

A Week in the Horn – 24.08.2018

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Kofi Annan, Chair of the Kofi Annan Foundation, Former UN Secretary-General and Nobel Peace Laureate, died on Saturday (August 18) after a short illness. He was aged 80. A global statesman and a deeply committed internationalist who fought throughout his life for a fairer and more peaceful world, he championed peace, sustainable development, human rights and the rule of law. He served two terms as Secretary-General of the UN (1997-2006) and was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in 2001 for his humanitarian work, and after stepping down from the UN, he continued to work tirelessly in the cause of peace through his chairmanship of the Kofi Annan Foundation, promoting global sustainable development, security and peace, and as chair of The Elders, the group founded by Nelson Mandela. Tributes poured in from leaders across the world and UN Secretary-General Guterres said: "In many ways, Kofi Annan was the United Nations. He rose through the ranks to lead the organisation into the new millennium with matchless dignity and determination." Former US President Barack Obama said: "Long after he had broken barriers, Kofi never stopped his pursuit of a better world." (**See article**)

The United Nations designated August 19 as World Humanitarian Day a decade ago. It is held to pay tribute to all humanitarian personnel, from the United Nations and from all other organizations and groups which have worked to promote the humanitarian cause, as well as to remember all those who have perished in the cause of duty. Last year 139 aid workers across the world were killed, a 23% rise on 2016, and there were over 300 attacks in 22 countries with 102 others wounded and 76 kidnapped. The death toll was the second highest recorded. South Sudan was classified as the most violent context for aid workers in 2017 for the third year running. (**See article**)

IGAD leaders are now expected to attend a signing ceremony early next month for the conclusion of the IGAD-mediated Peace Process and the year-long IGAD High-Level Revitalization Process. IGAD, under the chairmanship of Ethiopia, has been totally committed to the Peace Process and remained determined to achieve sustainable peace in South Sudan, along with the UN, the AU, JMEC, the Troika, the IGAD Partners Forum and other stakeholders. Indeed, the whole process has underlined both the commitment of Ethiopia and IGAD to regional integration, the friendship of peoples and of collective security as well as the spirit of Pan-Africanism. (**See article**)

Ethiopia

President Tran Dai Quang of Vietnam arrived in Addis Ababa on Thursday (August 23) for a state visit at the invitation of President Dr. Mulatu Teshome. His visit is expected to boost bilateral ties between Ethiopia and Vietnam. Diplomatic relations were established between the two countries in 1976. On leaving Ethiopia, President Tran Dai Quang will be visiting Egypt. (**See article**)

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed held talks with visiting President Tran Dai Quang of Vietnam on Thursday (August 23). Prime Minister Dr. Abiy noted Vietnam's sustained economic growth after introducing its reforms (Doi Moi). The two sides agreed to strengthen ties in agriculture, trade, investment, and human capital.

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed received a US delegation led by Republican Congressman Christopher Smith on Thursday (August 23). According to Fitsum Arega, Chief of Staff at the Prime Minister's Office, the two parties exchanged views on a range of bilateral and regional issues. Prime Minister Dr. Abiy updated the delegation about Ethiopia's current political and economic reform initiatives.

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed told a graduating class of the Ethiopian Defense Command and Staff College that Ethiopia needed a trained, impartial, and professional army to maintain development, democracy, peace and security. He said the violence being observed in some parts of the

country was unacceptable as it posed a considerable threat to the rule of law, the foundation for the unity of the people. He said the government would not tolerate any tendency to disregard the law. **(See article)**

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed met with community and religious leaders as well as representatives of the Ethio-Somali Region on Friday (August 24). According to Fitsum Arega, Chief of Staff at Prime Minister's Office, the participants urged action on justice. The Prime Minister, while appreciating their patience, emphasized the primacy of tolerance, dialogue and the rule of law.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony of the first batch of diplomats attending a one-month military training course at the Major-General Hayelom Araya Military Academy in Holeta Genet on Sunday (August 19), the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu underlined the country now needed active and disciplined diplomats who put their country first and responded effectively to the changes in regional and global environment. **(See article)**

Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu met with the US delegation led by Congressman Smith, Chairman of the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee on Africa on Thursday (August 23). Congressman Smith is accompanied by the ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights and International Organizations, Congresswoman Karen Bass. Dr. Workneh praised the strategic support the US government has been providing to Ethiopia's development efforts. He briefed Congressman Smith on the deep reforms and changes that are currently well underway in the country. He said: "The government is doing its level best to address human right issues and widen the political environment". Congressman Smith commended the reforms being made by the government, while also noting that these initiatives should be further strengthened. He asserted that his country would continue to cooperate with the government of Ethiopia on issues including the democratization process, human rights and illegal human trafficking.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu called for effective and speedy discharge of tasks in the 2018/19 budget year. He was speaking on Friday (August 24) during the signing ceremony between himself and State Ministers on the Ministry's 2018/19 cascaded annual plan. Dr. Workneh said, "The ministry provides services to various customers including diplomatic missions, international organizations and most importantly the public," adding: "Officials and employees of the ministry should discharge their tasks outlined in the annual plan to ensure fast and effective service delivery, thereby bringing maximum satisfaction to customers". The Minister said, "We registered huge diplomatic success in the 2017/18 budget year," and stressed this success story should be used as a stepping stone to ensure an even more effective discharge of duties during the 2018/19 budget year.

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene bade farewell to the outgoing Ambassador of Botswana to Ethiopia, Ambassador Mmamosadinyana Punkle Josephine Molefe, on Friday (August 24). Mrs. Hirut extended her gratitude to Ambassador Molefe for raising the bilateral relations between Ethiopia and Botswana to a higher level. The State Minister underlined the importance of further strengthening cooperation in areas including agriculture, tourism and aviation industry.

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Professor Afework Kassu along with the Minister of Planning and Investment of Vietnam, Mr Nguyen Chi Dung addressed an Ethio-Vietnamese Business Forum on Friday (August 24). The Forum, co-organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia and the Ministry of Planning and Investment of Vietnam, aimed to further strengthening bilateral business and investment ties between the two countries.

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Professor Afework and Mr. Frank Matsaer, Executive Director of Trade Mark East Africa (TMEA) signed a Host Country Agreement on Thursday (August 23). TMEA is a non-profit organization working to help the advance of integration, trade and competitiveness of East African Community member countries. Professor Afework said Ethiopia is in the middle of socio-economic reforms which demand regional economic integration, adding "infrastructural connectivity is vital in this regard". To make such initiatives effective, he added, harmonized regulatory mechanisms are needed. He further noted the important economic activities TMEA is doing in East Africa, and commended the decision of TMEA officials to open office in Ethiopia, adding that the government would extend support to such effect.

A tribute to former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan was being held in Addis Ababa on Friday (August 24). State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Professor Afework described Kofi Annan as a giant figure of the United Nations, whose leadership spearheaded the success stories registered in scores of multilateral fora. The State Minister said, "Kofi Annan made significant efforts in the promotion of global peace and sustainable development as well as women's rights," adding that "Kofi Annan is the Pride of Africa and the world at large, and history will always remember him."

Attorney General Berhanu Tsegaye said on Saturday (August 18) that "there is a shortcoming in realizing properly a justice system which meets the needs of the people." He said the newly set up Law and Justice Advisory Council, tasked to provide policy recommendations to the government for the amendment of laws and reform of the justice system, had begun consultations to amend the anti-terrorism and civil society organizations laws. The

Chairperson of the Council, Professor Tilahun Teshome, stressed the need to amend the justice system and ensure rule of law to maintain peace and development in the country.

Dr. Ambachew Mekonen, Minister of Industry briefing journalists on Thursday last week (August 16) said the manufacturing sector would remain a priority in the government's economic policy to attain Ethiopia's structural economic change. He said Ethiopia had embarked on industrial transformation as a national strategy to create an export-oriented economy in the country that enables it to compete in the global market. Prioritizing the manufacturing industries would also play a critical role in sector in enabling Ethiopia to alleviate poverty through viable economic transformation. Despite a modest growth in the manufacturing sector, production capacity and export remained far below projection. The sector had faced challenges in a shortage of foreign currency, raw materials and political instability. In the last fiscal year, it achieved only 48% of planned exports in leather, food and beverage, metal, textile and other products, an 11% reduction from the previous year.

The manufacturing sector had 6.4% of GDP and registered 17.4 % growth in 2017/18 fiscal year.

Former Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn has joined the Advisory Board of the South African Brenthurst Foundation. The Brenthurst Foundation in a statement last week said the appointment would be effective immediately. It described Mr. Hailemariam as "a beacon of democratic values in the Horn of Africa", and noted he was "the first ruler in modern Ethiopia to voluntarily step down from office...His departing message was that he wanted to clear the way for comprehensive and deep reforms and promote genuine democratic change in the second-most populous country in Africa."

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs says Ethiopia attracted more than US\$4.1 billion in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the 2017-18 fiscal year ending in July. Successful economic diplomacy carried out by embassies and consular offices attracted 156 big companies with a combined capital of over 4.1 billion US dollars, Ministry Spokesperson Meles Alem announced this week. He noted that more investment could be expected this fiscal year as the country was becoming more peaceful. Other countries have shown interest to cooperate with Ethiopia and the Diaspora community has decided to boost its engagement.

A cultural symposium held in Addis Ababa on Friday (August 17) brought together 500 participants, including senior government officials, from Ethiopia and Eritrea. The discussions focused on ways to enhance the cultural and linguistic ties as well as the need for cultural collaboration between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Ethiopia's Minister of Culture and Tourism, Fozia Amin, said cultural events were vital to advance the people-to-people ties between the two nations. This follows the resumption of telecom services, diplomatic relations, flights, and agreements to strengthen economic ties as well as an agreement to increase the movement and amount of bilateral trade through Assab to Addis Ababa. In a statement the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said: "There is still a huge opportunity to explore in terms of further opening up new venues of cooperation and partnership between Ethiopia and Eritrea as well as facilitating the process of economic integration in the region."

Eritrea

President Isaias hosted South Sudan President Salva Kiir for a two-day official visit at the weekend. The two presidents discussed the enhancement of bilateral cooperation in various sectors and exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual interest. President Isaias expressed his support for South Sudan and called on President Kiir to enhance relations with the Horn of Africa countries and especially Sudan. **(See article)**

Somalia

President Mohamed Abdullahi returned to Mogadishu on Monday (August 20) after visits to Djibouti last week and to Turkey at the weekend. In Djibouti, President Abdullahi held bilateral talks with President Ismail Omar Guelleh. He then went to Turkey at the invitation of President Erdoğan to attend the ruling AK party's sixth congress held August 18. President Abdullahi also met with his predecessor Hassan Sheikh Mohamud in Ankara. Former president Mohamud said they had agreed to cooperate on the stabilization of the country and jointly work on security and development. He said: "I met with President Mohamed Abdullahi. In our meeting we discussed the gains achieved by the government and challenges as well as means to resolve them."

President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed 'extended his best wishes to all Muslims and in particular, to the people of Somalia as they celebrated Eid-ulAdha. He called on all Somalis to extend their generosity towards those in need in their society and wished all Muslims across the globe to mark the day in peace, joy and prosperity. He also urged the public, to maintain peace and help the security forces in their bid to ensure the security of the nation. He emphasized that the need to unite in achieving a lasting peace and prosperity in the country.

Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre urged people to stay away from clannism, corruption, nepotism and other malpractices. Speaking at the Igsbahaysiga Mosque following Eid prayers, he said it was time for the public to stay away from all practices detrimental to the country's progress. All citizens had a responsibility to take part in the construction of the country. "We must learn lessons from our past mistakes. We are also expected to lead the reconstruction efforts of this nation and create future and hope for our youth."

The head of AMISOM, Ambassador Madeira extended best wishes to all Muslims on the occasion of Eid-al-Adha. He said, "As you celebrate this important day, which also marks the end of Hajj, may you grow in faith and emulate the actions of Prophet Mohamed. May peace and prosperity be upon you."

The new head of the Somali National Army, Dahir Adan Elmi assumed office at a handing-over ceremony held on Thursday (August 23) at the Defense Ministry in Mogadishu. The occasion was attended by Defense Minister, Hassan Ali Mohamed, Chiefs of Police and Custodial Corps, SNA Force Commanders and other officials. Mr. Elmi commended the outgoing Army Chief for his tremendous achievements in the fight against Al-Shabaab and vowed to intensify SNA operations to defeat Al-Shabaab. Defense Minister Mohamed said his ministry was committed to equip the army and to work hand in hand with the new army chief.

Ahmed Eissa Awad, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Hassan bin Hamza Hashim, Qatar's Ambassador to Somalia, on Sunday (August 19) laid the cornerstone of a Diplomatic Institute, in Mogadishu. The Institute is being financed by the Qatar Fund for Development. Minister Awad said the Institute would contribute to graduating diplomats and work on developing a diplomatic culture. Ambassador Hashim said the project was the first in a group of developmental schemes offered by the State of Qatar to Somalia.

Minister for Finance, Abdirahman Duale Beileh on Monday (August 20) inspected Mogadishu Port Authority, a day after several senior managers were arrested over corruption allegations. The government appointed a new head of authority for the Mogadishu Port Authority a day earlier.

The International Africa Director of the Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC) arrived in Mogadishu on Wednesday (August 21) to meet with government officials, reportedly for talks on the construction of a new international airport for Mogadishu. Under previous president Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, the government had indicated an interest in acquiring three MA60 planes for Somali Airlines.

South Sudan

The IGAD-mediated South Sudan talks in Khartoum were suspended on Monday this week (August 20) for the Eid al-Adha holiday. Sudan Foreign Minister El-Dirdeiry Mohamed Ahmed said the talks to conclude the final phase of the peace revitalization process would be resumed on Saturday (August 25). The parties are now expected to initial the final revitalized peace agreement three days after the resumption of talks. (**See article**)

The Chairperson of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC), Festus Mogae, has announced he will resign from his position by the end of September. In a statement on Monday (August 20) he said, "as the process to revitalize the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan draws to a close, I have adjudged it appropriate to allow for the new phase of the transition period for South Sudan to be in fresh hands." The former President of Botswana was appointed by IGAD in October 2015 to head the Commission tasked with the monitoring of the implementation of the South Sudan peace agreement.

Sudan

President Omer al-Bashir has reiterated his call for holdout groups to join the national dialogue in order to contribute to nation building. Speaking on the occasion of Eid al-Adha on Tuesday (August 20) he renewed the amnesty for those who lay down their arms and join the peace process. He also expressed full commitment to implement the National Document, stressing adherence to peace and dialogue as a means to overcome all differences and obstacles.

The United Nations has renewed its appeal for humanitarian aid for Sudan. The UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan said on Sunday (August 19) that the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan called for \$1 billion, of which about \$327 million had been received so far. This was a marked reduction in funding from previous levels. He said: "During the first half of 2018, in partnership with government agencies, the United Nations, international and national NGOs, and other partners provided food, shelter, water, health, education and other assistance to about 2.5 million people in need across Sudan." There was improved humanitarian access, with aid agencies able to reach new areas in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan, previously inaccessible. Noting Sudan also hosted some 1.2 million refugees, he reiterated the UN determination to assist Sudan.

VIETNAM'S PRESIDENT TRAN DAI QUANG ON A STATE VISIT TO ETHIOPIA

The President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Tran Dai Quang, arrived in Addis Ababa, for a three-day state visit on Thursday (August 23). President Tran Dai Quang was welcomed at Bole International Airport by the President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Dr Mulatu Teshome, high ranking government officials and members of the Ethiopian Public Diplomacy Team. The national anthems of both countries were played, followed by a 7-gun salute and the inspection of the Guard of Honor

President Dr. Mulatu and President Quang then held discussions on ways of further enhancing cooperation and ties between Ethiopia and Vietnam. During the discussions, both at a tete-a-tete and bilateral levels presided over by the two presidents, the focus was on trade, investment, tourism, peace and security as well as people-to-people ties. They looked at the numerous possible areas for co-operation including trade, investment, tourism, education, aviation and telecommunications and underlined the need to further consolidate Ethio-Vietnamese cooperation for the benefit and common aspirations of the peoples of both countries. President Dr. Mulatu and President Quang then oversaw the signing of two Memoranda of Understanding on Cooperation and Investment Cooperation as well as on an Agreement on Mutual Visa Waivers.

During a joint press conference, President Dr Mulatu expressed his appreciation for the Vietnamese President for paying a historic, first-ever state visit by a Vietnamese leader since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries forty two years ago. Touching on the areas where Ethiopia and Vietnam could further cooperate in the future, Dr Mulatu expressed Ethiopia's readiness to explore and widen the full spectrum of mutually beneficial opportunities in areas including, but not limited to, intensification of political ties by way of establishing contact at all levels, facilitation of more investment by Vietnamese companies in areas such as telecommunications, textile, food processing and the aviation industry, along with exchanges of views and best practices in several areas of mutual importance.

President Quang expressed his profound gratitude to President Dr Mulatu for the warm welcome accorded to him personally and to his delegation. He added he was more than happy to be in Ethiopia, 'the Cradle of Mankind' and 'the Land of Origins'. He noted that their discussions had been fruitful, helping both sides to explore areas to expand and strengthen ties in various areas including aviation, telecommunications and education. President Quang commended Ethiopia's historic role in the national liberation of many countries on the continent as well as its continued pivotal role in the maintenance of peace and security in the sub-region and beyond through organizations such as the UN and its current non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

President Quang also noted that the Republic of Vietnam was ready to bolster its ties with Ethiopia through the facilitation of mutual visits at highest levels, through parliamentary cooperation and people-to-people ties, as well as development cooperation and collaboration in their common aspirations for global peace and security.

During his visit, President Tran Dai Quang met the Speaker of the House of Peoples' Representatives of Ethiopia, Speaker Mufarihat Kamil, at the Sheraton Addis on Friday (August 24). Their meeting focused on further expanding and consolidating the historical and longstanding relations between the two countries, especially in the areas of Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation and people-to-people ties. Ms. Mufarihat, noted Ethiopia and Vietnam had signed several cooperative agreements, which she said were an epitome of the ever-growing relations between the two Governments as well as their peoples. She reassured the Vietnamese President of the strong political will of the Government of Ethiopia to enhance people-to-people ties and the political relations at the highest level.

DR. ABIY URGES REAFFIRMATION OF THE RULE OF LAW AT ARMY GRADUATION

Addressing the 12th graduation of high-ranking military officers on Saturday (August 18), Prime Minister Dr. Abiy, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, warned that Ethiopia was currently facing a looming threat of sporadic acts of vigilante justice and hatred-driven mob lynching. The Prime Minister noted the nation was currently facing the negative impact of an atmosphere of confusion and misunderstanding regarding freedom. He warned that the recent tendency to conflate freedom with acts of violent anarchism, of exacting revenge and of committing menacing acts in the name of justice, were drastically affecting the very fabric and durability of the ongoing efforts to achieve peace and stability. He emphasized the fact that respect for the rule of law included recognition of the exclusive policing powers of the state. This was entrenched in the highest law of the land, the Constitution.

As a bulwark against these alarming acts of ethnically-motivated vigilante activity and property vandalism, the Prime Minister called on citizens to reaffirm their determination to adhere towards ensuring the respect for the rule of law. This, he emphasized, was the duty of every citizen. Similarly, he underlined the need for the national security services to discharge their law enforcement missions with even greater effort. He said the Defense

Forces should demonstrate their allegiance to the Constitution by bringing to justice those who took upon themselves to instigate violence, setting a bad example of deliberately disregarding the law.

The Prime Minister also mentioned the ongoing reform efforts in the army, reforms aimed to create a professional army of a well-trained, responsive and responsible military personnel. He said, beginning from September this year, the army will undergo restructuring in a way that reflected its commitment to justice, peace and order, both at home and around the world, even more than ever and take its place in the hearts of millions of Africans as “the Pride of Africa.”

In his concluding remarks, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy urged the graduates to discharge their duties with full energy and a heightened sense of duty, joining forces with the public. He congratulated them upon the successful completion of their training and readiness to take up the noble task of being “agents of positive changes” in Ethiopia, in the sub-region, and beyond.

SOUTH SUDAN'S PRESIDENT SALVA KIIR VISITS ERITREA

President Salva Kiir made a two-day official visit to Eritrea last weekend (August 18-19) at the invitation of President Isaias Afwerki. He was accompanied by Foreign Minister Nhial Deng Nhial and the Minister at the President's Office, Mike A. Beng. According to Eritrean Information Minister Yemane Gebre Meskel, during the visit, the two presidents discussed the enhancement of bilateral cooperation in various sectors and exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual interest. President Isaias expressed his support for South Sudan and called on President Salva Kiir to enhance relations with the Horn of Africa countries and especially Sudan. Nhial Deng Nhial said the two leaders discussed bilateral relations, regional matters and the ongoing peace process in South Sudan. He pointed out that President Kiir reiterated his determination to end the ongoing conflict in South Sudan through peaceful means. He also noted that President Kiir congratulated President Isaias and Prime Minister Dr. Abiy for the full normalization of relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Eritrea's Foreign Minister Osman Saleh said the visit of President Salva Kiir to Eritrea would make an important contribution to the efforts being exerted to ensure peace and development in the region.

During his visit, President Kiir, accompanied by President Isaias, visited various development sites in the Southern region of Eritrea including the Tekera and Misilam dams, agricultural projects, dairy farms, and transportation infrastructure, as well as solar energy system. The Minister at the President's Office, Mike A. Beng, said the development sites they visited attested to the tremendous development efforts Eritrea was making on the basis of self-reliance.

Speaking at a state dinner he hosted on Saturday evening in honour of President Kiir, President Isaias pointed to the “distinct” relationship between the two people adding that Eritrea will stand with South Sudan “until and beyond the achievement of the mission of liberation”. He said the special bond between the peoples of South Sudan and Eritrea had been “nurtured through vigorous solidarity in a common struggle for justice and liberation; a colossal task that exacted precious sacrifices of heroes and heroines. The government and people of Eritrea are proud for their participation in this endeavour in a gesture of brotherly solidarity.” President Isaias stressed that the struggle for justice and liberation was “inherently onerous, but the struggle, challenges, and trajectory of nation building are much heavier.” He said, “The people of South Sudan have asserted their liberation through precious sacrifices. But due to external subversion and internal discord, they were embroiled in a relentless spiral of strife and crisis soon after independence as they embarked on the heavy task of nation-building. This is extremely distressing. As it happens, the mission of liberation has yet to be fulfilled.” He also emphasized, “The people of Eritrea will stand, as ever, on the side of, and in solidarity with, the people of South Sudan until and beyond the achievement of the mission of liberation.”

President Isaias expressed his hopes for success for the “domestic efforts” to overcome the “numerous challenges that the country is facing.” He called on South Sudan to build and enhance cooperation with other countries in the region: “I urge the people of South Sudan to nurture and consolidate ties of friendship and cooperation with all the peoples of the Horn of Africa in general and with the people of the Sudan in particular.” He said Eritrea itself would “continue to shoulder our responsibilities to strengthen our joint efforts and cooperation programmes, modest as they are, in various matters and sectors.”

President Kiir's visit underlined the new dynamic in the Horn of Africa, following the reconciliation between Addis Ababa and Asmara. On July 8, Ethiopia Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed received an overwhelming and emotional reception on his visit to Asmara, a visit aimed at normalizing relations between the two countries and expanding people-to-people ties. A week later, in another highly successful visit, President Isaias visited Addis Ababa during which he also received an overwhelming and emotional reception from the people. On July 28, the President of Somalia Mohammed Abdullahi Mohammed made a three-day official visit to a tumultuous welcome by the Government and people of Eritrea. Like Prime Minister Abiy, President Mohamed Abdullahi has called on the UN Security Council to remove the sanctions on Eritrea. He has also made a visit to Djibouti and offered to mediate between Djibouti and Eritrea.

SOUTH SUDANESE PARTIES CLAIM FULL COMMITMENT TO THE REVITALIZED PEACE PROCESS...

The IGAD-mediated South Sudan talks in Khartoum were suspended on Monday this week (August 20) because of the Eid al-Adha holiday. Sudan Foreign Minister El-Dirdeiry Mohamed Ahmed said the talks to conclude the final phase of the peace revitalization process would be resumed on Saturday (August 25). When the talks resume after the break and in order to finalize the implementation matrix, every party has to come with two delegations: a military one to discuss the security arrangement and a political delegation to discuss the remaining issues on transitional justice and constitutional process.

The parties are expected to initial the final revitalized peace agreement three days after the resumption of talks on 25 August. A signing ceremony will take place in the presence of IGAD leaders next month.

In a joint statement released by IGAD on Tuesday, signed by the South Sudanese Government, SPLM-IO, SSOA, SPLM-FDs, Other Political Parties (OPP) and Civil Society organizations, the South Sudanese parties reiterated their commitment to implement a deal ending the five-year conflict. The joint statement said, “We do acknowledge that the war and fighting has caused indescribable suffering to all our People and has deeply fractured our society.” It added that they pledged to continue discussions on the remaining issues adding “today we affirm our joint commitment to full implementation of this Agreement, the Khartoum Declaration and Agreements on the Outstanding Security and Governance Issues”.

After the signing of the governance agreement earlier this month, the parties on August 14 launched the Final Phase and engaged talks on the Article 4 related to the number of states, the new five ministries and their clusters, the Judicial reform, the roles in the Presidency and composition of the National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRC). When the talks resume, they will include the implementation matrix of the security arrangements and tackle the consequential amendments to Chapters III-VIII of the peace agreement on the Transitional Justice and the constitutional process. The South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA) and the SPLM-IO say they want the upcoming discussion to focus on the hybrid courts, Constitution making process and the issue of the 32 contested states. The SPLM-IO Chairman of the National Committee for Information and Public Relations, Mabior Garand de Mabior said on Monday that they would not sign an agreement that doesn't ensure “accountability and justice and free and fair elections” at the end of the three-year transitional period.

The two SSOA groups, the People's Democratic Movement and the National Salvation Front, which originally refused to sign the governance agreement on August 5 although the rest of the SSOA did so after a written pledge from the mediation to continue discussions on the contested number of states in the final phase, have now agreed to return to the negotiating table to take part in the final phase of the peace revitalization process.

The United Nations Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, Nicholas Haysom, said in an interview at the weekend that there had been undeniable progress in Khartoum in securing agreement on certain issues, notably on security arrangements and governance issues. However, he pointed out that international support for the outcome of the peace process depended upon clear evidence of the sustainability of any agreements. He said sustainability in this context meant a number of things: an inclusive agreement, clear evidence of political will on the part of the actors, robust financial transparency mechanisms, effective monitoring enforcement and accountability. He said what was required from South Sudan now was to reach out to all elements of society and to make the necessary compromises and sacrifices to make the agreement work. It was not a question of saying, “What is my entitlement? What is my proper share?”, but a question of what will make it work. In other words, we are looking to South Sudanese to behave as patriots, not entrepreneurs.” He said it would be wrong to say the international community was simply an observer, adding, “One can only make it clear to the parties that they bear the responsibility for making this agreement work and that if it fails there will be consequences for them.”

... A PROCESS ORCHESTRATED BY IGAD'S ROLE AND ETHIOPIA'S EFFORTS

With almost all the parties to the IGAD-led Peace Process proclaiming breakthroughs on the outstanding issues in the current Khartoum round of talks, the IGAD Secretariat will be preparing a final draft for signature in September. Since the direct meetings of President Salva Kiir and Dr. Riek Machar in Sudan and the signing of the Khartoum declaration on July 26, the Revitalization process has been moving fast. Equally, this stage has not been reached without employing pain-staking and extra careful efforts. IGAD and IGAD Member States along with the UN, the AU, JMEC, the Troika, the IGAD Partners Forum and other stakeholders have all been part of this hard-won progress.

IGAD, since the conflict broke out in December 2013, has shown remarkable effort and very considerable patience, based on considerable study of risk propensity, to work to ensure stability in South Sudan. A significant milestone in this was IGAD's championing of the signing of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict on South Sudan in August 2015. Although there has been very little progress on peace or on improving the continuing untold suffering of the people of South Sudan since then, nevertheless this agreement has now served as a basis for the recent progress.

At a time when no single effort seemed to have any effect on the situation in South Sudan, the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government on June 12 last year launched the IGAD High Level Revitalization Forum. Ethiopia's former Prime Minister, Hailemariam Dessalegn, the then Chairperson of IGAD Assembly, gave the mandate to the IGAD Council of Ministers to execute the revitalization process with the aim of bringing all the Parties to the Conflict as well as pertinent stakeholders and other estranged groups not previously part of the Peace Process, to the table.

Between the launch of the First Revitalization Forum in December 2017 until the 63rd IGAD Council of Ministers meeting in May this year, the Council of Ministers worked to organize and facilitate nearly a dozen venues for the Parties to hold meaningful dialogue in the spirit of mutual understanding and good-faith. Part of this involved a Pre-Consultation Process of considerable difficulty to reach a common understanding and persuade all the Parties to be part of the Process. During this phase the Chairperson of the IGAD Council of Ministers, Ethiopia's Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, accompanied by his colleagues, members of the Council and the IGAD Special Envoy Ambassador Ismael Wais, met and held intensive talks with all the parties to the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict on South Sudan (ARCSS) as well as estranged groups, in Addis Ababa, Juba and Khartoum as well as Pretoria.

During the year-long period of intensive Revitalization meetings, often going on far into the night, IGAD finally made some headway in forging new steps. Parties that were originally unwilling to even recognize one another, came to the table for the first time to hold a dialogue, showed commitment to negotiate in good-faith, prepared to debate on outstanding issues and made serious efforts to narrow the gaps between them. The discussions at the Forum produced the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities and Unhindered Delivery of Humanitarian Access in December 2017 at the first session, as well as general consensus on a series of issues including all-encompassing measures to restore a permanent cease fire, responsibility-sharing, transitional security arrangement mechanisms and eventually to develop a revised and realistic timeline and implementation schedule towards a democratic election at the end of the transition period. A series of consecutive consultations held at different times and places co-chaired by Ethiopia's State Minister of Foreign Affairs Mrs. Hirut Zemene, acting on behalf of Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh greatly helped the Parties to continue their positive spirit of negotiation. The Council also undertook several additional activities, shuttle diplomacy and engaging with the parties in intensive consultations as well as organizing workshops on governance and security.

The Final Bridging Proposal, proposed by IGAD and signed at the Council of Ministers' 63rd Extra-Ordinary Session in May, provided a "middle ground for the various negotiating positions" covering power-sharing, governance and security arrangements. The Council's meeting was preceded by the face-to-face meeting of President Salva Kiir and Dr. Riek Machar in the presence of Ethiopian Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed. It was the first time they had met since December 2015.

The same day, at the 32nd Extraordinary Summit of IGAD, the IGAD Chair, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy insisted: "We cannot continue to work like business as usual. Each second and each minute that passes with business as usual, is a missed opportunity to save lives [in South Sudan]." It was at this meeting that the IGAD Assembly gave President Omer Hassan EI-Bashir the mandate to help the Parties finish the last leg of the Peace Process in Khartoum.

There's no doubt that the progress made in the last few weeks and the results achieved owe much to the hard-won gains of the year-long IGAD High-Level Revitalization Process. IGAD's unremitting efforts over the last few years, particularly after the launch of the HLRF, have finally produced a viable chance to end conflict in South Sudan. IGAD has been very careful to keep up pressure on the parties to end their conflict as well as demonstrating considerable tolerance towards the often disheartening irresponsibility all-too-frequently shown by various individuals and groups. Ethiopia as Chair of IGAD has remained totally committed to the Peace Process and has never lost its determination to achieve a sustainable peace in South Sudan. This is a matter of considerable pride, not least because of the internal problems Ethiopia has also been facing over the last two years. Ethiopia, indeed, firmly believes that a sense of regional ties, the friendship of peoples and of collective security as well as the spirit of Pan-Africanism, can and does engender workable solutions to the deep-seated problems of the continent.

FORMER UN SECRETARY GENERAL, KOFI ANNAN, PASSES AWAY

Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations and Nobel Peace Laureate, passed away on Saturday (August 18). A global statesman and a deeply committed internationalist who fought for a fairer and more peaceful world throughout his life, he led the United Nations from 1997 to 2006, showing himself an ardent champion of peace, sustainable development, human rights and the rule of law. After the United Nations, he continued to work for the cause of peace through his chairmanship of the Kofi Annan Foundation and as chair of The Elders, the group founded by Nelson Mandela.

Kofi Annan was a leader who felt a special responsibility towards Africa. He actively promoted the partnership between the African Union and the United Nations. He spearheaded, together with the then African Union Commission Chairperson Alpha Oumar Konare, the Ten-Year Capacity

Building Program for the African Union, the establishment of the UNAU/Hybrid Mission for Darfur, a unique model of cooperation in peacekeeping between the African Union and the United Nations, and other key developments. Mr. Annan was particularly committed to African development and deeply engaged in many initiatives, including his chairmanship of the Africa Progress Panel and his early leadership of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA).

As UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan worked closely with the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi on various global and continental issues. In a statement released at the weekend, Ethiopia expressed its deepest condolences, testifying that “Kofi Annan is best remembered as a mastermind who has greatly contributed to global efforts in bringing about peace, tranquility, rule of law and sustainable development as well as ending agonizing conflicts and civil wars.” The statement stressed that as “The first African to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for his remarkable contribution to World Peace in 2001, Kofi Annan, was best known for his unwavering position towards voicing the deep-seated problems of developing countries.”

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, who noted that Kofi Annan made a tremendous contribution to the quest for durable peace and sustainable development in the world, offered the African Union’s condolences and his own to Mr. Annan’s family, the people and Government of Ghana and to his colleagues in the United Nations system. The Chairperson noted that both during his time as Secretary-General and thereafter, within the framework of his Foundation and with the Elders, Kofi Annan made a tremendous contribution to the quest for durable peace and sustainable development in the world. He pioneered some of the most ground-breaking United Nations policies, including on the Millennium Development Goals and the Responsibility to Protect. He advocated tirelessly for the values of peace, human rights, tolerance and solidarity among all nations and peoples.

The AU Commission Chairperson paid tribute to Kofi Annan for “his immense contribution to the advancement of peace and development. His dedication to humanity, diplomacy and humility will forever be a shining example of what leadership should be. He said: “As the continent pursues ever resolutely its goal of achieving “The Africa We Want”, Kofi Annan will remain a source of inspiration and encouragement. Through his numerous accomplishments, he has made Africa proud. May His Soul Rest in Peace!”

WORLD HUMANITARIAN DAY COMMEMORATED ON SUNDAY AUGUST 19

In 2008, the United Nations designated August 19 as World Humanitarian Day. This was in commemoration of a terrorist suicide bomb attack on the UN offices in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad in 2003 which killed 22 people including the UN’s top representative in Iraq and injured many more. Every year since 2011, World Humanitarian Day has been held on August 19 to pay tribute to all humanitarian personnel, from the United Nations and from all other organizations and groups which have worked to promote the humanitarian cause, as well as to remember all those who have perished in the cause of duty.

Secretary-general Antonio Guterres in his message on World Humanitarian Day, noting that this year’s commemoration marked the fifteenth anniversary since the 22 humanitarian workers died in Baghdad, expressed solidarity with all people affected by humanitarian crises. He paid tribute to the humanitarian workers who help them. He underlined that “civilians in conflict zones also continue to be killed and maimed, deliberately or in indiscriminate attacks. Last year, the United Nations recorded the deaths or injuries of more than 26,000 civilians in attacks in just six countries, Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Somalia and Yemen.”

The Secretary-General also stressed that “conflict is forcing record numbers of million people now displaced. Children are recruited by armed groups and used to fight. Women are abused and humiliated. As humanitarian provides for these in need, they are all too often targeted or treated as threats.” Humanitarian workers, he underlined, continue to risk their lives saving to those who are in a grave need of assistance. He called on global leaders to do everything in their power to protect people mired in conflict.

South Sudan was classified as the most violent context for aid workers in 2017 for the third year running, reflecting the conflicts there and atmosphere of impunity for armed actors. In its latest report last week covering the violence against humanitarian actors across the world in 2018, Humanitarian Outcomes said South Sudan remained the most dangerous country in the world for aid workers with 24 humanitarians workers killed in 2017. It said: “The violence in South Sudan continued to escalate, with record numbers of aid workers killed by gunfire in addition to a rise in aid worker kidnappings,” adding that “The sharp increase [of kidnapping] in 2016 and continuing through 2018 suggests a troubling trend of armed groups using this tactic to assert control over aid operations.” In its report for 2017, the group said the attacks on aid groups reflected “a brutal, ethnically driven military campaign, disintegration of command and control, an environment of impunity for offenders and a festering hostility against the international humanitarian community upon which a great many South Sudanese rely for their basic needs”.

Overall, 139 aid workers were killed last year, a 23% rise on 2016. South Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan and CAR accounted for two-thirds of 158 major incidents targeting humanitarian operations last year. In total, Humanitarian Outcomes recorded attacks on 313 aid workers in 22 countries with 139 people killed, 102 wounded and 76 kidnapped, four of whom were killed. The death toll was the second highest recorded. Most attacks took place in situations where international aid organizations have restricted access, it said. There had also been a marked rise in the number of victims who worked for national rather than international aid agencies, reflecting the growing dependence on national staff and organizations

While World Humanitarian Day aims to pay tribute to aid workers who risk their lives in humanitarian service, it also has the objective of rallying support for people affected by crises around the world, and the UN Secretary-general also called on all who were concerned should join the campaign at worldhumanitarianaday.org to show that civilians are not [#NotATarget](https://twitter.com/NotATarget).

As the international community marked World Humanitarian Day, a senior United Nations official warned of the grave threats faced by aid workers in Somalia. They continue to be targets of armed groups which often abduct and detain them and steal desperately needed relief supplies. The UN Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative for Somalia and Humanitarian Coordinator, Peter de Clercq, said: "As humanitarians deliver aid and medical workers treat the sick and wounded, they are directly targeted," adding, "They are still facing threats and they are being prevented at times from bringing relief to those in desperate need – this must stop." Mr. de Clercq noted that 74 violent incidents affecting humanitarian personnel, health facilities and assets had been registered in Somalia since the beginning of the year, and seven humanitarian workers had died so far this year and another ten injured. Of the 18 humanitarian workers who had been kidnapped this year, six remained in the custody of their captors, including a German nurse working with the International Committee of the Red Cross when she was abducted in Mogadishu last May. The Humanitarian Coordinator said that although the number of aid workers who had been targeted in 2018 was lower than the figure for a similar period last year, the practice remained a major cause for concern. Somalia's federal government has vowed to take action to reduce the threats facing aid workers. The Federal Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, Hamza Said Hamza, said: "Our ministry will work on getting strong policies that protect the well-being of civilians, aid and health workers."

The plight of civilians caught up in humanitarian crises was highlighted in Mogadishu with Internally Displaced Persons, topping the list of priority cases. The Mayor of Mogadishu and Governor of the Benadir Regional Administration, Abdirahman Omar Osman, estimated that Mogadishu and environs host at least 500,000 IDPs. He said: "Addressing displacement is a development issue for the Benadir Regional Administration. You cannot have a modern and forward-looking capital city with thousands displaced." He said the city needed to adopt an "an inclusive progressive agenda" to cope better with its IDP population.

IDPs are currently a major concern of the Federal Government of Ethiopia as well as the Oromia and SNNP regional authorities. As the latest issue of the Ethiopia Humanitarian Bulletin, issued by UN OCHA last week, underlined, they are working on finding a lasting solution to the IDP crisis in Gedeo and West Guji zones. For this, the Aba Gadas and elders from both West Guji (Oromia) and Gedeo (SNNP) zones, since 28 July have been convening a series of peace and reconciliation conferences to realize a voluntary return of IDPs to their places of origin. In West Guji, the majority of IDPs have already returned from all the six *woredas* except Kercha *woreda* where only 35 per cent have returned to their places of origin according to the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC). In Gedeo zone of SNNP region, *woreda* officials are finalizing a comprehensive return and rehabilitation plan that will provide the basis for the required investment for immediate life-saving and recovery needs of returning IDPs. On August 10, the NDRMC confirmed that all returns will respect humanitarian principles of safety, dignity, voluntariness and sustainability. Government and partners will continue their scaled-up response to address gaps in identified IDP sites in both zones.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS EXPANDS DIPLOMATIC PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, one of the country's oldest ministries, has been leading the foreign policy of the country and providing for its diplomatic activities since its own inception in 1907. In this long period, the Ministry has passed through various developments, marking its own legacy not only in promoting Ethiopia's national interest but also in playing a leading role in the struggles against colonialism and independence and for the growth and protection of the place of Africa in the modern world. Ethiopia's diplomatic role has also been vigorous in the common affairs and concerns of the world, with its diplomats always in the front line, taking initiatives to devise solutions on such important matters of the international system, including UN peacekeeping and climate change.

Along with its successful efforts has been the continuous commitments undertaken by ministry officials and staffers to work for professional excellence and produce highly qualified and trained manpower. Over the years, the Ministry has carried out numerous capacity-building measures and mechanisms to enhance the professional excellence of its diplomats. These have included organizing local short- and long-term training as well as dispatching staff members on scholarships for overseas studies for further degrees and other training.

A major element in this process was the Ministry's establishment of the Foreign Service Training Institute (FSTI) in 2012. This was set up to further consolidate the valuable experience of human resource development the organization had long enjoyed and pave the way for establishing professionalism as a central aspect of its organizational culture. It was a bold step forward in the history of the ministry, letting it prepare to host changes happening in the future while also discharging the mission it upholds effectively and continuing to maximize the results from Ethiopia's interactions with the global system.

The Institute has, therefore, been mandated, along with others to enhance the competency and professionalism of Ethiopian diplomats and diplomacy. It provides a two- and half-year training program on international relations and diplomacy, language and communications as well as other area-related courses. So far, the Foreign Service Training Institute has provided training to 141 junior diplomats and demonstrated its importance practically as its graduates are already showing strong their professional potential in the ministry. Currently another 89 trainee diplomats are attending long-term training in the Institute.

The Ministry has also expanded the scope of the professional training for diplomats significantly. On Sunday (August 19), at an iconic moment in Ministry's history, the first group of trainee diplomats attending one-month military training for the first time graduated. The training was given at the Major-General Hayelom Araya Military Academy at Holeta Genet. It offered special focus on patriotism, military etiquette, national pride, discipline, physical fitness and psychology. Speaking at the graduation ceremony, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, underlined the country needed active and disciplined diplomats who put their country first and who were quick to respond to changes in the regional and global environment. The Minister, who noted this had been the first time in the more than 110-year-old history of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the country's diplomats had attended military training, expressed satisfaction at the results and said such programs would continue.