

A Week in the Horn

9th March 2012

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Prime Minister Meles' State Visit to Kenya.....

Prime Minister Meles paid his first state visit to Kenya on Thursday and Friday last week [1st and 2nd March] accompanied by senior government officials. In addition to official talks on bilateral and regional issues with President Mwai Kibaki, the two leaders, together with President Salva Kiir of South Sudan, launched the 23 billion dollar project to build a port and oil refinery at Lamu and create the oil pipeline, railway and motorway to link Lamu Port to South Sudan and Ethiopia (LAPSSET).

In his opening remarks at their bilateral discussions, President Kibaki noted that Kenya and Ethiopia continued to make the best use of the Joint Ministerial Commission referring to the importance of border management along the two countries' 1,000 kilometre border. He said the long-standing Visa Abolition Agreement had contributed significantly to consolidating bilateral relations but it was important to update this to take account of increasing criminal sophistication. The two countries needed to work closely together on conservation and exploitation of water resources and he looked forward to Ethiopia's response to the suggested commission on Lake Turkana and the Omo and Daua rivers. He spoke of the massive LAPSSET project and the need to work together towards self-sufficiency in electricity and energy. He welcomed the Power Purchase Agreement with Ethiopia under which Kenya will obtain up to 400MW annually. Kenya supported the search for peace and stability in Sudan and the need for Somali leaders to resolve their disputes peacefully. He commended Prime Minister Meles' efforts as chair of the AU Committee on Climate Change. President Kibaki was pleased that Prime Minister Meles would be representing the region on the committee

of 8 on the AU election process and he hoped Ethiopia would support the re-election of Mr. Erastus Mwencha as deputy chairperson of the AU Commission.

In his response, Prime Minister Meles noted that Kenya was one of Ethiopia's major economic partners and a major ally in the fight against terrorism and extremism in the region. Ethiopia and Kenya had complimentary national development priorities, and similar areas of mutual concern in Somalia and Sudan. He reiterated Ethiopia's commitment to the on-going processes in Sudan and Somalia in support of peace and stability. He agreed with President Kibaki on the importance of the Joint Ministerial Commission, revived last year after a seven year hiatus, and of the annual Joint Border Commission meetings. Ethiopia appreciated the commitment of Kenya not to allow terrorist organizations like the ONLF or the OLF to operate out of Kenya, and the decision of Kenya to categorize the OLF as an organized criminal group. It was ready to undertake a comprehensive study of the Omo basin to provide the basis for full and informed discussion. Prime Minister Meles mentioned the various bilateral agreements now being implemented including electric power purchase, joint investment promotion and avoidance of double taxation. He referred to LAPSSSET as a milestone in the history of the sub-region.

In the joint communiqué issued after the bilateral talks, President Kibaki and Prime Minister Meles noted that Kenya and Ethiopia have a functional Joint Ministerial Commission which made decisions on a wide range of issues at its last session, the 33rd, in May-June last year. The relevant agencies must now ensure timely implementation of these decisions. Trade between Ethiopia and Kenya has registered steady growth but they agreed there was still a huge unexploited potential. The two leaders agreed to work closely within the framework of the Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) to improve movement of goods and services. They expressed confidence that LAPSSSET will unlock trade and investment opportunities on a significant scale. They welcomed the bilateral agreement for the development, operation and management of a railway linking Lamu to Addis Ababa and its signing by the Kenyan and Ethiopian Ministers of Transport.

The two leaders commended the Joint Border Commissioners/Administrators for their work along the border and underlined the importance of keeping close contact to exchange information and facilitate legal trading activities. The Joint Ministerial Commission had agreed to establish technical teams to inspect boundary beacons in order to restore those destroyed or removed. Kenya has organised its technical team; Ethiopia will do so shortly. Kenya has also decided to open seven additional border posts in Toudonyang, Markamari, Rhamu, Banya Fort, Dukana and Furore in order to facilitate trade and curtail human trafficking, smuggling and other cross-border crimes. Prime Minister Meles said Ethiopia would now consider doing the same.

President Kibaki and Prime Minister Meles agreed on the importance of working together on conservation and exploitation of shared water resources. Kenya has proposed a Cooperative Framework Agreement to establish a Joint Lake Turkana and Rivers Omo and Daua Basin Commission. Prime Minister Meles said Ethiopia would respond after a study of the two basins had been completed.

The two leaders reviewed the situation in Somalia and welcomed the growing interest of the international community as shown by the London Conference. They welcomed

the UN Security Council's decision to increase the size of AMISOM, noting this would allow deployment into liberated areas and facilitate the setting up of administrative systems by the TFG and the provision of humanitarian support as well as the return of internally displaced people and refugees. They emphasized that the destiny of Somalia always rests in the hands of Somalis themselves and they challenged Somali leaders to reciprocate the efforts being made regionally and internationally.

During his visit, Prime Minister Meles also spoke to Kenyan business leaders on the two countries bilateral trade and the investment opportunities of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Government, he said, was ready to facilitate easy access to land, cheap electricity and train manpower for Kenyan investors interested to invest in manufacturing sectors in Ethiopia. Responding to questions, Prime Minister Meles said the government was going to gradually lift controls on sectors currently not open to foreign investors. He said this needed to be gradual as Ethiopia's private sector remained feeble and needed to be protected from tough competition from foreign companies. The priority remained the development of the country. Meles also told the audience that **Ethiopia's adoption of a mix of policies had enabled the government to make headway in the energy sector**, making the country a competitive destination for business.

...and the launching of LAPSSET

On the second day of his state visit to Kenya, Prime Minister Meles attended the formal inauguration of the port of Lamu by President Kibaki. President Salva Kiir of South Sudan was also present. The building of the new port at Lamu will be a key component in the LAPSSET Corridor, the linking of Lamu Port to South Sudan and Ethiopia with an oil pipeline, railway and motorway. In total, this 23 billion dollar project envisages 1,600 kilometres of railway and 1,700 of new highways and three international airports as well as the new port of Lamu, and an oil pipeline and refinery. At the ground-breaking ceremony when the three leaders unveiled a plaque to commemorate the official start of the building work, President Kibaki said he had no doubt that "this day will go down in history as one of the defining moments, when we made a major stride to connect our people to the many socio-economic opportunities that lie ahead." The project would provide "the landlocked countries of our region with a direct and dependable route to the sea", he noted, and help connect "the entire east and central Africa region to international markets." The project could be expected to play a critical role in enhancing the economic livelihood of over 167 million people in the region, and it would also generate massive employment opportunities, and the President urged the residents of Lamu and Kenyans at large to support the project. He said all necessary precautions would be taken to ensure minimal interference with the ecosystem and adequate expertise and technology would be deployed to ensure environmental sustainability. President Kibaki thanked a number of organizations for their support including the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the Africa Union. He singled out China for being extremely supportive of the project.

Prime Minister Meles said Ethiopia looked forward to extending its cooperation to make sure the project came to full fruition. He called the launch an historic occasion and expressed optimism that it would propel the collective development of Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan forward. LAPSSET, he said, would add credence to Kenya's position as a gateway to East and Central Africa. It would link the economies of the three states and

also bring their peoples together. President Kiir congratulated President Kibaki and the people of Kenya for the realization of a dream to spur regional economic integration. It would create economic opportunities and enhance national and regional stability. For South Sudan, he said, “it is a vision whereby in the future you will be able to board people and freight cargo in the morning in Juba and be in Lamu that same afternoon.”

The 1st Ethio-South Sudan Joint Ministerial Commission meeting

The 1st Joint Ministerial Commission meeting between the Republic of South Sudan and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia was held in Juba, South Sudan, from 27th February to 2nd March. The main objective was to review cooperation over a broad range of interests and strengthen political, economic, social and cultural relationships and lay out mechanisms for future links between the two countries. The meeting, co-chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Haile Mariam and South Sudan’s Foreign Minister, Nhial Deng Nhial, was held under the theme of “together let us embrace our historic relations”. It was friendly and cordial with both sides expressing their understanding of each other’s views and recognizing the existing strong relationship between the two countries.

Deputy Prime Minister Hailemariam said that the meeting would enable the two countries to undertake a range of joint activities in the future, and he emphasized that Ethiopia would continue to support the ongoing development endeavors of South Sudan as it did during the liberation struggle. Foreign Minister Nhial said the two countries had established a solid foundation for their future relationship. He expressed gratitude for Ethiopia’s role in helping to bring about the peaceful separation of Sudan and South Sudan and the efforts it is currently exerting to peacefully resolve the differences and other pending post-split issues between Khartoum and Juba, including the on-going discussions on borders, citizenship, debts, oil and Abyei where Ethiopia is providing a UN peacekeeping force. South Sudan was ready to strengthen its relations with Ethiopia, he stressed.

At the conclusion of the meeting, which was preceded by extensive discussions between experts from both sides, the two countries signed eight Memoranda of Understanding to foster economic and political ties. These covered the areas of transit, exports, communications, transport, education and capacity building and included an MoU on a Joint Strategic Partnership to promote development, peace, security and stability in the region in particular and in Africa in general. The issue of security along the adjacent border regions between Ethiopia and South Sudan was discussed. Agreement was reached to establish a joint border Administrators /Governors Commission to address matters of concern along the common border. In addition, both sides underscored the need for concerted efforts to combat terrorism and work on regional and international cooperation mechanisms to defeat all terrorist groups operating in the region, posing threats to the two countries. It is expected that these agreements will be implemented within the next six months. Other areas covered in the talks included the possibility of a Preferential Trade Agreement and environmental issues as well as health, energy, science and technology. The two parties envisaged that these Agreements and the Strategic Partnership document would be the foundation for future relations and economic integration of the two nations.

The Ethiopian delegation also included the Government Communications Affairs Office Minister, Bereket Simon, the Minister of Trade, Kebede Chane, the President of Gambella Regional State, Oumod Oubang, and the President of the Southern Ethiopian Peoples State, Shiferaw Shigute as well as other officials.

UN Security Council Presidential statement on Somalia...

On Monday [5th March], the UN Security Council issued a Presidential Statement on Somalia, following a briefing from Ambassador Mahiga, the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Somalia, and an open debate. This month's presidency is held by the United Kingdom and the meeting was chaired by the UK's Under-Secretary of State (Africa), Henry Bellingham. The Presidential Statement noted that the Security Council welcomed the London Conference of 23rd February and fully supported the conference communiqué. It emphasized that there would be no further extension of the transitional period, and welcomed the commitments made at the conference to work for a more representative government in Somalia. It also welcomed the relocation of UNPOS to Mogadishu and encouraged the UN to achieve a more permanent and full relocation when conditions allowed. It expressed appreciation for AMISOM and called for further support for the mission from existing and new partners. It recalled SC Resolution 2036 authorizing expansion of the Mission and increasing the scale of the UN Logistics Support Package. It underlined the importance of effective governance and the delivery of basic services, and the necessity to fight corruption and promote transparency and accountability. It called upon the international community, in coordination with the UN and AMISOM to provide increased support to Somali security and justice sectors. It supported efforts to expand existing stabilization plans to new sectors and welcomed increased international support to areas of stability, including through a new stability fund, and encouraged efforts to address long-term reconstruction and economic development. It called for continued and effective humanitarian assistance and demanded unhindered access to all who needed aid. The Council welcomed new commitments to repress piracy and address the problem of terrorist attacks by Al-Shabaab, and it emphasized that it remained gravely concerned about the threat posed to Somalia and the international community by Somali armed opposition groups, in particular Al-Shabaab.

In the discussion, Secretary-General, Ban ki-Moon, said the London Conference, the UN Resolution 2036 on AMISOM and the Garowe II Consultative Conference last month presented a rare opportunity to advance the peace process. Maintaining the momentum was critical, he stressed, and he asked the Security Council to encourage the international community to support the implementation of the London communiqué. UNPOS, he pointed out, required immediate human and financial resources to put in place the processes and structures for ending the transitional period satisfactorily. There is a window of opportunity, but it is a narrow window and "all stakeholders must act with urgency and unity of purpose."

Ambassador Mahiga, speaking by video-conference from Mogadishu, noted that there was a very tight timeframe for the Garowe process. Drafting the constitution had to be completed by the end of March and the selection process for the 1,000 members of the Constituent Assembly for over eight community-based constituencies within 8 weeks. The provisional constitution is to be adopted by the end of April. It must also be made

clear to local populations that the departure of Al-Shabaab would be followed by peace dividends. Local actors must be convinced that the way forward was to work with the transitional authorities. Another challenge was the stalemate in the Transitional Federal Parliament which could disrupt the gains made. Parliament, he said, had paralyzed the peace process. It was critical to preserve the institution of Parliament, he said, but the break-away group should not be allowed to hold hostage the process of ending the transition. Ambassador Mahiga welcomed the increase in AMISOM and noted that the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security had chaired a meeting of the Joint Coordination Committee with AMISOM force commander and troop contributing countries on AMISOM's concept of operations.

The Somali representative endorsed the statements made by Security Council members and he accepted that the commitments made to deliver on agreements already made and to end the transition period on time must all be followed up. Other speakers welcomed the results of the London Conference and the Security Council's Resolution 2036, acknowledging the need for continued support for the TFIs and the peace process as well as for AMISOM. The international community's commitment as shown by London and by the proposed conference in Istanbul in June was welcomed. There was recognition that the process still remained an "uphill struggle" and it called for greater efforts by Somali parties as well as the international community. The Security Council must remain "vigilant on compliance with the deadlines" of the transition period. The Kenyan representative noted that Resolution 2036 did not include the requested maritime component for AMISOM. She also emphasized the humanitarian situation, adding that Kenya needed a firm and durable solution to the problem of the 600,000 Somali refugees at the Dadaab camp. This was, she said, a "matter of utmost urgency". Ethiopia's Representative, Dr Tekeda Alemu, stressed that the recent extension of areas controlled by the TFG represented a significant turning point and the liberation of Baidoa helped validate the belief that Al-Shabaab had lost momentum. Equally, the problem in Somalia was political and it required a political approach. The Garowe process might pave the way for a successful completion of the transitional process but it still needed the international community to scale up its support on all fronts, especially security. Al-Shabaab must be kept on the run, its funds must be disrupted or cut off. Ambassador Tekeda noted that the entire Horn of Africa was united in the effort to stop Al-Shabaab, as indeed was IGAD and the African Union.

...Journalists visit liberated Baidoa and AMISOM's 5th anniversary

Last week, a number of international journalists visited Baidoa, liberated from Al-Shabaab two weeks ago by Government forces with Ethiopian support. As elsewhere, despite security operations in the city, Al-Shabaab has managed to carry out one or two bombing attacks. After a bomb explosion on Saturday afternoon [3rd March], security forces arrested dozens of suspects, but according to the regional police commissioner four other attempts had been foiled. Clan leaders and the local population were quoted as saying that after 'three years and twelve days' of Al-Shabaab killings and violence they were happy to see the arrival of TFG and Ethiopian forces. The BBC quoted one group of elders "We welcome our brothers from Ethiopia. We work with them. We've had many meetings with Ethiopian commanders to help stabilize this place." Elders said that under Al-Shabaab control the city's people had become steadily poorer, conditions had worsened and many had been forced to flee in the last three years. Many of the

youth were forced to join Al-Shabaab. Now the elders were telling them to leave Al-Shabaab.

The TFG Governor for Bay Region, Abdifatah Mohamed Gesey said people were already returning to the city to reopen businesses. He said that before the allied forces had arrived in Baidoa they had held discussions with elders, business people, women's associations and others. "They have asked us to liberate nearby towns just as we liberated Baidoa." Although there was little actual fighting at Baidoa, Al-Shabaab appears to have abandoned considerable amounts of equipment including detonators and bomb-making material as well as a number of 'technicals' before leaving the city. It has withdrawn down to the south east on the road to Balidogle and Mogadishu. Ethiopian and TFG forces have already advanced 30 kms along that road to take Daynuunay and towards Burhakaba another thirty kilometres further on. Burhakaba is a necessary outpost for the security of Baidoa. Other Al-Shabaab forces withdrew to the south west towards Dinsoor, a similar distance from Baidoa which is connected by road to Bardere in Gedo region, also now held by Ethiopian and TFG forces. According to reports from Kismayo, some of the fighters from Baidoa have gone to Kismayo to join Al-Shabaab forces there. An Al-Shabaab commander in Kismayo claimed that 300 had arrived from Bay and Bakool at the end of last week and more were expected. He claimed Al-Shabaab was prepared to fight for Kismayo not retreat as it had done from other towns.

A local Baidoa MP, Mohamed Ibrahim Habsade, a former TFG minister, told journalists he had been the last out of Baidoa when the government left in 2009 and he was the first to return. He said he was happy to be back but many things had been destroyed. It was like an earthquake. He said people in the town needed a lot of humanitarian support. Bay and Bakool regions were areas which suffered badly in last year's drought. Habsade told journalists that moves were underway to organize regional administration in Bay and Bakool regions, largely inhabited by the Rahenweyne Merifle and Digil clans. He said any, even leading Al-Shabaab figures like Sheikh Muktar Robow, would be welcome to participate in such an administration "if they leave Al-Shabaab, changed their way of thinking and came to live peacefully."

Meanwhile the security situation in Mogadishu and the areas on the edge of the city has continued to improve, though sporadic explosions, assassinations and hit and run attacks still occur. Some concern has been expressed that the government has been recruiting Al-Shabaab defectors into the National Security Agency without proper checks and that some of the attacks, including the deaths of three journalists in the last two months may have been carried out by defectors. Government officials however remain confident that attacks are being carried out by Al-Shabaab fighters who are in hiding in the city. The government is now deploying trained Special Forces as part of its security apparatus to carry out house to house searches and prevent incidents of violence.

At the end of last week, TFG and AMISOM forces seized Maslah in the northern Heliwa district of the city after a gun-battle lasting several hours. This adds another strongpoint to government/AMISOM bases along the northern edge of the city and will effectively deny Al-Shabaab a number of the infiltration routes into the city that it has used in the

past. It also threatens Al-Shabaab use of Suqa Holaha, a long time centre of Al-Shabaab activity which is now essentially surrounded by AMISOM bases on three sides.

Tuesday this week [6th March] was the fifth anniversary of the deployment of the first Ugandan troops in AMISOM, mandated to help stabilize Mogadishu. AMISOM is now composed of troops from Burundi, Djibouti and Kenya as well as Uganda, and working together with the Somali National Army and allied militias as well as Ethiopian troops. In a press statement, the AU Chairperson said that five years ago there had been considerable scepticism over the ability of AMISOM troops. “Now, no one can be in any doubt that the dedication and sacrifice of AMISOM has brought tremendous success for Somalia and for Somalis...a city, once deserted, is now back on its feet. Businesses are thriving, Somalis now have the opportunity to lead an ordinary way of life in the capital, roads and houses are being repaired and rebuilt, public markets are once again packed with merchants and buyers.”

The AU Chairperson also took the opportunity to thank the troop-contributing countries, IGAD leaders and all others, including the UN, the EU and US, who had supported AMISOM during the past five years. He paid a special tribute to the fallen and the injured: “Their sacrifices will never be forgotten. We continue to honour their memories and commiserate with their loved ones left behind.”

Another round of Sudan/South Sudan talks opens in Addis Ababa

Another round of talks between Sudan and South Sudan opened in Addis Ababa under the auspices of the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) on Tuesday [6th March]. The first subject to be discussed was the issue of nationality, of citizenship, with the issue of oil to follow later in the week. Another subject on the agenda is the undemarcated border. The talks are scheduled to last ten days. As the talks opened, the UN Security Council demanded that Sudan and South Sudan take steps to reduce hostilities. The Council said it was gravely concerned about reports of troop movements and airstrikes along the border. This month’s Council President, UK Ambassador Mark Lyall Grant, urged the two countries to respect the non-aggression pact they signed less than a month ago. The Security Council demanded that all parties ceased military operations in the border areas and put an end to the cycle of violence. It also demanded that Sudan and South Sudan “take no action that would undermine the security and stability of the other.”

Both sides have been indulging in harsh rhetoric in advance of the latest round of talks but observers have noted that both sides do certainly need to be able to obtain revenue from the oil which has been cut off during the dispute. South Sudan shut down its oil production in January. The AU issued a statement on Monday [5th March] calling on the international community to put pressure on the two sides to abandon their hard-line positions, stressing the urgency for progress on all three negotiating tracks – oil revenue sharing, citizenship and border issues. Security concerns are being dealt with through the Joint Political and Security Mechanism meeting in Juba.

The UNHCR has said that more refugees are being registered in Ethiopia following further fighting in Sudan’s Blue Nile State and it was working to set up a third camp inside Ethiopia as there were reports of more people moving away from the fighting.

The UNHCR has also expressed concern over the border areas between South Sudan's Unity State and Sudan's Southern Kordofan following reported bombings last week. Almost the only area along the border that is currently quiet is the disputed border region of Abyei where a UN peacekeeping force, the United Nations Interim Security Force in Abyei (UNISFA) is being deployed following earlier violence in the disputed area.

UNISFA strength is authorized at up to 4,200 troops plus 50 policemen. It is composed of a brigade of Ethiopian troops and so far 3,700 troops have now been deployed with 80 military observers. Led by Lieutenant General Tadesse Werede Tesfay, UNISFA was authorised by the Security Council in June last year following renewed violence, escalating tensions and population displacement in the Abyei region which straddles northern and southern Sudan and has been claimed by both sides. Over the previous weeks more than 100,000 people had fled their homes after a series of clashes.

UNISFA was given the task of monitoring and verifying the redeployment of any Sudan Armed Forces, Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) or its successor out of the Abyei area. The area has been demilitarized apart from UNISFA and the Abyei Police Service. The interim force is also charged with facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid and, when necessary, providing security for the oil infrastructure in the region. It is also tasked with protecting UN personnel and with the protection of civilians in the Abyei area from imminent threat of physical violence. It can use force to protect the area "from incursions by unauthorized elements". In December, UNISFA was also given the added responsibility of assisting the process of border normalization, including support for the development of effective bilateral management mechanisms, facilitating liaison and building mutual trust. It has effectively managed to stabilize the situation in the region, though many of the Dinka Ngok who fled earlier have yet to return.

Regional seminar on Arms Trade Treaty

The sixth regional seminar, on the theme of "Supporting the Arms Trade Treaty Negotiations through Regional Discussions and Expertise Sharing", was held in Nairobi, last week, 29th February-2nd March. Coordinated by United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and the European Union, the seminar brought together representatives from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Interior, and the armed forces of 24 Eastern and Southern Africa states and from international and regional partner organizations and civil society. The project, initiated by the European Union and implemented by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, provides for a series of regional seminars in different parts of the world to advance discussions on an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), and to raise awareness and facilitate exchanges of views among UN Member States and other relevant actors.

In the discussions, most participants saw illegal and uncontrolled transfers of conventional arms were linked to conflict, crime, instability and piracy. Equally, it was felt that an effective treaty would contribute to the improvement of wider security issues in Africa, including good governance, development and principles of democracy. While many called for an ATT to be comprehensive and cover a wide range of weapons and activities, others expressed caution, especially with regard to the possibilities of reaching consensus and the challenges that a treaty might have in terms of implementation and practicality. The primary responsibility of states in negotiating and

later implementing the treaty was underlined by many, who made reference to states' rights and obligations as express limitations. It was stated that an ATT should respect the right of states to develop their defence and security capacities according to national needs. Transparency in the procurement of arms was noted to be quite low in the region, and many participants expressed the wish that an ATT could improve openness and transparency in the arms trade by shedding light on arms transfers to and within the continent.

Many participants called for more active African participation and a stronger common voice in the ATT negotiations. The importance of bringing on board all states, including those extensively involved in manufacturing and exporting of conventional weapons, was highlighted, together with calls for a global commitment to achieving the proposed ATT's objectives. During the discussions, many participants highlighted the need for further national and regional capacity-building.

Africa has a range of regional and sub-regional instruments and agreements relevant to an Arms Trade Treaty mostly in the area of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) controls. AU states have agreed on the African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Bamako Declaration. The Declaration identifies the harmful consequences of SALW proliferation and welcomes efforts at national and regional level to address these. At national level, it recommends the establishment of coordination agencies to oversee all aspects of SALW, enhancements to national law enforcement capabilities, criminalization of illicit SALW manufacturing, trafficking and possession, and the development of a range of national programmes. At the regional level, the Declaration encourages states to harmonize their SALW policies and to strengthen cooperation among police, customs and border control services. It appeals to the wider international community and to arms-supplying states to support and cooperate with the African Union in arms control efforts. Arms production in Eastern and Southern Africa is limited, and the region is heavily dependent on imported weapons though it only accounts for 3.5% of the volume of global arms imports. SALW, however, are a category of special importance as there have been and are large numbers of SALW transfers to the region that have been key weapons in numerous armed conflicts.

The Bamako Declaration has since been followed up by the African Common Position to the Review Conference on Progress Made in the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects. In addition, the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa was signed in 2000. This provides a comprehensive framework to combat illicit SALW which prolong conflicts and undermine political stability and human security. The regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons now coordinates the joint efforts of member states.

Ethiopia's delegation at the seminar stressed that regulation and control of the spread and transfer of weapons is an important component for the establishment of real peace and security and for the creation of sustainable development. Ethiopia fully supported the call for urgent and concerted action by the international community to address the threat of conventional weapons. It has taken measures to combat illicit arms trading, working together with other regional states and institutions to implement the Bamako

Declaration, and the Nairobi Declaration and its Protocol. The early conclusion of an Arms Trade Treaty must be a critical component in efforts to prevent and halt the proliferation and uncontrolled trade in conventional weapons.

Discussions during all these seminars have confirmed that most states see unregulated trade in conventional arms as a problem that needs to be addressed. The issues related to uncontrolled and poorly regulated trade are wide-spread and international, indeed global. They need to be dealt with internationally and most participants at the regional seminars have called for an Arms Trade Treaty to provide truly international and legally binding controls to guarantee its effective implementation. Any such treaty in fact needs to have true global coverage and applicability - global problems require global solutions.

Workshop on prevention of terrorist financing

A three-day workshop on the theme of “Preventing abuse of the non-profit sector for terrorist financing” was held in Nairobi last week, from 28th February to 1st March. It was coordinated by the UN Counter Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Centre on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation on behalf of the Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force and co-sponsored by the US, Canada, the United Kingdom and Switzerland. The more than sixty participants from Ethiopia and six other East African countries and partners included policymakers, law enforcement and relevant ministry officials as well as representatives of non-profit sectors to tackle the problems and risks of terrorist financing in these areas.

The workshop was opened by Jacques Pitteloud, Ambassador of Switzerland to Kenya, who noted that terrorism was a challenge that needed cooperation and a unified approach to resist. Terrorist financing was a serious problem hindering the process of effective counter-terrorism. It was a proper and timely moment to discuss the issue. Participants at the workshop reflected the deep concern for an effective legal framework to assist all state actors who were involved in trying to control terrorist financing at a regional as well as at local levels. All were agreed that terrorism was a major challenge for both developed and developing nations. It needed to get the full attention both of governments and the international community as a whole and it also required proper awareness to avoid situations which provided even indirect support to terrorists and acts of terrorism.

Participants noted the importance of regional states and NGOs keeping each other informed on security and other issues including finance. Many NGOs, for various reasons, knowingly or unknowingly, prefer to keep their financial activities closed. Given the activities of terrorist organizations in the region and the flows of terrorist financing this has inevitably given rise to some suspicions, and raised problems of accountability as well as responsibility both in particular countries and throughout the region. Participants from law enforcement agencies and relevant ministries at the workshop insisted on the need for all non-profit organizations and NGOs to discharge their roles transparently, in financial as well as other areas. Those from NGOs noted the points raised but raised issues of over-regulation and the need for pragmatic administrative challenges. The discussion on regulation mechanisms, on law enforcement and the policies of the different states in the region towards the non-profit organizations was useful and informative.

Ethiopian delegates emphasized the government's total dedication to guarantee national and regional peace and security. They underlined its zero tolerance towards any terrorist acts and terrorist groups and for financing however organized, whether by non-profit organizations or anybody else, which hindered the country's peace, stability and development. Terrorism is still a relatively new and escalating phenomenon. It concentrates on targeting innocent civilians and public property to try to influence policies and decisions, or to advance certain ideologies. Ethiopia co-operated fully with regional authorities and international bodies to counter terrorism at every level and in every aspect. It had carefully formulated legal instruments to add to the existing former criminal code and provide authority within the framework of international human rights practices to deal with these new offences and incorporate responses on the basis of international counter-terrorist practice. These included, *inter alia*, an Anti-Terrorism Proclamation, a Proclamation against Money Laundering, and a Charities and Civil Society Proclamation to regulate the non-profit sector and deal with the danger of inadvertent financing of terrorist organizations and bodies.

The Oakland Institute campaigns to perpetuate people's poverty

The campaign against Ethiopia's development endeavours appears to have gathered steam yet again. Waged by people who appear to have a vested interest in perpetuating the misery of the Ethiopian people, it comes in different forms and packages. Curiously enough most of their comments, ostensibly made in the name of protecting the interests and rights of Ethiopians, actually amount to virulent attacks on those very same rights and interests. Cloaked in paternalism, the materials churned out in these campaigns are all-too-often insulting and certainly condescending. A brief look at some of these is instructive.

One of the areas that have been subject to what can only be called a vitriolic campaign is the villagization programme currently under way in some parts of the country. This is a Federal Government project being undertaken with one single objective: improving people's livelihood within the framework of the national Growth and Development Plan. The targets include provision of efficient and effective economic and social services, including safe drinking water, optimum health care, increased education, and improving agronomy practice and market access, creating access to infrastructural development of roads, power and telecommunication links, and ensuring people's full engagement in good governance and democracy.

One vehement actor in the anti-development campaign is the Oakland Institute in California. It paints a lurid picture of not just the villagization programme but also of other development efforts in different parts of Ethiopia. The Oakland Institute has made up its mind that the government of Ethiopia is incapable of taking care of the interests of its own people. It is only advocacy campaigners from ten thousand miles away that can have either the "genuine" concern or the knowledge to know the problems of indigenous populations in Ethiopia. Any development endeavour by the Ethiopian government is immediately and invariably portrayed as an attack on the livelihood and indeed the survival of local populations.

In its recent media campaign, now being turned into a ‘crusade’, the Oakland Institute alleges that sugar plantation projects in the South Omo area will result in “the decimation” of the entire South Omo population, unless of course, the US and other donors “do something about it.” The Institute says that “available information shows a network of roads to be built across the area including around 750 kms of internal roads (in an area with virtually none at present) and two extensive irrigation canals that run the length of the Omo River.” These, of course, are evidence of the progress being made in an expansion of infrastructure that will go far to address the long-term problems of child and maternal mortality and other livelihood issues in the region. The possibility of irrigated farming in the region is something from which the local population stands to benefit immensely. The previous river-flood farming traditions have never produced more than precarious living. For the Oakland Institute all these benefits are classified as threats. Even the possibility of other people from elsewhere in the country having jobs in South Omo sugar plantations is portrayed as an existential threat to the local population although they will also have the availability of employment. In fact, the Institute’s long-distance ‘research’ even goes so far as to suggest that development projects will cause civil war in the region.

In reality, the villagization programmes as well as other developmental interventions are all implemented in accordance with the constitution and with relevant democratic principles. The process involves consultations, and is conducted on a voluntary basis and with the full consent and participation of the beneficiaries. The sites for villagization are selected after careful study of the availability of surface and ground water and adequate arable and grazing land and of all environmental concerns. Utmost care is taken to ensure necessary critical social and economic services, including water, health services, education and improved agronomy practices, are put in place before beneficiaries relocate to the new areas. It might be added that they always have the right to return to their original location whenever and if they want; and certainly, on occasions, some have been disappointed and have returned.

The objectives of the villagization programme have never been and never will be what the Oakland Institute’s desk ‘research’ claims. Equally, allegations that force has been used to intimidate local populations, that the military or police have been forcefully obstructing settlers from returning to their previous villages, or that the police and the military are routinely deployed in the programme are simply not true. There hasn’t been any need for the deployment of police, much less the military, in these projects. The totally inaccurate assertion that local populations have been involuntarily displaced from their original villages can only be seen as an attempt to cause conflicts among the regions’ inhabitants. The same also holds true for allegations about South Omo development projects. **The claims appear to reflect the personal biases of Oakland Institute’s informants in Ethiopia or more usually in the Diaspora than any reality on the ground.** The methodology used and the informants deployed appear politically and ideologically driven. Certainly their ‘information’ is far removed from reality. The so called “study findings” are simply not worth the paper they are written on.

The South Omo valley projects outlined in the report are part of the plan towards accelerated and sustainable development to end poverty in Ethiopia. The government is open to access from donor agencies and media with relevant interest and knowledge for fact-finding missions in good faith, as demonstrated when the Ethiopia-based Donor Assistance Group investigated allegations in Gambella. **There is no reason why similar**

missions cannot take place if and when a legitimate request is made. Indeed, there already is a joint working group mechanism in place for this purpose that needs to be further strengthened.

The project sites and the selected locations in South Omo are nowhere close enough to human dwellings to disturb people's lifestyles. The area involved is only inhabited on a widely scattered pattern. The population density in Selamago woreda, one South Omo project site, is less than 5 persons per square kilometre. The project covers some 1,700 hectares and will involve provision of access to irrigation schemes. Social and economic facilities and infrastructure are involved and these will certainly impact on the livelihood and quality of life positively, not least the 18 kilometres of road access being constructed to the district capital, Hana. 0.75 hectares of irrigated land is prepared for each of 2,050 households and more will be available. There will be no land scarcity for any family. Training for improved practices, technology inputs and livestock management will be provided. The projects also create job opportunities for others throughout the SNNPR regional state and more widely. Indeed, the local population will have the opportunity to enjoy a national development dividend rather than face alleged human rights violations. These developments will actually lift South Omo minority populations out of what can only be called dismal living conditions.

This alleged concern about the indigenous culture and group identity is no more than a diversion. Whatever the Oakland Institute believes, the constitution respects all individual and group rights claims. Insisting that people be kept in perpetual poverty and backwardness so the researchers of the Oakland Institute can have a primitive environment to whine about is nothing more than an attempt to consign the local population to sub-human status. It is telling to note how the Oakland Institute's 'research' concludes. It suggests that donors, including the US, should leverage their aid to the Ethiopian government to arm-twist it into stopping all development projects. More outrageously, it even claims that Ethiopia must be told to stop its projects because these "sadly annihilate years of investment by USAID and other donors to support the rights and livelihood of pastoralists in Ethiopia." It is appalling to see Oakland Institute claim that the fight against poverty is a violation of human rights. It would be rather more accurate to identify sabotage of development efforts to end poverty as a violation of human rights. Indeed, by any standards, it has to be said that the efforts of the Oakland Institute amounts to a campaign to promote poverty.

News and Views

The AU celebrates Environment Day, Wangari Maathai commemorated

The African Union marked the African Environment Day last Saturday [3rd March], commemorating Professor Wangari Maathai, Kenya's Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa. Africa Environment Day was launched in 2000 as a way to create awareness about environmental issues and the challenges facing the continent, and the AU Heads of State and Government have taken the decision to designate 3rd March as Wangari Maathai Day. Professor Maathai was the first woman in East and Central Africa to obtain a PhD and in 2004 became the first environmentalist to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for leading the fight to promote ecologically viable social, economic and cultural development. She spent her entire life promoting and defending human well-being through her pioneering Green Belt Movement and grass-roots activism, inspiring people to promote sustainable development. The AU's Director for Rural Economy and Agriculture noted that Wangari Maathai believed in taking action at the local level as part of changing the bigger world. She believed in two powerful forces to bring about credible results and lasting impact: women and the environment, and this commemoration is given exceptional sympathy by being celebrated on the eve of world Women's Day which took place on Thursday [8th March]. Speaking at the commemoration, Christopher Chika, Deputy Head of Mission at the Kenyan Embassy in Ethiopia, said, "As we celebrate this day let us strive to emulate Professor Wangari Maathai's resilience and determination in her efforts to fight poverty, environmental destruction, disempowerment, bad governance, and loss of real values."

Turkish Airlines starts regular flights to Somalia

Turkish Airlines started flights to Mogadishu on Tuesday this week [6th March]. The airline is the first major international carrier to run a regular service to the Somali capital in more than two decades. Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister, Bekir Bozdog, accompanied the first flight into Mogadishu to launch a twice-weekly service from Istanbul to Mogadishu via Sudan's capital Khartoum. He said Somalia had been cut off from the world for a long time. Now it was re-connected to the world. The Turkish Government and the TFG had repaired the airport for the use of international flights. He also said, following discussions with President Sheikh Sharif, that Turkish Airlines will now also operate local flights inside Somalia. Until now, flights into Mogadishu have been confined to small East African operators linking the Horn of Africa nation to neighbouring countries. Last August, Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan visited Mogadishu. Since then Turkey has opened an embassy in Mogadishu, made repairs and improvements to the international airport, offered hundreds of university places in Turkey to Somali students and made plans to build a new hospital. In June, it is hosting another conference on Somalia in Istanbul, a follow up to the recent conference in London. Turkey's interest in Somalia reflects Turkey's efforts to boost its profile in Africa, as it has done in the Middle East in recent years, and its aim to promote itself as a model Muslim democracy. Turkey has boosted trade with Africa generally and opened several new embassies in Africa.

Somalia requests EAC membership

The Transitional Federal Government of Somalia has made an official request to join the East African Community (EAC). A statement released on Tuesday [6th March] in Nairobi said Somalia had formally asked to join the regional bloc of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi. The letter of request was submitted to President Mwai Kibaki, the current Chair of the EAC, and to Kenyan Foreign Minister Wetangula, by Ambassador Abdi Hakim Ali Yassin, Special Envoy of Somalia's President Sheikh Sharif. Foreign Minister Wetangula assured the people of Somalia that the request would be considered by the necessary EAC organs and forwarded to the next EAC Summit. Three months ago the EAC rejected an application by Sudan to join the EAC due to Sudan's geographical location. The EAC leaders who met in Bujumbura in November last year [2011] for the EAC summit regretted the application by Khartoum did not meet the criterion for membership because of the lack of geographic proximity and contiguity and thus did not qualify to be admitted into the bloc. The EAC also has an application from the Republic of South Sudan which is awaiting consideration by regional leaders. The Bujumbura summit directed the EAC Council of Ministers to verify the application by South Sudan on the basis of criteria for admission of foreign countries, and to submit recommendations to the tenth extraordinary meeting of the EAC due to be held later this year.

Concern grows over Eritrean Abune Antonios's health

The priests, deacons and religious faithful of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church across the world are asking for prayer and support in calling for humane treatment and appropriate respect for His Holiness, Patriarch Antonios, the illegally deposed Patriarch of the Eritrean Church. Abune Antonios, widely regarded as the rightful occupant of the Episcopal throne of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church, has been detained in an undisclosed location within the general confines of Asmara for approximately seven years. His detention restricts Abune Antonios from exercising his spiritual leadership over what has become a widely dispersed church with members in many countries outside Eritrea who still look to him for spiritual guidance and reassurance. The Œcumenical Canonical Orthodox Church Worldwide (ŒCOCW), which expressed its concern about Abune Antonios's health several weeks ago, now says it has reliable information that the Abune is in delicate health due to lack of proper medical care, and because he is suffering from humiliating and degrading treatment by the Eritrean Government in violation of his human rights. The Abune is 87 years old and suffers from the debilitating effects of advanced diabetes. The unattended medical condition of the Abune makes the concern a humanitarian rather than a political or church matter. The ŒCOCW notes there are widely repeated complaints that Abune Antonios, despite not being an enemy or a political or military threat, is being denied necessary medical care, one of the most basic of human rights, for a well-known disease that is undoubtedly being exacerbated by inhumane treatment and advanced age. Despite his mistreatment, the ŒCOCW says its information is that Patriarch Antonios is always in good spirits and continues to pray for his jailors, as well as for his spiritual children in the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church.

EEPCO plans to provide power to Somaliland

Ethiopia's Electric Power Corporation (EEPCO) says that Somaliland will be the next beneficiary of its electricity export deals. EEPCO plans to electrify Togo Wuchale across the border from the Ethiopian town of the same name, and electric transmission line installation work has begun around the area. In future, the corporation plans to expand its supply to Somaliland's capital, Hargeisa. Broad agreement has been reached but some details have yet to be ironed out. Ethiopia has been supplying up to 80MW of electric power to Djibouti since the middle of last year earning the country US\$1.5 million a month. The Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation has now also completed the transmission lines to make Sudan the second country to benefit from Ethiopia's power exports. The 296 kilometre link has a 230 Kilovolt capacity and will start operation this year. Agreement has been reached over a deal to supply power to Kenya as well, and another transmission line is under construction on the Kenyan side of the border, funded by the African Development Bank. Export of electricity to Kenya is scheduled to begin in 2014, but the Kenyan border town of Moyale is already receiving electricity from EEPCO. Another Kenyan border town is expected to be linked to the Ethiopian grid in a few weeks. Ethiopia is currently undertaking multibillion dollar investments on a number of green energy projects that will see the country become one of Africa's leading exporters of power. The government plans to generate a total of up to 10,000MW of electricity by the end of the current Growth and Transformation Plan within the next ten years.