

A Week in the Horn 02.10.2020

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Africa and the African Union

The African Union Commission in partnership with International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) on Wednesday (September 30) launched virtually the second edition of the report on Labour Migration Statistics in Africa. The launch event was carried out in two events, drawing over 100 technical experts, government ministers and representatives of member states, officials from the development sector, development partners, and other interested individuals. The new report on labour migration statistics in Africa revealed that international migrants in the continent almost doubled in the decade from 13.3 million to 25.4 million international migrants in Africa, out of which 14.4 million are migrant workers. Majority of these migrant workers 24.9% are working in the agricultural sector.

Dr Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, addressed on Wednesday (September 30) the MTN “Y’ello Connection Thought Leadership Roundtable” organized under the theme “Bridging the developmental gap: Africa’s digital acceleration path in the “new normal”. The high-level roundtable attended by leading industry experts and government officials aimed at discussing the impact and immediate steps needed to better leverage digital technologies and infrastructure under the “New Normal” with specific focus on the opportunities and challenges facing the Continent during and post-COVID-19 pandemic. “COVID-19 pandemic has not only highlighted the importance of digital inclusion in daily life, but this “new normal” has reset the urgency to accelerate digital transformation on the Continent” said Dr Abou-Zeid. Particular attention to building an African digital ecosystem and creating a conducive environment to

economic growth and social inclusion was underscored by all speakers to implement the digital transformation strategy for the benefit Africans.

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The African Union Commission announced on Monday (September 28) that it has launched a new campaign to spotlight and remove non-tariff barriers (NTBs) in intra-continental trade. The #TradeEasier campaign aims to promote the uptake and use of the African Union's tradebarriers.africa, a non-tariff barriers reporting mechanism tool. The tool, developed by the African Union in partnership with UNCTAD, supports efforts to make continental trade easier and less costly by helping African businesses report such barriers and supporting their elimination with the help of governments.

The 5th Informal Joint Seminar and the 14th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting between the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AUPSC) have taken place virtually from 29-30 September 2020. On the seminar conducted on the 29th of September, the two Councils have exchanged views and conducted discussions mainly on how to strengthen cooperation between UNSC and AUPSC focusing on improving working methods and Silencing the Guns in Africa to Create Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development, while the consultative meeting was focusing on two issues: the Situation in Mali and the Sahel, and the Situation in Somalia. (See article)

Ethiopia

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia has issued today (October 02) a statement regarding the situation of Ethiopian irregular migrants in Saudi Arabia. The statement said: "Recently there have been numerous reports on human rights abuses, and the Government of Ethiopia is teaming up with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to confirm allegations and improve the condition in the detention centers" (See article).

A decision has been made to celebrate Teachers' Day at a national level as of this Ethiopian fiscal year, according to the Ministry of Education. Teachers deserve the necessary recognition and respect as they have a great role in shaping a generation, said Dr Geremew Huluka, State Minister of Education. The day will be observed for a month through presentation of research papers and panel discussions, he said during a press conference issued on Thursday (October 1).

Ethiopia on Thursday (October 1) inaugurated power distribution stations built at three towns at a total outlay of 53.7 Million USD in a presence of high government officials. Chief Administrator of Oromia Regional State, Shemelis Abdissa and Minister of Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy, Dr. Seleshi Bekele have officially launched the power stations. The power distribution stations inaugurated in Dukem, Bishoftu and Mojo are said crucial to address power outage problems and rising energy demands from mushrooming industries in the area.

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Ambassador of Ethiopia to Algeria, Nebiat Getachew has presented his credentials on Wednesday (September 30) to President Abdelmadjid Tebboune. On the occasion, the President recalled that Ethiopia and Algeria have historical, brotherly, and longstanding political relations. He said Algeria is keen to strengthen its comprehensive relations with Ethiopia and will support the ongoing reforms in the country. Regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), President Abdelmadjid reaffirmed Ethiopia's sovereign right to use its natural resources and said any attempt against this is unacceptable. Ambassador Nebiat thanked the President for the warm welcome and said he would work to strengthen the political, economic, and social ties between the two countries. He said Ethiopia has the sovereign right to develop its natural resources and does not intend to cause any significant harm to lower stream states of the Nile Basin in building the GERD. The ambassador added that technical problems regarding the dam can be resolved through dialogue.

A humanitarian aid plane arrived at Khartoum Airport on Wednesday (September 30), from Ethiopia. The aid was accompanied by an Ethiopian delegation headed by Minister of Foreign Affairs Gedu Andargachew. The delegation was received upon arrival at the airport by Sudanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Omer Ismail Gamar-Eddin. The Ethiopian delegation constituted senior government officials, including General Adem Mohammed, Chief of Staff of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces. The Ethiopian Foreign Minister affirmed solidarity of his country with the Sudanese government and people. For his part, Gamar-Eddin expressed thanks to the Ethiopian delegation and called for more cooperation in the future between the two countries. The plane was loaded with 60 tons of food and medicines.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed on Wednesday (September 30) expressed condolences on the passing of His Highness the Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. "Comfort to the family and the People of Kuwait," he writes on his Twitter page.

The veteran politician Professor Mesfin Woldemariam has died at age of 90 on Wednesday (September 30). Professor Mesfin Woldemariam was peacefully struggling for political and human rights of citizens with intense devotion. Mesfin Woldemariam was a professor of Geography at Addis

Ababa University and contributed a lot in the academic sphere of his field of study. He was also an author who wrote a number of books focused at social, political, economic and historical phenomenon in the country besides the academic area. As renowned politician, academician and author, Professor Mesfin served as chairperson of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has expressed his grief up on the death of the late Professor and extended condolences to families and all Ethiopians at large.

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A stakeholder's consultation organized by Ministry of Transport was held on Wednesday (September 30) with a view to introduce a renewable energy transport service in Ethiopia by promoting electric vehicles. Speaking on the occasion, Transport Minister, Dagmawit Moges said imported old cars are the major causes of pollution being observed in the country. Noting 75 percent of greenhouse effect is caused by the transport sector, she pointed out that electric cars play a vital role in minimizing the air pollution that is threatening the environment.

Ethiopia and Germany on Wednesday (September 30) signed a budgetary support grant agreement amounting to €100 million. The agreement was signed by Ahmed Shide, Ethiopia's Minister of Finance and Stephan Auer, Germany Ambassador to Ethiopia. The grant will be used to support the implementation of the national COVID-19 multi-sectorial preparedness and response plan. Ahmed Shide said the support will also help to expand social protection measures to cover more vulnerable populations, particularly the people requiring food aid and essential services.

President Sahle-Work Zewde said everyone must come together to keep the promise of uninterrupted maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) services. The President made the remark during a panel discussion organized by the partnership for MNCH and held alongside the UN General Assembly 2020 on Tuesday (September 29). The President said "5 years ago world leaders pledged to leave no one behind. In the face of the challenges today, that seems to be a dream." According to President Sahle-Work, the current COVID19 pandemic has pushed 37 million into extreme poverty, a majority of them in developing countries. The panel, which was moderated by Helen Clark, former Prime Minister of New Zealand, brought together representatives from government, civil society and youth.

State Minister Ambassador Redwan Hussien received at his office on Tuesday (September 29) the Egyptian Ambassador to Ethiopia Mr Osama Abdelhalek for both a courtesy call as well as for discussions on common issues of interest.

Hirut Zemene, the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ethiopia to the Kingdom of Belgium, Luxembourg and the EU institutions, presented her letter of credence and letter of recall of her predecessor to his Highness King Philippe, King of the Kingdom of Belgium on

Tuesday (September 29). On the occasion, Ambassador Hirut had the chance to exchange views on common issues of cooperation between Ethiopia and Belgium and to further strengthen the relations that exist between the two sisterly countries for more than hundred years.

The Ministry of Culture & Tourism has announced the beginning of October as the official full reopening date for the country's tourism sector, which has been interrupted for the past six months due to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The re-opening date, informed through a letter to all industry operators, comes pending a safe travel stamp from the World Travel & Tourism Council. The stamp is bestowed on countries that have adopted standardized global health and hygiene protocols. The Council requested the lift of restrictive quarantine measures upon entry into the country as a necessity. The Protocol, crafted to contain the spread of COVID-19, has been green-lighted by the Council in all other regards, according to Tewodros Derbew, director of international tourism facilitation at the Ministry. "The Ministry is holding discussions with the Ministry of Health in order to lift these requirements," he said.

The historic 75th session of the UNGA started this week under the overarching theme of "The Future We Want; The United Nations We Need: Reaffirming our Collective Commitment to Multilateralism". The 75th anniversary of the founding of the UN was marked with a high-level commemoration event on 21 September 2020, which concluded with the adoption of a Political Declaration reaffirming faith in multilateralism and the principles and purposes of the UN Charter. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed participated on the occasion via a video message. (See article)

In related news, there were several high-level meetings that took place virtually on the sidelines of the 75th session of the General Assembly. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, President Sahle-Work Zewde, Foreign Minister Gedu Andargachew and the Minister of Women, Children and the Youth have participated on these sideline meetings held on various themes. (See article)

The government of Ethiopia has been closely working with its South African counterpart to reach a final agreement to curb illegal migration and resort to skilled labor exchanges that will ensure the rights, benefits and dignity of citizens, according to Ethiopia's ambassador to that country. Ethiopia's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to South Africa, Shiferaw Teklemariam on Tuesday (September 29) stated that the Ethiopian government is giving due emphasis on well-researched legal frameworks, structural organization and working systems to send skilled employees to South Africa.

The first institute of higher education that will deliver courses and conduct research solely focused on the coffee industry is setting foot in Ethiopia with an investment of 50 million euros, Addis Fortune reported on Tuesday (September 27). The handily named Coffee College, scheduled to start delivering courses next year, will offer six courses in the undergraduate Coffee Industry programme: Roasting, Trading and Branding; Metal & Engineering; Power & Decentralized Power Generation; Water & Water Distribution; Media; and Nursing & Kindergarten. After finishing the first four semesters in Ethiopia, students will go to Europe for six months to pursue the remaining courses.

With a campus in Austria and its Scientific & Research Headquarters in Munich, Germany, the College plans to build an administrative headquarters in Addis Abeba.

Eritrea

Six patients have been diagnosed positive for COVID-19 in tests carried out on Thursday (October 1) at Quarantine Centers in Adibara (1), Shilalo (2), Mukhti (1); Goluj (1), and Om-Hager (1) in Gash Barka Region. All the patients are nationals who returned from Sudan and Ethiopia recently. On the other hand, twelve patients who were receiving medical treatment in hospitals in Gash Barka and Southern Regions have recovered fully and have been released from these facilities. The total number of recovered patients to-date accordingly stands at 353. The total number of confirmed cases in the country to-date has risen to 381.

Mr. Tesfai Ghebreselassie, Minister of land, water and Environment of the state of Eritrea delivered a statement during the virtually held biodiversity summit in New York on Wednesday (September 30). He mentioned, among other things, the precarious condition of an abandoned oil tanker moored in the Red Sea waters near the Yemeni port of Al Hudaydha. He said "Eritrea calls for a united stand to urge the concerned Yemenis political forces to cooperate in the safe unloading of the tanker, in order to preclude marine ecological catastrophe and socioeconomic damage that could result by spill dispersion of over one million barrels of crude oil from the tanker into the waters of southern Red Sea."

Foreign Minister Osman Saleh delivered a pre-recorded message on behalf of the President of the State of Eritrea, H.E. Mr. Isaias Afwerki, at the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly. The speech pointed out the challenges that humanity is facing at a global level. The speech concludes saying: "The pursuit and ideals of enduring global peace, stability and prosperity are squarely predicated, and can only flourish, on the edifice of a robust global organization that can measure up to all these challenges."

Somalia

Somalia's new Prime Minister Mohamed Hassan Roble on Thursday (October 1) held talks with Wadajir party leader in one of the progressive incidents in which could change fortunes in Somalia's politics. The surprise meeting at the prime minister's office in the capital Mogadishu ended with the two discussing current government holding free, fair and timely election.

A delegation led by the Galmudug State of Somalia leader Ahmed Abdi Kariye (Qor-qor) has arrived on Wednesday (September 30) in Somalia's capital city, Mogadishu. The delegation led by president Qor-qor has been warmly welcomed by MPs from both the lower house and the upper house and other federal government officials at Aden Adde international airport. Ahmed Qoor Qoor is expected

to be joined by other regional states leaders in the coming days and hold talks with President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo.

The US-trained Somali Special Forces [Danab] have executed an operation in the Lower Shabelle region, south of the country on Wednesday (September 30), targeting key Al-Shabab base. According to the military sources, the troops have peacefully wrested control of Leego area, the scene of the deadly Al-Shabaab attack on AMISOM outpost on 26 June 2015. The takeover came after Al-Shabab pull out. The Leego attack, one of the biggest against AU troops in Somalia left more than 70 Burundi soldiers dead while dozens wounded by armed Al-Shabab militants during the raid. Somali army backed by AMISOM and AU stepped up operations in the region as part of the government plan to liberate all areas still under Al-Shabab control.

The Minister of Finance of the Federal Government of Somalia, Abdirahman Duale Beyle, held a meeting with UN officials in Mogadishu on Tuesday (September 29). Beyle had talks with the United Nations Special Representative for Somalia, James Swan, and his deputy Adam Abdelmoula, focusing on the country's economic situation. The UN Office in Somalia has pledged continued support to the Somali government in financial reform and debt relief. The new PM Mohamed Hussein Roble has this week met with the US ambassador in Mogadishu and signed a deal on the debt cancellation.

Last week the Somali parliament approved the appointment of Mr. Mohamed Hussein Roble as the new Prime Minister of Somalia. Similarly, the week before, the Somali leaders at the Federal Government and the Federal Member States level have reached a deal on the election model for the 2020/2021 elections to the parliament that, in turn, elects the president. Both developments, very much related to each other, are quite excellent signs of progress in light of the challenges both in security and the cost of election processes. (See article)

US Ambassador to Somalia Donald Yamamoto and Somalia's Minister of Finance Abdirahman Dualeh Beileh have signed a bilateral agreement spelling out ways of reducing and restructuring debt owed by the Horn country to three American State agencies. Having reached the middle stage in its quest for debt cancellation in March this year, Somalia was declared as favoured by its donors for debt relief after implementing important milestones in its economic reform through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC). During the signing of the agreement on Sunday (September 27), it was noted that more efforts will lead to Somalia reaching the final stage known as 'Completion Point', by which point the US will have forgiven debts amounting to more than \$1 billion (about Sh108 billion).

After taking office on Sunday (September 27), the country's new PM Mohamed Hussein Roble has received on Monday a handful of foreign mission diplomats at the presidential palace in Mogadishu. The UN envoy to Somalia, James Swan said he was honoured to have an introductory meeting with the country's new Prime Minister, along with other representatives of the international community, to discuss a partnership in achieving national priorities. The PM is trying to burn the candle at both

ends to implement the new election deal and realize Somalia's goal to hold timely, credible and peaceful polls next year.

The Federal Minister of Labour and Social Affairs H.E Sadik Warfa and the World Food Programme (WFP) Country Director and Representative Cesar Arroyo on Sunday (September 27) signed an Output Agreement enabling WFP to implement the Shock Responsive Safety Net for Locust Response Project (SNLRP) on behalf of the Somali Government. This comes after the Federal Government of Somalia secured a grant equivalent to US\$40 million from the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank to help the locust affected rural communities in 43 districts across Somalia for a period of six months.

South Sudan

The UN announced on Friday (September 25) that, since July, some 625,000 people have been affected by devastating flooding along the White Nile river. To date, some 360,000 people have received assistance. The UN announced that it needs more than \$80 million for the overall flood response, including \$46 million for immediate assistance to 360,000 people until the end of the year.

Sudan

The UN on Thursday (October 1) announced that the number of people impacted by the unprecedented floods affecting Sudan stands at 860,000 and continues to increase. More than 120 people have also died. More than 400 schools and thousands of health facilities have been damaged, compromising education and health services. Nearly 30,000 latrines have collapsed, which could hinder the prevention and treatment of potential disease outbreaks.

The President of the Transitional Sovereignty Council, Lt. Gen. Abdul-Fattah Al-Burhan, on Wednesday (September 30) received in his office the Ethiopian Foreign Minister, Gedu Andargachew, who conveyed to Lt. Gen. Al-Burhan the greetings of the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, and Ethiopia's support to Sudan in confronting the floods disaster.

In related news, the Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Mohamed Osman Al-Hussein, received in his office on Wednesday noon (September 30) his Ethiopian counterpart, Lt. Gen. Adam Mohamed Mahmoud, who arrived among the Ethiopian high-level delegation led by the Foreign Minister, Gedu Andargachew, to present humanitarian support to the flood-affected people in Sudan. During the meeting, the Chief of Staff has appreciated the stances of Ethiopia in support of Sudan and its stability. The Ethiopian Chief of Staff affirmed the solidarity between the two brother countries and peoples, noting that the visit came under the directives of the Ethiopian Prime Minister for strengthening the fraternal relations and cooperation between Sudan and Ethiopia and to express the stand of Ethiopia alongside Sudan in confronting floods disaster.

UNAMID, UNCT and the Government of Sudan on Tuesday (September 29) held a Trilateral Meeting in El Fasher, North Darfur to discuss the implementation of the UN State Liaison Functions (SLFs) Projects and Programmes, considering the planned exit of UNAMID from Darfur by end of December 2020. The meeting also discussed UN support to the Government on SLFs COVID – 19 Response and coordination between the Government and the UN and between levels of Government in order to hasten the ongoing SLFs projects implementation processes at the Darfur States level.

UNAMID Joint Special Representative/Joint Chief Mediator (JSR/JCM), Jeremiah Mamabolo, accompanied by UNAMID Force Commander, Lt. General, Leonard Ngondi, on Sunday (September 27) met in Khartoum with the Sudanese Defense Minister, Major General, Yassin Ibrahim. During the meeting, they discussed issues related to the latest developments in the Sudan peace process, the security situation in Darfur as well as the National Protection of Civilians Plan.

The UN Security Council held an open meeting on Sudan Friday (September 25). The Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo, said that, despite the pandemic, Sudan's political transition continues to move in the right direction but that we are also mindful of the significant work ahead. Ms. DiCarlo said that planning for the new UN Mission in Sudan, to be known as UNITAMS, is progressing and is intended to enable a new and innovative way of working, fostering maximum cooperation and integration among various UN entities.

Briefing the UN Security Council open meeting on Sudan on Friday (September 25) the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, welcomed last month's initialling of a peace agreement between the Transitional Government of Sudan, the Sudan Revolutionary Front and the Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi, which he said is an important milestone in the often-troubled history of Darfur. Nonetheless, he added, much of the work remains to ensure that the goodwill shown in the negotiating process is translated into lasting and sustainable change on the ground, stressing that the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the UN are ready to step in, excuse me, stand ready to help.

Press Release on Irregular Migrants in KSA

Ethiopia continues to receive its most vulnerable citizens from the Kingdom of Saudi (KSA), although the COVID-19 infection rate spikes at home. Since April 2020, Ethiopia has repatriated and quarantined 3500 of the most vulnerable migrants. They have been in the process of being reintegrated into their community.

Another round of 2000 comprised of women, unaccompanied minors, and migrants with health conditions have begun to arrive in the capital since the eve of Ethiopian New Year in a safe and dignified manner. So far, we have received 964 (58 infants), assisted them in the temporary transit places (Universities in the capital), and sent them to their destination community for reintegration.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has reviewed the repatriation process in the month of April to assure safe and dignified repatriation involving all sector Ministries. This change has brought about smooth and effective coordination in the process of identification with detailed data, sharing information among sector ministries, confirmation of citizenship and security check, repatriation, transition/quarantine, psychosocial support, and reintegration. Data management has helped all involved to make preparation ahead of time before migrants arrive and enabled the government to provide expedited assistance to returnees.

Migration on the East and Horn of Africa route is a large scale, mixed in terms of types of migrants involved, and heavily facilitated by smuggling and trafficking networks. Over 90% of the migration along this route are bound for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The convergence of the irregular nature of the migration, involvement of smugglers and traffickers, and the ongoing conflict in Yemen – the transit country to KSA – results in migrants facing significant threats to their lives and human rights.

Torture, sexual abuse, and other forms of violence are day-to-day experiences among migrants on this route. Migrants also suffer from dehydration, hunger, and exposure to the elements on a journey that can last several months. This makes the repatriation process even more complicated as the psychosocial support is intense. The reintegration process also needs enormous resources as returnees come back home empty-handed while costing their family or themselves scores of resources in the aspiration of a better life in KSA.

On 29 March 2017, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) announced that all irregular migrants should voluntarily leave the country within a 90-day amnesty period or risk detention, fines, and deportation. The Government of Ethiopia (GoE) estimated that 500,000 Ethiopians could be affected by the new decree. The amnesty ended on 15 November 2017.

Since May 2017, more than 400,000 Ethiopian irregular migrants (90% male, 10% female) have returned from the KSA following the announcement of the amnesty. Due to weak data management and lack of proper reintegration, most of these migrants were re-trafficked back to KSA by smugglers.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated need to avoid exacerbating the spread of the coronavirus and overwhelming Ethiopia's fragile health system by limiting large-scale movements, the GoE and the KSA agreed on a Moratorium on large-scale returns to Ethiopia. KSA has always provided information regarding the increasing number of irregular migrants crossing its border from Yemen and offered to assist in enhancing border control and assisting in financing the reintegration of returnees. The GOE has increased its border checkpoints by 5 to better manage irregular migration and the spread of the pandemic. The Ethiopian Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs has prepared a proposal for reintegration and submitted to KSA and development partners.

Recently there have been numerous reports on human rights abuses, and we are teaming up with KSA to confirm allegations and improve the condition in the detention center. The GOE missions in Riyadh and Jeddah are closely working with KSA and have assigned dedicated staff to collaborate with the detention centers in assisting our migrants. The GOE has asked for a full report in lights of recent reports and will conduct follow-ups based on the responses obtained.

The process of repatriation of citizens goes beyond quarantine- it is beyond moving people from one place to another which is shifting the problem. The focus should be on a proper reintegration of returnees in their respective communities. In support of and with the guidance of GOE, IOM continues to provide post-arrival assistance to returnees from the KSA. IOM is also providing lifesaving humanitarian assistance to migrants stranded en route to the KSA. However, the much-needed long-term reintegration assistance has been provided to only 2% of all returnees from KSA, making it impossible for these returnees to rebuild their lives and livelihoods once returned. This is the major gap that GOE is working g to address as we want to ensure the safe and dignified returns of our citizens from wherever they are, but equally important, we want to ensure their sustainable reintegration. This is why the current returns from KSA are happening at the current pace.

The GOE is grateful to KSA for allowing in migrants into its territory and their understanding and patience as we continue to plan for the post-return and reintegration end of this type of operation. With the friendly relationship both governments have, the GOE is confident that human rights issues, raised in many reports, will be addressed properly.

The GOE knows fully well they without reintegration assistance, a significant proportion of returnees from KSA will have remigrated. There is, therefore, an urgent need for reintegration assistance for returnees and enhanced livelihood solutions for young people at risk of migrating irregularly. The GoE is also committed to interstate dialogue and cooperation to find lasting solutions to the complex challenges stemming from irregular along the East and Horn of Africa migratory route.

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Even though Ethiopia has a large number of migrants in KSA, Lebanon was also one of the destination countries where migrants needed urgent assistance. Ethiopia has been successful in applying the new system in Beirut. We have assigned a new consul general who was effectively working with the community and partners to prioritize the welfare of our migrants and arrange their return through different sponsorship and discount from Ethiopian airlines.

Now, the 8th round repatriation is on the way. The most important achievement in this regard is the fact that the issue was scaled up to be an African Union issue under the African migrant in Lebanon

that called for synergy in assuring their welfare together as a continent and work as an individual country when repatriation occurs. That is what the GOE is aiming at when assisting irregular migrants.

75th session of the United Nations General Assembly and High-Level Commemoration Event on the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations

The historic 75th session of the UNGA started this week under the overarching theme of “The Future We Want; The United Nations We Need: Reaffirming our Collective Commitment to Multilateralism”. The 75th anniversary of the founding of the UN was marked with a high-level commemoration event on 21 September 2020, which concluded with the adoption of a Political Declaration reaffirming faith in multilateralism and the principles and purposes of the UN Charter. Through the Declaration, Member States requested the Secretary-General to report back before the end of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly with recommendations to advance our common agenda and to respond to current and future challenges.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who spoke at the occasion via a video message, said, “Ethiopia, as a founding member of the UN, remains an ardent supporter of the principle of collective security as enshrined in the UN Charter. I want to take this opportunity today to assure you that Ethiopia will continue to adhere to these ideals and to the principles of multilateralism in addressing the unprecedented challenges and threats that we face as a community of nations”.

The General Debate of the 75th session of the General Assembly was held from 22 to 26 and 29 September 2020. The 75th session started with the address by the Secretary-General of the United Nations who gave a tour d’horizon of the state of peace, security, and development of our world. The Secretary-General highlighted in his remarks the five major challenges and threats that endanger the world, including rising geostrategic tensions, an existential climate crisis, deep and growing global mistrust, the dark side of the digital world, and the COVID-19 pandemic. He called for unity and solidarity in responding to these challenges and threats.

Prime Minister Abiy, in his message delivered at the session, reaffirmed Ethiopia’s commitment to the UN’s transformative agenda and highlighted its efforts to implement the SDGs as an integral part of its development plan. He also underscored the need for enhanced support to Africa in addressing the medium and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. On the other hand, he stressed the significance of taking urgent and swift action to combat climate change and its devastating impact. In this regard, he explained the work that is being done through the Green Legacy Initiative to build a green and climate-resilient economy.

Concerning the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, the Prime Minister made it abundantly clear that Ethiopia has no intention to harm downstream countries. He expounded on Ethiopia's desire to meet our electricity demands from one of the cleanest sources of energy. He took the opportunity to affirm Ethiopia's steadfast commitment to addressing the concerns of downstream countries and reaching a mutually beneficial outcome in the context of the ongoing AU led process.

Furthermore, Prime Minister Abiy stated in his remarks the efforts that have been exerted over the past two years to open up the political space and promote the exercise of democratic freedoms and human rights. He acknowledged the challenges encountered in this process but assured that Ethiopia remains committed to the objective of democratizing our society, and it will pursue our reform efforts with all the necessary political vigor and commitment to achieve a successful transition with the holding of a peaceful and credible election.

An unprecedented number of Heads of State and Government of member states participated in the General Debate. Most of the leaders who addressed the General Assembly more or less spoke within the framework of the challenges and threats that the Secretary-General outlined and underscored the need to reinforce multilateralism to collectively address them. "The fact that so many world leaders chose to address this Assembly is a testament to the power and relevance of the United Nations," the President of the General Assembly said. He further added, "No other platform in the international calendar, has this convening power. No other Organization can bring so many global leaders together. No other body has the potential to address global challenges, like this United Nations."

High-Level Events on the Sidelines of UNGA75

Several high-level meetings took place virtually on the sidelines of the 75th session of the General Assembly. On 29, September Prime Minister Abiy attended his high-level event convened by the UN Secretary-General and the Prime Ministers of Canada, and Jamaica aims to articulate a coordinated and comprehensive multilateral response to the urgent financing for development crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Prime Minister Abiy delivered remarks at the event. He stressed the need for global action to respond to the global pandemic. He also emphasized the need for a coordinated debt relief package for developing countries to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. Furthermore, the post-COVID-19 recovery effort should be green and resilient.

On 17 September, President Sahle-Work Zewde participated at a Virtual Summit with Women in Global Health and delivered a keynote address. The meeting discussed the role of women who are in the frontlines fighting the COVID-19 pandemics. The President also attended a High-Level Meeting on Digital Cooperation on 23rd September, which focused on concrete actions to safeguard the technological era for future generations. Moreover, she participated in a panel discussion organized

by the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health (PMNCH) where she pointed out the “need to come together to keep the promise of uninterrupted maternal, new born and child health services even during this difficult times”.

This year also marks the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing+25) and the landmark adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The President delivered Ethiopia’s Policy Statement at the High-Level Event organized on 1 October 2020, to commemorate the event and highlighted the progress made in promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment. The President said, “That I am addressing this historic gathering as the First Female President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is indeed symbolic of the remarkable progress that we have made” in this regard. President Sahle-work welcomed the adoption of the Political Declaration at the High-Level Event, which embodies the collective aspiration of Member States for realizing women’s right for an equal future and reaffirmed Ethiopia’s unwavering support and commitment toward its full and effective implementation.

On his part, Foreign Minister Gedu Andargachew attended the Ministerial Meeting of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) on 17 September, while State Minister Redwan attended the Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked Least Developed Countries (LDCs) on 23rd September. Ethiopia joined the Alliance for Multilateralism which was initiated by France and Germany. Foreign Minister Gedu who attended the Ministerial meeting of the Alliance on 25 September 2020, reaffirmed Ethiopia’s commitment to play a meaningful and active role to help ensure the United Nations becomes more effective and secure greater legitimacy.

Furthermore, the Minister of Women, Children, and the Youth participated at a High-Level meeting on Child, Early and Forced marriage and the COVID-19 pandemic on 18 September. The Minister of Health participated at a High-Level meeting on ensuring Equitable Access to Life Saving Immunizations in the Time of COVID-19 held on 23rd September. The State Minister of Finance and Economic Cooperation also participated at a High-Level meeting on Financing for Development in the era of COVID-19 and beyond on 8 September.

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Ethiopia’s participation in all these high-level events is believed to have contributed to enhancing its visibility in multilateral fora. The events also provided a useful platform to highlight the multiple efforts that are being undertaken in the political and socio-economic fields to advance its peace and development as well as facilitate progress towards the realization of the UN’s transformative agenda.

Somalia: A Promising Progress

Last week the Somali parliament approved the appointment of Mr. Mohamed Hussein Roble as the new Prime Minister of Somalia. Similarly, the week before, the Somali leaders at the Federal Government and the Federal Member States level have reached a deal on the election model for the 2020/2021 elections to the parliament that, in turn, elects the president.

Both developments, very much related to each other, are quite excellent signs of progress in light of the challenges both in security and the cost of election processes. What matters most is that these are Somali led processes and outcomes that must encourage, unlike to what we hear from some quarters, all stakeholders of Somalia.

The reasons for these encouraging steps are manifold, among the most important ones being the continuity of regular elections in Somalia since the establishment of the Federal Government in 2004. It has become a wonderful reality that in no part of Somalia, including at the Federal Government level, a leadership change can occur without elections.

The presidential candidates so far are around 12, and as the elections approach, the number of candidates is expected to increase. Looking at the candidates so far, one would find, in addition to the incumbent, two former Presidents, one former Prime Minister, two former regional presidents, as well as six more very familiar faces in the political life of Somalia. This indicates that politics in Somalia is stabilizing, Somalis from inside and outside the country (i.e. from the Diaspora) are convinced that through the electoral process, it is possible to have a fair play so that leadership successions are done peacefully.

When we talk of elections, it is indeed an indirect election that necessitated the participation of clan elders, civil society, the women and the youth blocks, etc. One has to be very critical before expressing any contrary views that whether a one-man-one-vote election can take place in all parts of Somalia as it stands now.

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The underlining considerations are security in the first place and economic capabilities which is less difficult. Equality, no less significant challenge is all sorts of infrastructures and necessary elements that are pre-requisite for a smooth election process and its outcome. It is time, therefore, for the Somali stakeholders in particular and the international community, in general, to come to the

support of Somalia in many ways than one i.e. politically, financially and technically to enable it to hold a successful election.

UN, AU Peace and Security Councils Conclude Joint Seminar and Annual Joint Consultative Meeting

The 5th Informal Joint Seminar and the 14th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting between the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AUPSC) have taken place virtually from 29-30 September 2020. On the seminar conducted on the 29th of September, the two Councils have exchanged views and conducted discussions mainly on how to strengthen cooperation between UNSC and AUPSC focusing on improving working methods and Silencing the Guns in Africa to Create Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development, while the consultative meeting was focusing on two issues: the Situation in Mali and the Sahel, and the Situation in Somalia.

The Seminar has aimed at further enhancing the effectiveness of the two Councils in discharging their respective mandates in mutual understanding though each of them has the mandate to pass decisions independently. Among the interest points addressed in the discussion during the seminar include nomenclature and improved modalities for the joint meetings/seminars, better preparations for the annual joint consultative meetings, avoiding lengthy negotiations for the joint communiqué, improving implementation of joint commitments, improving modalities for undertaking joint field missions, enhancing close consultations, promoting harmonization and coordination of initiatives between the two Councils, and ensuring predictable and sustainable financial support from the UNSC to AU deployed peace support operations, among others. Moreover, the seminar has targeted at further developing common understanding towards achieving the objectives of "Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development". This was discussed in line with the Framework Agreement on the UN-AU Partnership in Peace and Security, signed in April 2017, and the AU-UN Framework for the Implementation of Agendas 2063 and the 2030 for Sustainable Development, signed in January 2018.

The 14th Annual Joint Consultative Virtual Meeting between the AUPSC and the UNSC was conducted on 30 September 2020. This consultation addressed two conflict issues in Africa. These were the situation in Mali and the Sahel, and the situation in Somalia. The two Councils deliberated extensively and have reached an understanding that the peace and security situation in Mali and the Sahel Region has become more challenging. The meeting has condemned unconstitutional change of government and agreed to act in coordination with regional actors such as ECOWAS to find a sustainable solution to the crisis in Mali while respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. As the Sahel region is affected by terrorism, other criminal networks, and intercommunal violence, the meeting underlined the need for a holistic approach in addressing the security challenges as well as the root causes.

On the situation in Somalia, as well, the joint consultative meeting of AUPSC and UNSC has extensively deliberated on recent developments in Somalia and the future of AMISOM. The common position of the African side was presented to the meeting by Ethiopia, as a lead speaker supported by others. In presenting Africa's common position, positive developments in Somalia including agreements between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and Federal Member States (FMS) on the election Model and related issues were explained to the delegates. It was also noted that the current atmosphere of dialogue amongst various stakeholders in Somalia is a positive development that needs to be sustained. The meeting emphatically commended the encouraging work African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is doing in Somalia. The two councils have stressed that AMISOM is critical to stemming off the increasing security threats, exacerbated by the terrorist group Al Shabaab and other armed groups in Somalia, and to support the Somali Security Forces (SSF) in fighting Al Shabaab.

Several delegations have commended the fact that the FGS is currently revising the Somali Transitional Plan (STP) to eventually take over responsibility. In that connection, the two Councils have reached understanding to work closely together to ensure that AMISOM has the required capabilities to carry out its mandated and authorized tasks. Furthermore, it was underlined that the reconfiguration has to align with the pace of the FGS to generate the required capacity and capabilities for the takeover of primary security responsibility from AMISOM. In addition to that agreement was reached to undertake the mandated review of AMISOM 2018 to 2021 Concept of Operations (CONOPs) to ensure its alignment with the revised Transitional Plan of Somalia (TPS).

It was also pointed out that, for this to happen, the issue of predictable funding leading up to and after 2021 is inevitable. The need for extra resources to prevent COVID-19 among AMISOM personnel was also underlined. Finally, the two Councils have reached an understanding of an inclusive approach in conducting an independent assessment to ensure the effective integration of the African views with the policy options pertaining to post-2021 international engagements with Somalia.

The 14th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting between the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AUPSC) enhanced mutual understanding between the two Councils so that they can adopt decisions on African conflict situations which would reinforce each other for a better result.