

A Week in the Horn 5.10.2018

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News in Brief

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The General Debate of the 73rd Session of the UN General Assembly started on Tuesday last week (September 25) and concluded on Monday this week (October 1). UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, said: “Multilateralism is under fire precisely when we need it most,” and the President of the General Assembly stressed the United Nations was as relevant today as when the Organization was founded. Multilateralism was the only viable response to global problems and she invited Member States to focus on gender equality, empowerment of women, refugees and migrants; creation of jobs, rights of persons with disabilities, greater youth participation in politics, peace and security, and revitalization of the United Nations. African and world leaders gave their views on climate change, nuclear proliferation, unilateralism, large-scale migration, economic inequality, elimination of extreme poverty reform of the United Nations, sustainable development, terrorism and cybersecurity, freedom of the press and electoral processes and expanded multilateral cooperation. The general debate concluded amid calls for regional solidarity, multilateralism and respect for human rights. **(See article)**

Ethiopia

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu headed the high-level Ethiopian delegation to the 73rd UN General Assembly. The delegation included State Ministers of Foreign Affairs Mrs. Hirut Zemene and Professor Afework Kassu, and other high-level officials from different sectors. They participated in numerous different meetings, bilateral discussions and consultations. Dr. Workneh addressed the 73rd United Nations General Assembly on Friday (September 28). **(See article)**

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh met with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, in New York and discussed on a range of issues focusing on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues. The Minister briefed the Secretary of State on the changes taking place in Ethiopia and requested the Secretary of State to support the ongoing institution-building, deepen democracy, ensure good governance, human rights and encourage business and trade to harness the available opportunities in Ethiopia. Mr. Pompeo appreciated the reforms being undertaken by Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed. He said the United States would work closely with the Government of Ethiopia to support institution-building. He also praised the ongoing and positive development of peace in the Horn of Africa and assured the Minister of US support to work with Ethiopia to advance peace and stability.

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh and Eritrea's Foreign Minister Osman Saleh met with Italy's

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Enzo Moavero in New York last week. Minister Moavero stressed the peace sealed between Ethiopia and Eritrea was "a great achievement, capable of having a positive fallout on the entire region." He assured his counterparts of Italy's firm and active support for the full enforcement of the Peace Agreement both at bilateral level and at different international and multilateral levels. He said Italy was motivated and ready to support Ethiopia's and Eritrea's economic growth and sustainable development through cooperation activities and education and vocational training programs. He invited both Dr. Workneh and Mr. Saleh to attend and actively participate in the Italy-Africa Conference in Rome on October 25.

Dr. Workneh met with the Foreign Ministers of Eritrea and Djibouti in New York last week to discuss issues relating to strengthening trilateral peace, friendship and cooperation between and among the neighboring countries in the region. He said the forgiveness and reconciliation ideology of Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, was not confined to Ethiopia but aimed beyond its borders to encourage peace and stability in the Horn of Africa, and obtain international support and appreciation for normalization and rapprochement in this region. The three ministers reaffirmed their collaboration to advance "the whirlwind of peace and cooperation" and work closely together to take the recent gains to a higher level and ensure economic integration.

Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu received copies of credentials of the newly appointed Ambassador of the Republic of the Sudan to Ethiopia, Ambassador Elsadig Bakheit Elfaki Abdalla on Monday (October 01). Dr. Workneh underlined the fact that Ethiopia and the Sudan have enjoyed excellent bilateral relations and strong people to people ties. Praising the constantly growing strong cooperation between the two counties, the Minister also stressed on the need to do more in areas of economic cooperation.

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Professor Afework Kassu, participated in the annual G77 Foreign Ministers' meeting, on Friday (September 28). **(See article)**

Professor Afework received copies of credentials of the newly appointed Ambassador of Canada to Ethiopia, Ambassador Antoine Chevrier on Tuesday (October 02). The two sides deliberated on ways of further strengthening the bilateral relationship. The State Minister noted the historical ties and long standing cooperation between Ethiopia and Canada, adding that the two countries would further work more closely to expedite their cooperation in bilateral and multilateral fora.

In his media briefing on Thursday (October 4), the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Meles Alem said the Ministry is undergoing substantial structural reform in a bid to create an institution that can effectively deal with the challenges of foreign policy and statecraft in the 21st century. The changes would provide for an effective and digitalized institution to protect and promote foreign policy goals and advance the national interest, he added.

The Director of Ethiopia's Administration for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA), Hadera Abera Admasu, gave Ethiopia's statement at the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR, the UN Agency for Refugees, this week (October 1-5) in Geneva. **(See article)**

Freedom House, the US advocacy organization, in testimony to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs, Sub-committee on Africa last month said this was "a pivotal moment in Ethiopia's history." "If reform efforts continue on their current trajectory, Ethiopia could become one of the few victories for democratic governance at a time when many countries are moving in the wrong direction. Much remains to be done, and support from the international community will be needed." **(See article)**

The 20th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies (ICES20) opened at Mekelle University, on October 1. The five-day conference is being held under the theme of "Regional and Global Ethiopia – Interconnections and Identities".

The 2018 Ethiopian Culture Festival has been celebrated colorfully in Chuncheon City, Republic of Korea, in front of the Memorial Hall for Ethiopian veterans. The festival was organized to honor Ethiopian soldiers who fought for the freedom of Korea during the Korean War and to promote Ethiopian history, culture and coffee. The event was organized by the support of the Mayor and people of Chuncheon City. Bekuma Merdassa, Charge d'Affaires of the Ethiopian Embassy in South Korea, Embassy staff, and members of the Ethiopian community participated in the festival to promote people-to-people relationship between the two countries.

Ambassador Shiferaw Jarso, Ethiopia's Ambassador to the Sudan met with leaders and members of Ethio-Sudanese Business Council at an event organized by the Ethiopian Embassy in collaboration with Mr. Wagdi Marghani CEO of Mahgoub and Sons Group and Chairman of the Ethio-Sudanese Business Council. Also attending were the Chairman of the Sudanese International Peoples' Friendship Council, the newly appointed Ambassador of the Sudan to Ethiopia, and high-ranking government officials. The Chairman of the Friendship Council noted Sudan was preparing to send a second public diplomacy team to Ethiopia before the end of the year. Mr. Wagdi Marghani said a lot of business opportunities are emerging as a result of political and economic reforms in Ethiopia, and he welcomed the new peace initiatives

starting with normalization of relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea and now being followed by other countries in the region. He said they were creating a conducive investment climate and access to market for investors.

The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) has completed the restoration of the Al-Nejashi Mosque, the tomb of the Abyssinian King Al- Nejashi, and 15 tombs of the disciples of Prophet Muhammed (Peace Be Upon Him). Located in the town of Wukro, 790 kilometers north of Addis Ababa, Al-Nejashi, the Site of the First Hijra by the disciples of Prophet Muhammad following persecution and torture in Makkah, was the First Mosque in Africa.

Djibouti

Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Djibouti told the UN General Assembly of the positive developments in the Horn of Africa. The thaw in relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea had offered significant consequences for the region. The Presidents of Djibouti and Eritrea had met and agreed to open a new chapter between their brotherly countries and hold dialogue on remaining issues. **(See article)**

Eritrea

Foreign Minister Osman Saleh Mohammed led the Eritrean delegation to the UN General Assembly. In his speech to the General Assembly on Saturday (September 29) he called for the immediate lifting of sanctions on Eritrea. **(See article)**

At the Council of Ministers meeting last week chaired by President Isaias, the Cabinet reiterated the five pillars that should govern regional partnerships. These were: respect of each other's sovereignty; the articulated Framework of Common Interests; the Rejection of harmful extraneous agendas; a Conducive regional climate; and Sectors of Synergy.

Kenya

Addressing the UN General Assembly last week, President Kenyatta emphasized the impact of corruption by major corporations misrepresenting earnings to deny governments the revenues needed for investment in development. The outflow of funds from Africa between 1980 and 2009, far surpassed the money Africa received from outside. Illicit capital powered a global corrupt network used by drug cartels and terrorist organizations. He also called for increased international support for AMISOM and for Somalia. **(See article)**

Somalia

Foreign Minister, Ahmed Awad Isse, told the UN General assembly of the major strides in security sector reform and political and economic transformation that the government had made since assuming office a year and a half ago. Thanking AMISOM for its efforts, he called on the United Nations to lift the arms embargo on Somalia and allow it to consolidate its collective security gains and provide further support to its institutions. **(See article)**

Uganda Prime Minister Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda, speaking at the UN General Assembly on Thursday (September 27) warned that any reduction of peacekeeping troops in Somalia should match the strengthening of the country's security forces. If it did not do so, the political and security gains could be endangered. Uganda, with more than 6,000 troops in

Somalia, is the largest contributor to AMISOM. Other troop contributing countries are Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya. Dr. Rugunda cited Somalia as the ideal example of collaboration between the UN and African Union on African problems. (See article)

A two-day meeting was held this week by representatives from AMISOM, the United Kingdom Mission Support Team, United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS), the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), the United States Army, the Turkish Army, and the European Union Training Mission (EUTM) to devise ways of reducing the threat posed by Improvised Explosive Devices in Somalia. Participants discussed mitigation efforts, while analysing the impact of IEDs along the main supply routes. The meeting considered the nature of capacity building support to the Somali National Security Forces and in counter-IED efforts. It agreed to intensify sensitization of local populations on the impact of IEDs and to form multi-stakeholder teams in all AMISOM sectors to offer quick solutions to mitigate rising threats from explosives.

The European Union said its Training Mission in Somalia (EUTM) would continue the training of Somali troops in spite of a car bomb attack on one of its convoys on Monday (October 1) in Mogadishu. No EUTM personnel were injured but three people died. The Mission condemned the attack and expressed its condolences to the families of those killed. The EU launched its training mission in 2010.

South Sudan

President Kiir, in a speech at Army headquarters in Juba on Thursday (September 27) directed the South Sudanese army and other regular forces to abide by the revitalized peace agreement. He underlined the need to fully observe the rule of law and to not commit any attacks on civilians in the country. He said military courts would be established to punish the perpetrators of any aggression on civilians. He has also ordered the army to refrain from revenge attacks and retaliation and directed army forces to cease the training of any recruits immediately.

First Vice President Taban Deng Gai speaking to the UN General Assembly on Friday (September 28) emphasized the government's commitment to the revitalized peace agreement signed on September 12. He called for the "speedy normalization of Sudan and the United States and the total lifting of sanctions on Sudan. (See article)

First Vice President Taban Deng Gai and UN Secretary-General António Guterres discussed the next steps towards the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement in New York last week. The Secretary-General congratulated South Sudan on the considerable progress made in the peace talks and the political goodwill demonstrated by all parties culminating in the signing of the final revitalized Peace Agreement on September 12. He encouraged the

Government to "undertake confidence and trust-building measures amongst the parties to help ensure the smooth implementation of the Agreement."

The Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) has welcomed President Kiir's Presidential Order to release all Prisoners of War and political detainees, issued on Thursday last week (September 27), and urged immediate implementation. In a statement on Monday (October 1), JMEC Deputy Chairperson Lt. General Njoroge urged all peace parties to "honour their commitment to the R-ARCSS, to cooperate with the ICRC and release all PoWs and Political Detainees without further delay". The statement also urged all parties and

stakeholders to submit a complete list of their nominees to the various Agreement Institutions and Mechanisms immediately; and to facilitate the operationalization of the Transitional Security Arrangements and the voluntary repatriation, resettlement, rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees and internally displaced persons.

Sudan

President Omer al-Bashir renewed his call to rebel groups to renounce violence, stressing the government's keenness to achieve comprehensive peace in the country. Speaking to the National Legislature on Monday (October 1), the President quoted the national dialogue and the unilateral cessation of hostilities. He praised the success of the disarmament campaign and said the government would launch a national project to rebuild the Sudan Armed Forces to protect the country and maintain its sovereignty. He called on the international community to support Sudan's efforts to combat illegal migration and human trafficking and to bear its responsibility towards the refugees.

Former Minister for Foreign Affairs, El-Dirdiri Mohamed Ahmed, addressing the UN General Assembly welcomed the leadership role of the United Nations to promote sustainable development. He noted the government's efforts to implement economic and fiscal reforms to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development and called for the removal of unilateral sanctions on Sudan to increase its ability to engage in development activities. He also called for the removal of Sudan from the list of countries supporting terrorism. **(See article)**

The Army Chiefs of Staff of Sudan and South Sudan met in Khartoum on Sunday (September 30) to discuss ways to consolidate joint cooperation before taking part in a regional meeting on the implementation of the security arrangements of the revitalized peace agreement. On Monday last week Sudan and South Sudan signed an agreement to take all necessary measures to activate the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone between the two countries, and agreed to activate the joint cooperation agreement signed in 2012. This covers the opening of crossing points and the border demilitarized area, as well as other security arrangements. South Sudan Army Chief of Staff General Gabriel Jok Riak said with the end of the conflict in South Sudan the two countries had the opportunity to cooperate and protect their joint interests.

A high-level meeting on Darfur on Friday (September 28) in New York agreed on the creation of a Group of Friends to support the transition from peacekeeping to peace-building and development in Darfur. Convened by UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergu, participants included representatives of China, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Morocco, Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Sudan, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. The Deputy Secretary-General said it was time to consolidate the gains on the ground and make sure that Darfur moved towards peace and development. The "Group of Friends of the Transition in Darfur" should provide political support and ensure the United Nations Country Team has sufficient resources to achieve the transitional tasks. She also proposed "holding a pledging conference in the near future to ensure there is no gap in critical work as UNAMID draws down."

The General Debate of the UN General Assembly:

The General Debate of the 73rd Session of the UN General Assembly started last week (September 25) and concluded on Monday this week (October 1). UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, speaking at the opening noted that with the world suffering from a bad case of “trust deficit disorder”, its leaders must not only advance the welfare of their people, but also promote a reformed, reinvigorated and strengthened multilateral system. He said: “Multilateralism is under fire precisely when we need it most,” and he warned that shifts in the balance of power between nations might increase the risk of confrontation. He appealed for a renewed commitment to a rules-based order, with the United Nations at its centre. “In the face of massive existential threats to people and planet...there is no way forward but collective, common-sense action for the common good; this is how we rebuild trust,” he said. The Secretary-General said the world had reached a pivotal moment when world leaders must guarantee implementation of the 2016 Paris Agreement on Climate Change to avoid “runaway climate change”. The upcoming Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change must be a success, he said. He planned to convene a summit on the issue in September 2019. He also stressed the need to address the impact of new technologies to avert a new arms race, inviting the international community to embrace the United Nations as a platform to nurture a digital future that is safe and beneficial for all.

The President of the General Assembly, Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés (Ecuador), said the United Nations was as relevant today as it was 73 years ago when the Organization was founded. Multilateralism was the only viable response to global problems and she invited Member States to focus on seven priorities: gender equality and the empowerment of women; implementation of new global agreements on refugees and migrants; the creation of decent work opportunities; protection of the environment; the rights of persons with disabilities; the revitalization of the United Nations; and peace and security. She also underlined that the role of the General Assembly must be the world’s chief peacebuilding organization championing initiatives to ensure greater youth participation in politics.

Over the next few days, world leaders and representatives shared their views on the world’s most pressing challenges, ranging from climate change, nuclear proliferation and denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, unilateralism, and protracted conflicts to large-scale migration, economic inequality and the elimination of extreme poverty through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Other issues included reform of the United Nations and the Security Council, sustainable development, with calls for expanded multilateral cooperation. Successful transitions from conflict to peace, offering proof that diplomacy and multilateralism were effective, were highlighted. There was emphasis on the continuing threats of terrorism and cybersecurity and on the need to protect freedom of the press and peaceful electoral processes.

The general debate concluded amid calls for regional solidarity, multilateralism and respect for human rights. President Garcés noted the almost unanimous agreement on the irreplaceability of the United Nations. Speakers had presented a snapshot of the state of the world. They had defended multilateralism urging all States to pursue it in the face of global challenges. They had highlighted the benefits of regional cooperation and dialogue as a means to promote sustainable development, security and stability. They had marked the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, discussed gender equality and safe migration, and focused on issues of sustainable development and the threats of climate chan

...Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh details the “winds of change” in the Horn

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu headed the high-level Ethiopian delegation to the 73rd UN General Assembly which opened on September 18. The delegation included State Ministers of Foreign Affairs Mrs. Hirut Zemene and Professor Afework Kassu, and other high-level officials from different sectors. They participated in numerous different meetings, bilateral discussions and consultations.

In his address to the 73rd United Nations General Assembly on Friday (September 28), Dr. Workneh paid tribute to the late Mr. Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations: “This, of course, is a year in which the United Nations lost one of its icons, someone who rose through the ranks to lead the organization and someone who, as the Secretary-General rightly said, truly represented what the United Nations is all about. We mourn the loss of this illustrious son of Africa who left an enduring mark on the world stage”.

Dr. Workneh described the year as a time when multilateralism was facing serious challenges and yet there had never been a time “when we need multilateralism more”. This was why such a gathering of nations under the umbrella of the United Nations was so important. It remained the only universal organization whose ideals of freedom, equality and justice are still as valid today as they were at its inception. He quoted Emperor Haile Selassie’s words to the General Assembly in October 1963: “The Charter of the United Nations expresses the noblest aspirations of man: abjuration of force in the settlement of disputes between states; the assurance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion; the safeguarding of international peace and security”. This, said Dr. Workneh, remained profoundly true, adding that Ethiopia, as a founding member of the United Nations, would continue to adhere to these ideals and to the principles of multilateralism “as we face unprecedented challenges and threats to our community of nations”. He noted Ethiopia’s contribution to United Nations peacekeeping was second to none., adding, “We remain totally committed to this noble endeavour as we reform and adapt to the new and challenging realities of peacekeeping. We fully endorse the Secretary-General’s Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the Declaration of Shared Commitments to United Nations Peacekeeping to tackle the challenges peacekeeping faces today”.

Dr. Workneh noted the positive winds of change that were now evident in Ethiopia under the leadership of Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed. He underlined that this had opened a new chapter in Ethiopia’s political and social history, offering realistic and genuine possibilities of change to meet the hopes and expectations of the country’s youthful population. These were: “changes that are in line with the new political and democratic realities we are implementing; changes that have been welcomed and embraced by Ethiopians across the length and breadth of the country”. The new leadership, he said, had the vision of creating a just, peaceful, equitable and sustainable society by way of building a new society on the foundations and achievements of the past.

There were, of course, continuing challenges in working to ensure the benefits of economic growth and development were widely shared among all sections of its people. To this end, he said, “We are working today to widen and deepen the reforms necessary to promote democratic governance and the rule of law; to promote fairness and justice, better financial and economic management; to promote transparency and accountability across the entire administration of governance; to promote popular participation and an effective democracy”.

Minister Workneh stressed: “We have exerted every effort to make sure all this, together with our message of forgiveness and reconciliation strengthens the unity and solidarity of our people”. The new government led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed was continuing to take measures to open up democratic space in every direction, open up the economy, and remove previous constraints on development such as corruption, human rights violations, and failures of administration and governance.

Dr. Workneh also underlined that the momentous changes in Ethiopia had peace dividends for the Horn of Africa and this was another highly important and historic development. In the previous three months Prime Minister Dr. Abiy had launched an equally significant process of reconciliation across the region. It was the start of a real process of normalization between and among the countries of the Horn. Ethiopia and Eritrea had opened a new chapter in their relationship, ending two decades of conflict and charting a future in which their relationship will reflect the longstanding ties between the peoples of the two countries. Somalia and Eritrea had reconciled their differences and re-established diplomatic relations, marking a new chapter of relationship between their two countries. Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia held a Trilateral Summit in Asmara, and their Foreign Ministers then visited Djibouti, opening a new phase in relations between Djibouti and Eritrea. Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed and President Isais Afeworki of Eritrea recently signed a further comprehensive cooperation Agreement in Jeddah; and Presidents of Eritrea and Djibouti also met, ending a decade of dispute. The South Sudanese parties had signed the Revitalized Peace Agreement for South Sudan at an Extraordinary IGAD Summit, offering the real prospect for peace in South Sudan after five years of civil war.

The AU Commission Chairperson had described these developments as a “clear demonstration of the value and effectiveness of the search of African solutions to African problems.” And Dr. Workneh said in light of these important and positive developments: “It is only appropriate and timely that the Security Council now seriously considers lifting the sanctions imposed on Eritrea”.

While mindful of these ongoing major steps towards “silencing the guns”, Dr. Workneh underlined the importance of extending the process to promote a framework for regional economic integration to fight poverty. Regional economic cooperation would also make a real contribution to help rid of violence and war as well as promote “deeper regional and continental integration in line with Agenda 2063.” He emphasized that Ethiopia remained firmly committed to exerting every effort towards creating peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies in the sub-region and the continent at large. He said: “As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, we have been doing everything we can to support this important and noble cause and we will continue to do so in the spirit and commitment of nurturing peace, security and stability for the common good of our countries”.

...Eritrea demands the rescinding of sanctions

Foreign Minister Osman Saleh Mohammed led the Eritrean delegation to the UN General Assembly. In his speech to the General Assembly on Saturday (September 29), he called for the immediate lifting of sanctions on Eritrea.

Mr. Saleh underlined that Eritrea and Ethiopia had recently signed a historic Peace Agreement bringing an end to “the dark, two-decades-old chapter of war, constant tension, and strife.” This historic achievement would allow both countries to funnel their resources, potential and positive energy solely towards much-needed development. He added, “It has already infused hope and optimism on the peoples of both countries”. It was already providing a positive dividend for regional peace and security as attested by “the new frameworks of all-rounded cooperation that have been set in motion in the past two months or that are in the offing at the regional level.” The Minister expressed Eritrea’s gratitude to the various countries that had contributed in different ways to the success of the process and demonstrated their political goodwill.

In conclusion, the Minister stressed the need for an immediate lifting of sanctions on Eritrea. Indeed, it is to be noted that all countries of the Horn of Africa region have unanimously called for the lifting of sanctions on Eritrea.

...South Sudan: committed to the new peace agreement

South Sudan’s First Vice-President, Taban Deng Gai, called on the international community to put aside scepticism about Juba’s commitment to the new peace deal, despite earlier failed agreements. He said the peace agreement signed in the presence of the IGAD Heads of States and Governments on September 12, in Addis Ababa, included all the parties, the Transitional Government of National Unity, Juba People Liberation Army, South Sudan Opposition Alliance, Former Detainees, other political Parties and stakeholders. The agreement was attended and witnessed by IGAD Heads of States and Governments, the international community, the African Union, the European Union, the United Nations, the Troika, China, international partners and friends of South Sudan.

Mr. Denga said South Sudan was ready to welcome regional forces to monitor the security arrangements under new deal including the cantonment of forces agreement. It encouraged IGAD and the African Union to work with the United Nations Security Council on support that can be provided by United Nations Mandated Regional Protection Force to ensure that peace holds in the country. He emphasized the commitment to security sector reform, combat impunity and upholding human rights.

The First Vice-President said: “I have been asked specifically why my government believes that Addis Ababa peace accord signed between the two warring parties on September 12 is a permanent peace this time?” He quoted an African proverb to show that the leaders had changed their attitude – “look where you have slipped, because it is there you will find what made you fall.” He called on members of the United Nations family, including those who are sceptical, to give a peace chance. His government, he said, had unreservedly embraced diplomatic efforts led by IGAD. South Sudan has embarked on a national dialogue and grassroots people-to-people peace initiative. It was seeking national healing through an inclusive nationwide dialogue process; a multi-layered approach to repair the country’s social fabric. A grassroots component is working with local communities to identify causes of division while also searching for solutions on how to heal them. It was a process that allowed for those who did not have an opportunity to have their voices heard to begin putting across their various viewpoints. This would be vital, he said, as the country moves forward in its peace pro

... President Kenyatta identifies corruption as a major threat to multilateralism

President Uhuru Kenyatta expressed strong support for the General Assembly's intention to better enable the United Nations Human Settlement Program (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) to fulfil their global mandates. Equally, he emphasized the need for broader reforms. In every part of the world, he said, there was a growing trust gap between citizens and their governing institutions, due to growing awareness of the scourge of corruption and wastage of public resources. Looking beyond individual corruption, he said that major corporations were misrepresenting earnings to deny governments the revenues that were needed for investment in public development. The corrupt dealings of cartels and oligopolies pillaging Africa's resources "have over several decades been clothed in the garments of legality"

Citizens all over the world were becoming more aware that a globalized financial and legal system enables the illegal conduct of corrupt individuals, with Africa enduring the most suffering. He noted the evidence that increasingly marked Africa as a net exporter of capital through illicit outflows. Conservative estimates were that the outflow ranged between \$1.2 and \$1.4 trillion between 1980 and 2009, roughly equal to the continent's current gross domestic product. This surpassed by far the money Africa received from outside over the same period. Illicit capital, he said, powered a global corrupt network used by drug cartels and even terrorist organizations. It had driven a loss of trust in national, regional and global governing institutions, and enabled populists and extremists who thrived in chronic instability.

President Kenyatta praised the regional efforts of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which had, he said degraded Al-Shabaab, one of Al-Qaeda's most ambitious affiliates. "Kenya has been part of this journey from the start", he said, and the Kenyan people had provided material and moral support to bring a transitional Federal State into existence: "The Kenyan people have lost lives and property in pursuit of peace in Somalia, and the job is not yet done." With military success over Al-Shabaab a necessity to provide for political and economic solutions, he called for increased international support, commensurate with the continued threat, emphasizing: "What the international community is doing with Somalia is not good enough," he stated. The President also underlined that forging stability and peace in South Sudan required a commitment to continue to work closely with South Sudanese parties in the wake of the revitalized peace agreement. Kenya, he said, was proud of its role there and he called on the international community to redouble its efforts to end the suffering of the South Sudan people, as "in building peace, there are no silver bullets".

The President also noted that multilateralism was under severe strain globally, threatening the system of trade and security established after the Second World War under the United Nations. Calling for bold solutions, he said the global community must fight impunity and corruption, fraud and abuse of public trust. Kenya had reached out to partners in Switzerland and the United Kingdom to counter transfers of illegal proceeds to their banking and financial systems, but bilateral agreements must be accompanied by determined reforms. One such reform, he added, must occur in the Security Council. He called for two permanent seats for Africa in the Council, to counter the "historical injustice" of its under-representation in the non-permanent Member category. "Global decision-making needs more of Africa, if the world is to respond wisely to the demographic and economic shifts underway," he insisted.

... Climate change and refugees in Uganda

The Prime Minister of Uganda, Ruhakana Rugunda, underlined that Uganda's development transformation could not take place without peace and security and emphasized that Uganda must be unwavering in its resolve to combat terrorism. Religious extremism and terrorism from groups like Al-Shabaab or Boko Haram, he said, severely threatened security and development. This threat was compounded today by possibilities of linkage between terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Uganda, he said, remained committed to multilateralism as a means of achieving comprehensive and equitable solutions to global challenges. To respond successfully to global crises, he insisted, the international community needed an efficient multilateral system.

Climate change remained a major challenge to Uganda's ability to achieve sustainable development, he said, expressing support for the climate pact signed in Paris. "We must continue to muster the necessary political will to fully implement the agreement," he stressed. Financing the most vulnerable countries was critical to their ability to mitigate climate change. He noted that the adoption of the 2030 Agenda had coincided with the onset of what had become Uganda's single largest ever refugee influx. "We now host 1.4 million, the largest number of refugees on the African continent," he said. Uganda remained committed to ensuring its refugee model was consistent with the New York Declaration. He said: "We do this because we know that no one chooses to be a refugee and understand the critical importance of treating refugees humanely," The new Global Compact on Refugees would help share the responsibility and burden among all Member States.

Mr. Rugunda stressed that Uganda supported a comprehensive reform of the Security Council. African issues dominated the Council's agenda, and as continent of 54 countries, Africa must have a bigger voice in the global political debate. This would help to increase the legitimacy of Council decisions. Strengthening South-South cooperation was also essential for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, he added; and in the last 40 years, South-South cooperation had proved a valuable avenue for building capacity and promoting development in developing countries.

Prime Minister Rugunda noted that since the deployment of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) a decade or so ago, Somalia had made tremendous progress. The Somali Government, previously based out of the country, had moved back to Mogadishu in 2007. More than 80% of areas dominated by Al-Shabaab had been liberated and major political developments had taken place. This would hardly have been possible without the contribution and sacrifice of AMISOM and Somali security forces. So, any reduction in the numbers of AMISOM troops must correspond to the strengthening of Somali troop capabilities. The Prime Minister also welcomed the recently signed Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan.

...Somalia calls for its arms embargo to be lifted

The Foreign Minister of Somalia, Ahmed Awad Isse, underlined the major strides in security sector reform and political and economic transformation, the government had made since assuming office a year and a half ago. Stressing the importance of a multi-faceted security approach, the government and its partners had militarily dismantled terrorist hideouts, while also engaging religious leaders, elders, youth, women and civil society groups to dramatically reverse the ideology of hate and religious intolerance. Joining Al-Shabaab was no longer appealing to young men and women; it was no longer getting a ready stream of new and voluntary recruits. Some have accepted the offer of amnesty, denounced violence and surrendered peacefully. Senior commanders, former sector heads and infantrymen had been surrendering unconditionally, weakening the terror network's logistical and planning capabilities. The Government is now working with civil networks to flush out remaining terrorists. New road networks and supply routes had been opened, liberating towns and villages from Al-Shabaab.

Equally, the administration was mindful of the enormous challenges ahead, particularly to overcome terrorism. Awareness that sustaining security was a collective responsibility had helped establish effective policing models, noting the plans to gradually transfer security tasks to the national security architecture. He thanked AMISOM for all its efforts and called on the United Nations to lift the arms embargo on Somalia in order to consolidate collective security gains and further support Somali institutions. "Stronger fighter capacity would enable us to have the upper hand, it would entirely dismantle terrorists, and possibly within a shorter time," he said.

The Foreign Minister said a prosperous Somalia was only possible when the governance system was effective and based on the rule of law. Somalia's quest for inclusive, reformed politics was on the right track, he said, as demonstrated by the election model adopted by the Federal Government and Federal Member States. He emphasized that tapping into opportunities created by Somalia's vast natural resources and long coastline would help transform the economy, streamline trade and open new trade routes. Economic development and sustainable productivity, he said, also needed strengthened alliances with partners worldwide. He expressed his hope for better days and prospects. "For Somalia", he said, "it is the beginning of a transformation; we have risen anew and fresh. We are not only optimistic, but we are also motivated."

He noted that to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, Somalia was working towards financial self-sufficiency. Through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Staff Monitored Program domestic revenue had reached previously unprecedented levels. The Government was now normalizing relations with international financial institutions bringing it closer to debt relief. Somalia was taking a huge role in achieving economic integration in the Horn of Africa and also serving as a mediator to end decades-long conflicts in the region, to help achieve the African Union goal of "silencing the guns by 2020". Towards that end, he said, all economic sanctions on Eritrea should be lifted.

... Djibouti welcomes positive regional developments

Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Djibouti told the Assembly that while there was a consensus for United Nations reforms, inertia continued to hinder any progress. On the international scene, major upheavals were a significant cause of concern. The number of people leaving their countries was growing, and the migratory flows had contributed to bitter political debate in many countries in Europe, preventing the international community from building a better world. The crisis in

multilateralism is a consequence of this, he said, as it contradicted collaborative notions. He welcomed the international community's mobilization to adopt reforms initiated by the Security-General for development, management, and the peace and security architecture. He hailed finalization of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, adding that finalizing the Global Compact for Refugees would be an important development. If the United Nations could not solve the crises that created refugees, it must meet their needs, he said.

The Minister noted that the 2030 Agenda depended not only on innovative financial strategies, but also on the honoring of commitments already made. The greatest threat to this would be worldwide conflict and violence, and the expansion of terrorism called for an enlarged response different from conventional peacekeeping operations and diplomacy. However, he was pleased to note that the Horn of Africa could see some positive developments. Highlighting the thaw in relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea as inauguration of a new age of relations between them, Mahmoud Ali said the region had already seen the consequences. The Presidents of Djibouti and Eritrea had recently met and agreed to open a new chapter of relations between "these two brotherly countries" and to continue a dialogue on remaining issues. He expressed the hope that the recent peace deal in South Sudan would be successful. He also noted Somalia was building robust governing institutions, though he added it remained necessary to combat those opposing progress, like Al-Shabaab. Paying tribute to the troops of AMISOM which included units from Djibouti, he said international support for Somali forces was vital for a successful handover of security responsibilities.

The Minister emphasized that the United Nations played a key role in peace and international cooperation, and it was therefore incumbent upon everyone to support it. Djibouti looked forward to building a world of greater security and prosperity.

...Remove Sudan from the list of terrorist supporters and lift unilateral sanctions

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sudan, El-Dirdiri Mohamed Ahmed, welcomed the leadership role of the United Nations to promote sustainable development, to serve humanity and to confront challenges. He commended the partnership between the United Nations and African Union in Darfur as well as the assistance of donor countries that promoted stability and financed development projects. He commended the role of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). Negotiations were the only path to peace, he said, calling for the opening of humanitarian corridors so that aid can reach people in need. He underlined the Sudan Government's successes and the tangible results of the national campaign aimed at collecting small arms and light weapons. This, he said, had led to a reduction in crime and curbed drug and human trafficking.

The Minister also noted that the government had made significant efforts to implement economic and fiscal reforms to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development. But despite the efforts to mobilize local resources, the unilateral sanctions imposed on Sudan had undermined its development and its ability to engage in development activities. Sudan had the potential to achieve food security in the region, he said, but added: "You have to support our initiatives in that respect."

Sudan, he stressed, did not support terrorism and must be removed from the list of countries that does. It had been and remained a sincere defender of justice and international cooperation. He said it was unfortunate that the selective approach adopted by the

International Criminal Court has caused it to lose its impartiality. He said Sudan's position was aligned to that of the African Union, describing the Court as nothing but a political tool. The Minister emphasized: "We should not link any religion to terrorism," adding that Sudan rejected all forms of terrorism to achieve political objectives, including Islamophobia, abuse of religion or the spread of hatred.

Turning to migration and refugee issues, he noted that Sudan had hosted more than three million refugees despite the problems it faced, and he urged the international community to provide it with financial support. He called on the international community to support regional initiatives to deal with various issues on the continent from conflict resolution to resource management. Acknowledging that the separation of South Sudan from Sudan had not been easy, he said Sudan has made many sacrifices for South Sudan. He welcomed the recently signed peace agreement with South Sudan, and commended the efforts of IGAD., insisting that "those who doubted must now give peace a chance."

State Minister Professor Afework represents Ethiopia at the G77 ministerial meeting

The Group of 77 (G-77) was established in June 1964 by seventy-seven developing countries, the signatories of the "Joint Declaration of the Seventy-Seven Developing Countries" at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva. The first ministerial meeting in Algiers in October 1967 adopted the Charter of Algiers and a permanent institutional structure has gradually developed. The members of the G-77 have increased to 134 countries, but the original name has been retained due to its historic significance. The Group of 77 is now the largest intergovernmental organization of developing countries in the United Nations, and it provides the means for the members of the Group to articulate and promote their collective economic interests and enhance their joint negotiating capacity on all major international economic issues within the United Nations system. The Group of 77's annual meeting of Foreign Ministers takes place in New York during the UN General Assembly. This year the meeting opened on Thursday (September 27) with a statement from President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi of Egypt. Egypt is the current chair of the Group of 77 for 2018; Palestine will take the chair for 2019.

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Professor Afework Kassu, participated in the annual G77 Foreign Ministers' meeting, speaking on Friday (September 28). He underlined the

importance of accelerating the integrated implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement. These were absolutely critical in order to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path of inclusive growth. Climate change, the greatest challenge of all, was threatening the survival of climate vulnerable countries and undermining hard-won development gains.

Professor Afework said that the international community was certainly working to implement the ambitious and transformative 2030 Agenda, but Ethiopia was concerned that the rate of progress was insufficient to fully meet the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Poverty, rising hunger, youth unemployment, and growing inequality, among other factors, continued to pose serious challenges for the realization of the common agenda. To eradicate poverty in all its forms and combat the adverse impacts of climate change, he said developed countries must fulfil their obligations to provide enough, and predictable, funding. They also needed to transfer appropriate technologies in line with

national development needs and priorities. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, he stressed, provided a comprehensive and transformative global financial framework for this.

The State Minister reiterated that the eradication of poverty was the overarching policy objective of the Ethiopian Government, and by implementing comprehensive development policies and strategies, it had been registering encouraging pro-poor and rapid economic growth. He emphasized that underlined Ethiopia was continuing to redouble its efforts to build a middle income and a climate-resilient economy by 2025. To realize this vision, he stressed, it was implementing the SDGs by integrating them ion the current national development plan, the Growth and Transformation Plan II. At the same time, aware of the challenges of financing the SDGs in Ethiopia, the government had also been mobilizing all types of financial resources and aligning them with the national development priorities.

Ethiopia's statement to the UNHCR Executive Committee in Geneva

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR, the UN Agency for Refugees, held the 69th session of its Executive Committee this week (October 1-5) in Geneva. The Committee considered reports of the work of the Standing Committee on International Protection and on program budgets and administration. It also reviews annual consultations with non-government organizations and holds a general debate

The Director of Ethiopia's Administration for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA), Hadera Abera Admasu, spoke for Ethiopia, explaining the important changes, indeed transformational changes, that had been taking place in Ethiopia over the last few months. Ethiopia, he said, had been engaged in thorough-going reform and a liberalization process which was having a positive impact on its multilateral cooperation, in particular creating a peaceful and enabling environment to discharge the country's humanitarian obligations including those towards refugees.

Mr. Hadera emphasized that despite a growing number of refugees, migrants and IDPs and only meagre resources are at its disposal, Ethiopia continued to provide an international protection system to the refugees it was hosting to the best of its ability. He noted, however, that its capacities to meet complex emergency challenges as the situation required, were very limited. It was very grateful for the help of humanitarian partners and the UNHCR, but today it needed, more than ever before, urgent and increased collective support to meet the myriad of challenges confronting it. Mr. Hadera said, "We are hopeful that we will see enhanced support in the months to come in order to help address the increasing burden of refugees we are compelled to shoulder as one of the largest hosting states on the African continent."

He said Ethiopia hoped the Global Compact on Refugees that the international community was expected to adopt at the end of this year would better address the principle of burden and responsibility-sharing through practical actions. Over the past three years, following the pledges it made in September 2016 in New York, Ethiopia had been undertaking important steps towards ensuing better protection to refugees, improving overall self-reliance capacity through the provision of education, strengthening out-of-camp policy and affording other essential services. In collaboration with partners, it had embarked on a series of activities aimed at transforming the manner of response to the needs of refugees, strengthening the nexus between humanitarian assistance and development intervention. Furthermore, Amendments to the country's refugee proclamation, to incorporate recent policy

commitments and create a conducive legal environment, would be endorsed by the parliament in the next few months.

There had been significant progress in refugee education. Gross enrolment of refugee children in primary school has reached 72%; secondary education stands at 12%. With the support of partners, the construction of irrigation on 10,000 hectares of land was helping to produce crops and fruits for the benefit of both refugees and host communities. The groundwork for the realization of the Jobs Compact, expected to provide jobs to 30,000 refugees in industrial parks in Ethiopia is well underway. The vital events' registration system has been amended and registration launched in all of the 27 refugee camps giving equal access to civil registries regardless of nationality in a bid to reduce statelessness. In the effort to improve the protection and wellbeing of refugees as well as host communities, the government has continued to seek demand-driven technical and financial support, particularly from the development partners, and the World Bank has approved projects to Ethiopia from the IDA -18 facility.

In addition to the large numbers of refugees, close to 1.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been an additional burden. The response has been to link humanitarian assistance with the long-term development and peace building, based on "The New Way of Working". This should increase resilience of communities. Mr. Hadera expressed his appreciation for the support of UNHCR and partners, but also noted that continued support for government efforts to meet the challenges of IDPs was still needed.

The ARRA Director also emphasized that Ethiopia's refugee response plan unfortunately continued to suffer from serious under-funding, and this, he said, compromised the quality of protection provided. Out of the US\$321 million budget for 2018, only 25% had been funded so far. Under-funding, ear-marking, unpredictability, and untimely release of funding had hampered Ethiopia's capacity to respond to complex emergencies in a more development-oriented way. Other challenges included limited socio-economic opportunities for both refugees and host communities, insufficient skills and other types of training for refugees, and a lack of recreational and social gathering centers. There were also dwindling opportunities for third country solutions, and this was a matter of serious concern.

Mr. Hadera concluded by noting that the significant changes in Ethiopia were also having a major impact throughout the sub-region. The new leadership of Ethiopia, under Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed was working toward a peaceful and integrated Horn of Africa. Ethiopia and Eritrea had signed a peace agreement, restored diplomatic relations, reopened their embassies and resumed flights and road transportation between them. As Chair of IGAD, Ethiopia had played a key role in the recent signing of the final peace deal between the Government of South Sudan and SPLM-IO. Efforts for normalization of relations between Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia were continuing to bear fruit. This had, he said, brought a great sense of hope to the peoples of the region. He called on the UNHCR and the international community to continue to support these peace efforts. They would certainly contribute significantly to help address the refugee challenges of the whole region.

Freedom House calls for more support for Ethiopia's reforms

The U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs, Sub-committee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights and International Organizations held a hearing last month: "Reviewing Current Developments in Ethiopia". As we reported two weeks ago, the hearing was chaired by Congressman Smith and members of the committee included Ranking Member Karen Bass. One of the bodies which gave testimony to the hearing was Freedom House, an independent US advocacy organization.

Freedom House provided written testimony to the hearing, underlining it was "a pivotal moment in Ethiopia's history." It said: "If reform efforts continue on their current trajectory, Ethiopia could become one of the few victories for democratic governance at a time when many countries are moving in the wrong direction. Much remains to be done, and support from the international community will be needed." In a brief roundup of recent events, its testimony noted the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front announcement in January that it would take comprehensive reform measures; the resignation of the then Prime Minister Hailemariam in February; and the selection of Abiy Ahmed to become the new prime minister in April after "six weeks of painstaking deliberation within the leadership of the ruling party. All this "ushered in a new chapter in Ethiopia's political history, one that seems to put the country on an unprecedented trajectory of political change and opening." It added: "It is not yet certain this reform effort will be sustained, but if it is, Ethiopians can chart a path to a viable democracy and economic prosperity that will have significant implications for the Horn of Africa region and the entire continent."

Freedom House noted some of the changes already made. Abiy Ahmed had taken his vision of national reconciliation and forgiveness to the public, touring the country conducting town hall meetings, speaking with community leaders and local politicians. It was, it said, a dramatic shift in EPRDF's style of governance. The new government released thousands of political prisoners, lifted the state of emergency in June, publicly announced plans to amend the constitution to institute term limits on the tenure of the prime minister, invited exiled opposition politicians to return home and participate in politics and moved to lift the terrorist designation of three major opposition political parties. Many opposition parties including those engaged in armed struggle, returned home pledging to participate in peaceful political activities. The Government was taking steps to end the government monopoly on key economic sectors including telecom, energy and air transport, appointing reform-minded executives to key economic positions and setting up an advisory council on the privatization of state-owned enterprises. Earlier in June, the Government had also set up a Law and Justice Advisory Council to examine restrictive laws, including the Charities and Societies Proclamation and the Anti-terrorism Proclamation, and the justice system.

Another dramatic move with potential implications for the wider Horn of Africa region was Prime Minister Abiy's initiative to end 20 years of hostility with Eritrea by declaring unconditional acceptance of the 2000 Algiers Agreement and the 2002 decision of the Ethiopia-Eritrea Boundary Commission. The leaders met several times, restored diplomatic relations, re-opened their respective embassies and signed a number of trade and investment agreements. And as Freedom House underlined: "This peace dividend seems to be expanding to the region, as Djibouti and Somalia have also engaged in peace talks with Eritrea."

All this was welcomed by Freedom House, but it also warned of persistent challenges, including the power struggles within the ruling EPRDF; ethnic tensions; managing the expectation of the youth; and reintegration of armed militia groups returning home and for proper demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration processes. It underlined the need for electoral reform and for a roadmap to spell out government aims. In this context it mentioned that the constitution required a census to be conducted every 10 years, and “timely and up-to-date census data is crucial for elections.” The November 2017 census was postponed. Another issue was the lack of public trust in the security services and this needed to be addressed.

Freedom House had a raft of recommendations “to help harness the optimism and hope of the people of Ethiopia and ensure the viability of the reform measures”. The US, it said, should press the Government of Ethiopia to move quickly to mend ethnic grievances; address youth expectations: undertake meaningful reforms to ensure free and fair elections; guarantee the independence of democratic institutions; reform the criminal justice system and implement robust changes to the security sector; ensure accountability for rights abuses; reform the judiciary and law enforcement agencies; help deepen political reforms in Ethiopia by considering increased US financial and technical support for elections that are free, fair, transparent, and inclusive; provide robust US support designed to strengthen civil society and independent media; encourage substantive engagement in the reform process by the U.S.-based Ethiopian Diaspora; and “finally, if reforms continue to advance, strengthen economic ties between the U.S. and Ethiopia and expand U.S. economic support to assist Abiy and his government in providing tangible democratic dividends to a broad swath of the population, enabling political reform to become clearly associated with an improved standard of living in what remains a largely impoverished country where growth has been unevenly distributed.”

In conclusion, Freedom House emphasized that Ethiopia was a key partner and ally for the United States. Ethiopia, it underlined, was at a key moment in its history. It said: “The U.S. government would be wise to strengthen its partnership with reformers in Ethiopia to ensure that recent gains are transformed into actual improvements in democratic governance and the protection of fundamental rights – the crucial foundations of sustainable peace and prosperity.”