

A Week in the Horn

1st April 2016

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News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

Africa's medium-term growth prospects for 2016 and 2017 remain positive but risks and uncertainties abound says Adam Elhiraika, Director of the Macroeconomic Policy Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) on March 31. The remarks are made at the ongoing African Development Week, Co-organized by UNECA and the African Union.

A Seminar aimed at establishing an inclusive platform of regional reconciliation, peace-building and transitional justice in Africa commenced (March 30) at Hilton Hotel in Addis Ababa.

Ethiopia

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn said Korea's experience in urban development has an immense contribution for Ethiopia's ongoing housing development. The Premier made the remark during a meeting with senior experts from the Ministry of Construction and Transportation of Korea on March 31.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn on March 31 held discussions with First Vice President designate, Riek Machar, in Addis Ababa.

Foreign Minister Dr Tedros Adhanom, who has been on an official visit to the Republic of Senegal during the week, made bilateral consultations with Prime Minister of Senegal Boun Abdallah Dioune and his Senegalese counterpart, Mr Mankeur Ndiaye, among others. Ethiopia and the Republic of Senegal have also signed a Memorandum of Understanding to cooperate in areas of culture and tourism, and capacity building. (See article)

Foreign Minister Dr Tedros Adhanom on March 28 visited the Goree Island and made a stop at the historic "Maison des esclaves" where he was given a guided tour by the curator of the world heritage site. (See article)

Ethiopia and Ivory Coast on March 31 celebrated 50 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The event was attended by a high-level Ethiopian delegation headed by Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Tedros Adhanom, who has been to Ivory Coast for first official visit. The Minister made bilateral consultations with his Ivorian counterpart Dr Abdallah Toikeusse. At the event, a series of agreements were also signed.

The government of Japan announced on March 31 that it would provide more than 30.1 million US dollars emergency humanitarian assistance to Ethiopia.

Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia La Yifan on April 1 stressed that Sino-Ethiopia relations have been flourishing, particularly against the backdrop of the latest Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) summit held in Johannesburg last December.

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie discussed with Ambassadors based in Addis Ababa the campaign for Dr Tedros' candidacy for the post of Director Generalship of the World Health Organization this week. (See article)

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie held talks with Ms Amanda Dory, US Assistant Secretary for Defense on March 30. Ms Amanda appreciated Ethiopia's efforts of bringing stability in the region adding that the US would continue working with Ethiopia in the process of stabilizing Somalia.

Ethiopia and the U.S. held the 6th Working Group bilateral discussions on democracy, governance and human rights in Addis Ababa on Tuesday (March 29).

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie on (March 31) received copies of the letters of credence of the Hungarian Ambassador to Ethiopia, Mr Gabor Sagi.

With last week marking the 5th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, anniversary celebrations are taking place this week. (See article)

Ato [Mr] Gedu Andargachew, President of the Amhara National Regional State, held extensive discussions with Ethiopian Diaspora community members drawn from different regions of the United Arab Emirates, in Dubai, on Saturday (March 26). (See article)

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie on March 31 received the letters of credence of the first Bangladesh Ambassador, to Ethiopia, Ambassador Md. Monirul Islam.

Ethiopia's Ministry of Transport on March 30 signed a MoU with Korea Expressway Corporation.

Ethiopia's Ministry of Education and Microsoft signed an Education Transformation Agreement on March 29.

At the UNSC debate on "Women, Peace and Security" held on March 28 Ethiopia highlighted its leading role in providing female peacekeepers. (See article)

The Ministry of Mines, Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoMPNG) has revealed that Ethiopia will supply potash to the global market within the coming four years.

Ministry of Health launched a five-year Health Sector Transformation Plan (HSTP 2016-2020) on March 28, which is up for ensuring better and fair access to health services.

Mr Demeke Atnafu, Director General of the Diaspora Engagement Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, met with Mr Kudret Bulbul, President of the Turkish Abroad and Related Communities. The two sides shared views and experiences on promoting Diaspora engagement.

Djibouti

Egyptian Ambassador to Djibouti, Ahmed Adel in an interview with Daily News on March 28 said Egypt is set to launch a new commercial services office in Djibouti. Delegations of Egyptian businessmen will also make visits to exchange information on investment opportunities, he added.

Eritrea

The People's Alliance for Freedom and Democracy (PAFD) held its first general congress March 21-25 in Asmara, Eritrea. PAFD is a political alliance among armed Ethiopian opposition groups, such as the Oromo Liberation Front and the Ogaden National Liberation Front.

Kenya

Kenya's economy is projected to grow at 5.9% in 2016, recording an improvement over the 5.6% estimated for 2015, says a new World Bank Group economic report released on Thursday (March 31). The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to improve further to 6% in 2017.

Kenyan Energy Principal Secretary Joseph Njoroge on March 31 said Kenya may build its own pipeline to transport oil from the northern Turkana region to a coastal port if a proposal to build one jointly with Uganda falls through.

Judges at the International Criminal Court will hand down their ruling on April 5 on whether to throw out a case brought against Kenyan Deputy President William Ruto for his alleged role in post-election violence.

Somalia

The United Nations said thousands of people in northern Somalia may die as a result of the El Nino-related drought and a shortage of aid, and the poor rains that are forecast are likely to make things worse (March 31).

The United Nations and Africa Union on Tuesday began the training of 200 officers of the Somali Police Force in Jubaland March 31.

A suicide bombing in central Somalia killed at least nine people and wounded 10 others, a police official said on March 31. The bomber blew himself up among a group of people at a café near a hotel in the town of Galkayo.

A statement from the Galmudug government said at least 115 al-Shabaab fighters were killed and 110 more others captured on March 28 in heavy fighting with pro-government forces in northern Somalia.

French Navy frigate FS Provence (March 29) has intercepted a large weapons cache from a small boat sailing towards Somalia. Several hundred machine guns, anti-tank weapons and AK47 rifles were among the weapons seized.

South Sudan

The head of JEMEC, Festus Mogae told the UN Security Council on March 31 that the formation of a transitional national unity government in South Sudan was now within reach. He added, despite continuing cease-fire violations, "there has been notable progress." (See article)

The Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) which is overseeing the Peace Agreement, welcomed the arrival in Juba of the first thirty-nine of the SPLM-IO troops March 28.

First Vice President designate, Riek Machar, who has been in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, on March 31 met with Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn. SPLM-IO's Spokesman, James Gatdet Dak said both sides discussed the steps being taken and challenges encountered in the implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS).

The South Sudanese government (March 30) has regretted a decision of the Sudanese government to close its recently reopened border between the two countries. According to a recent UN report (March 31), more than 48,000 South Sudanese have fled to neighboring Sudan since late January amid food shortages and continuing conflict in the country.

SPLM Spokesperson, James Gatdet Dak (March 31) hinted that SPLM-IO leader and South Sudan's First Vice President designate, Riek Machar, will soon return to the national capital, Juba.

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) March 30 dismissed as "non existent" media reports that its peacekeepers had failed to offer protection to civilians who fled protection sites in the Upper Nile capital, Malakal.

The South Sudanese army (SPLA) has accused the armed opposition group SPLM-IO of allegedly attacking their forces on Mayendit-Leer road on March 30. Meanwhile, the South Sudanese army (SPLA) has been accused of planning to attack forces of the opposition SPLM-IO in Unity state. SPLA-IO's spokesperson, Deng on March 29 said their forces have been warned of imminent attack in Leer and Mayandit counties in Unity state.

Sudan

An African Union team arrived in the Sudanese capital on March 31 to monitor the three-day administrative referendum in Darfur region which will be held during the second week of April.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon (March 29) called on the Sudanese opposition to sign the Roadmap Agreement [drawn up] by the African mediators.

The Sudanese government on March 31 called on the international community to increase pressure on the holdout groups to sign the Roadmap Agreement brokered by the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP).

The Sudanese government on March 29 once again closed its borders with South Sudan, just a week after Khartoum threatened to treat South Sudanese in Sudan as foreigners.

A military official said on March 28 that the Sudanese army recaptured key positions in the areas held by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement - North (SPLM-N) in South Kordofan state.

Foreign Minister Dr Tedros makes an official visit to the Republic of Senegal....

Foreign Minister, Dr Tedros Adhanom made a three-day official visit to the Republic of Senegal at the beginning of this week (March 27 to 29). The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Senegalese Abroad, M. Mankeur Ndiaye and Ambassador Mohammed Said, Ethiopia's Ambassador to the Republic of Senegal and embassy staff, welcomed Dr Tedros on his arrival in the Senegalese capital of Dakar.

The three-day official visit was an opportunity for the Foreign Ministers of the two countries to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral relations. During their discussions at the Senegalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr Tedros Adhanom and M. Mankeur Ndiaye stressed the need to reinforce their bilateral relations. Working for the full implementation of previous signed agreements and expanding the areas of cooperation were some of the ways forward proposed to strengthen the two countries' relationship. The ministers agreed to hold the first Joint Ministerial Commission between the two countries later this year.

Speaking on the occasion, M. Mankeur Ndiaye reiterated Senegal's support for Ethiopia's candidacy for the United Nations Security Council Non Permanent Seat for 2017-18. Dr Tedros thanked the Minister for the delegation welcome and hospitality as well as the support of the Senegalese government and people for Ethiopia's bid. He noted that the good relations, the "complicite positive", between Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn and President Macky Sall provided real impetus to Ethio-Senegalese relations. Dr Tedros briefed M. Mankeur Ndiaye on the peace and security situation in the Horn of Africa.

Following their bilateral consultations, the two ministers signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Culture and Tourism. They noted that this memorandum paved the way for more cooperation agreements between the two sisterly countries. The two parties agreed to cooperate in the areas of capacity building, exchange of experience and to work together to protect, preserve and promote cultural properties and heritage. This cooperation agreement is the sixth agreement signed by the two countries.

During his visit, Dr Tedros also met the Prime Minister of Senegal, M. Boun Abdallah Dioune and the Minister of Tourism and Air Transport, Mme. Maimouna Ndoeye Seck. They discussed economic and political relations and the avenues of cooperation to improve the Ethiopia-Senegalese relationship. The talks also provided an opportunity to stress the need to better exploit the real opportunities that existed in capacity building and provided an exchange of experience between Ethiopia and Senegal, notably in such areas as power

generation, industrial park development and aviation to strengthen economic and business relations.

...and visits the UNESCO World Heritage site at the Island of Goree

During his visit, Dr Tedros visited the UNESCO World Heritage site of Goree Island, which lies off the coast of Senegal opposite Dakar. From the 15th to the 19th century, it was the largest slave-trading center on the African coast. Today it continues to serve as a reminder of human exploitation and as a sanctuary for reconciliation. Guided by a resident of the island, Dr Tedros visited many of the historical sites on the island including "La Statue de la Liberation et de l'Esclavage" and the slave house (la Maison des Esclaves) where hundreds of thousands of Africans were sold and shipped to the Americas during the slave trade. Reflecting on the visit, the Minister noted the brutality of the slave trade, and how this historic site gave the opportunity for soul-searching about such a period of history. He noted that the slave house, in particular, offered a lesson for present and future generations to help them avoid making similar mistakes. Dr Tedros emphasized that his visit was made all the more poignant and special as it came only a few days after celebrations for the International Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade on Friday last week (March 25), an occasion that offers the opportunity to honor and remember those who suffered and died at the hands of the brutal slavery system over more than two hundred years.

Dr Tedros also met with Ethiopian community members and friends of Ethiopia at a reception organized on March 28 at the residence of Ethiopia's Ambassador to Senegal. The recently appointed Ambassador to Senegal, Mohammed Said, welcomed the Minister to the beautiful and historic city of Dakar. He also briefly introduced himself to members of the Ethiopian community and expressed his commitment to sustaining the existing good relations between the embassy and the community. The President of the Senegal-Ethiopia Friendship Association and former ambassador, Silcarneyi Gueye, noted that the Friendship Association was working firmly to strengthen Ethio-Senegalese cooperation. He said it had organized events to promote Ethiopian culture in Senegal in the past and would continue to do so in the future. In his welcoming remarks, the Minister welcomed Ethiopian community members as well as members of the Friendship Association. He commended the activities of the Friendship Association for its efforts to strengthen the people-to-people relationship between the two countries. He also expressed the hope that his visit to Senegal would be the basis for further cooperation between the two countries in the future.

The Minister also visited the Abdou Diouf International Conference Centre inaugurated in 2014 and discussed the business and economic environment of Ethiopia with the President Director General of the "Les Ciments du Sahel" group, M. Latfallah Layousse. Foreign Minister Dr Tedros ended the first leg of his West African tour on March 29 and flew to neighboring Ivory Coast for a three-day official visit.

State Minister meets African Ambassadors on Dr Tedros' candidacy to lead WHO

The State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie, met with Ambassadors from African countries this week to discuss the candidacy of Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, Dr Tedros Adhanom, for the post of Director General of the World Health Organization. Ambassador Taye noted that Dr Tedros had been nominated by Ethiopia for the post of the next Director-General of the World Health Organization. The election for this

position will be held in May 2017. Ambassador Taye, thanking the ambassadors for their presence, emphasized that the African Union endorsed Dr Tedros' candidacy during the 26th ordinary session of the African Union Assembly of Heads of States and Government in January.

Dr Tedros is currently serving as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, a post he has held since November 2012. He is also currently serving as a Member of Parliament. Prior to that, he served as Ethiopia's Minister of Health, from October 2005 to November 2013. He previously served in a number of expert and leadership positions in both federal and regional government, including the post of State Minister in the Ministry of Health and Head of the Tigray Regional Health Bureau.

Dr Tedros has extensive experience in global health initiatives and diplomacy. During his tenure as Minister of Health of Ethiopia, he chaired the Boards of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Program Coordinating Board of UNAIDS and Co-Chaired the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health. He also served on the Boards of GAVI, the Vaccination Alliance and the Stop TB Partnership. He has made an indelible impression on many priority global health agendas. As Chair of the Global Fund, in particular, he guided a comprehensive reform agenda that resulted in a more efficient and effective Global Fund to respond effectively to the financing needs of countries.

In Ethiopia, his health sector reforms and the introduction of the Health Extension Program led the country to achieve most of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular those in the area of health issues. As Minister of Foreign Affairs, he also continues to champion health. Dr Tedros led the Third Financing for Development Conference that was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in July last year to a successful outcome to finance the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, in which health plays an integral part.

Dr Tedros holds a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) in Community Health from the University of Nottingham and a Master of Science (MSc) degree in Immunology of Infectious Diseases from the University of London (UK). He has co-authored numerous articles on prominent scientific journals including *Nature*, *The Lancet* and the *British Medical Journal*. He has also received several awards and recognition including being the first non-American recipient of the "Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Humanitarian Award" in 2011. He was listed among "50 people who will change the world" by the UK *Wired Magazine* in January 2012.

As Minister of Foreign Affairs, and with proven diplomatic and negotiation skills, he has also served as Chair of the Council of Ministers of IGAD, the regional economic community for Horn of Africa. As Chair of the Executive Council of the African Union in 2014, he oversaw the successful adoption of the first 10-year plan for the AU's Agenda 2063 for the African Union, a plan that has put health at its center. Under his leadership, Ethiopia successfully hosted the 50th Anniversary conference of the OAU/AU. Equally, as Co-chair of the main committee of the Third Finance for Development (FFD3), he played a key role in bringing together polarized positions on the future of the global development finance architecture. The conference ended with the successful adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

As Foreign Minister, Dr Tedros also played the leading role in brokering the Addis Ababa Agreement between the Federal Government of Somalia and Jubaland politicians, which led to the formation of the Interim Jubaland Administration in Somalia, providing for the return

of normalcy in Kismayo and its environs. The successful implementation of the Addis Ababa Agreement has turned Jubaland into a model for regional state formation in Somalia. Dr Tedros has been the leading diplomat in the successful negotiations between Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, leading to the signing, last year, of the Declaration of Principles that helped ease tension and pave the way for dialogue. In April 2014, he authored an article titled "The Nile is a Symbol of Cooperation and Collaboration" in which he made the case for the importance of cooperation for the mutual and equitable benefit of the Nile Riparian States from the Nile River. Recently, honoring his efforts as Ethiopia's top diplomat, the leading African magazine, *New African*, chose him as one of the 100 most influential Africans for the year 2015.

State Minister Taye emphasized to the African ambassadors that Dr Tedros was the first African candidate to run for the head of a prestigious organization like the WHO. Given Dr Tedros' professional experience, particularly in the health sector, and his immense experience and contribution in the diplomatic arena, Ambassador Taye said that Dr Tedros was "surely the ideal candidate to lead this organization. However, Ambassador Taye noted, "Even though the African Union fully endorsed him, there is still a long way to go to make his candidacy a reality." He called on the ambassadors to fully support Dr Tedros' candidacy and requested that they pass this message across to their respective governments. Letters addressed to the highest destination in their respective countries, together with Dr Tedros' biography were distributed to the ambassadors.

The general consensus among the ambassadors was that while it would be a great loss for Africa to lose such a wise and dedicated diplomat, to achieve the Directorship of WHO should be seen as an important step for Africa as a whole. They said the election of Dr Tedros, as Director-General of WHO, would surely help Africa and all third world countries. They also felt the decision to run for the candidacy was timely given that most of the current health crises like Ebola are mainly affecting third world countries. They agreed that as Dr Tedros is the AU candidate, all African countries should unite and campaign for him outside of the continent. They assured the State Minister that they will do all they can to help lobby for his election. The State Minister thanked the ambassadors for their support and the meeting agreed on the hope to see an African leading the World Health Organization next year. The State Minister also met with Ambassadors from Europe, Asia, the Middle East and the Americas, during which Ethiopia's bid to lead the WHO was able to generate significant support.

5th anniversary of laying the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam's foundation stone

With last week marking the 5th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, the celebrations of the anniversary are taking place this week. The anniversary has already been lifted by the renewed vigor of the public and the Government in reaffirming its unreserved support for the largest hydro-electric power project in Africa. With continuous fast-paced growth in Ethiopia, the need for an increased and sufficient power supply and electricity remains substantial and inevitable. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam was started in consideration of both of the need for increased electric power for domestic consumption and development and with the specific aim of exporting the balance to neighboring countries to help develop the region, enhance economic integration and build people-to-people ties with countries in the Horn of Africa region and more widely.

At the celebration of the anniversary at the national stadium, Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen said the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) had further boosted national unity and consensus among Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples. He described it as a "symbol of national identity" with many facets. Noting the collaboration among all Ethiopians in support of the construction of the Dam, Ato [Mr] Demeke said the dam, whose total construction cost is being covered by domestic sources, had strengthened cooperation among Ethiopians even further. GERD, he said, had helped Ethiopians to further cement their unity and the "yes we can" spirit. The Deputy Prime Minister called upon Ethiopians, both at home and abroad, to intensify all-round support for the grand project.

The celebration of the anniversary began on March 26 and lasts until April 4. Among the various occasions are visits by farmers and others to the construction site, various sports activities, a variety of entertainments, question and answer contests across the country. The Office of the National Council for the Coordination of Public Participation for the Construction of GERD also noted that there were also programs being held at Guba, the construction site. The Executive Director of the Council, W/o [Ms] Roman Gebresillassie told a press conference before the celebrations started, that the council had been working to ensure that the latest information on the status of the dam was available, and promoting participation of the public in various celebrations. She said that since the laying of the foundation stone of the Dam five years ago the public has pledged 12 billion Birr. Of this, 8.1 billion has so far been collected for the project. This year alone some 800 million Birr has also been pledged, and of this 500 million Birr had already been collected. The Executive Director commended the participation and support of the public.

The State Minister of the Government Communication Affairs Office, W/o [Ms] Firehiwot Ayalew, speaking to the press about the ongoing arrangements and celebrations, noted that the Dam, which she emphasized symbolized the unity of Ethiopians, would begin trial power generation according to schedule. She also underlined the wide and commendable cooperation between Ethiopians at home and abroad, as demonstrated by the public contributions. Speaking about the negotiations with riparian countries, she said talks with the lower riparian countries had continued on the basis of the previously agreed framework as well as on the basis of agreement on fair share and the mutual trust and benefit of the Nile waters. The State Minister said that the current El Nino-induced drought had not caused any impediment to the construction of the Dam, which was progressing as planned. GERD had now reached a height of 75 meters, over halfway to the final height of 145 meters. State Minister Frehiwot also noted that the installation of various other infrastructure elements including roads was progressing.

Members of the international community, scholars and ambassadors of various countries praised Ethiopia's efforts and expressed encouragement for the development of the project. The Ambassador of Ghana to Ethiopia, Ambassador Albert Francis Yankey, told the press that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam would play a key role in the implementation of Ethiopia's green growth strategy. He said the Dam could be a model for Ghana's current alternative power development activities. The Ambassador emphasized that the Dam, as well as driving the country's green growth strategy, coupled with renewable energy development, guaranteed the sustainability of its growth.

Last week, to emphasize the occasion, the Ethiopian Electric Corporation published a brochure detailing the progress Ethiopia has made in power development. Current electric power coverage has reached 55%, and once the Dam is fully operating, generating 6,000mw,

this will add 15,692 GWh average energy to the national grid. The Ethiopian Electric Corporation also underlined the essential impact the Dam would have on improving water resources, providing Sudan and Egypt with important benefits, as well as its contributions to the prospects of economic integration both regionally and more widely in the Nile Valley.

Ethiopia's two-year membership of the African Union Peace and Security Council

Ethiopia concluded its two-year term as a member of the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) on Thursday (March 31). Over the last two years, the PSC held more than 170 regular meetings, informal consultations and joint meetings with the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and with the European Political and Security Committee (EUPSC) as well as in field missions to different conflict-hit countries on the Continent.

It was the third time Ethiopia had the privilege of serving on the Council and, as before, it made every effort to contribute effectively and significantly to all activities of the Council. It also served as the chair of the Council twice, in October 2014 and February this year. During its recent membership, Ethiopia in particular played a leading role in the Council's efforts to resolve the crises in Somalia, South Sudan and Burundi. In addition to these specific cases, it was also closely involved in helping in the thematic issues covered by the Council. These major priorities included the UN Peacekeeping Review, Early Warning and Conflict Prevention, Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) and Coordination between the PSC and the African members of the UNSC (A3).

On Somalia, Ethiopia successfully advocated the provision of stronger support to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and for the Somali National Army in its fight against the terrorist group, al-Shabaab. Ethiopia also emphasized the importance of enhanced command and control structures within AMISOM, as a critical factor in ensuring the effectiveness of the Mission. It stressed the need for the AUPSC to encourage all Somali stakeholders to stay on course and to demonstrate the required unity of purpose and action in order to fulfil the aspirations of the Somali people for peace, security and stability. In this regard, the AUPSC expressed its strong support on a number of occasions for the formation of interim regional administrations and timely and transparent conduct of the 2016 elections.

Another crisis at the top of the Council's agenda for the last two years was the crisis in South Sudan. Here, Ethiopia stressed the need for closer coordination between IGAD and the African Union throughout the mediation process. It also emphasized the critical and necessary importance of the full implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan by all parties. In light of this the Council, following the proposal of IGAD, established the IGAD Plus mechanism to complement the effort of IGAD. This complementary role is expected to continue during the implementation phase of the South Sudan Peace Agreement. The continued support of the PSC for the work of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism (JMEC) set up under IGAD Plus will remain vital.

Ethiopia has also been active in the peace processes for the Burundi crisis. Over the last ten years Africa has been clearly able to see the fruits of faithful implementation of the Arusha Agreement. Despite the current unrest in the country, Burundi was not only able to nurture its own peace; it also managed to contribute its share to the maintenance of Regional Peace and Security. Indeed, it was able to deploy its own forces in the very demanding African Union Peacekeeping Missions in Somalia and CAR. Ethiopia, therefore, strongly underlined the

need to find an all-inclusive political solution under the auspices of the East African Community, together with the necessary support from the African Union and in strict compliance with the Arusha Agreement.

In addition, during its membership of the AU Peace and Security Council, Ethiopia played a leading role in the development of the Common African Position on the UN Peacekeeping Review. Ethiopia emphasized that over the last decade the AU had shown greater readiness and capability to deploy peacekeepers in the field in a speedy manner. This included situations in which many felt there was "no peace to keep". Equally, the financial and logistical difficulties associated with such undertakings continue to pose significant challenges to the AU's efforts to put effective peacekeeping forces together quickly and efficiently. Ethiopia emphasized that Africa is still forced to depend on an unpredictable flow of donor funds, provided in a fragmented, unsustainable and ad hoc manner. It has underlined that the global mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security, in Africa as elsewhere, belongs to the UN Security Council. Africa has been sharing the burden of the UN in line with Chapter VIII of the Charter. Ethiopia has therefore strongly asserted the United Nations has the charter-based responsibility to cover the finances needed to fund Security Council authorized African Union peace support missions in a predictable, sustainable and flexible manner.

More generally on the proactive prevention of conflicts, Ethiopia has consistently underlined the need to develop an effective conflict prevention and early warning mechanism in line with the African Peace and Security Architecture. During its chairmanship of the Council, Ethiopia devoted an open session to this issue and the Council decided to have horizon-scanning sessions on a quarterly basis. The Council has also emphasized the importance of Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) to prevent the all-too-common relapse of peace agreements into renewed conflict. In this connection, the acceptance by the Council of Ethiopia's proposal for the Council to review the 2006 PCRD Architecture of the continent is a major achievement. The review is expected to be presented to the Council this month.

Ethiopia also strongly advocated for closer partnership and synergy between the African Union Peace and Security Council and the UN Security Council. The Peace and Security Council and the AU Summit in January this year unanimously endorsed Ethiopia's proposal for strong coordination between the African members of the Security Council and the AUPSC.

During its two-year membership of the African Union Peace and Security Council, Ethiopia, along with the other Council members, did its very best to enhance the Council's role in preventing and sustainably resolving conflicts in Africa. It did this in line with the principles enshrined in the African Union Constitutive Act and the Protocol Establishing the Peace and Security Council, as well as with its strong commitment to the ideals of Pan-Africanism. Ethiopia will not be a member of the Council over the [next] two years, but as the largest troop-contributing country to the UN and the AU as well as being the seat of the African Union, it will certainly continue to be an active player in the promotion of continental stability. Its capacity in this respect will certainly be enhanced if Ethiopia joins the UN Security Council as a Non-Permanent Member for the period 2017/18.

The UNSC debate on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

The United Nations Security Council, under the chairmanship of Angola, held an open debate on Sunday (March 28) on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. The debate focused particularly on the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. The meeting was briefed by the Executive Director of UN-Women, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, the representative of South Sudan Women's Empowerment Network and others.

The Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, noted that the role of women in preventing conflict was often lauded, but rarely visible. She said countries with lower levels of gender inequality were less likely to resort to force; that women's security was one of the most reliable indicators of a State's peacefulness; and that their different spending patterns contributed directly to post-conflict social recovery. Conversely, women were the first to notice attacks on their rights and freedoms, as well as the militarization and radicalization of individuals in their families and communities.

Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, Assistant-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, said that promoting the effective participation of women in conflict mediation and addressing their specific needs in peace-making efforts was a priority of his Department. Since 2012, all United Nations mediation support teams included women, who made up half the number of participants in the Department's high-level mediation skills training. Nevertheless, unequal access and opportunities for women's participation in political decision-making processes persisted worldwide. "Prioritizing prevention and inclusive political solutions has never been more urgent," he stressed, adding that the African Union and other partners had made notable efforts to ensure that gender was more systematically integrated into electoral processes.

Paleki Ayang of the South Sudan Women's Empowerment Network said the world, and Africa in particular, must move beyond stereotypical images of women as victims during conflict. They were also fighters, peace-builders, protectors and community leaders. With limited resources and in spite of threats, they organized peace marches, advocated for enhanced peace and security policies and led reconciliation efforts across conflict lines. Conflict-prevention and conflict-resolution strategies would be ineffective without immediately addressing systematic, deliberate and widespread sexual violence in South Sudan and the rest of Africa. She urged the Security Council to insist on accountability for atrocities committed by all warring parties, armed groups, security forces and peacekeepers, and said it should demand that the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission in South Sudan ensured the representation and participation of women.

Many speakers lamented the lack of women's involvement in peacekeeping activities, with India's representative pointing out that women constituted less than 4 per cent of signatories to peace agreements and less than 10 per cent of negotiators at peace tables. Brazil's representative noted that women constituted a mere 4 per cent of the 88,000 troops and police currently deployed in United Nations peace operations in Africa. Ethiopia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Dr Tekeda Alemu, highlighting Ethiopia's leading role in providing female peacekeepers to UN Peacekeeping Operations, said it was a source of satisfaction for Ethiopia that it was the largest contributing country of female peacekeepers. It had 558 deployed in various UN peacekeeping missions. It was also working to further enhance the contribution of women in peacekeeping in terms of military and police personnel in the future. This was in addition to its efforts to promote women's participation in

all spheres and at all levels of government. He said a lot of progress had been made over the past two decades.

In this context, Dr Tekeda also emphasized that the growing number of allegations with regard to sexual exploitation and abuse committed by UN Peacekeepers was a matter of serious concern. As one of the largest troop contributing countries to UN peacekeeping operations, Ethiopia, he said, took this matter very seriously and subscribed to the Secretary-General's Zero-Tolerance Policy. Ethiopian peacekeepers, he said, were given all the necessary pre-deployment training and were committed to carrying out investigations and taking appropriate action to deal immediately with any allegations of misconduct. He concluded by emphasizing Ethiopia's firm commitment to improving the plight of women "whose effective participation is extremely critical to achieve the noble objectives that we have set for ourselves in the peace and security, governance and development spheres."

Ambassador Tekeda emphasized that there was no doubt that women were uniquely positioned to nurture a culture of peace and enhancing their effective participation would have a meaningful impact on prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as participation in peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building endeavors. He noted that, as far as Africa was concerned, women and girls were indeed the most vulnerable sections of society and they were the ones bearing the brunt of violence. That, he said, was why the women, peace and security agenda was so critical. He said the African Union's Gender, Peace and Security Program to increase women's participation in the promotion of peace and security and enhance the protection of women in conflict situations in Africa was, indeed, a step in the right direction.

Equally, Dr Tekeda stressed that what really mattered the most in making a real difference in improving the plight of women and enhancing their effective participation, was implementation at the national level. Ethiopia, he said, subscribed to all the relevant regional and international treaties and conventions on the rights of women and was committed to the women, peace and security agenda. Accordingly, it has been striving to promote women's participation in all spheres and at all levels of government and a lot of progress has been made over the past two decades.

South Sudan: progress still remains slow

Head of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission for the South Sudan peace process (JMEC), Festus Mogae, told the United Nations Security Council this week (March 31) that there are positive steps [that have been] taken as well as delays in the formation of a Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) needed to implement reforms in the war-ravaged country. He said, "I must unfortunately report that implementation of most aspects of the agreement continues to be delayed." Mogae, however, said, with the ongoing arrival to Juba of the 1,370 armed opposition (SPLM-IO) forces to be completed next week, Machar was likely to return and the long-awaited transitional government can be formed in mid-April. "...I am cautiously optimistic that the new transitional government will be in place by the middle of next month... That said, the Parties can do more to prepare for the return of the First Vice President-designate to Juba and ensure that the formation of the new government is not itself destabilizing," he added.

On Monday (March 28), the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) which is overseeing the Peace Agreement, welcomed the arrival in Juba of the first thirty-nine of the

SPLM-IO troops in Juba, These were the first of the 1,370 SPLM-IO troops expected to return to the capital in accordance with the JMEC plan for transitional security arrangements agreed on February 23. The JMEC Chairman, Mr Festus G. Mogae, Former President of Botswana, said a few days earlier that: "the obstacles that have impeded the return of the 1,370 SPLM- IO troops to Juba have been overcome. There are no remaining difficulties [concerning] the return of the First Vice President-designate and the formation of the new Transitional Government of National Unity." A series of flights by United Nations and charter aircraft will now transport the remaining troops in the coming days. Multiple flights are planned until the movement is complete.

The Peace Agreement between Sudan President Salva Kiir and Riek Machar was signed in August last year under the auspices of South Sudan's regional and international peace partners. Despite all efforts by IGAD Plus and others, full implementation of the peace agreement remains behind schedule. The Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) is in process of formulation; other key provisions of the agreement, including demilitarization of Juba and the withdrawal of the Uganda People's Defense Forces, are also being implemented. However, the Peace Agreement also covered such areas as the cessation of hostilities and a ceasefire between the conflicting parties, and since the signing of the agreement, a whole series of violations have been registered. Article 1 (1) of Chapter Two of the Agreement, covering the permanent ceasefire, and one of its key elements, has been repeatedly violated.

The signatories to the Peace Agreement have the primary responsibility of implementing the provisions and their slowness in implementing the pre-transitional milestones demonstrate a serious lack of commitment by the warring parties to resolve their political differences. In fact, both the government and SPLM-IO have made continuous accusations of violations of the principles of the permanent ceasefire and transitional security against each other. The Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM), for example, released a report last week (on March 22) which notified the Chairman of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, Mr Festus G. Mogae, that the SPLM-IO had committed violations of article 1.7 of the protocol which states "the parties hereby agree to cease all military actions aimed at each other and any other actions that may undermine the peace process." That article demands that all forces or armed groups under the influence, control and command of the parties should observe the agreement. As the conflict drags on, accusations of war crimes and cries for accountability continue to surface. A recent United Nations Report gave an account of the magnitude and severity of the problem over the longer terms. The report details a multitude of human rights violations, including the deliberate and systematic targeting of civilians and accounts of widespread rape of women and children. The UN report said that South Sudan faces "one of the most horrendous human rights situations in the world."

Amhara Regional President meets Ethiopian Community in Dubai

Ato [Mr] Gedu Andargachew, President of the Amhara National Regional State, held extensive discussions with Ethiopian Diaspora community members drawn from different regions of the United Arab Emirates, in Dubai, on Saturday (March 26).

The Amhara Regional President briefed some 300 Ethiopian community members on Saturday on the achievements of the Growth and Transformation Plan I, the main objectives of the Growth and Transformation Plan II and the role that the Ethiopian Community could

play. He also gave an account of the unfortunate recent incidents that had happened in some parts of the country including the Amhara Regional State.

Ato Gedu pointed out that overall the GTPI performance had been largely successful, noting the achievements in social and economic affairs, increasing democratization and the infrastructure developments of the country in general and the Amhara Region in particular. He underlined that Ethiopia's well-crafted policies, stable macro-economy and enhanced peace and stability had been able to continue to register double-digit economic growth. Its position as one of the fastest growing economies in the world was helping to make it a preferred destination for foreign direct investment. The reasons for this growth could also be seen in the Amhara Region, Ato Gedu underlined. The region had a total area of 170,000 sq.km and over 20 million people, over 55% of whom were trainable youth. He pointed out that it was a region where all faiths and nationalities co-exist peacefully; it had a substantial historic heritage, and extensive natural resources, including livestock, water resources and mining and mineral wealth. All this provided the key for future transformation.

Ato Gedu stressed that during the last 25 years the region had made continuous efforts to ensure peace and develop democratization processes in line with development activities. In order to ensure human and democratic rights, a number of different reforms had been undertaken, encouraging genuine popular participation in accelerating and sustaining development of the region in a way that benefitted all. The Region had been doing well in socio-economic development and had contributed significantly to national development. In the agriculture sector, cereal production had increased from 28.6 million quintals in 1996 to 87.6 million quintals in 2014/15. Overall, 4 million hectares of farmland, 446,000 hectares of hill and hillside terraces and 2.02 million hectares of land have been developed and protected. Forest coverage in the region had increased from a mere 1% to 15%.

Concerning industrial development in the region, the Regional President noted the success of the Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) job creation program which had increased those employed from 15,000 in 2006 to over 2 million (2,035,571) in 2014/15. The capital involved had risen from 467 million birr to 6.64 billion in those years, and several hundred had now become medium sized industrialists/investors. Ato Gedu stressed that the SMEs were not only intended to provide for job creation or technology transfer, but it was also a program that was aiming to create and develop medium-level investors. He said the number of medium and large industries in the region had also increased significantly, from 11 in 1996 to 373 in 2014/15. These now had capital of 31 billion birr and had created job opportunities for about 17,720 people.

The President also underlined the urban development of the region. The Amhara Region now has some 421 towns, he said, including three cities, 106 municipalities and 85 sub-municipalities. There were also 190 developing towns in which the regional government was making maximum effort to provide centers for industries, services and markets. To help this process, there had been major developments in infrastructure, with 64.9% of kebeles of the region interconnected by all-weather roads. Out of the Region's total of 3,479 kebeles of the region, 2,447 (33%) now had access to electricity, water access had increased from 10% in 1996 to 89.5% in 2014/15, and 11 million people had mobile telephones. There had also been tremendous changes in the social sector, particularly in education and health. These, he said, were due to sustained regional and federal government efforts, and the [contribution] of the people, who owned the process.

Ato Gedu noted that the region's achievements were not without limitations and the process had faced challenges. He mentioned the issue of governance and other related factors facing the country on its march to its Renaissance. Democratization in Ethiopia is a process, he stressed, but both in Ethiopia in general and in the Amhara Region in particular, democracy, together with the necessary institutional and infrastructure development, was providing the foundation for economic take off. There had been remarkable achievements gained so far and, he said, "We should be proud of these". Equally, it was necessary to build on past achievements and sustain the momentum. He, therefore, called on the Ethiopian Diaspora community to play their part. They had, he said, an important role in carrying out research, providing further investment at home and in influencing their country of residence to cooperate with Ethiopia and invest there. He underlined the conducive investment environment of the region as well as the country. Ato Gedu emphasized the importance of establishing their own Diaspora association, for instance an Ethiopian Renaissance Council. Through this, for example, they would be able to challenge the regional and federal governments to fulfill their commitments.

Following the briefing, Ato Gedu answered questions and continued the extensive discussions on various issues of regional and national concern. The President also explained that the Amhara Regional government's Diaspora Outreach Program continues in Djibouti on April 1 & 2; Saudi Arabia-Riyadh and Jeddah on April 7 & 8 and further extends to different countries later in the year. In conclusion, the Amhara Regional President thanked the Ethiopian community for their contribution to the achievements of the region and the country so far. He invited them all to take part in the Amhara Region's forthcoming Diaspora Festival to be held this July.