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News in brief

Africa and the African Union

The Second IGAD-Plus Extraordinary Summit was held on Friday (August 5) at Sheraton Addis, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. AUC Chairperson, Regional leaders, and IGAD Executive Secretary are expected to deliberate on the situation in South Sudan.

A meeting of coordinators to look at the progress achieved since the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Summit in Johannesburg in December last year was held in Beijing, China at the end of last week (July 28-29). The meeting was intended to underline the continuous commitments from China and African countries to carry on cooperation and development and give further impetus to the implementation of the FOCAC Action Plan's five pillars and identified areas of cooperation. **(See article)**

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon marked the 2016 UN World Day Against Trafficking in Persons on Saturday (July 30), urging the international community, to carry forward the fight against human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants and refugees. **(See article)**

On Tuesday this week the United Nations considered a draft agreement on refugees and migrants as a document for the planned UN Summit to be held on September 19 in New York. Refugees and migrants will be one of the biggest issues at next months' UN General Assembly, and the proposed document is expected to be the centerpiece at the Summit. **(See article)**

Ethiopia

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn gave briefings to the press on Friday (August 5) on the current issues and the El-Nino –induced drought in the country. Noting that the government has managed to cope with the drought, the Premier said the country's efforts of mitigating the challenge have brought about encouraging results. Touching upon the recent demonstrations, both staged and the ones being called in parts of

Amhara and Oromia Regional states, Prime Minister Hailemariam described the demonstrations as “in appropriate” given that “they have no owner [responsible body] and are unauthorized.” Accordingly, he stressed that the government will be obliged to discharge its responsibility of ensuring rule of law. The Prime Minister however said the government would continue to making efforts to address concerns of good governance, corruption and maladministration through dialogue.

Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros Adhanom bade farewell to the departing Mexican Ambassador to Ethiopia, Alfredo Miranda on Thursday (August 4). Recalling the longstanding and historical relations between Ethiopia and Mexico, the two sides reiterated that the bilateral relation should further be enhanced at all levels.

A high-level Ethiopian delegation, led by State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Taye Atske-silassie took part in the follow-up forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing, China at the end of last week (July 28-29). (See **article**)

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Taye Atske-selassie conferred with US Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ambassador Patricia M. Haslach on Tuesday (August 2). The two sides discussed on issues of mutual interest.

State Minister Ambassador Taye held discussions with Mr. Liu Guanglei, Vice Chairman of China People's Political Consultative Conference Chongqing Committee (CPPCC) on Wednesday (August 3). On the occasion, Ambassador Taye noted Ethiopia is making unreserved effort in poverty eradication and economic transformation through modernization of agriculture and industrialization; and Chinese investors are encouraged to invest in these priority areas more than ever.

Ambassador Taye Atseke-Selassie, State Minister for Foreign Affairs and Remi Hemeryck, Executive Director of SOS Sahel, signed on Monday (August 1), a Memorandum of Understanding to open SOS Sahel regional office in Ethiopia.

Motuma Mekassa, Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy, said the 24th meeting of the Nile Council of Ministers (Nile-COM) in Entebbe, Uganda, last month had discussed ways to advance Nile cooperation, the operations of the Nile Basin Initiative and its financial sustainability. The meeting had agreed country contributions would be made in a timely manner to support the NBI. Egypt has requested to rejoin the NBI (it left in 2010). The meeting said its resumption as a member would be decided in the future.

The Gibe III hydroelectric project has begun generating 800 megawatts electric power. Engineer Azeb Mesfin, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Ethiopian Electric

Power on Thursday (August 4) said the project, which has 10 Francis turbines with a power of 187 megawatts each for a total installed capacity of 1,870 megawatts, is now 96 percent complete.

Eritrea

A high-level Eritrean government delegation headed by Mr. Hagos Gebrehiwet, Head of Economic Affairs of the ruling Peoples Front for Democracy and Justice, took part in the China-Africa Cooperation Forum last week. During his visit, Mr. Gebrehiwet signed an agreement with Gao Huncheng, Minister of Commerce, for the development of the Mai-Nefhi College of Science and Technology.

Kenya

Kenya and France signed a \$37 million deal this week to support the installation of renewable energy generation units, both solar and wind turbines, in 23 mini-grids currently powered by diesel generators. The deal was signed at State House in the presence of President Uhuru Kenyatta and French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault. It will add 9.5 MW of power for some of the northern counties and reduce the cost of electricity by an average of 20%.

Somalia

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud officially opened the National Leadership Forum in Mogadishu on Wednesday (August 3). The meeting, attended by the Prime Minister, Omar Sharmarke and the regional state presidents, was to finalize the timetable for the election and decide whether a delay is necessary, the establishment of the commission to resolve disputes, the status of Mogadishu, and the composition of regional election commissions as well as electoral security and other issues that need to be completed before the election. **(See article)**

The UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has warned that the humanitarian situation in Somalia remains extremely serious. In a report released on Friday last week (July 29) it said the main harvest season after the April to June *Gu* rains is expected to be 30% to 50% below average in southern Somalia. This was due to poor rains, pests and flooding in Hiiraan and Middle Shabelle regions, which normally provide up to 80% of cereal production. The depressed rains will also affect availability of water for livestock and people. OCHA said the next *Deyr* rainy season, from October to December, is also likely to be below average.

Puntland marked 18 years of governance with a ceremony at State House in Garowe on Monday (August 1). Puntland President Abdiweli Mohamed Ali led the celebrations, with Vice-President Abdihakim Abdullahi Haji Omar, parliamentarians, traditional elders and Islamic scholars. President Abdiweli expressed his optimism about the Puntland democratization program due to culminate in a presidential vote in

2019. He said: “We want to move away from the clan-based political system and embrace democratic ideals.”

South Sudan

The Second IGAD-Plus Extraordinary Summit was held on Friday (August 5) at Sheraton Addis, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. AUC Chairperson, Regional leaders, and IGAD Executive Secretary are expected to deliberate on the situation in South Sudan. **(See article)**

The World Food Program said this week that the situation in South Sudan was close to catastrophic. About a third of children across the country were now acutely malnourished, twice the emergency threshold, with the situation in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal and Unity states particularly severe. Half the population was dependent on food aid. Rains and armed banditry mean the WFP has to use airdrops to reach the most endangered populations. The UNHCR said on Tuesday (August 2) that 60,000 have fled the country since the conflict erupted again last month, many being women and children; 900,000 people had fled from the country with 1.8 million internally displaced.

President Salva Kiir this week sacked six ministers suspected of loyalty to former vice president, Riek Machar, and replaced them with people loyal to his new first Vice President, Taban Deng Gai. The new officials, according to the presidential decree, were appointed on the basis of recommendations from the first Vice President. President Kiir has also dismissed 50 MPs appointed by Machar, replacing them with people nominated by Taban Deng Gai. These moves have been described by the SPLM-IO as illegal and in contravention of the Peace Agreement. **(See article)**

Sudan

The Head of the African Union Office in Khartoum, Mahmoud Kan, said on Tuesday (August 2) that the African Union High-level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) would meet with the Sudan opposition, Sudan Call, in Addis Ababa next week. He said the Sudan Call leaders had agreed to sign the Roadmap on August 8 and talks on the cessation of hostilities and the humanitarian assistance would take place from 9 to 11 August. The head of the AUHIP, Thabo Mbeki, has also extended an invitation to the Sudan government to participate in the Addis Ababa meeting.

Sudanese Petroleum Minister, Mohamed Zayed Awad, returning from a visit to China on Wednesday (August 3) said several Chinese companies would launch new oil and gas investments in Sudan. He said a delegation from the state-owned China National Petroleum Corporation would arrive in Khartoum on August 25 to explore new investment opportunities. Presidential aide for China affairs, Awad Ahmed al-Jazz, said the government has laid out 170 projects in various fields for Chinese investors. During the visit the delegation discussed establishing a free zone, an industrial area

and a port.

In a speech in South Kordofan on Monday, First Vice President, Bakri Hassan Salih, praised the opposition decision to sign the Roadmap Agreement, saying this would pave the way for Sudanese people to meet together and solve their country's issues. He said the national dialogue process would continue "until it reaches its goals" and called on rebel groups to join peace process.

A week of Diaspora Festival Celebrations in Bahr Dar

A week of Diaspora Day festival was celebrated in the city of Bahr Dar, capital of the Amhara National Regional State from July 28 to August 2, attended by thousands of members of Diaspora Communities.

The first part of the week was devoted to the Amhara Region Diaspora Festival, which involved a series of panel discussions and visits to various industrial sites in and around Bahr Dar with members of the Diaspora Community visiting industrial villages, hospitals and flower farms. Thousands also attended the laying of the corner stone of the Diaspora Park, the Bete Abbay Technology and Innovation Center. Ato Gedu Andargachew, President of the Amhara National Regional State, laid the stone and noted that this was carried out by (ANRS). It was during the laying of the corner stone for the Diaspora Park that Bete Abbay Technology and Innovation Center had "the potential of proving to become a center of technological excellence for the Region as well as the Nation." The Amhara Region Diaspora Festival concluded with a soccer match between government officials of the Regional State and members of the Diaspora Community.

The Amhara Region Diaspora Festival preceded the National Ethiopian Diaspora Festival, also celebrated in Bahr Dar on Monday and Tuesday this week (August 1 -2). Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn and Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros Adhanom presided over this celebration, which included key discussion sessions on issues of urgent importance to the Ethiopian Diaspora Community. High-ranking government officials, Ambassadors and invited dignitaries also attended the two-day festival.

During the occasion, the Prime Minister held useful and extensive discussions with members of the Ethiopian Diaspora Community, allowing them to address all issues of regarding the opportunities for investment, as well as any challenges and problems they had come across, including any rent-seeking activities. The Prime Minister encouraged the members of the Diaspora to invest in the Information and Technology sector in particular in the country. During these sessions, the Prime Minister reiterated his belief that "We have a moral as well as spiritual obligation to invest in and develop Ethiopia. I appeal to you to continue your support to Ethiopia."

Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros told the members of the Ethiopian Diaspora Community that it is imperative that the Diaspora, the people and the Government all worked together to realize Ethiopia's aspirations. He said, "If we work hard together, nothing is impossible. We could realize Vision 2025 that envisions making Ethiopia a middle-income country by 2025." Referring to the problems posed by rent-seeking, Dr. Tedros said, "the government believes that rent-seeking is a major obstacle - a cancer - to development and it is committed to fighting against it." He added: "It's only by creating a corruption-shunning generation that we can sustainably tackle rent-seeking."

The festival also included an extensive panel discussion on "Federalism and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's Constitution". Ato Kasa Tekleberhan, Minister of Federal and Pastoral Development Affairs, chaired this discussion, emphasizing, "The FDRE Constitution is an aspirational covenant that energizes the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia to claim their future and control their fate with a sense of optimism." He also noted "the people of Ethiopia are the source of [the country's] development while the constitution is the source of this transformation that will enlist Ethiopia among middle-income countries in the year 2025."

The celebrations of the 2nd National Ethiopian Diaspora Festival in Bahr Dar successfully concluded after deciding to hold the 3rd Festival in City of Hawassa, the capital of the Southern Nations', Nationalities' and Peoples' Regional State.

Follow-up to the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation Summit in Johannesburg

The Coordinators for the implementation of the follow-up actions of the Johannesburg Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) met in Beijing, China at the end of last week (July 28-29), with over 300 delegates at ministerial and senior levels attending. The meeting aimed to take stock of the progress achieved in follow-up actions of the FOCAC Summit held in Johannesburg in December last year. It was also intended to demonstrate the continuous commitments from China and African countries to carry on cooperation and development and give further impetus to the implementation of the FOCAC Action Plan's five pillars and the identified areas of cooperation within the 10 major economic and trade domains. The five pillars were: high level mutual visits; advancing mutually beneficial cooperation across the board; maintaining robust people-to-people and cultural exchanges; security cooperation; and cooperation in the international arena.

The forum was attended by ministers and representatives of governments from Africa, Chinese ministers, as well as representatives of Chinese financial Institutions and enterprises. A high-level Ethiopian delegation, led by State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Taye Atske-silassie took part in the follow-up forum.

At the opening of the Coordinator's meeting, State Councilor Yang Jiechi read out a message from President Xi Jinping. The President expressed warm congratulations at the convening of the meeting and pointed out that the FOCAC Johannesburg Summit has opened a new era of win-win cooperation between China and Africa, producing a significant milestone in the development of China-Africa relations. He declared, "China's support for Africa's peace and development will never change". At the Johannesburg Summit President Xi Jinping also pledged 60 billion United States dollars in financial support to Africa. This was to be divided: five billion dollars of free aid and interest-free loans; 35 billion dollars of preferential loans and export credits on more favorable terms; five billion dollars of additional capital for the China-Africa development fund; 5 billion dollars each of initial capital for special loans for the development of African Small and Medium Enterprises; and 10 billion dollars for a China-Africa production capacity cooperation fund.

The meeting appreciated the timely action taken by both China and Africa in the implementation of the outcomes of the Johannesburg summit. The South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maite Nkoana Mashabane, declared, "In a matter of months (since Johannesburg), we are busy with implementation, unlike past partnerships whose implementation would take a long time."

The two-day meeting included seminars, dialogues, plenary sessions and China and African government signing ceremonies for cooperative agreements and documents between various financial institutions and enterprises. China-Africa business dialogues and business networking agreements were among sessions that caught the attention of participants. Representatives of Chinese financial institutions, state-owned enterprises, and enterprises with cooperative agreements and documents to sign, were able to hold useful discussions on issues of enhancing ways of business cooperation with representatives of African enterprises in the areas of banking, infrastructure cooperation and international trade.

Gao Hucheng, China's Minister of Commerce, addressing the report on the progress made so far, noted that under the proposed measures for China- Africa industrialization and infrastructure development, China had signed cooperation documents with a number of countries including Mozambique, Egypt, the Republic of Congo, South Africa, Guinea, Rwanda, and Ethiopia. The Minister said China's contribution to the newly launched Hawassa Industrial Park, the grants and zero-interest loans for Addis Ababa municipal roads, the first electrified Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway, and other projects, were an excellent example of the rapid progress China-Africa relations were making in multi-faceted areas of cooperation.

Ethiopia was the first co-chair of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and has benefitted extensively from the cooperation. The development of infrastructure in Ethiopia and in neighboring countries is playing a key role in interconnecting the IGAD region and pulling it together towards market integration and sustainable development. The recently inaugurated world-class Hawassa industrial park will

function with zero waste discharge, using a system constructed by the China Civil Engineering Construction Company (CCECC). Another area of extensive cooperation, in which Ethio-China cooperation can be described as exemplary in transforming the country's human resource into human capital, is capacity building, and since 2013, China has doubled its scholarship availability for Ethiopia. Following the 60 billion dollar pledge made at Johannesburg, Ethiopia submitted a list of priority projects that are in line with its second Growth and Transformation Plan (2015-2020). Comprehensive negotiations are currently well underway for consideration of these projects.

A joint communiqué issued at the end of the Coordinators' meeting stated that both sides had reaffirmed their readiness to make joint efforts to promote industrialization and agricultural modernization in Africa through alignments of industry, and transfer of technology and human resources capacity development cooperation. The communiqué also noted the agreement to continue to push forward the implementation of the agreed action plan. Delegates agreed to adhere to five cooperative concepts for the implementation of the outcomes of the Johannesburg Summit: common, intensive, green, safe and open development. It called on the international community to pay greater attention to, and increase investment in peace, security and development for Africa. It urged developed countries to honor their commitment to provide aid, transfer technologies and support for capacity building of African countries and to support African countries to enable them to effectively tackle challenges in peace, security and development.

Regional and international concerns over South Sudan developments....

Amid a fresh outbreak of fighting in South Sudan, the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) partners' group held its Third High Level meeting in Khartoum on 31st July 2016 to discuss implementation of the August 2015 Agreement and the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS). The meeting was co-chaired by Sudan and China and was also attended by various participants including the Chairperson of Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission Festus Mogae, the U.S. Special Envoy and representatives of Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Chad, Norway, United Kingdom, the African Union Commission, the European Union, the IGAD Partners' Forum and the United Nations Secretary-General and other UN organs. In addition to considering the implementation process of the August 2015 peace process, the meeting also considered the current situation and what could and should be done to convince the warring parties to re-commit themselves to end hostilities. The Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission took the opportunity to call again on the South Sudanese parties to stop hostilities around Juba and put the peace process back on track.

In fact, immediately following the end of the meeting and the release of its statement, the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission said it had received reports from the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism on renewed clashes in the areas around Juba, Equatoria and other parts of South Sudan. The Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission stressed that the resumption of hostilities represented a violation of the peace agreement, and expressed deep concern that the situation might deteriorate further. It condemned in the strongest terms the recent armed clashes that had erupted between the parties. It said the operations targeting opposition leaders had exposed the country once again to unprecedented levels of violence and must be stopped immediately. The Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission also called for a full investigation and accountability for those who bore the responsibility for violations of the ceasefire and the atrocities that have been committed. Its statement said: “We are shocked and grieved by the loss of life and the atrocities that have been reported, including well-documented reports of attacks on civilians. We express our strongest condemnation regarding these attacks. Those responsible for war crimes, crime against humanity, and other violations of international law will be held accountable”. The Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission along with IGAD-Plus is expected to hold further deliberations on the situation in South Sudan at the IGAD-Plus Extraordinary Summit which is to be held on Friday (August 5) in Addis Ababa.

Similarly alarmed by the renewed clashes between South Sudan’s warring factions in Juba, the Equatoria region and other parts of South Sudan, the United Nations has also underlined that the fighting is in violation of the peace agreement signed in August last year. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has called on the forces of all parties to return to their bases and allow the movement of humanitarian aid to affected areas. The United Nations warned that those taking actions threatening the peace, security, or stability of South Sudan, as well as those responsible for attacks on civilians or United Nations premises, may be subject to sanctions under United Nations Security Council Resolution 2206 (2015). The United States of America on July 31, 2016 issued a statement condemning the continued fighting in the Equatorial region and other parts of South Sudan. Mark Toner, deputy spokesperson of the US Department of State said, “We call for an immediate halt to combat operations and full compliance with the ceasefire declared on July 11 and in the peace agreement”.

Equally, concerned about the situation in South Sudan has been East Africa and the African Union. The East African Chiefs of Defense Forces met in Addis Ababa on July 8 and called unanimously for the UN Mission to South Sudan to be reinforced with troops from the region to contribute to the stabilization of South Sudan. The Council of Ministers of IGAD met in Nairobi three days later and adopted a communiqué demanding urgent revision of UNMISS’ mandate to allow for an intervention brigade to be sent to Juba and an increase in the number of troops from the region. The same day, the AU Peace and Security Council AUPSC endorsed the IGAD communiqué and called for revision of the UNMISS mandate to enable the establishment of an African-led intervention brigade and an increase in the number of troops to provide protection and security for civilians.

This was backed by the Summit of the IGAD-Plus Heads of State and Government held in Kigali, which supported recommendations to reinforce the UN Mission in South Sudan. It also requested the UN to revise the mandate of UNMISS to include the deployment of a regional protection force to separate the warring parties, protect major installations and the civilian population, and to pacify the capital, Juba. The 27th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, held in Kigali, also urged the South Sudanese Parties immediately to revert to the Transitional Government of National Unity and live up to their commitments under the August 2015 Peace Agreement. The Assembly endorsed the call of IGAD-Plus for reinforcement of UNMISS and the deployment of a regional protection force. The UN Security Council is now discussing revision of the UNMISS mandate and the deployment of regional force.

Following all this, the East African Chiefs of Defense Forces, from Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan and Uganda, held a second meeting in Addis Ababa on Friday last week (July 29). They agreed the security situation continued to be unpredictable. Pursuant to the decisions of the IGAD-Plus Summit and the AU Summit and on instructions of the respective Head of State and Government, they called for the warring parties to commit to an immediate cessation of hostilities. They recommended securing “the agreement and commitment of the Government of South Sudan for deployment of a Juba Security Force, the use of UNMISS civil police to enhance the joint local police force, and the creation of a Sector Juba. This would be under the command of the troop contributing countries to the Juba Security Force.”

All this underlines, the concern in the region about the situation in South Sudan, a concern which has been intensified by the recent measures taken on both sides, including the recent dismissal by President Salva Kiir of four ministers apparently supportive of the Riek Machar’s SPLM-IO and of the 50 Members of Parliament appointed by Riek Machar. This follows the dismissal of Machar as First Vice-President and the appointment of Taban Deng Gai. At the same time, President Kiir has strongly rejected the deployment of any external regional protection force. All this and other measures taken by the President threaten the Transitional Government of National Unity, and they have been strongly criticized as violations of the Peace Agreement.

There is no disagreement of the dangers of the situation, and of the urgent necessity for the warring parties to fully and immediately re-commit to the August 2015 peace agreement without delay or prevarication. The international community must commit itself equally to every effort to prevent another round of bloodshed. The current crisis and the threat to the whole peace agreement threaten the collapse of South Sudan into another civil war.

In a similar development, the Second IGAD-Plus Extraordinary Summit was held on Friday (August 5) at Sheraton Addis, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, during which AUC Chairperson, Regional leaders, and IGAD Executive Secretary are expected to

deliberate on the situation in South Sudan.

UN efforts to produce a draft document on Refugees and Migrants

More people are being forcibly displaced from their homes today than at any time since the end of the Second World War, and there appears to be no end to the growing numbers being forced to flee from their own country. The plight of these people is, however, so politically contentious, that it appears almost impossible to get countries to agree about how to make their journeys safer or easier. Nor are countries prepared to provide any legal backing to make life safer for refugees. Following days of intense negotiation over possible options, on Tuesday this week the UN considered a draft agreement on refugees and migrants that did little or nothing to offer commitments to make refugee movements safer or easier, nor was there any agreement to provide legal support.

In advance of the General Assembly and of the planned New York Summit on Refugees and Migrants on September 19, efforts have been made to agree a draft “outcome document”. It would not be legally binding but even agreement on a draft has proved extremely difficult and decisions on specific commitments on what countries should do to protect refugees and migrants have been deferred until 2018, although early this week a 22 page draft was finally agreed.

The effort to draft an agreement, of course, comes at a time when refugees and migrants have become a divisive element in European and American politics, and they will be one of the biggest issues at next months’ UN General Assembly. The proposed document will be a centerpiece at the Summit. President Obama has also said he plans to lead a meeting at the General Assembly in an effort to encourage countries to take in more refugees and help those countries that have taken them in for years.

A number of countries in Europe resisted an effort to agree a pledge to resettle one-tenth of all the people fleeing war and persecution. Others were not prepared to accept a commitment to refrain from detaining undocumented children who arrive at their borders. Other countries criticized sentences that called for states to share in the “burden” of taking in refugees.

The Center for Migration Studies regretted that the draft “falls short of creating a new framework for the protection of refugees and migrants around the world. Instead, it reaffirms the status quo, and, in some areas, weakens current protections for these vulnerable populations.” The United Nations says 24 million people worldwide left their home countries because of war or persecution in 2015. More than 10 times that number, 244 million, should be considered migrants, as they live somewhere other than the country of their birth.

The draft agreement does set out a list of principles, most of which are already to be found in countries’ existing laws. These agree that refugees deserve protection and

they should not be sent back to places where they could face war or persecution. Countries should allow refugees to work and let their children attend school, though the draft does not say that refugees have a right to jobs or schools. The draft also manages to appeal to both migrant-sending countries and migrant-receiving countries. It emphasizes that migration can be good for the world, appealing to the former; and also calls for countries to take back their citizens if they travel illegally and fail to get asylum, which is what the later, especially in Europe wanted. Equally, the draft text has nothing to say about the rights of the 40 million people who are internally displaced in their own countries, not does it mention those forced to leave their homes because of the effects of climate change.

A statement by the International Organization for Migration at the end of last week pointed up the seriousness of the problem. Almost as many Europe-bound asylum seekers and irregular migrants have died on journeys so far this year than in the whole of 2015, which was the deadliest year on record for refugees with 3,771 refugees losing their lives crossing the Mediterranean. Between January 1 and July 28 this year, at least 3,034 refugees died in the Mediterranean, compared with 1,970 in almost the same period last year. This is an increase of 54%.

The draft was considered a day or two after the UN's World Day against Trafficking in Persons, celebrated on Saturday (July 30). Human trafficking is a crime that exploits women, children and men for numerous purposes including forced labor and sex, and the International Labor Organization estimates that 21 million people are victims of forced labor globally.

.... and the UN World Day against Trafficking in Persons

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon marked the 2016 UN World Day Against Trafficking in Persons on Saturday (July 30), urging the international community, including countries of origin, transit and destination, to carry forward the fight against human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants and refugees. Human trafficking is a crime that exploits women, children and men for numerous purposes including forced labor and sex, and the International Labor Organization estimates that 21 million people are victims of forced labor globally. Every country in the world is affected by human trafficking, whether as a country of origin, transit or destination for victims and the link between the refugee and migration crisis and trafficking in persons was highlighted at this year's observance of the World Day. The Secretary-General stressed that this transnational menace facing humanity ought to occupy the attention and energy of the international community since it was currently a major element in the biggest refugee and migration crisis since the Second World War. He said the world had seen surging numbers of people seeking refuge throughout the globe, coupled with unprecedented risks and challenges facing refugees and migrants.

Given the impact of the threat facing trafficked persons, and most importantly the needy and the vulnerable, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon underlined the urgency to

protect migrants and refugees from exploitation, abuse and violence. He defined the remedial solutions the international community must take to tackle the threat and shield migrants and refugees from all forms of exploitation. The launch of “safe and rights-based migration governance” and the creation of “sufficient and accessible pathways for the entry of migrants and refugees” are two of the necessary remedies, in addition to addressing the “root causes of the conflicts which include extreme poverty, environmental degradation and the other crises which force people across borders, seas and deserts.”

The Secretary-General called upon all states to adopt and implement the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocol on human trafficking as well as all core international human rights instruments with a view to put in place a “strong legal basis for action”. He reiterated the immediate importance of providing for the protection and respect for all migrants and refugees as well as for the fulfillment of their human rights. He also recommended the creation of well-governed, safe and human-rights based migration and asylum procedures as the means to take the first step towards eliminating the business and profit elements that led to human trafficking and smuggling.

Ban Ki-moon emphasized that this issue will be at the summit of the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants, due to be held in New York on September 19. He stressed that the objective of the summit was to consider ways to “win renewed commitment for intensified efforts to combat human trafficking and smuggling of migrants and refugees, ensure protection and assistance for the victims of trafficking and of abusive smuggling, as well as all those who suffer human rights violations and abuse in the course of large movements, and promote respect for international law, standards and frameworks.”

Yury Fedotov, the Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) , also speaking on the World Day Against Trafficking, noted that while not all migrants are vulnerable to trafficking, a forthcoming Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016 from the UNODC identified a clear pattern linking undocumented migration to trafficking in persons. Certain migration flows, he said, appeared particularly vulnerable to trafficking in persons. For example, the UNODC report, which will be released later this year, highlights the links between human trafficking and refugee flows from several countries including Syria and Eritrea, as well as Rohingya refugees from Myanmar and Bangladesh. Mr. Fedotov said, “We clearly need to do more to stop human traffickers as part of coordinated and comprehensive responses to the refugee crisis and continuing migration challenges we are facing around the world.” He called on governments to ratify and effectively implement the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols on trafficking and migrant smuggling, to assist and protect victims and the rights of smuggled migrants, and promote the international cooperation needed to bring criminals to justice.

Human trafficking of refugees and migrants is a major global challenge facing 21st century policy makers and strategists. Ethiopia being at the heart of an unstable region is no exception to this problem. Currently, it is host to the largest number of refugees in Africa, in part because of its open door policy towards refugees and migrants fleeing conflicts and other risks. In part, also because its vision for national development is also entwined with the interests of all the peoples of the Horn region as it aspires to build a community for a shared future and a common destiny in the region.

As a party to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Ethiopia is fully aware of its responsibilities for the protection, respect and fulfillment of the human rights of migrants and refugees. It has strongly supported the need for a comprehensive and holistic response as well as the importance of international cooperation. It has implemented this commitment at all national, regional and global levels. Along with its neighbors it has participated in the practitioner in the fight against human trafficking and smuggling in regional, continental and global frameworks. As a contributor to the formulation of regional policy and strategy to deal with human trafficking and smuggling, Ethiopia, in collaboration with other IGAD member states, has played its role in combating the threat through provision of services and deployment of national institutions. Its contribution within the IGAD Peace and Security Strategy is one example; another is Ethiopia's participation and efforts within the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

Beyond cross-border cooperation and information sharing with neighboring countries, Ethiopia has also gone a long way in laying the foundation for law enforcement to combat human trafficking and smuggling. It established its National Council against Human Trafficking and Smuggling in June 2012. The National Council, supported by a law enforcement task force is sub-divided into four working groups: a Protection Working Group, and a Victims Assistance Working Group, as well as a Legislation and Prosecution Group and a Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Group. It has also promulgated a new law; Proclamation 909/ 2015, "The Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants" to provide the legal basis for action. This legal platform covers issues ranging from criminal provision with regard to aggravated trafficking to dealing with issues related to the protection, rehabilitation, and compensation of victims.

Somalia's National Leadership Forum meets to finalize election details

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud officially opened the latest meeting of the National Leadership Forum in Mogadishu on Wednesday (August 3). The meeting attended by the Prime Minister, Omar Sharmarke and the regional state presidents, is to finalize the remaining major issues still unsettled over the election: the timetable for the election, the establishment of the commission for conflict and dispute resolution, the status of Mogadishu and seats for Benadir, and the composition and

terms of reference for the Electoral Implementation Teams at regional level and how these will work with the National Election Commission, as well as ensuring that women get their allocated 30% quota, issues of security and a number of other technical and implementation details that need to be completed before the election takes place.

Another major question is resources. At its last meeting, the Somali Leaders' Forum submitted a budget but international partners queried some of the costs, which included accommodation for electors as well as creating a secure environment for the actual election. The current process is more inclusive than in 2012 when 135 clan leaders chose the MPs. This time there will be 14,000 people, including many more women, involved in the election of the MPs; voting will take place in six or seven locations around the country, allowing for "a real sense of local ownership"; there will be ballot boxes, secret voting and a mechanism for verifying the processes. The process still needs a lot of work.

The meeting is also considering the plans of the Federal Electoral Implementation Commission (FEIT) whose Chairman, Omar Mohamed Abdulle 'Dhegey', said on Monday this week (August 1) that the team would carry out its task impartially to ensure the electoral process is successful. He said firmly that "Our committee is independent, and I want to assure all presidential candidates that we shall carry out our exercise without due favor to anybody." He said the electoral process would be held concurrently in 37 locations in the federal and regional capitals including Mogadishu, Garowe, Cadaado, Kismaayo, and Baidoa. According to the Chairman, FEIT has established committees at both the federal and regional levels and was working closely with Somali security agencies, the army, police and intelligence, as well as AMISOM, to ensure that the electoral process is held in a secure environment. The team will oversee the conduct of the 2016 electoral process and handle complaints in accordance with the principles of democracy, transparency and accountability.

There have been suggestions of postponing the elections for one or two months, or until till January/February next year; of merely copying the 2012 electoral process, or even consider a one-year extension. However, there is a consensus among Somalia's federal and state leadership as well as the international community and partners of Somalia that there must be no extension of the term of the current government.

On Tuesday this week (August 2) the UK Minister for Africa, Tobias Ellwood, on a visit to Mogadishu told President Hassan Mohamud firmly that the election of a new President and Members of Parliament in Somalia "must be expedited without any delays". Mr. Ellwood who met with Prime Minister Abdirashid Sharmarke as well as the President said: "the international community looked forward to the exercise being conducted without any further delays. " However, he added, "We encourage the elections to take place as soon as possible. We really don't want too much of a delay between the end of the mandates of Parliament and the President and the elections themselves. We have got to get all these right. So we do encourage them to happen as

soon as possible.”

In an interview, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Michael Keating, who emphasized that the role of the UN in the electoral process was to “support a Somali owned and Somali managed electoral process”, stressed the challenge was to hold the electoral process on time as there were still things to be done to make the process credible for Somalis and for the international community.

In anticipation of the start of the electoral process, Somali security forces and AMISOM have been intensifying their efforts to ensure security both in Mogadishu and elsewhere in the country. Equally, they have been making considerable efforts to respond to the recent upsurge of attacks by Al-Shabaab, which has been making attempts to disrupt the proceedings. The new AMISOM Force Commander, Lt. Gen. Osman Noor Soubagleh, has already asked senior military officers to review existing strategies to improve the efficiency of security operations and strengthen collaboration with the Somali National Army. He told AMISOM sector commanders on Monday (August 1) that they now had a chance to review “what we have been tasked to do over the next year and align our thinking”. Their meeting would allow for discussion of the changes and developments currently being worked on in order to implement the strategic directions of the African Union.

The Force Commander emphasized that AMISOM must train the Somali National Army, build its confidence, plan and conduct operations with it. AMISOM is mandated to take all measures necessary to reduce the threat posed by al-Shabaab; to support the Federal Government of Somalia in establishing effective and legitimate governance; build up the capacity of state institutions; and facilitate coordinated support towards the stabilization and reconstruction of Somalia.

Last week, Kenya’s Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Amina Mohamed underlined the importance of AMISOM when she told a UN Security Council meeting on Thursday (July 28) that slashing funds to African Union peacekeeping troops in Somalia would, if implemented, put the security of Somalia at “great risk” again. She said the move by the European Union earlier this year to cut AMISOM funding by 20% threatened peace and security in the region. Ambassador Mohamed insisted that the international community should continue funding AMISOM to ensure stability. She underlined that “Less emphasis should be placed on militarized responses to conflicts in Africa. Emphasis should instead be placed on political engagement and development approaches.” Kenya is the current chair of the Peace Building Commission, an intergovernmental advisory body created by the UN to help support efforts of countries emerging from war and conflict.
