

A Week in the Horn 7th December 2012

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Somalia's President Mohamud on a state visit to Turkey.....

On Tuesday this week [4th Dec], President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of Somalia arrived in Istanbul on a state visit to Turkey at the invitation of Turkish President, Abdullah Gül. It is his first trip outside Africa since he was elected in September. The President is accompanied by a five-member high-level delegation including Foreign Affairs Minister, Fauzia Yusuf Haji Adan; Defence Minister, Abdikarin Mohamoud Fiqi; Finance and National Planning Minister, Mohamoud Hassan Saleban; and the Chief of General Staff Major-General Abdul Qadir Sheikh Ali Dini.

President Mohamud was welcomed at Istanbul airport by senior Turkish officials and subsequently met with President Abdallah Gül in the Turkish capital of Ankara on Wednesday (5th December). Their meeting was attended by ministers of both countries and discussions focused on security, economics, strengthening ties between the two states and on ways in which Turkey might play a leading role in boosting the security, military and economic sectors of Somalia.

At a joint press conference after his meeting with President Mohamud, President Gül said "Turkey wants to show the entire international community how to help another nation with humanitarian purposes and without any expectations. We are fulfilling this in the best way." He also emphasized the importance of security forces in a country that was being rebuilt like Somalia, and he noted that Turkey and Somalia were already cooperating in this area. He added: "We proposed to the international community the establishment of a fund to this end. We will work towards this during a donors' meeting to be held in Istanbul in 2013." He went on: "we are continuing our strong efforts for the formation of Somali armed forces and a police institution, for their service to maintaining security and their own interests in the country." President Gül said that Turkey would lobby for the formation of an international fund to establish security forces for Somalia, adding that Turkey would assist logistically and in regard to the training. The Defence Ministers of the two countries and the chiefs of general staff have been in contact on these issues, he said, and officials from the two countries have signed agreements on military-financial cooperation and the implementation of aid grants.

President Gül noted that there were deep-rooted relations between Turkey and Somalia. Turkey had launched aid campaigns to assist Somalia's famine problems. The visit of Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, to Somalia last year, and the visit of the President this week had boosted relations. President Gül noted that Turkey had given scholarships to hundreds of Somali students; over 1,600 students and undergraduates have been receiving education in Turkey. Turkey has taken a leading role in the redevelopment of Mogadishu, and in November, Turkish Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu, said Ankara would reconstruct roads and repair government buildings in Mogadishu. He also promised to rebuild the Parliament building. Turkish Airlines has been operating regular twice-weekly flights to Mogadishu since March. Turkey had played an influential role in bringing Somalia's situation to international attention. In May it had hosted a United Nations conference on Somalia's transition process.

President Mohamud said that Somalia was moving into a process of change after a period of long uncertainty and he thanked Turkey for the support it was giving and for boosting hope for the country. He said Turkey was not only giving a helping hand in the field of education but also extended its assistance to infrastructure and healthcare. Prime Minister Erdoğan was the first non-African leader to enter Mogadishu in 2011. Since then, Turkey set up an embassy in Mogadishu last year to join the embassies of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Libya, Sudan and Yemen. It has supplied over US\$ 50 million in assistance and has been assiduous in its efforts to rebuild schools and hospitals, improve public sanitation, repair key streets in Mogadishu, and renovate the country's dilapidated airport, and following the expulsion of Al-Shabaab from Mogadishu, Turkey is reported to have sent some 500 development and aid workers to help in reconstruction. President Mohamud stressed that overall his visit would strengthen the bilateral relations between Somalia and Turkey, and their discussions, covering military and security issues as well as diplomatic, technical and economic development, would deepen and expand relations between the two countries.

During his visit, President Mohamud and his delegation also met with Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and other senior Turkish government officials. Other meetings were held with members of the Somali community in Turkey and with Turkish businessmen in Istanbul on Thursday and Friday.

.....and the UN's annual humanitarian appeal for Somalia

The United Nations launched its annual humanitarian appeal for Somalia in Mogadishu for the first time for two decades, on Tuesday (4th December). This year's appeal is for US\$1.3 billion to address the immediate needs of the Somali people over the next year and enhance resilience in the country. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the appeal is part of the UN's three-year strategy for 2013-2015. It covers a total of 369 humanitarian projects targeting 3.8 million Somalis in need; "With 3.8 million people in need of assistance, the humanitarian crisis in Somalia is one of the largest in the world. More than 1.1 million people are internally displaced and over 1 million Somalis live outside the country as refugees"; the latest report of the Famine Early Warning System Network also says that over 2 million people still remain food insecure either at stressed or crisis level.

The UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, Stefano Porretti, presenting the appeal said the humanitarian situation in Somalia "remains critical", but the improvement in the food supply situation and the new security and political landscape "presented opportunities to break the cycle of recurring crises brought on by drought and conflict". He noted that it was possible to prevent any possible future shocks in Somalia from developing into a humanitarian catastrophe "by strengthening Somalis' ability to cope with droughts and floods". OCHA has also made it clear it

wants to see a comprehensive peace process that will see Somalis able to return to cultivate their farms to improve food production. Mr Porretti described the road to resilience as “long and difficult.” At the same time, he added, “There is an absolute imperative to continue supporting the humanitarian work in Somalia. The new three-year humanitarian appeal allows for greater continuity in programming and aims at responding to the existing emergency needs of the population in crisis in a sustainable manner.”

For the first time the Consolidated Appeal Process strategy is covering a three-year period, to allow for greater continuity in programming, particularly needed for the resilience-building necessary. The strategy is aimed at ensuring equal and integrated assistance to malnourished children and people living in emergency conditions; improving the quality, reliability, responsiveness, and accessibility of basic services, and promoting safety-net programming; investing in household and community resilience through access to solutions addressing livelihood vulnerability, including displacement and climate change; and strengthening the capacity and coordination of NGOs, affected communities, and local, regional and national-level authorities. Two operational objectives support these strategic objectives: improved transparency and accountability, and better alignment with development mechanisms and structures.

The implementation of the strategy will be carried out by a total of 177 national and international non-governmental organizations and UN agencies operating in Somalia. Somalia's Minister of Interior and National Security Abdikarim Hussein Guled, who also has responsibility for humanitarian affairs, said the appeal was a humanitarian not a political event. OCHA has announced that the 2012 humanitarian appeal for Somalia had been 57 per cent funded, with over US\$668 million provided out of US\$1.1 billion requested.

The Prime Minister responds to questions

In an interview this week with the Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency (ERTA), Prime Minister Hailemariam answered questions on the recent restructures in the executive, on the overall performance of the Growth and Transformation Plan, on government plans to look to the public to tackle the problems of good governance, and on the efforts to lower inflation. The Prime Minister underlined the institutional strength of the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front and of the developmental government which provided for the country's stability. He said that all those who had been “trumpeting doomsday stories forecasting instability in Ethiopia after the death of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi” were people who were totally ignorant of the institutional strength of the government and administration and of the industriousness of the Ethiopian people.

The Prime Minister noted that the recent changes in the organization of the executive involved the creation of two administrative clusters, covering Good Governance and Reform, and the Economy and Finance. Ministers have been appointed to coordinate these clusters. Ato Muktar Kedir has been appointed Minister of the Civil Service, and coordinator of the Good Governance and Reform Cluster, with the rank of Deputy Prime Minister. Dr Debretsion Gebremichel, the Minister of Communication and Information Technology, has been appointed to coordinate the Economy and Finance Cluster, also with the rank of Deputy Prime Minister. The Prime Minister made it clear these changes were designed to improve the operation of the Growth and Transformation Plan. He said that the strategies and directions to enable implementation of the plan were all now in place and carrying these out was the major task for the immediate future.

The Prime Minister noted that the major GTP projects, the mega projects, were operating according to the schedules laid out in the Plan. The hydro power projects, for example, including

the Gilgel Gibe III Dam and the Grand Ethiopia Renaissance Dam (GERD) were well on course to meet the 10,000 MW target for the end of the GTP in 2015. By the middle of the year, it seemed that more than 13% of GERD and over 60% of Gilgel Gibe III had been completed. In the road sector, a series of major projects were under way at a cost of some 20 billion birr, and they were also on schedule. The Prime Minister pointed out that the government was covering some 90 per cent of the cost of these road developments from its own resources. He added that implementation of a number of railway and telecom projects have now started, backed by reliable funding from both local and foreign sources. He reflected that the World Bank had provided loans larger than ever before and that the EU, USA and other development partners, were also increasing their support.

The Prime Minister also spoke of the government's efforts to create a public movement against the problem of maladministration. He said that the government had now completed its identification of activities related to areas where the problems of maladministration were rampant. These included, he said, land administration, tax collection, business license registration, telecom and power services and justice administration. All of these had major problems of poor governance and administration. Now, preparations had been completed to initiate a nationwide public response to tackle the need for good governance in a meaningful way.

Prime Minister Hailemariam noted that inflation remained a challenge for Ethiopia's burgeoning economy as it had over the past few years. Explaining measures taken to bring down the inflation rate he said "Government activities aimed at controlling the circulation of money and the provision of basic commodities in bulk to the public have enabled us to lower the inflation rate to 15.8%". He further said the government was working to bring the rate down to single figures as soon as possible. Measures involved the promotion of savings, dealing with problems of housing particularly in Addis Ababa, creating jobs through small and micro enterprises, and rectifying problems in the wholesale trade and in distribution.

The Prime Minister noted that the government was working to ensure that the upcoming local and Addis Ababa elections would be conducted in a peaceful, fair and democratic way. He took the opportunity to call on all parties to work towards peaceful conduct of the elections.

US citizens advised to stay out of Eritrea

Last week, (on 29th November) the U.S. Department of State reissued its warnings to U.S. citizens of the risks of travel to Eritrea, strongly recommending any U.S. citizens defer all travel to Eritrea. This latest comprehensive warning is an update of the Travel Warning for Eritrea issued in April, providing "additional information on security incidents, including attacks near the border with Ethiopia, and to remind U.S. citizens of on-going security concerns in Eritrea." It makes depressing and discouraging reading.

The warning itemises the possible problems US citizens (or Eritrean-US dual citizens) could face. The Eritrean government continues to restrict the travel of all foreign nationals. It demands any visitors, and residents including U.S. diplomats, apply ten days in advance for permission to travel outside the city limits of Asmara. Permission is rarely granted. The U.S. Embassy is therefore extremely limited in its ability to provide emergency consular assistance outside Asmara. It is not usually informed by the authorities if U.S. citizens, whether they are dual nationals or not, have been arrested or detained. In any case, the Embassy is rarely allowed consular access whatever the reason for the arrest. The warning also notes that a number of Eritrean-U.S. dual citizens have been arrested at various times and held without apparent cause. Indeed, detainees are often held

for extended periods without charge or trial and conditions are harsh: “those incarcerated may be held in very small quarters without access to restrooms, bedding, food, or clean water.”

The warning cautions U.S. citizens to carry appropriate documentation with them at all times as those without evidence of their identity and military status might be taken into custody at any time: “U.S. citizens are advised to exercise caution around armed persons.” It also adds that although there have been no specific incidents of violence against U.S. citizens, the government controlled media frequently broadcasts anti-U.S. rhetoric, and this has become much louder since UN Security Council sanctions were strengthened a year ago.

U.S. citizens are strongly advised not to travel near the Eritrean-Ethiopian border or in the Southern Red Sea region. The warning notes the presence of large numbers of Eritrean and Ethiopian troops along the border and itemises a number of incidents, including the killing of five tourists and the kidnapping of four others inside Ethiopia in January. The attack was carried out by a group trained and based in Eritrea. Two months later Ethiopian troops carried out a carefully calculated and proportional response, destroying three training camps inside Eritrea. A year earlier, the warning notes, there had been bomb attacks on vehicles inside Ethiopia. In the south, the statement says Eritrean forces may have withdrawn from the territory Eritrea claims from Djibouti, but tensions along the border remain high, not least because Eritrea still refuses to admit it attacked Djibouti or even to acknowledge that it is holding some prisoners.

The State Department warns people not to sail near the Eritrean coast, visit Eritrean ports or even travel through Eritrean waters. It points out that islands along the coast may be used for military training. The Eritrean government doesn't issue visas to people arriving by sea. Fuel and provisions are often unavailable in the port of Massawa, or in other ports. They are often scarce in Asmara as well. The statement gives examples of Yemeni, US and British ships whose sailors were detained and adds that “there are reports of additional vessels carrying nationals from other countries being detained for several months. In nearly all cases, the Eritrean government has neither given a reason for detention nor granted consular access.” The statement also points out that the port of Assab is closed to private vessels and adds that incidents of piracy were reported off Assab last year.

The State Department statement lists a number of other possible difficulties and dangers. These include landmines and unexploded ordnance, described as “serious problem throughout the country.” Many of these date back to earlier conflicts but some have been more recently laid by opposition groups. Crime in Asmara has increased as a result of deteriorating economic conditions and there are persistent shortages of food, water, and fuel as well as rapid price inflation. The warning notes that “the combination of forced, open-ended, low-paying, national service for many Eritreans and severe unemployment” has led to a growth in criminal activity in peoples' efforts to support their families. It also points out that telecommunication options are limited; international cell phones do not work on Eritrean networks, and local cell service is tightly controlled by the Eritrean government as well as difficult to obtain. Internet cafés are rare and hours are limited, and internet service is limited and slow.

The State Department warning also points out that U.S. citizens choosing to travel to Eritrea despite all this must obtain an Eritrean visa in advance. Those arriving without a visa are generally refused admission and returned on the next flight to their point of origin, but in some cases they may be jailed for several months after arriving without a visa. Eritrean-U.S. dual citizens who enter Eritrea with an Eritrean ID card may face other difficulties, including problems in obtaining the necessary permission to exit the country legally. In fact, in numerous cases, dual Eritrean-U.S. citizens have been prevented from leaving, again without any reasons given.

IGAD Member States plan increasing investment to end drought emergencies

Members of the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) have expressed their commitment to work together as a region to increase investment aimed at ending drought emergencies in the IGAD region by building sustainable livelihoods. Member states and partners in a meeting on Monday (26th November) in Nairobi overwhelmingly backed the IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI) Strategy which has been developed by the IGAD Secretariat in consultation with member states, development partners, non-state actors and other stake holders.

This follows the IGAD Summit of Heads of State and Government, convened in Nairobi in September last year. The Summit declared the commitment of member states to end drought emergencies in the IGAD region, once and for all. The Summit was held with a view to properly evaluate and respond to the severe drought situation in IGAD region in 2011, a situation that affected more than 13 million people and exacerbated chronic food insecurity to famine levels in areas of Somalia.

In responding to the emergency, the Heads of State and Government of IGAD made a collective decision calling for a strategy to end drought emergencies while emphasizing the need to do things differently, in other words to provide for a holistic approach in the regional setting. This, the Heads of State and Government agreed, should be supported by investment plans at the level of member states and of the region. The Summit therefore tasked IGAD with the responsibility of leading and coordinating implementation of the initiative.

According to the information released by the IGAD Secretariat, this strategy will now guide and inform the process of coordinating and leading the implementation of the initiative. The initiative itself will drive a regional agenda to harmonize policies, strategies and systems throughout the IGAD region. It will also improve efforts to enhance cooperation and integration among member countries and ensure the execution of national and regional projects within a coordinated implementation framework, aimed specifically at ending drought emergencies. The September 2011 Summit emphasized that ‘droughts need not, and should not, lead to famine and other disasters in the region’. The new IGAD framework should ensure that this will indeed be the case for the future.

The Adama One Wind Power Project inaugurated

The Adama One (I) Wind Power Project was inaugurated last weekend, Saturday (1st December) in the presence of Prime Minister Hailemariam and other high-level government officials. The power project has an installed generation capacity of 51 megawatts, using a total of 34 wind towers each with the ability to generate 1.5MW. It has already been connected with the country’s main power grid. Eighty-five per cent of the US\$117 million budget was covered by a loan arranged by the Export-Import Bank of China, and the remainder by the Ethiopian government. The mechanical work for the project was handled by Hydro China and the civil work was by another Chinese company, GCOC.

An agreement for the second stage of the Adama project (Adama II Wind Power Generation Project) has now been signed by the Chief Executive of the Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation (EEPCo), Mihret Debebe, and the manager of GCOC, Wang Yantao. This provides for an extension of the Adama I Wind Power Project at a cost of US\$340 million dollars. The two projects between them will supply power for the industrial developments in Adama town and surrounding areas. The development was welcomed as the project had no negative impact on the environment or the

surrounding community; in addition there was no expense once completed, other than routine maintenance.

There is significant national potential for the generation of energy from wind power in Ethiopia. A number of projects are being developed in various parts of the country. The first one to become functional was the Ashegoda Wind Power Project which has a capacity of 120MWs. It was built at a cost of 210 million Euros, financed by the French bank BNP Paribas, and the project was facilitated by the Agence France de Development. Others now under development include the Ayisha Wind Farm which will have a generation capacity of 300MW, and the Debre Berhan Wind Farm and Assela Wind Farm, each of which will be able to generate 100MW. Messebo/Harena Wind Farm, which will have the capacity to generate 51MWs within the Growth and Transformation Plan, is due to be implemented by 2015.

The focus given to the development of wind power projects underlines the emphasis of the Government's policies in pursuing green and sustainable energy projects through its Green Economy strategy. In addition to wind power, other green and sustainable energy possibilities include geothermal, solar and, of course, hydro-power. These have the capacity to provide development as well as strengthen the Green Economy strategy. Ethiopia is rich in all these possibilities. Preliminary estimates suggest the possibility of obtaining at least a 1,000MWs from geothermal sources and more than 10,000MWs from wind and solar energy. Overall, it is expected that the wind power projects will play a significant role in the production of energy, adding to the enormous hydro-power potential of Ethiopia, regarded as "the water tower of Africa". This is estimated at over 45,000 MWs. The country's ambitious five-year Growth and Transformation Plan, which began in 2010, aims to increase the power generating capacity at least fourfold from the current level of 2,179 megawatts (MW) of electricity.

News and Views:

Prime Minister Hailemariam meets the Emir of Qatar

Prime Minister Hailemariam, in Doha, Qatar, to attend the Doha Climate Change Conference (COP18), met and held discussions with the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani on the side-lines of the Conference. The two leaders discussed ways to further strengthen bilateral ties between the two countries. Following the resumption of relations between Ethiopia and Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabor al-Thani, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Qatar, made a two-day visit to Ethiopia last month. Prime Minister Hailemariam and his delegation arrived in Doha on Sunday (2nd December). He was greeted on arrival at Doha International Airport by Minister of State, Sheikh Hamad bin Nasser bin Jassim Al Thani.

The Prime Minister repeats offer of direct talks with Eritrea

Prime Minister Hailemariam, in an interview with Al-Jazeera on Wednesday (5th December), expressed his readiness to hold direct talks with Eritrean President, Isaias Afewerki, on any outstanding issues that exist between the two countries. He said: "If you ask me, 'Do you want to go to Asmara and sit down and negotiate with Isaias Afewerki?' Then, I will say 'yes'". Ethiopia has repeatedly expressed its readiness to hold direct negotiations with Eritrea to discuss any existing differences at any time and place, with or without the presence of a third party. These efforts by Ethiopia have been continuously rejected by Eritrea. Prime Minister Hailemariam said: "My predecessor Meles Zenawi had asked more than 50 times even to go to Asmara and negotiate with President Isaias Afewerki". The Ethiopian government's top priority is to fight poverty and create strong regional integration, and the Prime Minister said if Ethiopia and Eritrea could deal with

their differences by round table negotiations, the situation would be “much more productive”. IGAD, the AU and the international community have repeatedly encouraged Eritrea to abandon its disruptive policies towards the rest of the Horn of Africa, and contribute positively to an already improving situation of regional peace, security and integration. Eritrea itself has requested to rejoin IGAD "with immediate effect", and also asked the UN Security Council to lift the sanctions regime, claiming it has stopped supporting anti-peace elements in the sub-region. However, the situation on the ground still suggests Eritrea has failed to change its behaviour. All it has done is change its tactics for providing support to organizations like Al-Shabaab. The most effective proof of Eritrea's adherence to regional peace and stability would be implementation of the 'guidelines' proposed by the UN Security Council but not yet implemented. Real behavioural change should precede any policy shifts towards Eritrea to ensure Eritrea itself has put an end to disruptive policies in the region.

A “Grand Stabilization Plan” MoU for South Central Somalia

The IGAD Joint Committee on the Grand Stabilization Plan for Southern Central Somalia met on Thursday (6th December), under the chairmanship of Somalia, to discuss a draft Memorandum of Understanding. The meeting, in Addis Ababa, at the Office of the Facilitator for Somalia Peace and Reconciliation aimed to ensure effective and timely coordination of the Grand Stabilization Plan, and strengthen its implementation by expanding the joint IGAD Committee to include new committee members appointed by the federal government of Somalia. The plan covers the promotion of political reconciliation, the establishment of a local administration, development of integrated national security capacities, the establishment of the rule of law, and the delivery of necessary assistance to communities in need. The Office of the Facilitator for Somalia Peace and Reconciliation said the draft MOU will enable the Committee to work more closely with the institutions of the Somalia Federal Government and provide them with greater support. It will also encourage the international community to provide coordinated assistance to ensure timely implementation of the stabilization plan. Attending the meeting were delegations from the three members of the Joint Committee, Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya. General Mohamed Sheikh Hassan led the Somali delegation to the committee and chairs the IGAD Steering Committee. The Somali team is also mandated to liaise with the office of the Somali Prime Minister and the Somali Foreign Ministry. The IGAD Secretariat was represented in the meeting by Engineer Mahboub Maalim, Executive Secretary of IGAD. The draft MOU is expected to be signed at a meeting of the Committee scheduled to take place in Nairobi on 13th December.

East African Community defers decisions on South Sudan and Somalia

The East Africa Community Heads of State summit, held in Nairobi on Saturday (1st December) decided to defer decisions on the application for membership by Somalia and the Republic of South Sudan. The Republic of South Sudan applied for membership of the regional economic bloc after achieving independence last year; Somalia submitted its application in February this year. The regional Heads of State summit in Bujumbura last April decided to defer a decision on Somalia's application until this meeting. Now it has decided to defer a decision once again, but the Summit also decided that a ministerial committee should visit Somalia and meet Somali leaders to look into the issue. A communiqué after the summit also noted the Heads of State Summit had deferred the decision on South Sudan's application. The Heads of State considered the verification report which had assessed South Sudan's eligibility in meeting the criteria needed to join the regional bloc. It then decided to refer the matter to the Council of Ministers to conduct further discussions with the Republic of South Sudan. The EAC treaty sets out details of adherence to universally accepted principles of good governance, democracy, rule of law, observance of human rights and social justice as requirements to join the East African Community. A country applying

for membership also has to have geographical proximity with regional states and is expected to be able to contribute towards regional integration.

Kenya building a power distribution station for Ethio-Kenya power supply

Kenya has announced it is planning to build a power distribution station at Sussewa to be used for the transmission of power from Ethiopia. The distribution station will be used for the onward transmission of power from the Walaita Soddo sub-station in Ethiopia under the deal signed between the two countries in 2011. Ethiopia is to supply Kenya with 400MWs of power annually. The project is being covered by loans from the World Bank and the African Development Bank. The World Bank is providing US\$684 million while the remaining US\$348 million is being provided by the African Development Bank. Once the 1,045 kilometre transmission power line between the two countries is complete in 2018, Kenya will be able to import cheap power from Ethiopia. The Ethiopia-Kenya Power interconnector marks the first phase of a regional project, the \$1.3 billion **Eastern Electricity Highway Project** aiming to establish regional integration of a power transmission network to connect all the East African countries including the Democratic Republic of Congo.

A high-level Djibouti delegation visits Belet Weyne

A high-level delegation from Djibouti led by Djibouti's Defence Minister, Abdikadir Mohammed Kamil, arrived Belet Weyne at the weekend (2nd December) to visit the AMISOM troops based in Belet Weyne and in the Hiiraan region of Somalia. Belet Weyne was liberated from Al-Shabaab extremists at the end of last year by Ethiopian troops who stayed there until Djibouti troops deployed under AMISOM arrived to take over security in the town. Last month, another 700 Djiboutian troops arrived in Belet Weyne to raise the number of AMISOM forces there to nearly a thousand. The Djibouti delegation held discussions with Hiiraan region officials as well as talking to the Djibouti troops and AMISOM commanders. It also assessed the overall security situation in Belet Weyne.

Prime Minister Hailemariam: HIV prevention results are encouraging

Prime Minister Hailemariam, in a message on World AIDS Day on Saturday (1st December), said encouraging results are being registered in controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia. The Prime Minister noted that the policies, strategies, programmes and other activities put in place by the government had played a key role. **The rate of new HIV infections has been reduced by 90 per cent** while deaths from HIV/AIDS had decreased by **53 per cent** as a result of the integrated efforts of government, the public and development partners during the last decade. The Prime Minister said the fight against HIV/AIDS would significantly contribute towards the success of the Growth and Transformation Plan and the country's on-going efforts to reduce poverty. He added that the government would further strengthen the provision of accessibility to HIV/AIDS services and of prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission as well as provide increased support to people living with HIV and for AIDS orphans. The Prime Minister called on the public, people living with HIV, religious institutions, the media and on governmental and non-governmental organizations to cooperate further and expand their on-going efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

A Pakistan civil servants training visit to Addis Ababa

This week a group of Pakistan civil servants visited Ethiopia as part of a study of the process of public policy formulation in Africa. The group was given briefings in the Ministries of Federal

Affairs and of Information as well as in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where the importance of the Constitution as the source of all laws, policies, promulgations and decrees was underlined. Article 86, for example, defines the main aspects of the business of foreign affairs to be conducted by the Federal Government. Foreign Policy promulgations are drawn from this and the Government has also produced a foreign policy document covering all the issues that need to be assessed and deliberated on. This document, putting **Economic Diplomacy** at the top of the priority list, demonstrates the philosophical and historical assumptions that policy-makers have taken into consideration, including such issues as democracy, national pride, globalization and development. Poverty is classified as the main threat to the State and to the process of State Formation after 1991. The destitute and disenfranchised elements of Ethiopian society (over 80% of the population) need to be pulled out of poverty. It is therefore an obligation for diplomatic practice to focus on economic amelioration vis-à-vis globalization and other global economic and political factors. The primary focus of the agricultural extension system, for example, has brought about equitable development in the rural areas, and in the current five-year programme the Government has introduced a new phase of development modalities to transform the economy into an **industrial-driven economy in which agriculture will provide inputs**. The service sector has also shown considerable development with urbanization encouraging the tourist and financial industries and the banking sector. The visit of the Pakistan civil servants is the first of its kind to Ethiopia. It underlined the growing importance of Ethiopia in Africa and its role at international level.