

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs



A Week in the Horn



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Dr Tedros Adhanom,
Minister of Foreign Affairs

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The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
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Telephone: (+251) 11 151 7345
Fax : (+251) 11 151 4300

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News in Brief



Qatar's Emir, His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani and including Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber Al Thani made a two-day official visit to Ethiopia this week. A number of agreements have been signed. (See article)

Prime Minister Hailemariam met and held talks with the UK's Minister for African Affairs, Mark Simmonds on Wednesday (April 10th). Discussions related to bilateral affairs and the London international conference on Somalia to be held on May 7th. Mr Simmonds invited the Prime Minister to participate in the conference.

The Central Statistics Agency has announced that Ethiopia's inflation rate fell to 7.6 percent in March (Megabit) 2005 E.C. according to government plans to bring the rate down to single figures.

The Meles enawi Foundation was established on April 7th at AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa. It will preserve and develop Meles' legacy of life-long commitment to Ethiopia and Africa, and provide a living memorial to his struggle for peace, democracy and development. Meles's widow, Azeb Mesfin has been named as Chair of the Board with House of Federation Speaker, Kassa Tekle-Birhan, as Vice-Chair. (See article)

Ethiopia's Council of Ministers has sent the Nile Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement to the House of People's Representatives for ratification. Ethiopia like Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, signed the agreement in May, 2010, and Burundi a year later.

A successful Business to Business Meeting designed at bolstering the Ethiopian Tourism Market and bringing together American Tour Operators with their Ethiopian counter-parts was held on Tuesday (April 9th) at the Ethiopian Embassy in Washington.

Bereket Simon, Secretary of the National Council for the Coordination of Public Participation on the Construction of the Dam reports that the public have so far pledged 9.2 billion birr for the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), launched on April 2nd 2011.



President Omer Al-Bashir arrived in Juba today (April 12th) at the invitation of South Sudan President Salva Kiir to consider the remaining outstanding issues between the two countries including the Abyei referendum and disputed border areas.



The African Union Executive Council met on Monday (8th April) to AU Commission's Draft Strategic Plan 2014-2017, progress on the Draft Budget for 2014, the 50th OAU/AU anniversary and the 2013 theme of the year 2013 "Pan Africanism and African Renaissance". The strategic plan is expected to be approved at the next summit in Addis Ababa in May. (See article)

The African Union formally launched the year-long celebration of the 50th anniversary of the AU/OAU on Monday (April 8th). Dr. Dlamini-Zuma, Chair of the AU Commission and Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros, Chair of the AU Executive Council, jointly lit a candle to mark the launch of the celebrations.

The 19th anniversary of the Rwanda genocide was commemorated on Sunday (April 7th) at African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa when the gathering observed a one-minute of silence in remembrance of the victims. (See article).

Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, Commissioner for Peace and Security, met with Mr. Mark Simmonds, the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa in Addis Ababa on Thursday. Discussions included preparations for the London Conference on Somalia. Mr. Simmonds invited the African Union Commission to participate at the highest level.

The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Ambassador Mahamat Saleh Annadif accompanied by the AMISOM Force Commander, the Director of the UN Support Office for AMISOM and the Representative of Kenyan Defense Forces, visited AMISOM forces in Kismayo at the weekend.



President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya sworn in as Kenya's fourth president in Tuesday (April 9th) in the presence of the Presidents of Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia and South Sudan and of Ethiopia's Prime Minister Hailemariam, the Chairman of the AU and other dignitaries, including US Vice-President, Joe Biden (See article).

President Kenyatta held talks with Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mahmoud after Kenya's Presidential inauguration. The two presidents agreed to launch a Joint Commission for Cooperation soon, and a meeting is planned over refugee repatriation (See article).



News in Brief



President Hassan Sh. Mohamud toured police special units training facilities in Mogadishu, highlighting the defeat of Al Shabaab militarily, but warning security forces to remain vigilant. The training program is being conducted by Somalis for the first time in 22 years (See article)

Somalia's Prime Minister, Abdi Farah Shirdon, was in Addis Ababa over the weekend holding talks on bilateral relations and security cooperation. Mr. Shirdon is on a tour to thank IGAD states and AMISOM troop-contributing countries for their support (See article).

President Museveni responds favourably to requests by the Somali Prime Minister for Uganda to take an active role in capacity building and helping in the process of reforming security institutions. (See article).

President Barack Obama has issued an order to allow Somalia to receive U.S. military aid. The US recognized President Mohamud's government on January 17th. The Security Council partially lifted the arms embargo on Somalia last month. President Mohamud said Somalia hopes to receive its first shipment of light weapons within two months.

Somali MPs who recently visited Kismayo have urged the government to change its view of the Jubaland conference, and resume talks with those organizing the meeting, now entering its second phase.



The World Bank approved a \$7-million (1.3-billion franc) line of credit to improve the delivery of healthcare services in Djibouti. The funds will support Vision 2035, Djibouti's development plan in co-operation with the World Bank, and will facilitate Djibouti's effort to provide better maternal and child health services and the treatment of communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.



An attack on a UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) convoy on Tuesday (April 9th) in South Sudan killed 5 Indian peacekeepers as well as seven other people. The UN Security Council condemned the attack in the strongest terms, and urged the South Sudan government to "swiftly investigate the incident and bring the perpetrators to justice."

South Sudan's President Kiir arrived in Nairobi on Saturday (April 6th) to participate in the inauguration for Kenya's President Kenyatta. He later held talks with President Kenyatta to discuss bilateral relations and joint projects including the construction of the new Lamu port and the LAPSSET corridor.

South Sudan has restarted oil production following the closure in January 2012 over the dispute with Sudan over oil fees. Agreement to restart production was reached last month. Initial production will reach between 150,000 and 200,000 barrels per day, and the oil will start to reach Port Sudan at the end of May.



Ex-President Bozize of the Central African Republic has reportedly claimed in a magazine article that "the arms used by the Seleka rebels during the final assault on the presidential palace were purchased from Eritrea and transited through Chad." Eritrea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs this week indignantly denied that Eritrea had had anything to do with arming the rebels who overthrew Francois Bozize and seized power.



The Emir of Qatar visits Ethiopia

A high-level delegation led by Qatar's Emir, His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani and Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber Al Thani arrived on Wednesday (April 10th) for a two-day official visit to Ethiopia. The delegation was received on arrival by Prime Minister Hailemariam, Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros and other ministers.

Discussions with the Emir and his delegation focused on bilateral relations and regional matters. Prime Minister Hailemariam noted that the Emir's visit to Ethiopia would fundamentally change bilateral relations between the two states and have a positive impact on trade, investment and other interactions. Speaking about the potential for economic cooperation between two countries he said "Qatar has major financial resources and the capacity to invest outside its borders; Ethiopia has major natural and human resource endowments. "He stressed that cooperation in economic areas would benefit both countries, adding that Ethiopia offered outstanding business opportunities in many areas. He expressed his hope that the economic agreement which was signed after the discussion would further enhance cooperation.

Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani expressed Qatar's desire to invest in Ethiopia in various sectors and indicated the potential for Qatar to finance infrastructure projects in Ethiopia. The two sides exchanged views on ways in which Qatar might engage in investment in sugar, mining and agricultural projects - Hassad Foods, Qatar's biggest investment company, is for example considering a business plan provided by Ethiopia's Ministry of Agriculture covering horticulture and floriculture.

Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani said Qatar was interested to get skilled labour from Ethiopia. He said he would like Ethiopian doctors, engineers and hoteliers to come and work in Qatar." The two sides also exchanged views on peace and security matters in the region. They came to an understanding on the importance of working together to consolidate the present relative peace and stability. On Somalia, they underscored the importance of ensuring Somalia's state-building process should be an all-inclusive and "Somali-owned process."

Following the conclusion of the bilateral talks between the Emir and Prime Minister Hailemariam a number of agreements were signed. The first Agreement on Cultural Cooperation was signed by the respective ministers of culture. A Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the field of Higher Education and Scientific Research was signed. Other agreements included a Civil Aviation Agreement which will allow the two countries to start direct air links, and a Double Tax Avoidance Agreement allows investors of either country to pay taxes in the country which provides the relevant income. A Memorandum of Understanding was also signed by representatives of the Chambers of Commerce of Qatar and of Ethiopia and an Agreement on Reciprocal Protection of Sustainable Investment. The signing of the Investment Agreement is seen as a major breakthrough to boost investment ties.



Prime Minister Hailemariam meets Somali Prime Minister Shirdon

Ethiopia's Prime Minister Hailemariam met and held discussions with a Somali delegation led by Prime Minister Shirdon on Monday (April 8th). Talks covered bilateral issues with particular emphasis on cooperation on security and economy. Other issues covered the establishment of inclusive regional administrations in liberated areas of Somalia.

Prime Minister Shirdon stressed how much Somalia appreciated the sacrifice of blood and the costs Ethiopia has paid in its continuous and constructive efforts aimed at helping establish a new Somalia, free from the terrorist activities of Al-Shabaab, and now under a new elected government. He said this wouldn't have been possible without the significant contributions of Ethiopia, of IGAD and of AMISOM forces. He expressed his government's belief that final victory over Al-Shabaab could only be won once the federal government was able to win the hearts and minds of all segments of the Somali population. He emphasized that his government was embarked on a series of Somali-led initiatives and was undertaking Somali-Somali dialogues with a view to bring about all-inclusive and Somali-owned solutions for Somalia's problems.

Prime Minister Shirdon underlined his government's desire for continued support from Ethiopia, particularly for its active and positive involvement in Somalia's security and economic sectors, both bilaterally and regionally. He noted that Al-Shabaab had been weakened but it had not completely disintegrated. Prime Minister Shirdon, who congratulated Prime Minister Hailemariam on his African Union chairmanship, underlined the importance of cooperation on security and development in the face of the dangers of Al-Shabaab: "Al Shabaab poses a huge threat to our nation building efforts and undermines development in the region and must be defeated at all cost," he said. He therefore requested Ethiopia to keep a presence in the areas liberated by its forces to maintain their peace and stability, and provide further support to efforts to liberate all remaining areas from Al-Shabaab. He asked the Ethiopian Government to provide diplomatic support for the new government's efforts to establish a strong governance structure.

Prime Minister Hailemariam emphasized the Ethiopian Government's belief that peace and stability in Somalia and in the region as a whole directly affected the peace, stability and development efforts of Ethiopia. He noted the Ethiopian Government's determination to beat poverty, identified as Ethiopia's leading enemy, through a concerted anti-poverty struggle designed to collectively address all other challenges including threats to peace and stability which might distract from development whether in Ethiopia or elsewhere in the sub-region. He said Ethiopia welcomed the new democratic constitutional arrangements and the federal structure in Somalia which provided a basis to effectively address its previous, present and future challenges. It was in this spirit that Ethiopia provided support for peace and stability in Somalia.

Prime Minister Hailemariam emphasized Ethiopia's readiness to continue its support to the Somali government's efforts for sustainable peace and development. He noted Ethiopia's preference not to integrate its forces in AMISOM, even though this would have provided relief from the financial burden of operations.



This decision to work to contain Al-Shabaab separately, he said, emanated from Ethiopia's desire to demonstrate most clearly to the Somali people and its government that Ethiopia's genuine intention was to see a new Somalia enjoying reliable and sustainable peace. He added that Ethiopia was committed to continue its existing support in the same way.

The Prime Minister also emphasized Ethiopia's desire to withdraw its forces as soon as possible once reliable and enduring peace and stability prevailed in Somalia, with the successful takeover of liberated areas by Somali and AMISOM forces, and strong local administrations had been established. He expressed his regret over the difficulties on the deployment into action of the three thousand Somali troops trained inside Somalia by Ethiopia due to issues of salary and other matters. However, he expressed Ethiopia's readiness to continue to train Somali forces in the context of building a representative and all-inclusive Somali army. He also said Ethiopia was ready to encourage and support efforts to establish a representative federal government administration capable of providing services to the population.

There are, of course, considerable expectations of the new federal government in Somalia and Prime Minister Hailemariam suggested there are several ways the Somali government could help to meet those expectations. These included ensuring full respect for the Constitution; making it clear that the federal government is in the driving seat; cultivating a culture of accommodation and reconciliation; and establishing strong regional administrations in an all-inclusive and participatory manner; as well as recognizing and accepting IGAD's facilitation and supportive role was of real value and paramount importance in expediting the pace of the Somali government's efforts to establish a peaceful, stable and developed Somalia.



Indications of improving dynamics in Somalia

Last week, Somali Prime Minister Abdi Farah Shirdon concluded the second stage of his “Listening Tour” of the Somali regions with two days in Garbaharey, Gedo region, where he met the district’s traditional leaders’ council and where following consultations with community leaders he appointed Maxamed Cabdi Kaliil as the new interim governor of Gedo region, with a six months mandate. The Prime Minister said the new administration would be “responsible to improve the security situation and work with the Federal Government on delivering much needed social services”. An agreement was also reached between the federal government and Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama in the south-west regions for Ahlu-Sunna forces to join the Somali National Army. The Prime Minister told Ahlu Sunna militia they were “officially accepted as part of the Somali National Army, with equal rights and responsibilities. Your mission is to secure our national borders and defeat enemies of peace, those threatening our national security and progress.”

This week, Prime Minister Shirdon has been on a tour of the sub-region to strengthen relationships between the new Somali authorities and neighboring countries, to Djibouti, Ethiopia, Uganda and Burundi. His trip started in Djibouti on Thursday (April 4th), just a month after the UN Security Council partially eased its ban on selling arms on Somalia, and the Prime Minister received a donation of military equipment from Djibouti. The donation, including 50 APCs and army logistical vehicles, was handed over in a ceremony in Djibouti’s Sheikh Osman camp, where the two defence ministers also signed a military deal. Prime Minister Shirdon said “these weapons will be used to make sure that the security of our people is in the government’s hand and it is a new start”, adding that “these weapons will be used in a responsible manner”.

After Djibouti, Prime Minister Shirdon went to Ethiopia where he met Prime Minister Hailemariam over the weekend. Discussions focused on bilateral relations between the two governments as well as cooperation between the two countries in the security sector. Prime Minister Hailemariam emphasized that the Ethiopian people and government will continue to strengthen its overall support until Somalia enjoys sustainable peace and stability. As Chair of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Ethiopia will also do all possible to its best towards sustaining peace and stability in Somalia. (See following story) The Somali Prime Minister had been expected to attend an IGAD ministerial meeting on Somalia but this was postponed because of the Kenyan presidential inauguration.

In Kampala, where he met Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni he discussed ways to expand AMISOM, transform the Somali Army and improve security across Somalia. He said the terrorist group was already weakened and underlined that security is at the top of the country’s agenda. He pointed out that his government would like to see Uganda taking an active role in capacity building and helping in the process of reforming security institutions. With the arms embargo lifted, the two leaders agreed on the need to move quickly. President Museveni said he understood the need to guard the roads, villages, towns and coastal areas while protecting civilians, adding “we are at your disposal to achieve full security in Somalia.” He was also quoted as saying. “The pillar of the army is officers; we really must train officers and if there is any way we can support you, we are happy to do that.



We need to get well educated officers and non commissioned officers with the right ideology and organize and support them to take control of the security of their country." The Prime Minister and his delegation travelled on to Bujumbura, Burundi on Thursday (April 11th) and are scheduled to return to Mogadishu on Saturday.

In all his visits Prime Minister Shirdon has been highlighting new government initiatives to get public support for the fight against Al-Shabaab, asking the countries of the region to back the implementation of new security and development-related initiatives. He has stressed the need to expand the scope and the operations of AMISOM troops. He has made it clear he believes the security situation has improved and there was now a need to work on delivering services. He has said the Somali government would like to see neighboring countries playing an active role in capacity building and the reform of security institutions.

President Mohamud himself attended the inauguration of President Kenyatta in Tuesday (April 9th) in Nairobi. In talks later, President Kenyatta of Kenya said that Kenya would continue to support Somalia's efforts for peace, added that the repatriation of Somali refugees from Kenya could follow after the two nations had convened a meeting. President Kenyatta, who said a Joint Commission for Cooperation with Somalia would soon be implemented, noted that Kenya's decision to move into Somalia and join AMISOM was born out of the realization that a stable Somalia was good for the entire region.

Early in the week President Mohamud had toured the Jazeera Military Training Compound and the General Kaahiye Police Training School where a thousand trainees for police special units are being trained. The President, accompanied by the Deputy Minister of Defence, Ahmed Mohamed Mohamud, and the Army Chief of Staff, General Dahir Adan Elmi 'Indhaqarshe' assessed the training facilities and programs of the army and the police. He told the trainees that "Somalia belongs to Somalis " and "all of us are sworn to protect the country, its people and our faith". He called for Somalis to live "with honor and dignity to defeat Al-Shabaab, criminals and rapists". Encouraging the cadets and officers to continue to work for stability for Somalia, he said: "I urge you all to win the hearts and minds of our people. We all are one, and in war, those supported by the citizens win in the end". The President warned the security forces that they need to remain vigilant as Al-Shabaab had yet to be completely eliminated from Somalia. The training at the Jazeera compound is being carried out by Somalis and the curriculum includes human rights courses. The new forces will be deployed in Mogadishu.

Meanwhile on Monday (April 8th) President Barack Obama issued a memo to Secretary of State, John Kerry to say that Somalia can receive U.S. military assistance. The Presidential order said Somalia was now eligible for "defence articles and defence services" under U.S. arms export and foreign aid laws. It allows Kerry to consider providing defence aid to Somalia. The United States formally recognized President Mohamud's government on January 17th, the first time Washington has recognized a Somali government since 1991. This memo is a sign of further improving relations between the US and Somalia, but according to Spokeswoman for the White House National Security Council, Caitlin Hayden it "is not based on any particular new threat assessment or any specific plans to undertake action". The United Nations Security Council last month partially lifted an arms embargo on Somalia to strengthen government forces fighting Al Shabaab, but acquisition of heavy weapons is still banned.



President Uhuru Kenyatta inaugurated as Kenya's fourth president

The swearing on of new Kenyan President, Uhuru Kenyatta, as the fourth president of Kenya on Tuesday (April 9th) was attended by heads of state and government from the East African Community and neighboring states. President Kikwete and former President Mkapa of Tanzania, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, President Pierre Nkurunziza of Burundi, President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, President Salva Kiir of South Sudan and President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of Somalia were all present. Ethiopia was represented by Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, the Chairperson of the African Union and of IGAD, and Foreign Minister, Dr. Teodros. US Vice-President, Joe Biden, represented President Barack Obama at the occasion. Others attending included former United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan.

President Kenyatta said the presence of the heads of state and other representatives was a symbol of their continued support and goodwill towards Kenyans and a clear indication of their commitment to the Pan-African agenda. He paid tribute to his predecessor, Mwai Kibaki, "a true statesman and a great leader", and thanked his opponents in the recently completed presidential election, saying that "Every one of you helped define and make stronger our democracy. Because of you, Kenyans had real choices. Because of you, Kenyans felt free to exercise their sovereign will." He added that "in an open and free democracy, there is a vital role for a vibrant opposition that helps to hold the Government to account. Kenya is such a democracy, and as President I will respect that role just as I will champion the right of every Kenyan to speak their mind."

The ceremony culminated in the official transfer of office from Mwai Kibaki to his successor who had won the March 4th election, defeating Prime Minister Raila Odinga. Following an unsuccessful appeal to the Supreme Court, Mr. Odinga had promptly accepted the results and congratulated Mr. Kenyatta. While neither he nor other officials of his CORD party attended the inauguration, in a televised statement, after the court hearing, Mr. Odinga said "The court has now spoken. I wish the president-elect, the Honorable Uhuru Kenyatta, and his team well." Mr. Kenyatta himself thanked the court for its work and promised his government would "work with and serve all Kenyans without any discrimination whatsoever."

The emphasis on the presidential vote has overshadowed another major element of the recent election in Kenya: it was the first election under a new constitution which gives a major boost to devolution in Kenya. Indeed, the new constitution provides for significant changes, designed to improve local governance, to reduce marginalization of smaller communities and the risk of conflict between different groups. Kenya, in fact, has now embarked on a very ambitious transformation of government, with the aim of devolving authority "to bring services, resources and power closer to the people, allowing people to make decisions about aspects and issues affecting them directly."

Until now, Kenya has been a highly centralized state with executive power largely concentrated in Nairobi with the Office of the President at the center of a hierarchy of provincial administration involving a whole series of officials, from local chiefs through to commissioners of the eight provinces. Disparities in power and resources have often arisen along ethnic lines with most of the country's 42 ethnic groups having little or no say in government.



The 2010 constitution however divides Kenya into 47 counties, each of which has its own executive and legislative local government which will be responsible for agriculture, transportation, trade licenses, sanitation, pre-primary education, village polytechnics and most health facilities. Overall policy in these areas will still be drawn up by the national government but the counties will have charge of implementation and service delivery. The counties will take at least 15% of the national budget and will be able to get additional funds. The national government keeps responsibility for security, foreign policy, national economic policy and planning, as well as most areas of education. Some questions remain. There have been suggestions that the county governments' 15% percent share of the budget will only provide for half of their requirements, and that the county responsibilities need be more closely detailed within some sectors.

The new constitution was adopted by referendum in 2010 and in this year's March elections people voted for the 47 governors, who will head each county executive and appoint members of executive committees for the counties, and for the 1,450 representatives to be members of county assemblies or parliaments. These were sworn in on March 22nd and they then elected speakers for each assembly.

The central government has already released nearly US\$60 million to finance these county governments. It has also set up a number of new institutions to manage the whole process. As detailed by IRIN these include The Transitional Authority, to oversee the shift of power from Nairobi to the county level; The Commission for Revenue Allocation, to manage distribution of budgetary resources between the central government and the counties; The Task Force on Devolved Government to ensure the development of administrative structures for the devolution process; The Commission for the Implementation of the Constitution, whose has the job of making sure the constitutional process of devolution is respected.

The governors themselves have also been sworn in to launch the machinery of county government which requires an elaborate process with thousands of new officials to be trained and offices to be set up. The local assemblies will need to start drawing up local legislation and new officials will have to begin to implement it. There will be practical problems as the new county officials, including the governors, work out a relationship with the district commissioners who remain in office as representative of the central government. At a recent workshop to brief the new governors, there were indications of uncertainty over the respective roles of government officials and of the governors with reports that the governors had walked out at one point.

Inevitably, there have also been questions raised about possible conflicts of interest between the central government and the county governors, governments and assemblies. There are concerns about the available capacity in some areas of managerial and technical expertise in the new administrations, though the central government will also be posting civil servants and other officials to the counties to carry out some of the functions previously operated in Nairobi. New legislation, forums for governors and senators, and improved public access to information are expected to significantly reduce the possibilities of any renewed tension between different communities and help resources to be shared equitably without conflict. It is now President Kenyatta's task to make sure the new constitution is fully implemented. His progress will be watched closely by his neighbors and by the international community.



The African Union commemorates the anniversary of the Rwanda genocide

The 19th anniversary of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda was commemorated on Sunday (April 7th) at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa. It was held under the theme "Let us commemorate the Rwandan Genocide, as we strive for self-reliance". The ceremony was attended by the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Rwanda's Foreign Minister, Mrs. Louise Mushikiwabo, Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros Adhanom, the Chairman of the Interim Board of the African Union Human Rights Memorial (AUHRM), Professor Andreas Eshete, other ministers, commissioners and ambassadors as well as officials, the Rwandan community in Ethiopia and invited guests. The gathering observed a one-minute of silence in remembrance of the victims, and heard prayers from representatives of the Catholic Church, Protestant churches and the Muslim Community and a reading of short stories by school representatives.

The Chairperson of the AU Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, said the commemoration was an opportunity to reiterate the AU's commitment to the assertion that there must be no more genocide on the African continent or anywhere else in the world now or in the future. She said the salute to the memory of the dead and the public act of remembrance of the victims of the Rwanda Genocide was devoted towards "remembering Rwanda's past and ensuring that the harmful grief experienced is not passed down to future generations". Dr. Zuma said the occasion also enabled us to "remember the millions of other Africans in all regions of our continent who have died as a result of senseless conflicts, characterized by disrespect of international and regional human rights and international humanitarian laws". She noted the numerous challenges that Africa still faced in the area of human rights and the tremendous efforts of the AU Commission to address the issue in Africa through various mechanisms and by encouraging member states to ratify, implement and domesticate international human rights instruments. She appreciated the short stories presented by students on lessons learned from the Genocide in Rwanda: "if children dare to believe they can change something, they will achieve it, if not today, then tomorrow...and that is the spirit and inspiration we, as adults, should also believe in and be inspired with".

Dr Tedros recalled the heinous crime committed against humanity in Rwanda when an estimated one million Rwandans were exterminated by their fellow citizens. He also noted the Red Terror Campaign in Ethiopia in the 1970's and 80s when tens of thousands of innocent Ethiopians died from genocide, mass killings, torture and summary executions under the military regime. He recalled the OAU International Panel of Eminent Personalities concluded it would have been relatively easy to stop the Genocide prior to April 6th 1994 had the international community, which the ability and means to prevent it, also had the will to do so. He noted the international community had similarly failed to act to stop the Red Terror Campaign in Ethiopia, though Ethiopia was among the first countries to ratify the UN Convention on Genocide in 1949. Historians refer the Ethiopia's Red Terror campaign as "one of the most systematic uses of mass murder by the state ever witnessed in Africa" – those targeted included civil servants, students, teachers, trade unionists, business owners and suspected members of opposition parties.



Africa might have had its fair share of gruesome experiences and tragic events, but Dr. Tedros also noted the encouraging initiatives that the AU is taking to prevent and resolve conflicts in the continent, to fight impunity and prevent recurrence of such massive crimes. The AU's Constitutive Act also includes provisions giving the AU the right to interfere in member states in circumstances of war crimes, genocide or crimes against humanity. Dr. Tedros recalled the foundation stone laid for the AU Human Rights Memorial (AUHRM) in January 2012 by the AU Heads of States and Government at the inauguration of the new AU Conference Center. The Memorial is dedicated to all the victims of human rights violations in Africa including the Rwandan Genocide, Ethiopia's Red Terror and Apartheid in South Africa as well as the slave trade and colonialism. He said the central objective of the memorial was to be a permanent center for reflection on the sanctity of life. It will also preserve the memory of mass atrocities to help prevent any future recurrence of such crimes.

In this context, Dr. Tedros called on the international community and the AU member states to condemn the erection of a memorial in Italy dedicated to the memory of the Fascist Field Marshal, Rodolfo Graziani, who committed ruthless crimes against humanity and was responsible for the slaughter of thousands of innocent people both in Libya and in Ethiopia. This encouragement of unimaginable carnage and violence was particularly inappropriate, he said, at a time when Africa was discussing how to make the AU Human Rights Memorial a more effective and convincing model to encourage future generations to learn from history and build a better society. He reiterated Ethiopia's firm commitment to stand hand-in-hand with all the member states of the African Union to fight to prevent the recurrence of all crimes against humanity and to ensure that denial and impunity are not tolerated in the continent.

The Chairman of the Interim Board of the African Union Human Rights Memorial (AUHRM), Professor Andreas Eshete, also emphasized the need to stand in unison against genocide, crimes against humanity and fight against any form of human rights violations in Africa.

Rwanda's Foreign Affairs Minister, Mrs. Louise Mushikiwabo, stressed that the commemoration was a reflection that Rwanda and Africa as a whole must remember the Rwandan genocide "because it's part of our duty to humanity and, we remember it so we do not forget how we got here". She said: "For genocide to take place, conditions must be ripe and one of those conditions is the absence of external voices or the lack of intention to speak out. This 'Conspiracy of Silence' existed in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, and so we remember today to say NO to this conspiracy". She recalled that Rwanda was at the time sitting on the UN Security Council from 1993-1994, but it was then a country that killed and covered up its crimes with the help of many. "Today, in 2013-2014, Rwanda is back in the same seat, but now, it is a deeply changed country; a country that guards and protects the lives of its citizens; a country that has brought its people hope and prosperity". Mrs. Mushikiwabo said the horror and agony of the innocent men, women and children, whose lives were cut short by the Genocide had been the subject of numerous detailed accounts on paper and in film but to Rwanda "this tragedy, as well as the history that led to it, has influenced our way of life". She said we must remain vigilant against any efforts to trivialize or deny Genocide.

Rwanda has two public holidays commemorating the horrendous episode with Genocide Memorial Day on April 7th, marking the start of the Genocide, and Liberation Day on July 4th marking its end.



The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Telephone: (+251) 11 151 7345
Fax : (+251) 11 151 4300

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The week following April 7th is designated a week of official mourning with activities including the laying wreaths at memorial sites, giving proper burial to the exhumed remains of genocide victims, testimonies, public lectures, and candle-lit vigils. The anniversary activities officially last for a week but the commemoration continues up to July 4th, marking the 100 days of the genocide.



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The Meles Zenawi Foundation established

The Meles Zenawi Foundation was established at a launching ceremony held on April 7th at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa. The Foundation, established by the proclamation of the House of Peoples' Representatives in January 25th this year is intended to serve: "as Meles Zenawi's final resting place; as a sanctuary for Meles Zenawi's political legacy to Ethiopia and the rest of Africa; and as a site for scholarship on Meles Zenawi's words and deeds." It will be dedicated to preserving and advancing the legacy of his lifelong commitment to peace, justice, economic development, good governance, and democracy for the Ethiopian and African people, and provide a living memorial to his selfless struggle and statesmanship for the freedom and equality of the peoples of Ethiopia; a place for the study of the new life that Meles Zenawi breathed into Africa's aspiration for peace, democracy and development.

To achieve these goals, the Foundation seeks to become a cutting-edge, first class international institution to serve as a center of ideas and actions to reflect on the vision of Meles Zenawi, preserving and expanding on his work. It will include a state-of-the-art library and research center where the written documents he produced throughout his life will be preserved; a center to establish vibrant educational programs to advance the values and principles inherent in the promotion of mutual cooperation and understanding among peoples around the world; a scholarship scheme, especially for women, to enable them continue secondary and university education; a prize trust for people who have excelled in their respective fields or made noteworthy contribution to the betterment of society; support for environmental protection and the green economy through advocacy and education; and a public memorial park in honor of the late prime minister. The Foundation also expects to attract visitors from all walks of life, ranging from scholars using the resources of the library to peoples walking in the memorial park.

The ceremony was attended by regional leaders including President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti and President Omar Hassan al Beshir of the Republic of Sudan, as well as Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, the Prime Minister of Somalia, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Dr. Dlamini Zuma, Olusegun Obasanjo, the former president of Nigeria, the Foreign Ministers of Rwanda and Seychelles and other high dignitaries.

Prime Minister Hailemariam remembered the late Prime Minister Meles as an "exemplary leader with unique leadership skills and a flawless performance as chief of the executive". He said that from an early age until his premature demise he worked without rest to accomplish tremendous achievements. The Prime Minister noted that Meles had led and fought against tyranny, designed strategies that were instrumental in extracting the country and its people out of the quagmire of poverty and lack of democratic governance, and, as Prime Minister, had saved his country from the brink of disintegration and put it on a solid basis of democracy and development. As a true son of Africa, he had also championed the cause of Ethiopia and indeed Africa in international for a. In a word, said Prime Minister Hailemariam, Meles was a treasure trove for those who were interested in in-depth research on a study of his life and the continuity of the renaissance of Ethiopia." Former First Lady, Azeb Mesfin, noted that the Foundation would provide scholarships for researchers interested to study Meles's academic works to ensure the continuity of the implementation of his vision.



The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Telephone: (+251) 11 151 7345
Fax : (+251) 11 151 4300

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President Yoweri Museveni described Meles as one of the new breed of African leaders who were independently minded, courageous, patriotic Pan Africanists who transcended their countries in search of development and scorned sectarianism, adding that 'the memory of his contribution will be our Motto.' He remembered Meles stress on the need to create strong structures with particular emphasis on infrastructure development, and that Africa needed to address power shortages as one of the means to enable its development efforts. President Museveni reminded his listeners that Meles had increased electricity generation in Ethiopia from 300 megawatts when he came to power to 2200 megawatts today. He also hailed him for his work in modernizing agriculture and the provision of irrigation and other essential facilities.

President Ismael Omar Guelleh of Djibouti described Meles as a man of action who visualized a bright future for his country, adding that he had been eager to provide for those who had little. "We will work hard to fulfill the dreams of Djibouti and Ethiopia," he said. President Omar Al- Bashir of Sudan remembered Meles's significant role in facilitating peace negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan and emphasized his role for Africa on the international scene. The Prime Minister of Somalia, Abdi Farah Shirdon, welcomed the Foundation as a way to keep Meles' legacy alive for the future generations, and hailed his work for peace and stability in Africa. AU Chairperson, Dr. Dlamini Zuma, remembered the late premier as visionary leader, who had managed to transform Ethiopia, at one time known only for poverty and hunger, into one of the fastest growing economies in Africa and the world. Reflections on the life and works of the late Prime Minister were presented by Professor Andreas Eshete, Dr. Getachew Betru, Alex De Waal and other dignitaries.

Ethiopia's neighbors have generously pledged a total of US\$3.8 million to help support the Foundation (Sudan – US\$ 2million; South Sudan US\$1 million, Djibouti US\$500,000 and Uganda 300,000). The Foundation will have a thirteen member board, four from Meles' family, to oversee its activities which will be based in Addis. Meles's widow, Azeb Mesfin has been names as chair of the Board with the House of Federation Speaker, Kassa Tekle-Birhan, as Vice-Chairperson.



14th Extraordinary Session of the AU's Executive Council

The 14th Extraordinary Session of the African Union Executive Council (of Foreign Ministers) was held on April 8th, in accordance with the proposal of the Chairperson of the Commission and the decision of the Council during its 22nd Ordinary Session, held in January, in Addis Ababa.

The session of the Executive Council discussed the Draft Strategic Plan of the AU Commission for the years 2014-2017, and also considered reports on the preparations for the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the OAU/AU as well as other issues.

The 2014-2017 Strategic Plan, the third Strategic Plan drawn up by the AU Commission since its establishment in 2002, was considered at length and provided with additional input from the Council. The third strategic plan is designed to detail the goals set for the implementation period in such a way to allow for monitoring and evaluation of the key priority areas. Members of the Council stressed that the Commission should draw lessons from the successes and the challenges it had encountered during the implementation of the two previous Strategic Plans. It decided the AU's draft budget should be revised in accordance with the strategic plan. In this connection it commended the Permanent Representatives Committee and the AU Commission for carrying out a SWOT analysis in preparing the draft of the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan. At the end of their deliberations on the Plan, Council members, underlined on the need for each member state to own the Strategic Plan and implement it with utmost commitment. The final version of the Strategic Plan will be adopted by the 21st ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, scheduled to be held in May 2013, in Addis Ababa.

Another urgent topic discussed during the 14th Extraordinary Session of the Executive Council was the Commission's preparations to the celebrations of the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of the OAU. The Commission briefed the Executive Council on the status of preparations and it was noted that encouraging progress had been made both for the events planned for May 25th, as well as for the year-long 50th Anniversary celebrations. The Executive Council endorsed the decision of the Permanent Representatives Committee to approve a budget of US\$3.3 million for the different activities that are going to be carried-out by the Commission in collaboration with Ethiopia, the host country, and other member States. The Executive Council commended the Commission, Ethiopia and the PRC for their coordinated efforts to make the 50th Anniversary memorable for today's generation and for future generations. It called upon all member states to involve their populations in the celebrations.

The Executive Council also exchanged views on the Theme of the May Summit of the African Union – “Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance”. It called on member States, Regional Economic Councils and different stakeholders to contribute to reflections on the Theme.

Meanwhile on the margins of the Executive Council meeting, the African Union formally launched the year-long celebration of the 50th anniversary of the AU/OAU. Dr. Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission and Dr. Tedros Adhanom Foreign Minister of Ethiopia, Chair of the AU Executive Council, jointly lit a candle to mark the launch of the celebrations.

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Fax : (+251) 11 151 4300

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Dr. Dlamini underlined the importance of the occasion, noting that “the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the founding of the OAU and AU offers the continent a rare opportunity to reflect on the last five decades, on our prospects, future and the challenges confronting Africa.” Ethiopia has set up a National Secretariat to organize the year-long celebrations which will also include the next AU Summit in Addis Ababa in May.



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Frezer Haile

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