing support provided to the Initiative by the UN System and encouraged further support for African women and youth-led initiatives to fast-track the implementation of the 'Silencing the Guns' agenda.

Member States welcomed stronger engagement of the AU representatives in PBC meetings and emphasized the need to further enhance the consultative mechanisms between the AUPSC and PBC to support effective partnerships for peace building and post-conflict reconstruction strategies and programs in Africa.

Ethiopia as a member of both the UNPBC and the AUPSC was represented at the meeting by its Permanent Representatives in New York and Addis Ababa. The Ethiopian delegation underlined the need to fully embrace the national ownership of peace building initiatives

with strong capacity building element embedded in them. In this regard, reference was made to UNSC Resolution 2457(2019), which provides strong support for Africa's efforts to Silencing the Guns in the Continent, including peace building initiatives, and that it would be helpful to our joint effort if concerned stakeholders could rigorously follow up on the implementation of that Resolution.

Finally, Member States suggested to hold more frequent meetings between the two bodies, including at the expert level, and, if resources permit it, to consider a future joint retreat in 2021, to develop practical recommendations to both bodies for deepening their relationship. In this connection, they requested their respective secretariats to present a joint proposal to the Chairs of the UNPBC and the AUPSC.

The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (UNPBC) was established as part of the reform process that took place during the 60th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2005, following the establishment of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change by the former Secretary-General Kofi Annan established in December 2004.