

A Week in the Horn 21.9.2018

News in Brief

Ethiopia and Eritrea sign a new comprehensive cooperation agreement

President Mulatu attends Kofi Annan's state burial ceremony in Ghana

State Ministers of Foreign Affairs brief the Diplomatic Community

The UN Security Council cautiously commends South Sudan's Peace Agreement...

... And has a briefing on Somalia

A UK Parliamentary delegation visits Sudan

Africa and the African Union

Today, September 21, is the International Day of Peace celebrated round the world. The UN General Assembly has declared it a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples. The Sustainable Development Goal 16 calls for promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. A peaceful society is one where there is justice and equality for everyone. Peace enables a sustainable environment to take shape and a sustainable environment helps promote peace. This year's theme for the day is: "The Right to Peace – The Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 70". This is the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which says that, "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person," elements which provide the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. And as Secretary-General António Guterres says: "It is time all nations and all people live up to the words of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognizes the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human race."

The wind of peace across the Horn of Africa, launched by the reconciliation between Ethiopia and Eritrea, has continued to gather force. And it is now driving a process of economic integration as well as peace across the region. (See article)

Health ministers from Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia launched a joint polio vaccination campaign for the Horn of Africa, on Friday last week (September 14). The Global Polio Eradication Initiative has recommended two rounds of synchronized polio vaccination campaigns to be conducted in Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia, following the recent isolation of vaccine-derived polio viruses circulating in Somalia, particularly in areas close to the Kenya-Somalia-Ethiopia border. The campaign will take place in September and October.

IGAD's Executive Secretary, Ambassador Mahboub Maalim said it is only a matter of time before Eritrea is officially welcomed back into IGAD. Speaking at the end of last week, Ambassador Maalim said, "Essentially the deal is done, we just await a pronouncement."

Ethiopia

President Dr. Mulatu Teshome attended former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's state funeral ceremony in Accra last week on Thursday (September 13). The President headed a high-level Ethiopian delegation which included State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Professor Afework Kassu, Ambassador Gifti Abasiya, Director-General of Women Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other senior government officials. **(See article)**

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy and President Isaias signed a new comprehensive cooperation agreement on Sunday (September 16) in Jeddah, reaffirming the Joint Declaration on Peace and Friendship that they signed on July 9 in Asmara. The Prime Minister and President Isaias were honored with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's highest award, "The Order of King Abdulaziz", for their historic achievement in bringing about peace between their two countries. **(See article)**

State Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene and Professor Afework Kassu briefed the Diplomatic Community and representatives of the International Organizations on the current situation in the country on Wednesday (September 19) and answered questions on recent incidents. **(See article)**

State Minister Hirut bade farewell to the outgoing Ambassador of Egypt to Ethiopia, Ambassador Abou Bakr Hefny Mahmoud, on Wednesday (September 19). Mrs. Hirut thanked the Ambassador for his efforts dedicated at strengthening and taking the bilateral relations between Ethiopia and Egypt to a higher level during his tenure. The State Minister underlined Ethiopia's continued commitment to work more closely with the Government of the Egypt in a bid to further enhance the ties in both bilateral and multilateral fora.

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Professor Afework Kassu received copies of the credentials of the newly appointed Czech Republic Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ambassador Dr. Pavel Mikes on Tuesday (September 18). The two sides discussed ways to further strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Ambassador Dr. Mikes praised the reforms underway in Ethiopia, and said Ethiopia was a top priority area for the Czech Republic in development cooperation and in its scholarship program. The Czech Republic, he said, was ready to strengthen the existing diplomatic relationship between the two countries. He added that he would work to create links between Ethiopia and the Ethiopian Diaspora residing in Czech Republic.

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Professor Afework met the French Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ambassador Frederic Bontems on Monday (September 17). They discussed bilateral issues, and Professor Afework emphasized the strong bilateral and multilateral cooperation that Ethiopia and France enjoyed on security, development, climate, culture and other matters. Ambassador Bontems also underlined the close diplomatic relationships between the two countries. He praised the ongoing reforms in Ethiopia and welcomed recent developments in the region.

Ethiopia's new ambassador to Cairo, Ambassador Azanaw Tadesse presented his credentials on Wednesday (September 19) to Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry. Mr. Shoukry expressed Egypt's keenness to continue working with Ethiopia on issues of mutual interest, and stressed Egypt would support the new ambassador in his efforts to strengthen the

relationship between the two countries. Ambassador Azanaw said he would exert his utmost to boost bilateral relations between the two countries.

The Ethiopia Railway Summit took place at the Sheraton Hotel in Addis Ababa this week (September 17-18). Dedicated to the development of Ethiopia's railway sector, it was organized by the Ethiopian Railways Corporation in partnership with the China Africa Advisory and RDN Global. It provided a platform for international railway technology companies, investors and financial institutions to engage with Ethiopian officials and technical experts to discuss concrete cooperation possibilities. State Minister of Public Enterprises, Ms. SimegnWube, said the Summit took place at an opportune moment "as we are moving towards privatization of major enterprises and new forms of partnership in the railway sector." She urged participating companies to consider partaking in Ethiopia's fast-growing railway sector.

Djibouti

President Ismail Omar Guelleh returned to Djibouti on Tuesday (September 18), following a visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at the invitation of King Salman. The two presidents agreed to establish a new chapter of cooperation and good neighbourliness. They thanked King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for their mediation. At a press conference after the meeting, Saudi Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir congratulated the two countries. Eritrea's Foreign Minister, Osman Saleh and his Djiboutian counterpart, Mohammed Ali Youssouf indicated that the two countries had established a new era of friendship and cooperation. They thanked the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its efforts as well as the leaders of Ethiopia and Somalia who had contributed greatly to restoring relations between Eritrea and Djibouti. The Foreign Ministers of Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia met President Guelleh in Djibouti on September 6.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres welcomed the Djibouti and Eritrea summit meeting in Saudi Arabia on Monday (September 17), and said it would help create "greater peace" in the region. He hoped the "encounter between the leaders of Djibouti and Eritrea will initiate a process to settle all pending issues between the two countries and lead to greater peace, stability and development in the region." "It was, he said, "yet another step in the consolidation of recent peace and security gains in the Horn of Africa region". He thanked the leadership of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its efforts in facilitating this dialogue.

Eritrea

President Isaias arrived for a 3-day working visit to Abu Dhabi on Wednesday (September 19). He held extensive talks on investment, economic cooperation ties and regional issues of common concern with Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Mansour and other officials. They discussed ways of bolstering ties of friendship and cooperation and explored prospects for joint cooperation across economic, investment and development sectors. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed said the historic Jeddah Peace Agreement crowned a series of positive steps that have ended the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. He praised it as "a victory for Saudi diplomacy". He underlined the UAE's support for every effort aimed at resolving conflicts peacefully and stressed the need for mobilising energies of both countries to build, develop and enhance security and peace.

President Isaias Afwerki met and held talks with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman , Vice President of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Defense of the Kingdom of Saudi

Arabia on Monday (September 17) . They discussed ways of enhancing their bilateral relations as well as on issues of interest to both countries. The meeting was attended by senior government official of both countries.

Somalia

The UN Security Council met to consider the situation in Somalia on Thursday last week (September 13). The Council was briefed by Michael Keating, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia and head of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), in his final briefing to the Council. **(See article)**

Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre on Sunday night participated in an introductory ceremony of the self-reliance, or Is-xilqaan, program in Mogadishu on Sunday (September 16). Ministers, Members of Parliament and others came together for the implementation ceremony. PM Khayre emphasized to participants the importance of the self-reliance program describing it was an opportunity to rebuild the country, whilst providing a better future for the youth. He encouraged Somali citizens to contribute monetarily and volunteer their time and participate in programs for national interest. The "Is-xilqaan" program provides for government and civilians to jointly rebuild roads, historical places and government institutions.

A delegation from the Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development met with the Qatar Minister of Development Planning and Statistics Dr. Saleh bin Mohammad Al Nabit this week to discuss means of cooperation and ways to benefit from Qatar's experience in activating the participation of all governmental, private and civil society in development. The Minister briefed the delegation on the methodology of development planning and on processes of collecting and analyzing statistical data and information in Qatar.

The Somali government said this week that it was ready to send troops to help with security and enhance peace in South Sudan. This followed an IGAD proposal that Somali troops should contribute to the Regional Protection Force in Juba. IGAD has proposed that Sudan, Somalia, Uganda and Djibouti forces should be included in the peacekeeping force in South Sudan to help build peace and improve security.

South Sudan

The UN Security Council met on Tuesday (September 18) for a briefing on South Sudan and to consider the Revitalized Peace Agreement signed last week. Members of the Council welcomed the Agreement but expressed concern about subsequent clashes and the continuing and protracted humanitarian crisis. **(See article)**

President Salva Kiir is visiting Khartoum for a ceremony to celebrate the signing of the revitalized peace agreement on Friday (September 21). A statement from the Sudan Foreign Ministry said President Kiir would be meeting with all the factions of the South Sudanese opposition in Khartoum in response to an invitation from President Omer al-Bashir.

President Salva Kiir said this week he understood international scepticism on the government's commitment to implement the revitalized peace agreement, adding, "We welcome any scepticism because it will only fuel our resolve to consolidate peace in our country. Where we may be concerned is when sceptics become spoilers to the peace process just to prove their doom prophecies." He said: "Our destiny is not determined in the corridors

of power outside South Sudan, we have been capable of writing our own history and this time is not any different”.

The South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA) has condemned the rejection of the revitalized peace agreement by some members of the Alliance and called on them to join them to continue the peaceful struggle for continued reform. Last week four groups and Pagan Amum, former SPLM secretary general, issued a statement distancing themselves from the signed peace agreement saying it failed to address the root causes of the five-year conflict and accountability. The four groups are the National Salvation Front (NAS) of Gen. Thomas C. Swaka, People’s Democratic Movement (PDM) chaired by Hakim Dario, National Democratic Movement (NDM) led by Emanuel Aban and the United Democratic Republic Alliance (UDRA) of Gatwech K. Thich.

Sudan

President Omer al-Bashir, on Tuesday (September 18), made a number of appointments and promotions of senior army officers including a new Chief of Joint Staff, a deputy Chief of Staff of Ground Forces for Logistics, and a new Sudan Armed Forces Inspector-General. The changes also included a new Director of Military Intelligence.

A parliamentary delegation from the UK visited Sudan this week (September 16-20), meeting senior officials, civil society organizations, business people and opposition parties. The delegation also visited North Darfur State and Internally Displaced Persons camps meeting representatives of the hybrid peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID). (**See article**)

Ethiopia and Eritrea sign a new comprehensive cooperation agreement

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy and President Isaias signed a new comprehensive cooperation agreement on Sunday (September 16) in Jeddah, reaffirming the Joint Declaration on Peace and Friendship that they signed on July 9 in Asmara.

The new Agreement on Peace, Friendship and Comprehensive Cooperation Between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the State of Eritrea, underlines the historic bonds between the peoples of Ethiopia and Eritrea, Recognizing the “close bonds of geography, history, culture and religion between the two countries and their peoples”, and respecting “each other’s independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity”. It stresses their desire “to achieve lasting peace and cement their historical ties” as well as their determination “to establish comprehensive cooperation and “contribute actively to regional and global peace and security. They also reiterate their commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

In the seven articles of the Agreement, the Two Parties agree that the state of war between them ended and a new era of peace, friendship and comprehensive cooperation has started. They will promote comprehensive cooperation in the political, security, defense, economic, trade, investment, cultural and social fields on the basis of complementarity and synergy, and develop Joint Investment Projects, including the establishment of Joint Special Economic Zones. They will implement the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission decision, and promote regional and global peace, security and cooperation. They also agree to combat terrorism as well as trafficking in people, arms and drugs in accordance with international

covenants and conventions. The final article says the two countries will establish a High-Level Joint Committee, as well as sub-committees as required, to guide and oversee the implementation of the Agreement.

The Agreement is another step confirming the commitment of Ethiopia and Eritrea to bring closure to decades of hostility and herald the new era of friendship and cooperation launched just six months ago. It was on April 2nd, during his inaugural speech to the parliament, that Prime Minister Dr. Abiy set the process in motion, making it clear that Ethiopia would resolve issues with Eritrea and bring lasting peace and prosperity to the Horn of Africa. Following President Isaias's very positive response, the two countries signed the initial Declaration of Peace and Friendship during Dr. Abiy's historic visit to Asmara on July 9. This was further complemented by President Isaias's visit to Addis Ababa on July 14. This was followed by the reopening of embassies on both sides and other measures to push the rapprochement forward at high speed.

On the occasion of the signing, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy and President Isaias were honored with the Kingdom's highest award, "The Order of King Abdulaziz", for their historic achievement in bringing about peace between their two countries. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in an official statement warmly welcomed the new agreement and praised the leaders of the two countries "for exercising outstanding statesmanship and courage to restore the brotherly relations between their countries and laying the foundation for a new phase that will bring significant developments in the relations between the two nations in all fields."

The signing ceremony was attended by H.M. King Salman of Saudi Arabia, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and UN Secretary-General António Guterres as well as the UAE's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Secretary-General Guterres said that the signing of the new agreement was an "historic event", adding, "We have seen a conflict that has lasted for decades ending, and that has a very important meaning in a world where we see, unfortunately, so many conflicts multiplying, and lasting forever." He commended Prime Minister Dr. Abiy and President Isaias. Lauding the critical role Dr. Abiy played in the process of making peace happen in the Horn of Africa, Mr. Guterres said that the Ethiopian Prime Minister had the capacity to overcome enormous resistance, opening a new chapter in the history of his country. He also commended the President of Eritrea for his prompt response to the peace initiatives and for the way he had responded.

The UAE's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, said he was proud to attend the signing of this "historic agreement, which would build bridges between brothers and bring peoples even more closer." The UAE welcomed the Agreement, which it said came within the context of King Salman's policy to strengthen stability in the region through a well-thought out vision that recognizes the vital, dynamic connection between the security of the Horn of Africa and that of the Arab World. The Egyptian Foreign Ministry described the agreement as "an important development in the Horn of Africa region and the entire continent." It would help end and settle conflicts between the two brotherly countries, and Egypt looked forward to promoting security, peace and stability in the Horn of Africa for the interests of the peoples of the region. The Turkish Foreign Ministry also hailed the peace deal, saying "We believe this peace agreement, which will contribute to the prosperity and well-being of the peoples of Ethiopia and Eritrea, will also serve peace and stability in East Africa."

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Dr. Yousef bin Ahmad Al-Othaimeen, said the Saudi leadership had “always been appreciated in the region as its help is often sought for containing disputes, bridging rifts, and promoting a convergence of views to achieve peace, safety, and stability. We have witnessed today the success of Saudi Arabia’s mediation.” Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary-General of the Muslim World League said this “historic agreement reflects the great attention given by Saudi Arabia to the issues of world peace and its pivotal and important role in achieving it.” He pointed out that this historic event “has proven that the Kingdom, with its wise policy, is one of the most important pillars of world peace, and that it has become in the forefront of its international symbols.”

President Mulatu attends Kofi Annan’s state funeral ceremony in Ghana

President Dr. Mulatu Teshome attended former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s state funeral ceremony in Accra last week on Thursday (September 13). The President headed a high-level Ethiopian delegation which included State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Professor Afework Kassu, Ambassador Gifti Abasiya, Director-General of Women Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other senior government officials. World leaders who also attended the funeral ceremony included UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat.

In his address at the funeral ceremony, President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo of the Republic of Ghana said Mr. Annan brought considerable renown to Ghana by his position and by his conduct and comportment in the global arena. He said: “Charming, cosmopolitan, a consensus-builder, elegant, eloquent, gentle-mannered, modest, polyglot, proud African, peacemaker, quintessential diplomat – these words are still inadequate to capture the fullness of the personality of Kofi Annan, one of the truly iconic figures of modern times.” He stressed that “the outpouring of tributes from the world over is an accurate measure of the man, a man who gave his life to making peace where there was conflict, to defending the voiceless who were powerless, and to promoting virtue where there was evil.”

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 UN/AU/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). In his connection, President Akufo-Addo said he believed that Mr. Annan was an ardent believer in the capacity both of Ghanaians and Africans to chart his or her own course into a path of progress and prosperity, adding that “He, Busumuru Atta Annan, found the vision of a Ghana beyond aid, and indeed an Africa beyond aid, very appealing.” He recalled the “Sensitive, deeply appreciated advice” Mr. Annan gave him when he became President of Ghana in 2017. “Ghana, Africa and the world”, he said, “have suffered greatly from his passing.”

President Akufo-Addo underscored that Mr. Annan’s “epic but unavailing effort” to establish a supremacy of international law over the actions of the world’s greatest power “won him the admiration of all right-thinking persons,” adding, “History has vindicated him.” “Undoubtedly, he excelled in the various undertakings of his life, leaving in his trails most pleasant memories. His was a life well lived.”

As UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan worked closely with Ethiopia’s then Prime Minister Meles Zenawi on various global and continental issues. He also lived and worked in Addis Ababa at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) early in his career as an international civil servant. In a statement released at the end of last month, 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.”

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene, signed the Book of Condolence in honor of the former UN Secretary-General, at the Embassy of the Republic of Ghana in Addis Ababa, at the end of last month. In a statement, the State Minister said, “On behalf of the people and government of the Federal Democratic Republic of [Ethiopia](#) and on my own behalf, I would like to express my heartfelt condolences on the passing away of Mr. Kofi Annan, the former United Nations Secretary General. It is also with a heavy heart that I join the people and government of the Republic of [Ghana](#), the family and friends of Mr. Kofi Annan, to commemorate and pay tribute to the life of this profound and beloved son of Africa.” The State Minister noted that Mr. Kofi Annan was the face of the United Nations and represented multilateralism, adding “He made all Africans proud by his tireless service for the causes of peace, sustainable development, the rights of women, and above all by being a staunch vanguard for the principles of the United Nations Charter”. Most notably, she added, Mr. [Kofi Annan](#) made crucial contributions to help developing countries navigate through, and play a meaningful role, in the increasingly globalized world. Mrs., Hirut said, “Mr. Kofi Annan is highly remembered in my country as a true friend of Ethiopia. His great works and his remarkable legacy as a global champion for peace, development and human rights will remain a true inspiration for all of us in Africa and in particular in Ethiopia”.

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.

State Minister of Foreign Affairs brief the Diplomatic Community

State Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene and Professor Afework Kassu briefed the Diplomatic Community and representatives of International Organizations on the current situation in the country on Wednesday (September 19) and answered questions on recent incidents.

In the briefing to the Ambassadors of various countries and other representatives, it was emphasized that since Dr. Abiy had been elected Prime Minister in the first week of April, the Government had been carrying out a series “of major reforms in a bid to ensure socio-economic development, widening of the political space, ensuring the rule of law, media freedom and respect of human rights”. It was underlined that despite these sweeping economic, political and social reforms, there had been some unrest in parts of the country. This had been “mainly aimed at disrupting the current wind of change”. The recent violence and attacks on innocent civilians, for example at the end of last week, Burayuo town, located 20 km west of Addis Ababa, and its surroundings, constituted “one of these attempts committed by organized criminals to disrupt the ongoing reforms.” The Federal Police Commissioner said the incidents had been intended to incite ethnic violence and those responsible had aimed to spread the violence into Addis Ababa and other areas. Several hundred arrests had been made and a number of weapons seized. The Commissioner also underlined the government’s firm commitment to the rule of law and its determination to bring the perpetrators of these crimes to justice.

The State Ministers stressed that the heinous attacks had led to an unfortunate loss of lives, substantial destruction of property, and the displacement of local residents. After the incidents at Burayuo, there was a largely peaceful demonstration on Monday (September 17) in Addis Ababa. Unfortunately, “five lives were lost when some protesters tried to snatch weapons from the security forces”.

The statement by the National Security Council was referred during the briefing that the incidents had been perpetrated by anti-peace elements in a vain attempt to reverse the ongoing developments in the country. “At a time when the Ethiopian Government and the entire people of the country have embarked on efforts to usher in a new era of widening the democratic space, some forces are working to abort the change by causing unrest in various parts of the country”, The Council statement said the task of building a democratic system was unthinkable without the rule of law and respect for the human and democratic rights. It was underlined that any such scheme would certainly fail as it did not represent the aspirations of the people of Ethiopia”.

The State Ministers assured the members of the diplomatic community that currently everything was under control. There was no need for concern. It was stressed that the government was doing everything possible to respond to the situation and provide for those affected residents in Burayuo. “Together with the government of the Oromia Regional State and the Addis Ababa City Administration as well as volunteers from Burayuo itself and from among Addis Ababa residents, the Federal Government has been providing shelter, food and medicine to those forced to flee from their homes.” More than 300 households have already returned and efforts were in hand to rehabilitate the remainder of those affected.

The State Ministers further said that isolated incidents like the trouble in Burayuo were deeply regrettable, but they were hardly a surprise. Challenges were unfortunately inevitable when a large and diverse nation like Ethiopia was undergoing such an unprecedented series of fast and major reforms. Overall, there was no doubt that, “Ethiopians from all walks of lives are determined to embrace the positive winds of change in the country. Ethiopia will be peaceful, and continue to play its part in regional and global peace and security matters”.

The UN Security Council cautiously commends South Sudan's Peace Agreement...

The UN Security Council met on Tuesday (September 18) for a briefing on South Sudan and to consider the Revitalized Peace Agreement signed last week. Members of the Council welcomed the Agreement but expressed concern about subsequent clashes and the continuing and protracted humanitarian crisis.

Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, briefing the Council on the Secretary-General's 90-day progress report on South Sudan, stressed that the Agreement offered an opportunity to "turn a new page". It provided a road map for peace through reform, political transformation, security, development and national reconciliation. He said he still was concerned about pockets of violence exacerbating the still worsening humanitarian conditions. He said IGAD had been playing a critical role and must continue to bring its influence to bear on the parties to meet their obligations under the Revitalized Agreement. The United Nations, he said, stands ready to help South Sudan achieve the Revitalized Agreement's goals.

Nicholas Haysom, the outgoing Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Sudan and South Sudan, emphasized that while the Agreement might have flaws, it is still an effective platform for peace as long as stakeholders demonstrated the political will to implement it. There were still reservations on some governance issues for example but these were not insurmountable if approached in an inclusive manner. He said the warring parties must demonstrate their willingness to bring an end to their conflict by "making their guns fall silent. Immediately and everywhere." Mr. Haysom said an assessment of the sustainability of the agreement was necessary and this should include its enforceability, political accountability and trust levels. He said confidence building measures were needed to build faith in the peace process, following the years of inter-communal violence. He also warned that potential donors would not be willing to fund the peace process unless there was financial transparency, and accountability for the past misuse of public funds. Mr. Haysom also underlined that IGAD and the Security Council must engage to determine the size and composition of peacekeeping forces.

Mr. Lacroix and Mr. Haysom both supported the proposal of IGAD that Sudan, Uganda, Djibouti and Somali troops should join the Regional Protection Force deployed in Juba. They would be tasked with, among other things, the protection of the opposition leaders once they return to the country to take part in the transitional government. IGAD issued a statement on Monday (September 17) saying last week's IGAD Summit had mandated Somalia and Djibouti to deploy troops to South Sudan to join Sudan and Uganda as guarantors, to contribute forces to enhance the protection and security, and to safeguard security and the implementation of the peace agreement. The statement said the Summit had mandated IGAD Chiefs of Staff to assess the operational needs and detail the tasks of the Regional Protection Force "as a basis for a securing endorsement from the African Union Peace and Security Council and the UN Security Council."

Ismail Wais, the IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan, addressing the Council via video, said the landmark Agreement deserves robust support. The all-inclusive process leading to its signing allowed all parties, including estranged groups, women and young people, to participate. He commended the people and Government of South Sudan for their efforts to

advance the peace process, adding that rebuilding South Sudan and addressing the dire humanitarian situation were priorities and all efforts must be made to achieve those common objectives. Speaking on behalf of the South Sudan Civil Society Forum, Grace John, Governance and Peace Manager of the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization, said people were desperately hoping that commitment to the Revitalized Agreement was genuine. She urged the Council to act decisively on a range of concerns, press IGAD to advocate continued engagement with the holdout group, insist on the immediate establishment of a Hybrid Court on South Sudan to end impunity for grave human rights violations, and exert pressure on parties to honor the ceasefire urgently and fully.

In the discussions, South Sudan's representative said President Salva Kiir had pledged to implement the Revitalized Agreement in good faith, appealing for reconciliation among the people. While the Agreement was difficult and complicated, this must not undermine its significance. The Revitalized Agreement should be seen as a positive turn of events, an achievement upon which to build. He urged the Council to join the Secretary-General, the African Union and IGAD in making peace a reality in South Sudan at long last.

Council members applauded the Agreement, describing it as a great example of "African solutions to African problems", and underlined the importance of an inclusive and genuine political process. It offered a chance to forge a prosperous future. Ethiopia, the chair of IGAD, noted the Revitalized Agreement was unique in that all parties signed without reservations. The process was conducted in an all-inclusive, transparent manner, with all political organizations, including estranged groups, fully involved in the negotiations. The continued commitment of all parties needed support from IGAD, the African Union and the United Nations. The Security Council's role was particularly important ensuring both the deployment of the Regional Protection Force and a review of its mandate. Speakers paid tribute to IGAD's hard work in bringing the parties together to sign the Revitalized Agreement, stressing the Security Council must remain united in supporting IGAD, the African Union and those parties in South Sudan who are implementing the Agreement's provisions. The international community should work to build trust between the parties, as well as provide sustained funding for humanitarian assistance and peace-building

Members also expressed concern that all perpetrators of rights violations should be held accountable and underlined the need for strengthened international cooperation in order to promote sustainable development, specifically in the fields of health and nutrition. Another major area of disquiet was the continuing dire humanitarian situation with almost 2 million people displaced within South Sudan and some 6 million needing assistance and another 2.5 million being forced to live in neighboring countries. South Sudan remained among the most dangerous environments for humanitarian workers in the world and more must be done to protect those providing assistance. Speakers expressed particular concern over the reports of attacks on women and girls, the displacement of millions and the hunger and suffering of many citizens. A permanent ceasefire is essential for rapid, safe and unhindered access to the population and safety of humanitarian personnel.

... And has a briefing on Somalia

The UN Security Council met to consider the situation in Somalia on Thursday last week (September 13). The Council was briefed by Michael Keating, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia and head of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), in his final briefing to the Council. Mr. Keating has completed three years as the

senior UN official in Somalia and is being replaced by Mr. Nicolas Haysom, currently the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Sudan and South Sudan, on October 1.

Mr. Keating told the Council, "The structural problems that shape Somali politics and security have not fundamentally changed," though this should not obscure some remarkable achievements in the last three years. He listed the peaceful transition of presidential power; election of a new Upper House representing the federal states had been set up; famine avoided in 2017; and successes in conflict prevention and resolution. These included prevention of conflict between "Puntland" and Somaliland through intense diplomatic activity by the UN, IGAD and others. A national framework for addressing chronic insecurity was now in place. Mr. Keating also noted the plan for the transition of lead security responsibility from AMISOM to the Somali security forces was being implemented. There was, he said, a Government with "a compelling reform agenda, anchored in the strong partnership between the President and the Prime Minister."

However, political differences could still bring a grinding halt to progress, to the passage of key legislation, to the implementation of the Government's reform or even to its security agenda. Another risk was disagreements within the international community or the Security Council. Somalia was vulnerable to rivalries among its partners. Mr. Keating stressed the importance of predictable funding and a clear drawdown horizon for AMISOM, warning that any premature departure could be disastrous. The dangers of another humanitarian catastrophe remained high. Somalia's future, he stressed, was in the hands of the Somalis, and political will alone was not enough. Practical capacities were essential, as were truly inclusive politics.

Ambassador Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union, said Somalia was on the way to taking ownership of its future, with tangible progress, triggered by the concerted efforts of its people, the leadership and international partners. There were initiatives enhancing efforts for increased stability, reconciliation, economic growth and prosperity without corruption, and progress on the transition plan, the sharing of power and resources, and issues related to constitutional reform. The creation of a commission to support political agreement at the leadership level was a landmark effort. At the same time, progress could never be taken for granted, and he emphasized that the dividends of peace were constantly under threat from competition for power, violent extremism and other obstacles. Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) told the Council that, "Peace will not be achieved by military means alone." She said: "I know Somalia will not have long-lasting peace and deep reconciliation without women's far-reaching contribution and recognition." Somalia was an important test case for the Secretary-General's gender parity goals and there was a need to support women's participation, not just in elections or electoral reforms, but in efforts to advance national and local reconciliation, prevent violent extremism and reform the security sector.

Council members welcomed further progress on the efforts for electoral reform, anti-corruption initiatives and improvements to the economy. There was concern that recovery remained fragile, and considerable emphasis on need to overcome the current difficulties between the Federal Government and the federal states. There was a need for better cooperation between the federal and state governments on such issues as power sharing, revising the Constitution, holding elections, supporting security, and establishing a federal justice model. Somali authorities must boost power sharing and security reform efforts.

The transition of security responsibilities to Somali forces must continue along an agreed timeline. Progress must be made in implementing the transition plan, which depended on establishing a strong national security architecture, and in ensuring that AMISOM's mandate is reconfigured to maintain the trajectory towards eventual withdrawal. Speakers offered support for the swift implementation of the national security architecture's reform and the transition plan, emphasizing that the plan must be implemented in a coordinated way and international partners must play their part. There was general agreement that AMISOM remained vital and required predictable support from the international community.

Council members expressed dismay at Al-Shabaab's attacks against Government buildings in Mogadishu, and the security situation remained worrying. They commended the troops operating in Somalia, as well as AMISOM's efforts and initiatives to transfer security responsibility to Somali forces. Reforming the security sector rests on phasing out AMISOM and a strong justice framework, but the transfer of security responsibility from AMISOM to national security forces was essential to avoid a security vacuum. The Federal Government and AMISOM should accelerate implementation of the transition plan; the next months were critical to success and the international community must show its support. Commitments must be translated into concrete action.

The positive regional developments, occurring at an astonishing pace and largely driven by the rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea, were welcomed. "The wind of change blowing across the Horn of Africa has rekindled a new sense of hope and optimism for regional peace and stability." Reconciliation and the start of normalization between Ethiopia and Eritrea as well as Eritrea and Djibouti, Sudan and Somalia had already provided the possibility of extended economic integration and a wider political response.

The Somali representative said inclusive politics and legitimate governance were the basis for future progress, and he urged all the Federal states to "join us at the table" to enable constructive dialogue. He noted the steady progress made by the Federalization Negotiation Technical Committee, working to establish an election model, and share resources and the allocation of powers. He said economic recovery was a priority for the Government, highlighting its work with the International Monetary Fund and initiatives to mobilize domestic revenue. And stressed: "We will continue strong on the path of realizing our common vision of a peaceful, stable and democratic Somalia that is self-reliant and an evident factor of perpetual regional peace and cooperation."

A UK Parliamentary delegation visits Sudan

A parliamentary delegation from the UK has been visiting Sudan this week (September 16-20), meeting senior officials, civil society organizations, business people and opposition parties. The all-party delegation was made up of two Labour Party MPs, a Conservative Party MP and a Liberal Democrat member of the House of Lords. The Chairperson of the Sudan parliamentary sub-committee on European affairs, Ms. Hayat Adam Abdel-Rahim said the delegation was meeting with National Assembly Speaker Ibrahim Ahmed Omer and a number of chairpersons of parliamentary sub-committees. They met some Sudanese businessmen. The delegation also visited North Darfur State and where they saw a number of Internally Displaced Persons camps including Abu Shouk and met with representatives of the hybrid

peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID) in North Darfur. On their return to Khartoum the delegation met with members of the National Dialogue Coordination Committee.

The delegation met with Foreign Minister El-Dirdeiry Mohamed Ahmed on Monday (September 17) and discussed ways to promote bilateral cooperation between the two countries, particularly on human rights issues. A Foreign Ministry spokesperson said the two sides praised evolving relations in light of the strategic dialogue between the two countries which covers all aspect of joint cooperation. The Minister briefed the delegation on Sudan's efforts to achieve peace in the region particularly in South Sudan and the Central African Republic and welcomed the international community's support for South Sudan's peace process. He also welcomed recent positive developments in the region, noting the recent agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea would have a positive impact on stability and development in the Horn of Africa. He also underlined that the Sudan and the United States would soon engage in a second phase of normalization talks, praising the UK efforts to assist in this. The British parliamentarians praised Sudan's efforts to achieve peace in South Sudan and welcomed the recent agreement.

The visit was organized by the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group for Sudan and South Sudan, a cross-party group raising issues of peace, social justice, and human rights in both countries. Since 2015, at Sudan's request, the two countries have been holding a dialogue on developing bilateral ties. In March 2016, Sudan and the UK held their first strategic consultation meeting in Khartoum. It was the first such talks at ministerial level in 25 years. They agreed to exchange visits at senior official level as well as develop increasing cooperation in the fields of economy, investment and culture. Earlier this month, Lord Tariq Ahmad Khan, the UK State Minister for the Commonwealth and the United Nations visited Sudan and met with senior members of the Government, UN officials, peacekeepers and Sudanese civil society. The UK Minister of State for Africa, Harriett Baldwin, also made a three-day-visit to Khartoum last month when she discussed bilateral relations and ways to support Sudan to achieve political stability and economic reform.

The UK is one of the three Troika countries, along with Norway and the US, that support the African Union peace process to end the armed conflicts in the Two-Areas and Darfur region.