

A Week in the Horn – 20.07.2018

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Africa and the African Union

The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, Moussa Faki Mahamat, in a statement on Monday (July 16) commended the leaders of Eritrea and Ethiopia for their steadfast efforts to enhance reconciliation, trust and cooperation between their two countries. He said the visit of President Isaias Afeworki to Ethiopia at the weekend, following that of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to Eritrea, a week ago, marked a new and important milestone, and was a further testimony to their commitment. The Chairperson said, “Coming at a time of renewed efforts to accelerate integration and silence the guns on the continent, the ongoing process between Ethiopia and Eritrea is a major and historic contribution to the stabilization and sustainable development of the Horn of Africa region.” He also added it would “go a long way in furthering continental priorities, as encapsulated in Agenda 2063 and other relevant African Union policies.” The Chairperson applauded, once again, the leadership and courage of President Isaias Afeworki and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, and he looked forward to similar bold initiatives in other conflict and crisis situations on the continent.

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, has appointed former Ethiopian Prime Minister, Hailemariam Dessalegn to lead an election observation mission to Zimbabwe. The election takes place on 30 July. The African Union deployed the mission following an invitation by the government and the Zimbabwe electoral commission.

A post-Tana Forum took place this week on July 18 and 19 in Gaborone, Botswana. The workshop, the first in Southern Africa, discussed the theme: “The Content and Shape of the Peace and Security Agenda in the Post-Reform Era”. President Masisi of Botswana delivered the keynote address and the Forum brought together experts and policymakers from the AU, RECs, member states, think tanks, international organizations, the diplomatic community, and youth and women-led civil society organizations .

Ethiopia

President Dr. Mulataw Teshome received credentials of six ambassadors of African countries to Ethiopia in a ceremony held on Friday (July 19) at the National Palace. The ambassadors include Prof Mafa Sejanamane of [Leshoto](#), Jean Ngandu Ilunga of [Congo](#), Hermann Immongault of [Gabon](#), Fadlassid NAFFA of [Chad](#), Gaoussou Toure of [Guinea](#), and Ms. Albertina Donald of [Mozambique](#). President Mulatu noted, “Ethiopia attaches a great importance to the relations with African countries and is committed to invest with all its capacities to strengthen the cooperation between [Ethiopia](#) and the respective nations and share best experiences for mutual benefit.”

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed welcomed President Isaias Afewerki of Eritrea on his first visit to Ethiopia for over two decades on Saturday (July 14). The highly successful visit followed Dr. Abiy’s equally triumphant visit to Asmara a week earlier, in the first stage of the process of restoring peace and friendship between Ethiopia and Eritrea. **(See article)**

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy will be holding a public discussion with 3000 Ethiopian university lecturers from different public and private institutions on how to keep the positive momentum on national reforms and transformation next week.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu hosted a reception at the National Palace on Thursday (July 19) to thank the all the stakeholders for their contributions to the successful three day visit of President Isaias to Ethiopia at the end of last week. On the occasion, Dr. Workneh said the visit of President Isaias to Ethiopia will always be remembered in the history of Ethiopia’s diplomacy. The Minister took note of the strong commitment the leaders of the two countries, as well as the solidarity shown by both the peoples of Ethiopia and Eritrea, adding that the peace and friendship reinitiated between Ethiopia and Ethiopia would positively impact the Horn of Africa region and the geo-politics in the continent.

A high level Ethiopian delegation led by State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene participated on the 2nd Somalia Partnership forum in Brussels this week (July 16-17). The Somalia partnership Forum was aimed at bringing international, regional and donor support to Somalia.

The eighth Ethiopian-United States bilateral dialogue meeting was held on Thursday this week (July 19) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Addis Ababa, to discuss human rights, governance and democracy and other related issues. The delegations were headed by State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Aklilu Hailemichael and the US Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ambassador Michael Raynor. **(See article)**

State Minister Dr. Aklilu conferred with Idris Suliman, the Minister of International Cooperation of the Republic of Sudan, on Monday (Jul 16). On the occasion, Dr. Aklilu reiterated that Ethiopia always attaches priority to neighboring countries and reaffirmed its readiness to push forward the cooperation and partnerships that would be an asset for the East African Economic Integration. Dr. Aklilu underlined that Sudan is one of Ethiopia’s significant trade partners with a

137.3 million USD trade volume and is the second largest destination of Ethiopian exports in Africa.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Professor Afework Kassu bade farewell to the outgoing Resident representative of UNDP to Ethiopia, Mrs. Ahunna Eziakonwa Onochie, on Friday (July 20). The State Minister extended his gratitude to Mrs. Ahunna for her outstanding service during her tenure in Ethiopia and her support to the development activities in the Country. Appreciating the immense contributions UN agencies are extending to Ethiopia, the State Minister noted that the pillars of the economic growth in Ethiopia are highly linked with SDG goals.

State Minister Professor Afework met with Mr. Solomon Mulugeta, Technology Specialist and TechTalk Producer at EBS on Friday (July 20) and held discussions on ways of utilizing the capacity of members of the Ethiopian Diaspora who have had the necessary expertise in the field of Science and technology. The State Minister said Science and Technology plays a significant role in the country's development. He also underscored members of the Ethiopian Diaspora would play a key role in this regard especially in mapping and bringing important technological outputs worldwide to domestic use, adding 'Government highly encourages such important contributions and innovative ideas.'

Ambassador Redwan Hussien has been appointed as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the State of Eritrea. The

Minister for Government Communications Affairs, Ahmed Shide, said that the embassy would be re-opened in Asmara at a date to be announced shortly.

The first commercial flight from Ethiopia to Eritrea in two decades left Bole International Airport on Wednesday (July 18). Ethiopian Airlines said demand was so great it had to run a second flight 15 minutes later. Airline's chief executive, Tewolde Gebre Mariam, said it marked a unique event in the history of Ethiopia and Eritrea. He said the airline would be going to increase frequency of flights to twice, even three times a day. Among the passengers on the first flight was former Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn who said the occasion was: "a golden moment for the two countries and the two people." He was leading a public diplomacy delegation which included the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church and State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prof. Afework Kassu. Other passengers included Eritreans who had been separated from their families, Ethiopian officials and Addis Ababa-based diplomats.

Ethiopia has signed an agreement with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) for the organization to relocate its headquarters from Geneva to Addis Ababa. No date has been given for the move but it is expected to take place as soon as possible. The WMO facilitates international cooperation for meteorological, hydrological and geophysical observations, as well as supporting the establishment and maintenance of centers for the provision of such services, the development and maintenance of systems for rapid exchange of information, the standardization of monitoring and regular publication of statistics. It also promotes scientific research in other areas, including aviation, maritime navigation, water issues, agriculture and other activities.

Ethiopian Airlines was named Best Airline in Africa' for the second successive year at the 2018 World Airline Awards at an award ceremony held in London, in recognition of its continued rapid growth, increased profitability and its outstanding contribution to aviation development in Africa. The Group CEO, Tewolde Gebre Mariam said: "We are thrilled to win the 'African Airline of the Year Award for the second time. It is testimony to the continued hard work of our committed team and the successful implementation of our airlines fast, profitable and sustainable growth plan, Vision 2025."

The Ethiopian Embassy in Seoul held a Business Forum focusing on the investment opportunities in the construction sector. The Forum was held on Tuesday (July 17) in Deajeon city of South Korea. Ambassador Shiferaw Jarso briefed the companies about Ethiopia's booming construction industry and urged construction companies to enhance cooperation with private Ethiopian companies and transfer technology by investing in this lucrative market.

Djibouti

Aboubaker Omar Hadi, Chairman of Djibouti Ports and Free Zones Authority said this week that Djibouti was ready to pay compensation to settle the dispute with DP World over control of the Doraleh container terminal. Djibouti took back control of the port in February. In an interview with the Financial Times newspaper he said Djibouti would be prepared to pay DP World compensation "as early as next week" to settle the issue.

Eritrea

President Isaias made a three-day state visit to Ethiopia July 14-16, visiting the Industrial Park at Hawasa and re-opening the Eritrean Embassy to Ethiopia during his visit. (**See article**).

Eritrea re-opened its embassy in Addis Ababa on Monday (July 16) with Ethiopian Prime Minister Dr. Abiy and Eritrean President Isaias Afeworki attending the ceremony.

Kenya

Former U.S. President Barack Obama on a visit to Kenya on Monday (July 16) praised President Uhuru Kenyatta and opposition leader Raila Odinga for cooperating following last year's disputed presidential election and for working together. Speaking at the birthplace of his late father, launching a sports and training center founded by his sister, Auma Obama, Mr. Obama said, "We now have a president and major opposition leader who have pledged to build bridges and have made specific commitments to work together," adding this was all part of the emergence of a more confident, more self-reliant Africa. He added, however, that real progress meant addressing remaining problems, mentioning the need "for rooting out corruption that weakens civic life, "tribalism and the need for better education. Mr. Obama later went on to South Africa where he delivered the annual Nelson Mandela lecture which this year will mark the hundredth anniversary of Mr. Mandela's birth.

Somalia

Representatives from 58 countries and 6 international organizations gathered in Brussels to participate in the 2nd Somali Partnership Forum (July 16-17) following the successful inaugural Forum in Mogadishu in December 2017. The Forum was co-hosted by President Mohamed Abdullahi, EU High Representative and Vice-President Ms. Federica Mogherini and Sweden's Foreign Minister Ms. Margot Wallström. **(See article).**

Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre held a special meeting with religious scholars to discuss their role in preventing radicalization and terrorism. He urged them to take part in the fight against Al-Shabaab. Sheikh Ali Wajis, one of the scholars at the meeting, said they had an important meeting and gave some suggestions and agreed to work with the government.

Foreign Minister, Ahmed Isse Awad held talks with Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström on the sidelines of the Somali Partnership Forum in Brussels on bilateral relations between Somalia and Sweden. Mr. Awad also had a meeting with Canada's Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Minister, Ahmed Hussein.

Somalia was admitted as the 21st member of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) at the 20th Summit of the Heads of State and Government of COMESA that concluded on Thursday (July 19) in Lusaka, Zambia.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security decided on Thursday (July 19) to extend temporary legal protections to about 500 Somali refugees in the United States. The majority of those affected live in Minnesota, the largest community of Somali-Americans in the US. Twenty-two U.S. senators sent a letter to the DHS to urge extension of Temporary Protected Status (TPS); the DHS determined "the ongoing armed conflict and extraordinary and temporary conditions that support Somalia's current designation for TPS continue to exist." The renewal lasts until March 17, 2020.

Ambassador of Kuwait to the European Union, NATO, Belgium and Luxembourg, Ambassador Jasem Al- Budaiwi announced during the Somali Partnership Forum this week that Kuwait would host a Donors Conference in Support of Education in Somalia. He said the conference in Kuwait would serve as a cornerstone to secure the future generations of Somalia, and called upon the international community, to join these efforts and actively participate.

South Sudan

In a decree read on state television on Tuesday (July 17) President Salva Kiir dismissed Minister of Foreign Affairs Deng Alor Kuol and announced the appointment of Nhial Deng Nhial, who has been the government's Chief Negotiator at the peace talks.

The UN Security Council passed resolution 2428 (2018) imposing an arms embargo on South Sudan on Friday last week (July 13). It calls for the prevention of direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of all weapons and bans all "technical assistance, training, financial or other

assistance, related to military activities. It also imposed targeted sanctions on two more individuals. **(See article)**

South Sudan parties at the Khartoum Round of the IGAD peace revitalization process were given a new draft Agreement on Outstanding Issues of Governance on Wednesday this week. The Sudan mediation said the draft could be initialed this week and a final signing take place on July 26 in the presence of IGAD leaders, including President Museveni of Uganda.

The Joint Monitoring and Evaluation (JMEC) on Thursday (July 19) called on the South Sudanese warring parties to embrace the spirit of compromise at the revitalization forum. JMEC's deputy chair, Lt. General Njoroge said: "The achievement of peace in South Sudan is a collective process. You must all make the decision that the conflict, and especially the senseless killings need to stop and say enough is enough" He was speaking at the closure of a four-day workshop attended by students in Juba on the theme, "Peace in Time: Creating awareness for the Youth on the South Sudan Peace Process". "It is critical for all parties to fully abide by the agreements they have signed to date, including the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access of December 2017, and refrain from all acts of violence," said Njoroge.

Sudan

Egyptian President Abdel-Fatah al-Sisi visited Khartoum on Thursday this week (July 20), the first visit since his re-election. He headed a delegation that included the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Defense and Water Resources and Irrigation. At a joint press conference, President al-Bashir said ministers in the two governments would set a clear strategy at specific times and that the leadership of the two countries would work to remove any obstacles. He said: "We want this relationship to be strategic in all areas of economic, commercial, cultural, security and military, as well as projects linking the roads between the two countries." He announced the signing of an agreement to connect the electrical network and studies to link the railways' networks between Sudan and Egypt. President al-Sisi said that his visit to Sudan comes within the framework of his firm and clear policy to strengthen relations in all fields. He stressed Egypt's support for these efforts and the removal of any obstacles to areas of cooperation. Both Presidents agreed to enhance joint cooperation and build strategic relations in all fields, stressing the importance of overcoming differences.

The President of the Republic of Sudan, President Omar al-Bashir visited Moscow at the end of last week (July 14) and held bilateral talks with President Putin on various bilateral issues.

The United Nations Security Council in a meeting on Friday last week (July 13) extended the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) for a year as well as more than halving the Mission's troop strength. **(See article)**

An IMF team concluded a nine-day visit to Khartoum on Monday (July 16). Minister of Finance Mohamed Osman al-Rikabi said the visit came within the framework of continued consultations between Sudan and the IMF. He called on the IMF to assist his country to resume international

banking transactions following the lifting of the U.S. trade sanctions. Following IMF recommendations, Sudan has begun a series of economic reforms to bolster the economy.

President Isaias Afwerki's historic visit to Ethiopia

A high level delegation led by the President of the State of Eritrea, President Isaias Afeworki arrived in Addis Ababa for a three-day state visit on Saturday (July 14). It was his first in over two decades. Upon arrival at Bole International Airport President Isaias and his delegation was welcomed by Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, Minister for Government Communication Affairs Office, Ahmed Shide and many other dignitaries, athletes, celebrities and religious leaders.

Thousands of Ethiopians from all walks of life, young and old, lined the streets of Addis Ababa, all the way from the Airport to the Jubilee Palace, singing, cheering and ecstatically welcoming President Isaias as his motorcade passed on Africa Avenue.

On his arrival at the National Palace, President Isaias was once again warmly welcomed to his "Second Home" – Addis Ababa – by President Dr. Mulatu Teshome, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy, Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh, Oromia Presidents of regional states and a crowd of athletes, musicians, artists and other guests of honor including former President Dr. Negaso Gidada. Following the welcoming ceremony, Dr. Abiy hosted quite a State Luncheon in honor of President Isaias.

In his opening remarks the Prime Minister expressed his heartiest gratitude for President Isaias' unconditional acceptance of Ethiopia's call for peace, reconciliation and love. President Isaias, said he was "short of words to express the unfathomable happiness" he felt and experienced during this epochal ceremony. He also expressed his gratitude to the people of Ethiopia, especially the residents of the City of Addis Ababa for the warm welcome they accorded to him and his delegation. President Isaias said: "The one who still says that the people of Ethiopia and Eritrea are two different people from this day onwards is a fool", further accentuating the new wind of change, of peace and love that is blowing between the two peoples. During the luncheon, President Isaias was presented with a plethora of gifts. The most memorable of which was a surprise gift of a horse, a shield and a spear, from Oromia Regional President Lemma Megersa.

The Eritrean delegation, accompanied by Prime Minister, and Foreign Minister, Dr. Workneh and numerous other dignitaries, headed to Hawasa, the capital of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State, where they were welcomed at Hawasa Airport by Regional President Dessie Dalke and other regional officials as well as community elders, religious leaders and hundreds young people. In Hawasa, President Isaias visited the Hawasa Industrial Park, a world class textile and apparel manufacturing hub, an iconic reminder of Ethiopia's national prestige and the pride of Africa. President Isaias stayed at the Haile Resort in Hawasa where he and Prime Minister Dr. Abiy attended a dinner hosted by officials of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State. Prior to the dinner, the Prime

Minister presented Pres. Isaias with a gift of a live camel gilded in the flags of Ethiopia and Eritrea and decorated with flowers as a token of their ever-burgeoning friendship, offered by Ethio-Somali Regional State. The camel is the national emblem of the State of Eritrea. The next morning, the Prime Minister treated President Isaias with an exceptionally enticing Arsi Oromo breakfast, including “Chikko”, “Marqaa” and “Ittituu”, a few of the items from an Oromo culinary smorgasbord.

On return to Addis Ababa, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy and President Isaias attended a musical concert at the Millennium Hall, dedicated to the historic breakthrough that the leaders and peoples of both nations have made in achieving peace and harmony after two decades of conflict

The Prime Minister said: “Forgiveness frees the consciousness. When we say we have reconciled, we mean we have chosen a path of forgiveness and love,” he stressed. He added: “When I spoke with Isaias, I told him that there may not be enough hotels as Ethiopians visit Massawa and Asmara. He said he would leave his house for them and stay in balconies.” In a keynote address, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy also called the attention of those present and those watching live around the world to his assertion: “Peace is the mother of freedom and freedom in turn is the mother of prosperity.” He said the value of peace and freedom must be equated with the unfathomable value of health. The value of health, he said, “is often overlooked when people are healthy, while its value is most treasured when we are overcome by sickness.”

President Isaias addressing the crowd at the event as well as the peoples of Ethiopia and Eritrea, and speaking in Amharic, said that “I am confident that together we shall prevail!”. He said, “I am glad to convey a message of peace and love of the people of Eritrea to the people of Ethiopia,” adding, “We are determined to go ahead with such momentum of peace and love.” Concluding his brief remarks, President Isaias called to attention the fact that Eritrea and Ethiopia “will not let anyone spoil [their] peace and love as well as mutual growth and development,” declaring his utmost optimism in these memorable terms: “I am confident that together, we shall prevail.”

On Monday (July 16) together with Prime Minister Dr. Abiy, President Isaias attended the re-opening of the long defunct Eritrean Embassy, closed in 1998. The two leaders jointly raised the Eritrean flag inside the embassy as a military band played Eritrea’s national anthem before touring the building. During the inauguration ceremony, the Prime Minister handed over the keys of the Embassy to President Isaias. The gesture was welcomed by the international community as well as the media corps, classified as an example of the “rapid thaw between the two countries” and celebrated as well as an example for the whole sub-region. In a tweet Eritrea’s Information Minister, Yemane Gebre Meskel described the re-opening of the embassy as “yet another milestone in the robust and special ties of peace and friendship both countries are cultivating with earnestness in these momentous times.”

During the visit, President Isaias said both nations would work together to safeguard the newfound peace that’s ended nearly two decades of frosty relations between the two countries. In a speech on Saturday he said: “For the sake of our culture and our historic benefit, we forsake the hatred and revenge of the past and we have decided to go forward for our mutual

development and for mutual benefit...We will not allow anyone who tries to break our relationship, our development and our growth, and anyone who tries to create conflict between us.” Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed said he would take action against anyone who tried to block a peace declaration with Eritrea.

President Isaias left for Asmara at around noon at the end of a highly successful, most welcome and epoch-making state visit. It’s been an extraordinary three weeks, – from the arrival of an Eritrean delegation in Addis Ababa on June 26, and Prime Minister Dr. Abiy’s arrival in Asmara and his embrace with President Isaias on July 8 and the declaration of the end of war the next day, to President Isaias’ welcome visit to Addis Ababa on July 14. On Tuesday this week, telecommunications links between Addis Ababa and Asmara were re-opened, and on Wednesday, Ethiopian Airlines resumed daily flights to Asmara.

The 8th Ethiopia-US bilateral dialogue meeting

The eighth Ethiopian – United States bilateral dialogue meeting was held on Thursday this week (July 19) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Addis Ababa. The Ethiopian delegation for the one day dialogue on human rights, governance and democracy and other related issues was headed by State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Aklilu Hailemichael. The US side was led by the US Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ambassador Michael Raynor, and also included Deputy Assistant Secretary Scott Busby of the State Department’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor from Washington.

In his introductory remarks, Dr. Aklilu expressed Ethiopia’s readiness to ensure respect for human rights, the prevalence of good governance and the building of a democratic political culture. Ambassador Raynor reassured Dr. Aklilu of the US government’s continued support for Ethiopia’s multifarious development efforts.

At the top of the agenda during the meeting was the overall picture of human rights in Ethiopia, as well as ways of effectively engaging the Ethiopian Diaspora in the US, electoral practices, governance and civil society and on ways Ethiopia could effectively leverage mainstream and internet-driven communications platforms to the betterment of human rights through extensive participation of concerned and respective stakeholders.

In briefing the US delegation, State Minister Dr Aklilu stressed the importance of the decision by the government to close the Ma’ekelawi Prison as well as the release of thousands of prisoners. These included key opposition political figures, dissident journalists and activists. All this, he pointed out, had already brought about positive and unprecedented changes in the political environment in the country. Dr. Aklilu said: “The new Prime Minister took bold measures with regards to ensuring respect for human rights by admitting that there were human rights abuses by the Government and promising to install a system of accountability and transparency in the justice system.” He added, “The reform that began with the appointment of a new Attorney General has now moved to the investigation of alleged human rights violations in major prisons.”

Dr Aklilu also underlined the fact that, “the Government aims to establish a transparent and accountable justice system by putting effective judicial organs in place” as a bulwark to ensure abuses could not happen again. Dr. Aklilu expressed Ethiopia’s appreciation of US support in the creation of an effective and efficient judicial system and human rights institutions. The US delegation noted the readiness of the US Government to provide Ethiopia with all the help and assistance it seeks in this respect.

With regards to Ethiopia’s engagement with its Diaspora in the US, both parties agreed to work together to realize Ethiopia’s aspirations for prosperity predicated on massive Diaspora participation. Pointing to the fact that Dr. Abiy’s administration’s was already making promising efforts and taking concrete steps to smooth relations between the Government and the Diaspora, Dr. Aklilu said: “The recent open invitation of PM Dr Abiy to the Diaspora is a hallmark of the improvement of relations between Government and the Diaspora.” He also noted that the Government was drafting a Diaspora Policy that would help Ethiopia to effectively engage the Diaspora.”

Governance is the other key area of cooperation between Ethiopia and the US, and Dr Aklilu noted the fact that Ethiopia had made remarkable progress in decentralization and the enhancement of the state’s developmental roles.” He said to make sure that good governance takes root the Ethiopian government had now undertaken several key steps towards reforming governance and increasing political participation. He reminded the US delegation that Ethiopia provided an exemplary model for many countries by its recent peaceful transfer of power, the first in the country’s political history. This showcased an important step towards democratization. In addition, Dr Aklilu alluded to the series of productive public discussions with the members of competing political parties, the business community, the civil society and community leaders in different parts of the country.

U.S. Ambassador Raynor commended the ongoing reforms the government of Ethiopia was undertaking to widen the political space and to bolster an all-rounded Diaspora participation in key sectors of the economy. He expressed the US government’s continued support to these development endeavors. He noted this dialogue meeting, the first since December 2016, was taking place at an extraordinary and historic moment in Ethiopia, one of the United States’ most important partners. It was, he said, charting a course toward long-term stability, prosperity, and political inclusivity. Ethiopia was now on a fast and comprehensive path of reform and progress, including steps to address political, governance, and human rights challenges. He said former Prime Minister Hailemariam’s resignation had set an example not just for Ethiopia, but for the world, “of a leader who did not hold onto power for the sake of power, but who courageously gave up power and did what he felt was necessary to advance reforms on behalf of his people.” The selection of Prime Minister Abiy was an important gesture by the EPRDF to acknowledge the aspirations of the Ethiopian people for a more inclusive and responsive political system.

Ambassador Raynor said Dr. Abiy, in his first 100 days in office, had made extraordinarily strong, clear, and forthright statements, and his government had taken some important steps toward promoting human rights and creating an inclusive political environment. Implementation of these steps was key and the process could only succeed if it comes from within Ethiopia, led

by Ethiopians for Ethiopians. Ambassador Raynor underlined the US Government's firm and sincere commitment to support making these ambitious goals a reality. The US, he said, wanted to identify the concrete actions that it could take to support Ethiopia's aspirations for a more inclusive and more democratic future. Progress in these areas, the Ambassador emphasized, would not only be good for the people of Ethiopia, and good for the long-term stability, prosperity, and governance of the country, they would also create new opportunities to deepen and strengthen the U.S.-Ethiopia partnership.

The Somalia Partnership Forum in Brussels

The Somalia partnership Forum, a medium aiming to bring international, regional and donor support to Somalia convened in Brussels this week (July 16-17). The Forum, a follow-up to conferences in London and Mogadishu in May and December last year, was co-chaired by Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi, EU High Representative and Vice-President Ms. Federica Mogherini, and Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström. Attendees included senior UN officials as well as representatives from 58 countries, six International Organizations including the World Bank and the IMF and leaders and representatives of Somali Federal Member States. The Ethiopian delegation was led by State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene.

The Brussels round of the Forum covered a wide range of issues in the areas of security stabilization, political development, economic recovery and humanitarian affairs. It came at an important juncture to emphasize support for Somalia's state building efforts, and in his opening Speech, President Mohamed Abdullahi reiterated his government's commitment to peace and security. He vowed to implement the Political Roadmap 2020, the transition plan for security, and economic reform as well as reach out to the whole of Somalia for reconciliation and dialogue. He emphasized that Somalia Partnership Forum was key to strengthen partnerships with regional and international partners and asserted his government was ready to work closely with the Forum. He said: "We want to work according to the theme of the forum – forward together." the President also noted Somalia had "signed bilateral cooperation agreements with strategic partners", adding "We are working towards rejoining the World Trade Organization, COMESA, and assessing how we can benefit from further regional integration."

EU High Representative and Vice-President, Ms. Federica Mogherini, stressed the necessity of supporting the people of Somalia's hope and the government's reform agenda adding, "Our engagement for peace and security in Somalia continues to be as strong as ever." She said: "The stability and development of the country is critical for the stability of the broader region and for Europe." During the Forum, Ms. Mogherini announced additional EU aid packages of around €200 million in support of Somalia's stabilization, and said she had also signed a €114 million package for the EU's contribution for AMISOM for the rest of the year.

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Ms. Margot Wallström, said: "The Somalia Partnership Forum has made a number of strong commitments for inclusive politics. We encourage Somalia

to adopt national laws and policies that protect women's and girls' human rights and enable them to have a stronger role in society. Somalia has taken very important steps on the pathway for sustainable peace and development. Sweden remains a committed partner and will double our development support to Somalia to approximately \$350 million over the next five years."

UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia Michael Keating encouraged the international community to "keep Somalia on the agenda," and noted that the inclusive approach in Somali politics needs to be extended to building national security in an effort to build trust. He said: "I cannot commend the Government enough for its commitment to a genuinely holistic approach, to recognizing that it is not only about military and operations, it's also about building institutions, rule of law, accountable local governance, reconciliation and countering violent extremism,"

The Forum adopted a new mechanism known as 'Mutual Accountability Framework of the New Partnership for Somalia (MAF) to be implemented over the next six months. It details the joint commitments of Somalia and its international partners in the areas of political reforms, security, economic development, and recovery and humanitarian assistance, as the country rebuilds after decades of armed conflict and climate-related shocks.

Appreciating the MAF, the UN Under-Secretary for Political Affairs, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo said, "The MAF provides for Somalia and its international partners to agree on and take stock of progress in jointly achieving key objectives to strengthen the country's state-building and peace building processes. It is to be considered a bedrock of partnership for the country's development," adding, "The country's security transition plan which allows for Somalia to gradually assume responsibility for security across the country, including progressively transferring tasks from the African Union Mission in Somalia, AMISOM represents remarkable progress in Somalia's state building process." She said over the next six months Somalia would need to advance its preparations for the 'one person, one vote' elections in 2020-2021 and the constitutional review process, and ensure solid agreements are in place regarding the allocation of powers and resource-sharing between the central government and federal member states. The political roadmap, she said, also needed to provide for gender-inclusive politics, and a significant engagement with civil society and private sector actors. She added: "We are providing technical, financial and logistical support, and we strongly support nationally-owned and -led reconciliation processes, including the national reconciliation framework."

The Forum concluded with a joint communiqué outlining key outcomes and agreed to meet again in Brussels after six months to review the results. The forum took note of the fact that the current meeting was held in a context of recent positive and historic developments in the Horn of Africa, with the restoration of peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and enhanced engagement between the leaders of the region, creating new opportunities for reconciliation, stability, regional cooperation and economic integration. It acknowledged the progress Somalia is making in a number of critical areas despite extraordinary challenges. It underlined that Somali leadership and unity of purpose will be key to achieving these goals, along with sustained, timely, and coherent international support, all within the spirit of mutual accountability.

International partners hailed Somalia for its efforts towards recovery. They singled out progress in the country's path towards debt relief, economic and public financial management reform and efforts made towards transitioning from AMISOM to Somali Security Forces. Notable also were preparation for universal suffrage in 2020 by enacting key legislative pieces, inclusive political processes and constitutional review process. However, they also noted the need for sustained international funding to cushion the country from sliding back especially in light of continued droughts and floods and the threat of the extremist groups.

Equally, the communiqué said progress in Somalia cannot be taken for granted, adding that institutional capacities need to be strengthened, as well as the required accountability mechanisms that underpin long-term progress. It noted the need for sustained international funding to help deal with risks including ongoing insurgency, violent extremism, climate change, unregulated competition for power and resources, lack of justice and corruption. The Communiqué paid tribute to AMISOM and the Troop and Police Contributing Countries, emphasizing "We are grateful for their commitment that has been essential to Somalia's progress."

The communiqué welcomed the landmark political agreement between the Federal Government and the Federal Member States, which it said, paved the way for the drafting, consultation and passage of the election law this year. It will be a major step towards the realization of a historic one- person-one-vote election in 2020 for the first time since 1969. It said: "We commend the FGS for putting inclusive politics at the core of its reform agenda towards federalisation and constitutional review as expressed through the Political Roadmap for Inclusive Politics."

Partners welcomed the decisions of the National Security Council meetings on resource sharing, security force integration, and the Transition Plan as well as the endorsement of this plan by the AU Peace and Security Council and the commitment to its implementation. The communiqué said: "The Government has made impressive progress towards achieving debt relief which will offer Somalia the opportunity to have access to international concessional financing and increased financial resources." It stressed that agreements in revenue sharing would both consolidate the federal project and enhance revenues available for Somalia, adding that generation and distribution of revenue must meet the highest standards of accountability and transparency.

It further commended the actions taken to prevent famine in 2017 and encouraged partners to address Somalia's current humanitarian needs, as set out in the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan. It also welcomed the proactive work undertaken in building a long-term Resilience and Recovery Framework and encouraging engagement within this Framework, under the leadership of the Federal Government and with strong Federal Member States' participation.

Security Council extends UNAMID 's mandate but cuts its numbers

The United Nations Security Council in a meeting on Friday last week (July 13) unanimously decided to extend for one year the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and also to reduce the number of its troops in line with the proposed exit strategy for UNAMID by 2020. Resolution 2429 (2018) cut UNAMID's troop strength from the current 8,735 to 4,050 personnel while maintaining its police strength at the current level of 2,500. UNAMID will now shut down its 14 sites in Darfur and transfer its headquarters to Golo.

The decision was based on the recent joint Special Report of the African Union and the United Nations recommending closure of UNAMID on 30 June 2020 and total withdrawal of all troops by December 2020. It emphasized that this draw-down of UNAMID forces must be based on progress against related indicators and benchmarks, and on continued improvement in the security situation despite the lack of a final peace agreement with several armed groups in Darfur. The Security Council left open the possibility to reconsider its decision in case of a significant change in the security situation. In this context it requested the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the situation every 90 days.

The resolution requests UNAMID to consolidate its whole-of-system approach to Darfur, focused on peacekeeping and providing sustainable solutions to the drivers of conflict. It defines UNAMID's priorities as the protection of civilians, monitoring and reporting on human rights, facilitation of humanitarian assistance and the safety and security of humanitarian personnel; support for mediation of inter-communal or other local conflict through measures to address root causes, in conjunction with the Government of Sudan, the United Nations country team and civil society, and mediation between the Government of Sudan and non-signatory armed movements on the basis of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD).

The resolution directs UNAMID to work closely with the United Nations country team and other United Nations agencies to coordinate transfer of responsibilities and to identify ways to address the gaps in capabilities to prepare for the mission's exit. This will enable the Government of Sudan, United Nations country team, civil society and other stakeholders prepare for the eventual exit of UNAMID. It calls for an urgent end to inter-communal conflict, criminality and banditry that affect civilians and demands that all parties in Darfur immediately cease all acts of violence, including attacks on civilians, peacekeepers and humanitarian personnel. It also reminds all parties to comply with their obligations under international human rights and international humanitarian law. Emphasizing the primary responsibility of Sudan in the establishment of peace and security throughout Darfur, the Council urges the Government to focus its efforts in supporting and cooperating with UNAMID and the United Nations country team in fulfillment of its tasks. It further notes the recommendation in the Special Report for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to open an office in Sudan, and requests the Government to discuss this with OHCHR.

The resolution underlines there can be no military solution to the conflict in Darfur, and that an inclusive political settlement is essential to ensuring peace. It stresses the importance of fully addressing the root causes of the conflict, including management of land, water and other

resources. It reaffirms Security Council support for the DDPD as a viable framework to address these as well as the peace process in Darfur. It also emphasizes its support for the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) and the Roadmap, urging all parties to re-engage in negotiations with the AUHIP to make immediate progress, to sign cessation of hostilities and humanitarian assistance agreements.

UN Security Council arms embargo on South Sudan

The Security Council narrowly endorsed resolution 2428 (2018) imposing an arms embargo on South Sudan on Friday last week (July 13). It was adopted by nine votes with six abstentions. The resolution calls on all Member States, especially South Sudan's neighbours, to immediately take the necessary measures to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary equipment, and its spare parts to landlocked South Sudan. It covers a ban on all "technical assistance, training, financial or other assistance, related to military activities or the provision, maintenance or use of any arms and related material, including the provision of armed mercenary personnel whether or not originating in their territories".

The resolution, which imposed targeted sanctions on two more individuals, also renewed the South Sudan Sanctions regime until 31 May 2019 and the Sanctions Committee's Panel of Experts until 1 July 2019. The two additional individuals sanctioned were Paul Malong Awan, the former Chief of Staff of South Sudan's army, now leader of a rebel faction, and Malek Ruben Riak, former Deputy Chief of Staff of the South Sudan's army. Accused of fomenting violence and hampering efforts for peace, they are subject to a travel ban and asset freeze.

The resolution condemned the failure of the warring parties to honour the different ceasefire agreements they have signed, including the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (August 17, 2015), the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access (December 21 2017), and the latest agreement, the Khartoum Declaration (June 27, 2018). The resolution demanded the parties adhere fully to these agreements, and allow, "full, safe and unhindered" humanitarian access to all those in need. It condemned past and ongoing human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law. The resolution also commended the continued efforts of the IGAD-led High-Level Revitalization Forum to facilitate the peace process, took note of the Khartoum Declaration and the intention of the parties to continue negotiations, and urged all parties to engage to reach agreement on outstanding issues. It also reiterated there was no military solution to the conflict.