

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs



A Week in the Horn

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Somalia's arms embargo partially lifted

AMISOM's mandate renewed

The U.N. Security Council on Wednesday (March 6th) unanimously adopted a resolution to partially lift its 21-year-old arms embargo on Somalia and extend the mandate of the African Union Mission to Somalia for another year. The Resolution, adopted unanimously, is in several parts, and defines a new United Nations presence in Somalia, guided by the Secretary-General's Strategic Review, and addresses itself to issues of human rights and civilian protection.

The resolution allows the Somali government to purchase light weapons for the next one year. These can include automatic assault rifles, rocket-propelled grenade launchers and other firearms with calibers that do not exceed 12.7 mm, as long as these are intended solely for the development of the Security Forces of the Federal Government of Somalia. The ban on heavy weapons including surface-to-air missiles, larger-caliber guns, howitzers, cannons and mortars, anti-tank guided weapons, mines and night vision weapon sights, is, however, maintained. The Somali government is required to notify the Council's sanctions committee at least five days in advance of any such deliveries and provide full details; alternately, Member States delivering assistance may make the notification after informing the Government of its intentions.

President Hassan Sheikh Mahmoud had been pressing for an end to the embargo arguing that it was outdated and impeded his government's effort to build strong and all-inclusive national army to create an Al-Shabaab free Somalia. He welcomed the easing of the embargo calling it a victory for the Somali Government: "It correctly reflects a new and constant improvement of the political situation in Somalia," he said. He said thousands of Somali army recruits, trained by Somalia's international partners, had returned to Somalia but had been unable to fulfill their security duty alongside AMISOM troops because the government could not get the equipment it needed. The lifting of the embargo, he said, was the missing element, and noted the responsibilities that came with the decision.

Some Council members agreed that a semblance of normality had begun to return to Somalia since the election of a new president, prime minister and cabinet last year. Others were concerned that terminating the embargo at this time might allow a flow of weapons into Al-Shabaab hands.

Speaking after the vote, The Permanent Representative of Guatemala said he had voted in favour of the resolution because it was important to support the efforts undertaken by the Somali Government, the United Nations and AMISOM. However, he added, he did not feel that the progress achieved justified the lifting of the arms embargo. He thought the Security Council should have adopted a 'phased approach' to prevent any possible repercussions stemming from such an 'abrupt suspension' of the ban. In fact, he supported the recommendations of the UN Monitoring Group which suggested providing Somalia with the capacity to develop its security sector without modifying the arms embargo. He trusted the international community would now redouble its commitment to accelerate progress towards security sector reform and support the establishment of necessary safeguards. The Government in Somaliland said it was concerned over the modification of the embargo, saying it was ill advised and the proliferation of weapons in Somalia was not conducive to security in the Horn of Africa; and the administration in Puntland also expressed its reservations.



Following the adoption of the resolution, The U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Susan Rice, described the Security Council resolution as a clear signal of support to the new Somali Government by easing arms embargo while still providing safeguards to ensure responsible development of the security sector and leaving the ban on Al-Shabaab and other terrorist and extremist groups in place. Britain's Permanent Representative to the UN, Mark Lyall Grant, said the council had struck the right balance, sending a positive political signal to President Mahamoud, but continuing to give the council oversight of weapons flowing into Somalia". He said major challenges remained, but "we are now ... moving away from international trusteeship of the situation in Somalia towards supporting the government's efforts to address its own problems."

The Council Resolution commended the contribution of AMISOM to lasting peace and stability in Somalia and expressed appreciation for the continued commitment of troops, police and equipment by the Governments of Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Uganda. It also recognized the significant sacrifices made by AMISOM forces. It extended the mandate of AMISOM until 28 February 2014. It also requested the UN Secretary General to continue the UN logistical support package.

The Resolution lays down specific tasks to be carried out by AMISOM. These include maintaining a presence in the four military sectors set out in the Mission's Strategic Concept of January 5th, 2012 and, in coordination with the Somalia Security Forces, reduce the threat posed by Al-Shabaab and other armed opposition groups. It is also expected to assist the Government in extending State authority in areas recovered from Al-Shabaab. Other mandated functions include assisting with implementation of the national security plans through training of security forces, providing protection to the Federal Government to help it carry out its functions and ensuring security for key infrastructures, improving security conditions for the provision of humanitarian assistance, and seeking to develop further an effective approach towards civilians, as well as strengthen child and women protection its activities and operations.

The Resolution welcomes the Strategic Reviews of both the United Nations and the African Union on their presence and engagement in Somalia, and the decisions taken by both organizations to enhance collaboration. It underlines the importance of both organizations improving coordination with each other as well as with the Federal Government of Somalia, other regional organizations, and Member States. It agrees that the "UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) has fulfilled its mandate and should now be dissolved, and further agrees that UNPOS should be replaced by a new expanded special political mission as soon as possible." It also accepts that "the conditions in Somalia are not yet appropriate for the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation," but requested the Secretary General to keep this under review.

In the meantime, the UN Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA) is to be integrated within the framework of the new UN mission, with the head of UNSOA continuing to report to the Department of Field Support (DFS) on the delivery of the AMISOM logistical support package. Discussions are under way on a revised UN presence in Somalia to support recent political gains and to address ongoing humanitarian and human rights situations. The new mission would cover the areas of good offices, advice and assistance on security, peacekeeping and state-building, the preparation of elections, human rights and the rule of law, and assistance for the coordination of international assistance.



The Council asks the Secretary-General to conduct a Technical Assessment Mission on the implementation of the new United Nations presence, in full cooperation with the Somali Government.

The Resolution in its Human Rights and Civilian Protection section condemns all attacks against civilians in Somalia and calls for the immediate cessation of all acts of violence; and strongly condemns reports of grave violations against children, urging the Somali Government to implement the action plan signed on August 6th last year to eliminate the killing and maiming of children, and the July 3rd action plan to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers; as well as all attacks on Somali institutions, AMISOM, United Nations personnel and facilities, journalists, and the civilian population by armed opposition groups, and foreign fighters. It reiterates its call to all opposition groups to lay down their arms. The Resolution also expresses its concern at the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Somalia and its impact on the people, underlining the importance of full, safe, independent, timely and unimpeded access of all humanitarian actors to those in need of assistance, and proper accounting in international humanitarian support.



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A massive turnout in the Kenyan election

Kenyans turned out in huge numbers on Monday, March 4th, to vote for a new president, some even waiting from the early hours of the morning. Long queues were reported at most polling stations. The polls opened at 6 am and closed at 5pm, though in many cases the time was extended to allow everyone to vote. Some 14.3 million Kenyans were eligible to vote for the country's 4th president as well as for governors, senators, and women representatives, members of parliament and county representatives, and there was a turnout of well over 70 percent. Eight candidates were standing for the presidency but the contest was essentially between Prime Minister Raila Odinga and Deputy Prime Minister Uhuru Kenyatta.

Before the election, President Mwai Kibaki, who was not standing again, urged Kenyans to vote peacefully and for the losers to accept defeat. In a televised address to the nation on the previous Friday he said: "Cast your vote and keep the peace. Let us send a clear message to the world that our democracy has come of age. A peaceful vote is a vote for a secure, prosperous and stable Kenya". Officials and candidates all appealed for a calm vote, and called on candidates to raise challenges in the courts and not on the streets. It was the first time a vote was taken under the new constitution designed to prevent a repeat of violence that followed the 2007 election when some 1,300 people died and tens of thousands were displaced. Special care was taken to counter any possible allegations of vote-rigging including anti-fraud fingerprint-based voter-ID technology.

More than 99,000 police were deployed to ensure security, and voting was largely peaceful though five police officers and at least six other people - including several attackers - died in an attack near Mombasa, and reports of disturbances in the town of Kilifi, north of Mombasa, where six civilians were killed. Three explosions in three different polling stations in Mandera, a town near the border with Somalia, and in another village were also reported. Police authorities said the incidents were unrelated with the elections, and said some of the attacks around Mombasa had been apparently carried out by the Mombasa Republican Council, a coastal separatist group.

There were a total of some 23,000 observers, including 2,600 from international bodies. The Joint COMESA, EAC and IGAD Election Observer Mission to the Kenyan elections released a preliminary report on Tuesday which commended the voter registration process and the election campaign as peaceful despite a few isolated incidents.

Their report also commended the role of the media: "The Mission noted with satisfaction that the media has been very vibrant and fair in covering the campaign process and the electoral process in general; by organizing peace campaigns and debates for various elective seats from presidential to county levels in order to assist the public to make informed decisions about the candidates." The Mission's report said the counting was being conducted in a transparent manner in the presence of political party agents, observers and the media. UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon said he was encouraged by the largely peaceful and orderly process, despite some incidents of violence and some technical problems: "We have all seen the inspiring images of Kenyans turning out in large numbers, with great patience, to exercise their democratic rights."



The new Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) has brought in improved technology to prevent fraud, speed up counting and increase transparency. This was expected to lead to quicker announcements of results, however the technology proved problematic. And the electronic transmission system to collate results from the over 30,000 polling stations broke down. Election officials had to resort to a manual recount. There were also an unusually high proportion of apparently spoiled votes possibly because voters were choosing representatives at six different levels of government and there was some confusion.

As a result the declaration of results has been delayed. At 9 am this morning, Friday March 8th, according to the electoral commission, Uhuru Kenyatta had 49.5 percent to Raila Odinga's 44.2 percent, figures based on votes reported from 223 of 291 constituencies. To win the presidency outright, a candidate must get 50% of votes cast plus one vote, as well as at least 25% of votes in half of Kenya's 47 counties. If no-one achieves that, the vote will go to a run-off, probably on April 11th. The election commission originally said it hoped to tally all the results on Wednesday, but the technical problems mean it was unable to achieve this. It has seven days from Monday's vote to declare the official outcome. Both candidates have raised concerns about the procedures but both have promised to go through legal channels and avoid violence.



UK Parliamentarians heartened by Ethiopia's socio-economic progress

A UK Parliamentary delegation led by Sir Malcolm Bruce visited Ethiopia this week to strengthen the developmental partnership between the two countries and evaluate a number of projects being funded by the Department for International Development (DfID). The delegation, comprising members of the UK Parliament Select Committee for International Development, visited a number of social and development projects in and around Addis Ababa, Bahr Dar and Asosa. The committee concluded its visit by holding meetings with senior government officials, including Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Berhane Gebre-Christos and Speaker of the House, Abadula Gemedu.

The Prime Minister told the delegation of Ethiopia's keen desire to continue to strengthen relations with UK in the areas of trade and investment. The Prime Minister said the expanding relations between the two countries were an opportunity to take these to an even higher level. He added that Ethiopia accorded a special place to the UK's assistance in efforts to achieve middle income country status. Sir Malcolm Bruce, chair of the Parliament Select Committee for International Development, said the delegation had noted the proper dispensation of UK development assistance during their visits to different regions in the country. He said the delegation had seen that the UK's development assistance was being used in projects primarily aimed at benefitting the general public. He went on to emphasize that the UK's recent decision to commit 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) meant the committee had a duty to monitor and report on DfID projects overseas. Commending what he called Ethiopia's encouraging activities in human rights protection and good governance, Sir Malcolm remarked that Ethiopia was at the top of the list of countries that receive UK assistance. He expressed the UK's desire to continue to support Ethiopia in its efforts to eradicate poverty and accelerate growth.

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos met the delegation at his office on Wednesday, (March 6th). Members of the delegation offered congratulations on the success of various development initiatives around the country in health, education and food security, and particularly emphasized the tremendous progress being made in rural communities to combat early marriage as well as improvements in food security as a result of the Government's villagization programmes. In the committee's visits to Asosa, location of various villagization projects, Sir Malcolm explained that they were encouraged by the provision of clean water, health benefits and education to new settlers. He expressed his confidence that the funding being provided by the UK in Ethiopia was yielding tangible results and commended the government for its commitment to delivering services to its people and fighting poverty. Ambassador Berhane reaffirmed the government's policy of voluntary resettlement and firmly rejected claims of the use of force in these matters. He said he shared the committee's sentiments and reaffirmed that the relationship between the UK and Ethiopia, based on mutual interest, was delivering results for the people of Ethiopia. With a high level political commitment to eradicating poverty, Ambassador Berhane underlined the government's willingness to learn through experience while addressing gaps through improved assessment and evaluation.



Fiona Bruce MP highlighted the impressive growth in education, citing the improved teaching of English and Science at secondary school level and noted the encouraging improvements in social and educational programs throughout the country. Ambassador Berhane shared her sentiments and confirmed the government's desire to continue to increase the quality of education by reducing the size of classrooms, improving both teaching and the availability of materials. The delegation expressed readiness to support the Government's ongoing efforts to ensure distribution of quality education to all. Ambassador Berhane highlighted government initiatives aimed at empowering women and providing more opportunities for young girls in education. He also explained that over the coming 10-15 years the policy would aim to increase the percentage of women at higher decision-making institutions including the Foreign Ministry to 50%.

The discussions covered various other issues including democratization where the delegation expressed its support for the government's democratization initiatives while emphasizing the importance of developing a vibrant civil society. Ambassador Berhane stressed the current opposition weakness was not by design and that there was adequate political space for opposition groups. The democratic processes in Ethiopia currently demonstrated high levels of public participation at the urban and rural level. Ambassador Berhane underlined the government's hope that with the rise of the middle class, the country would soon witness the growth of more opposition groups with articulate political programs. He strongly reaffirmed the government's commitment to multi-party democracy. Ambassador Berhane said civil society was one of the principle players in the development of home-grown democracy in the country. He assured the delegation that the democratization of Ethiopia was fundamentally tied to the country's survival, citing ethnic and religious accommodation as imperative to the country's success. He welcomed the UK's support for the development of a home-grown democracy.

Referring to recent reports surrounding the Charities and Civil Societies Proclamation, Ambassador Berhane said "the Ethiopian people deserve clean and non-corrupt governance systems and civil society and the behavior of NGOs operating in the country must reflect this". He cited examples in the past where this had not been the case. He affirmed the objective of the law was not to restrict NGOs but instead to regulate and develop a framework which could enhance the participation of civil society organizations in the country's development. He insisted the government and the Ethiopian people deserved to know where and how NGOs were spending the money they are raising. Auditing and reporting were a necessary part of a regulation strategy to ensure accountability. He explained that, as in any country, foreign charities could not be involved in political advocacy. This was part of government strategy to develop home-grown democracy without the undesired political influence of outsiders. Equally, local charities which receive the majority of their funding from domestic sources were free to be involved in all areas of advocacy work.

In his meeting with the UK delegation, Speaker Abadula emphasized that the House of People's Representatives was carrying out proper monitoring activities of ministerial activities and in other areas to ensure that any support provided by partners, including Britain, was being correctly used in accepted manner for their intended purposes.



Ambassador Berhane Gebrechristos meets US Counterterrorism Coordinator

The State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Berhane Gebrechristos, this week met Ambassador Jerry Lanier, acting Coordinator of the US Department of State's Bureau of Counterterrorism who urged Ethiopia to continue with what he described as its leading role in the global fight against counterterrorism within the auspices of the Global Counterterrorism Forum. He briefed the State Minister on the activities of the twenty nine member Forum in which Turkey and US are lead players. He said Ethiopia as a member of the East Africa Regional Mission of the Forum had a major job to consolidate counterterrorism actions in the region.

Ambassador Lanier praised Ethiopia as a trusted partner of US in the fight against counterterrorism. He made it clear the US appreciated Ethiopia's support to the new government of Somalia in its continuing fight against Al-Shabaab and other terrorist networks. He expressed the US government's desire to continue its support to Ethiopia through various counter-terror programs as in controlling money-laundering, terrorist financing and de-radicalization. In particular, Ambassador Lanier stressed the importance of putting in place functioning institutions that were able to control terrorist financing and money-laundering. These, he said, would help to maintain Africa's booming economic growth, adding that "as most of the countries in the world's top ten growing economies are from Africa, such institutions will help to make investment in Africa predictable and safe." Ambassador Lanier also outlined the US plan to train African judges and law enforcers in Tunisia as part of US capacity-building activities in combating terrorism. He said that as terrorism was a violation of law, instilling the core values of the rule of law was important as part of the process of tackling it effectively. The US embassy has started talks with the Minister of Justice here in Addis Ababa on arrangements for this training.

Ambassador Berhane noted that the relationship between Ethiopia and the United States was excellent, adding that "we are enjoying a strategic partnership with the US and we want to deepen our relation even more within that framework". He assured Ambassador Lanier that Ethiopia was happy to lead the Counterterrorism Forum's efforts within the region and continue to support the Forum fully. He emphasized Ethiopia's warm appreciation to the US for its assistance in the battle against terrorism and made clear the country's desire to expand this "excellent cooperation" in combating terrorism. The Horn of Africa is an area where there are several terror networks operating and the security of the sub-region was a matter of prime concern to Ethiopia. Ambassador Berhane added that the region was a "center of gravity for terrorists as in the Sahel and Pakistan and this affects us directly." He noted that "the link between Al-Shabaab, AQIM and terrorist groups in Sahelian region were worrisome to Ethiopia." On a domestic level he also pointed out that "terrorism concerns us because we have been facing its direct challenge here in Ethiopia."

Ambassador Berhane said that Ethiopia would continue supporting the government of Somalia until peace and security was consolidated throughout the country, though he noted that Ethiopia had only limited resources which it could give to this. On money-laundering, he said the country was making efforts to improve its capacity building and to provide the formation of institutions that would be able to fight money-laundering effectively. The two sides also exchanged views on possible ways of tackling the issue of finances for terrorists coming from the various regional diasporas.



Overall, State Minister Berhane assured Ambassador Lanier that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would continue to work closely with other line ministries and offices to streamline counter-terrorism efforts.



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Ethiopia's Health 'Program-for-Results' approved by the World Bank

The Board of Directors of the World Bank has approved Ethiopia's Health Program-for-Results (PforR), a central element in its plans to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The Program-for-Results will provide for the disbursement of a US\$100 million zero-interest credit over the next four years on the successful completion of specific health results, particularly those that improve the health of the country's women and children. Ethiopia also will get another US\$20 million grant from the Health Results Innovation Trust Fund, managed by the World Bank and funded by the United Kingdom and Norway. The World Bank said these funds would further enhance the achievements gained in maternal and child health, and assist in Ethiopia's progress to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the sector. This new Health MDGs Program-for-Results' operation marks the World Bank's first use of its result-based program financing to improve the health sector in a country through this zero-interest facility.

Key results against which Program-for-Results' funds will be disbursed to Ethiopia are identified as an increased share of deliveries attended by skilled health workers, timely immunization to protect children against five vaccine-preventable diseases (diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, hepatitis B and haemophilus influenza type b), and pregnant women receiving at least one antenatal care visit. Other key results, the Bank stated, are expected to improve efficiency. These include timely data reporting by health centers and more transparent procurement policies. The Bank noted that Ethiopia has made impressive progress in health, with child deaths falling by 30 percent between 2005 and 2011.

The Government has already recognized that there is no alternative to the increase and harmonization of investment in an integrated health systems approach to expand child health services. Indeed, the key components that have enabled Ethiopia to significantly reduce child mortality over the past few years are mainly due to the Government's sustained and massive investment in building strong, well-functioning and accessible health delivery systems. The Government's steadfast commitment and the support of a wide range of partners have immensely contributed to the steady progress in strengthening the health system throughout the country, resulting in improved access and quality of child health services. Future success, however, still hinges on further building up strong, well-functioning country-wide health structures and systems. In this regard, the World Bank's new scheme has a great deal to contribute.

The Bank has also commended the achievements resulting from the deployment of an impressive national network of more than 35,000 trained health workers as well as the expansion of the network of health centers that is enabling the country to quickly scale up the delivery of basic health services. According to Ministry of Health data, the Health Extension Workers, now deployed in communities across the country, are locally recruited young women, high school graduates with an additional year of intensive training in the delivery of a package of key health promotion and disease prevention interventions.



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As women, they have more access and are more trusted by local women and especially mothers who are the primary beneficiaries of their services. Health Extension Workers have been actively reaching out to women and their children at the community level, give lessons about family planning, closely following pregnancies, the newborn and young children and educating families about healthy living. They have contributed hugely to what has been achieved so far and will continue to play a crucial role in the future.

In fact, the Government has been steadily strengthening the health workforce at every level, though focusing in particular on mid-level health professionals and on areas where more lives can be saved. Task-shifting and pragmatic training strategies have been a central role in this. The Government is also revamping the health information system, establishing an effective health commodities supply and logistics system, and has introduced sustainable health-financing mechanisms through health insurance schemes tailored to the country's needs. These schemes will help Ethiopia to utilize its available health resources in an efficient manner and register improved and expanded results as the Bank and other partners expect.

Ethiopia is on track to meet the Millennium Development Goals in health by 2015, but it also has a more extensive aim, to increase the current pace of progress faster in order to reach the more challenging goal of reducing child mortality below 20/thousand by 2035. To accomplish this and other objectives set in the health sector's long term policy and strategy, the country needs to continue to move fast in building up the capacity of its health system and reach out to many more with appropriate care and at appropriate times. Given the strong commitment from the Government and the sustained support from dedicated partners, this ambitious goal can certainly be met. According to Guang Zhe Chen, the World Bank Country Director for Ethiopia, the Bank's program will boost these efforts, expanding the results by providing financial incentives to improve the reach of basic health services across the country.

It might be added that the Ministry of Health announced this week that all mothers delivering children in government health centers and hospitals will to be exempt from any kind of fees related to medical facilities and services, including delivery by cesarean section. The Ministry said the implementation of this directive will begin first in the regional states and then extended to Addis Ababa. The introduction of a free delivery service should have a very positive effect in encouraging the practice of hospital delivery and lessen the financial burden on women seeking maternal services. The charge-free service will also have a positive role in supporting achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.



The Celebration of Nile Day

The Nile Basin Countries celebrate Nile Day every year and this year it took place at Bahr Dar, a rapidly developing city on the shores of Lake Tana, and the Tissisat Falls where the Blue Nile/Abay River emerges. It is an area of economic growth with water resource development as a driving engine, and the Bahr Dar region hosts a number of Nile Basin Initiative projects, including the recently inaugurated power transmission connection between Sudan and Ethiopia, the Flood Prevention and Early Warning Project, the Eastern Nile Watershed Management Project, and the Tana-Beles Integrated Watershed Management Project.

The celebrations commemorate the launch of the Nile Basin Initiative on February 22nd 1999, and this year the theme was "Land Degradation and Climate Change address shared threats, sustain Nile Cooperation." Participants include Ministers in charge of Water Resources in each Nile Basin country, development partners, officials from various ministries working on Water, Energy, Agriculture, Foreign Affairs, Transport, Members of Parliament, Researchers and representatives of civil society, youth organizations, the media and the people of the Nile Basin.

The objective is to enhance public awareness about the Nile and its potential for promoting regional cooperation as well as its vulnerability from the impact of growing demand, utilization and climate change. The program is designed to engage the Nile Basin public by providing them the opportunity for participation, emphasizing the role the River Nile can play in enhancing collaboration and cooperation to manage the shared water resources. Such events help to promote Basin-wide cooperation and encourage the riparian states to improve water management and development for people's livelihoods.

Ethiopia's participation in the Nile day and the NBI in general underlines its well-grounded belief that cooperation on the Nile is indispensable for the shared vision among riparian states to ensure sustainable and equitable utilization of the River and implement natural resource management to maintain the ecology of the basin. All riparian states drink from the same water, their destiny is inextricably linked and there is no alternative to cooperation to guarantee the benefits for the people of the Basin. Ethiopia has always stood behind NBI and the common projects for the benefit of all riparian countries. Equally, Ethiopian policy towards other Nile Basin countries is grounded on perpetuating the historical relationship between the countries linked through the natural chord of the Nile, and resting on fraternal relations based on the principles of equitable and reasonable utilization.

As a result, Ethiopia has played a key role in the drafting and signing of the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) and it has subsequently taken measures to build the confidence of the downstream countries to bring them onboard as signatories of the CFA. One notable measure in this regard was its decision to delay ratification of the CFA until a new government was put in place in Egypt. Indeed, the obvious conclusion to draw from the launch of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam was that it underlines Ethiopia's commitment to the equitable utilization of the Nile waters.



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The Renaissance Dam will have major benefits for downstream countries including regulation of water flows, of enormous value for the agriculture down river, significant limits to siltation, and above all, a major reduction in evaporation and a consequent increase in the amount of water available.



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Ethiopia proposes ‘means testing’ on international climate efforts

Ethiopia has submitted a proposal to the UN Climate Agency, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to suggest a change in the way nations are classified as rich or poor. The UNFCCC divides nations by their wealth as this was in 1992, and as a result many major emerging economies such as Brazil, Mexico, Qatar and Saudi Arabia are currently in the same category as the world’s poorest countries. This division attaches respective obligations to countries based on “common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities”. It was on the basis of this that wealthy countries listed in Annex I of the Convention agreed to adopt national policies to reduce emissions. Those listed in Annex II are committed to providing financial assistance to other nations. This division bears little relevance to current development and Ethiopia’s proposal, underlining the need to devise a new mechanism to assess how much countries ought to contribute to global efforts to reduce emissions and contribute to climate finance, and suggests the need to reclassify nations from rich to poor and vice versa.

Ethiopia’s proposal points out that "it is not only the greenhouse gas emissions of some developing countries that have dramatically increased since 1992. Their economies have also grown substantively". It is, therefore, no longer sufficient to leave mitigation requirements to the Annex I Parties identified in 1992, and it may even no longer be sufficient to assign financial support requirements to the Annex II Parties identified as rich in 1992". In other words, the proposal emphasizes that "there is a global need to raise ambition for countering climate change more collectively than was seen as necessary in 1992".

It suggests a uniform equation should be produced to assess whether a nation has run out of its “atmospheric space”, or its population has emitted more than its fair share of greenhouse gases. It also proposes the need to conduct similar reviews to see if GDP and GDP per capita are sufficiently high for a nation to take on financial commitments to help others reduce emissions. Analysts hope that the proposal may be well received coming from Ethiopia, which has the reputation for being relatively progressive on climate change and the use of renewable energy including hydro, geothermal and wind power.

The international climate effort, from its inception, has focused predominantly on mitigation-reducing greenhouse gas emissions to prevent dangerous climate change. However, the next stage of the international effort must deal squarely with adaptation, that is coping with the impact of climate change that cannot be avoided. Ethiopia believes that this is both a matter of need, as climate change is already underway, and also a matter of equity, as the impact of the changes fall disproportionately on those least able to bear them. This may also be a condition for further progress on mitigation. Indeed, substantial new mitigation commitments post-2012 may be feasible only if accompanied by stronger support for adaptation.



News in Brief

Saudi Arabia says relations with Ethiopia excellent

Saudi Arabia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prince Saud Al-Faisal, has said relations between Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia are at an excellent level. In a press statement released by the Saudi's Foreign Ministry on Monday, March 4th, the Foreign Minister "confirmed the deep-rooted and long standing relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Ethiopia". He said that "the first Hijra (migration) in Islam was to Abyssinia, and the ties between the people of the two countries have had a long standing and prestigious history", adding that there was a growing "development of relations with Abyssinia, which culminated right now to reach an excellent level of cooperation in various fields", including the significant widening of trade between the two countries and growing investment relations. Prince Saud Al-Faisal also noted that Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Ethiopia were working closely to calm the situation in the Horn of Africa, and the two countries recently signed an agreement to cooperate on a whole range of issues. His statement followed comments by the Kingdom's Deputy Minister of Defense at a meeting in Cairo that Ethiopia's Renaissance Dam had the potential to affect downstream countries adversely. This led the Government to ask for an explanation from the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Addis Ababa. The Ambassador expressed his belief that the comments of the Deputy Minister did not reflect the views of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Last week, Saudi Arabia's Minister of Finance, Dr. Ibrahim bin Abdulaziz Al-Assaf, visited Addis Ababa for talks with Prime Minister Hailemariam and Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Ato Sufian Ahmed, and signed an agreement on double taxation. The discussions with the Prime Minister focused on ways to further enhance existing people-to-people relations and the importance of strengthening the activities of investors from Saudi Arabia, particularly in agricultural developments. Dr. Al-Assaf said that the Saudi Arabian government was keen to work closely with Ethiopia to further enhance existing relations in trade and investment. On Thursday, Dr. Al-Assaf and the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Sufian Ahmed signed two agreements were signed with the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) and the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD, for a total of US \$25 million to provide support for the implementation of the Gode-Kabridahar Rural Electrification Project, co-financed by the two development partners, to supply electric power supply to rural areas in the Somali Regional State.



News in Brief

President Guelleh tells opposition to complain to the Constitutional Council

President Ismail Omar Guelleh has warned opposition leaders against continuing what he called "violent protests". He accused protesters of carrying out killings, property destruction and creating anarchy and reiterated the government's commitment to crackdown on protests. He told a radio station that "They are creating an anarchy, we have warned them, we cannot let them destroy the country, it's the government's responsibility to stop them and we did that." The President called on opposition leaders to put any complaints before the Constitutional Council which decides on the validity of the election results. Riot police clashed with demonstrators on Friday (March 1st), as opposition supporters alleged fraud in the recent parliamentary election and demanded the release of detained opposition leaders. This followed demonstrations on Monday and Tuesday last week. Some protesters threw petrol bombs and security forces fired tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse crowds. The ruling Union for the Presidential Majority (UMP) has claimed 49 of the 65 seats in the National Assembly. Interior Minister Hassan Darar has said any street demonstrations would be illegal.

The Ethio-Russia Investment forum in Moscow

An Ethio-Russia Investment Forum has been held in Moscow this week attended by Dr. Tedros Adhanom, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Alemayehu Tegenu, Minister of Water and Energy as well as high-level officials of the Ethiopian Railway Corporation and the Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation and representatives of more than 60 governmental and private businesses engaged in leather and hides, horticulture, floriculture and grain and the oilseed trade. During the discussions representatives of more than 30 Russian businesses involved in investment in Ethiopia participated. The occasion helped to demonstrate Ethiopia's sound macro-economic policies and underline the investment opportunities available in mining, electromechanical works, railway development, hydropower energy, construction, the production of large scale machinery and agro-processing. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Tedros noted that the Forum would help to further boost the historic ties between the two countries. Dr. Michael Margelov, the President's envoy for Africa Cooperation, said Ethiopia was the closest African country to Russia in terms of culture, social and political relations, with links dating back to the time of the great poet, Alexander Pushkin. While in Moscow, Dr. Tedros held talks with Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, on bilateral relations. The discussions focused largely on ways to increase the volume of trade between the two countries including the importance of signing agreements to facilitate trade and on the ratification of previous agreements by Moscow. Other areas covered included scholarship opportunities in Russia to facilitate technology transfers to improve agricultural productivity and cooperation between Russia and Ethiopia in multi-lateral forums including the G-8.



News in Brief

Sudan and South Sudan to resume joint political and security meeting

Delegations from the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan open a meeting of the Joint Political Security Committee today, March 7th here in Addis Ababa. The delegations are headed respectively by the Republic of Sudan's Minister of Defence, Abdel Raheem Mohammed Hussein and the Republic of South Sudan's Minister of Defence, John Kong Nyuon. The Joint Political Security Committee is due to discuss an agenda prepared by the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) which has been mediating the talks between the two sides. Among the items under discussion will be the proposed buffer zone along the border, disengagement of armed forces on both sides and the harboring of each other's rebel groups. Discussion on the implementation of the earlier Addis Ababa Agreements of September last year is also expected.



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A Week in the Horn is essential reading for policymakers, the diplomatic community, corporate leaders, academia and interested citizens of the region.

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