

## **A Week in the Horn**

### **15<sup>th</sup> February 2013**

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#### **Celebrating Ethiopia's first Defence Forces' Day**

The first Defence Forces' Day was held on Thursday (14<sup>th</sup> February) at the end of a week of celebration (8<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> February) under the theme "Our constitutional loyalty and multi-national nature will be preserved." The week was marked with a series of events across the country with parades, military manoeuvres and exhibitions in various regional state capitals and Addis Ababa. The exhibition in Addis Ababa, opened by Prime Minister Hailemariam, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, comprehensively demonstrated the army's mission to defend the nation's sovereignty and its additional contributions to the various development efforts of the country including infrastructural development, technology transfer and electronic security.

Speaking at the opening of the exhibition, Defence Minister Siraj Fergessa said enormous activities have been carried out, focusing on capacity building, with the effect of establishing a modern and effective army. The armed forces were now able to undertake a wide range of different activities ranging from overhauling its equipment and machinery to manufacturing the materials it needed on a limited budget. As a result the Minister emphasized in addition to its major mission of defending the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the nation, the Army was contributing immensely to such development activities as the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and to the construction of the new sugar and fertilizer factories which are being built. The exhibition, the Minister noted, had the purpose of publicizing the capacity of the Army in accomplishing a mission, the success of its capacity building, its ability to provide technology transfer and other areas.

General Samora Yenus, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, noted that members of the Ethiopian National Defence Force had also contributed greatly in realizing peace, development, good governance and democracy through their protection of the country

from anti-peace forces and external acts to destabilise the nation. The Defence Forces' week, marked for the first time, has provided an opportunity to renew the commitment of the Army to reinforce the results gained over the past 20 years and to continue to defend the country from local and foreign anti-peace elements, General Samora added.

The Speaker of the House of Federation, Ato Kassa Tekleberhan also noted that the importance of Ethiopia having managed to build a dependable defence force, **loyal to the constitution and the people**. He emphasized that the National Defence Force had contributed its own share to realizing the renaissance of the country by significantly participating in the on-going efforts to speed up development and build the necessary democracy to ensure sustainable peace and economic development in the country.

At the conclusion of the celebrations in the National Stadium in Addis Ababa, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, reminded the forces that they had their own particular mission bestowed upon them by the constitution. The Ethiopian Defence Forces, he said, were responsible for protecting the constitution and the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia and therefore ultimately for ensuring the peace, security and continuity of Ethiopia's renaissance. Beyond this, he said, they are committed to ensuring the peace and security of Ethiopia's neighbours since that is of paramount importance for Ethiopia's own peace and development endeavours. So the Defence Forces have successfully participated in various peace-keeping missions across the continent, and their achievements in discharging this huge responsibility, he added, have meant they have become a reliable peace force for Africa. The Ethiopian Defence Forces are now respected around the world for their battle-hardened professionalism and their skills in application of counter-insurgency doctrines. In places like **Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia, Sudan and South Sudan**, they have played an exemplary role in peace-keeping and in building harmony among the indigenous communities.

The Prime Minister also noted that under the Growth and Transformation Plan, the Defence Forces were expected to be an engine for the establishment of institutions that would help bring about a transformation towards industrialization. They were achieving this through military and technology training institutions, the steel and engineering corporations, information and communication technology and cyber-security sectors. All these areas being run by the Ethiopian Defence Forces had already become vital elements in the country's socio-economic transformation.

The Ethiopian National Defence Forces are structured on the basis of the principles of Article 87 of the Constitution that stipulates that composition of the national armed forces should reflect equal representation of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia. In addition, the Constitution states that the armed forces should protect the sovereignty of the country and carry out such responsibilities as may be assigned to them under any state of emergency declared in accordance with the Constitution. The Constitution also clearly lays down the duty of the Armed Forces to carry out its functions free of any partisanship for any political organization, and that they should obey and respect the Constitution.

The Defence Forces were established according to Proclamation Number 27/88 and since then they have strengthened their unity through extensive training in a range of

areas, including measures taken to familiarize members of the Defence Forces with the Constitution. Various military training institutions have been established to enhance the military capacity, skills and technical ability of the Defence Forces. At the same time, the Defence University, as a higher educational institute, has been instrumental in producing professionals and experts in the fields of civil and military engineering, in health, resource management and other fields. Currently, the Defence University has four colleges, of Engineering, Health, Resource Management and Technology. These have helped to provide a level of expertise in the Defence Forces, enabling them to play a very constructive role in ensuring the peace and security of the country and in strengthening the democracy and good governance initiatives.

During the week-long celebrations in Addis Ababa, various aspects of the Defence Training Institutes and Colleges, of the Defence Forces ICT work and products were among material presented to the public. These included unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), light commercial-version helicopters designed by the Metals and Engineering Corporation, agriculture and construction machinery and transformers and spare parts for sugar and fertilizer factory production. Light and heavy military equipment, ammunition and heavy and light vehicles from Bishoftu Automotive Industry were also among the products on show.

### **UN Secretary General's latest report to the Security Council**

The UN Security Council met yesterday (Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> February) to discuss Somalia and the Secretary-General's latest report. The Council was briefed by Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Taye-Brook Zerihoun and Somalia's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Fowzia Yusuf.

The Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs said the recent developments in Somalia called for concomitant change in support of the new Government, based on a new Somali-led partnership with the United Nations no longer working from another country. He noted that the Secretary General in his latest report had suggested the basis for a new integrated strategic United Nations approach to Somalia should involve commitment to Somali ownership of the peace building and state-building agenda; support for AMISOM and for building up the capacity of Somali security forces; support for national reconciliation and the stabilization priorities of the Government, including support for the finalization of the constitution and the conduct of national elections by 2016; sustainable capacity and institution development; an expanded physical presence of UN inside Somalia; and assistance for short-term needs while reducing longer-term dependence on humanitarian assistance over time.

These suggestions follow an integrated strategic assessment conducted by the UN late last year, building on discussions with Somali authorities, the African Union, civil society and international partners in Somalia and Kenya. UN bodies involved in Somalia, which include the UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) and UNSOA, which provides logistics for AMISOM, are due to relocate to Somalia steadily over the next six to 12 months. The AU has not yet presented its own strategic review of AMISOM to the Security Council. The AU Peace and Security Council is scheduled to meet later this month to discuss the outcome of the review before forwarding it to the UN Security

Council, which is expected to start discussions soon on a resolution to renew the authorization of AMISOM which expires on 7<sup>th</sup> March.

The UN review recommended the establishment of a new UN mission and the Secretary General suggested four options for this: a Joint African Union/United Nations peace support operation; a fully integrated United Nations peace-building mission; a United Nations assistance mission; and a United Nations peace-building mission separate from the UN support operation for AMISOM.

The Secretary-General recommends the third of these options which would deliver political and peace building support with a presence across Somalia. It would involve, he said, establishment of a UN Assistance Mission to replace the UN Political Office for Somalia and deliver political and peace-building support with a presence across Somalia and would also integrate the functions currently performed by the UN Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA). Its tasks would include good offices, advice and assistance on security, peace- building and state-building, electoral preparation, promotion of human rights and the rule of law, and coordination of international assistance. The Secretary General intends to deploy a technical design mission to develop more detailed plans.

The report underlined the importance of the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in Somalia, and noted this will be strengthened as the next phase of support for stabilization, peace-building and more political coordination is implemented. “The African Union, through AMISOM and its partners, will continue to play a critical role in Somalia.” He therefore urged Council Members to consider all possible approaches to provide sustainable and predictable funding for AMISOM operations. He also encouraged the Council to give serious consideration to the African Union request for an AMISOM maritime component which, he suggested, remained critical to consolidating control over southern and central Somalia. In his briefing the Assistant Secretary-General noted that the recommendation for a United Nations Assistance Mission, while maintaining the high level of support for AMISOM, was the best option for the UN to simultaneously provide enhanced support to peace-building and to meet other development and humanitarian objectives.

The Secretary General’s report suggested it was still premature to establish a United Nations peacekeeping operation for Somalia. In the current context of combat operations, he said the African Union had comparative advantage as a provider of military support, though the lack of sustainable and predictable funding for AMISOM remained a concern. Re-hatting forces would be likely to compromise effectiveness and a merger would constrain the effectiveness of both. Rather, the UN should continue to work towards a fully integrated mission, as requested by the President of Somalia and keep the option of a United Nations peace keeping operation under review.

The Secretary General said Security Council members were aware of the request of the Somali Government to relax the arms embargo in order to facilitate the development of the security sector. He suggested that a calibrated approach be taken. This should be based on all factors, including the pressing need to support the development of Somali forces, while also avoiding the proliferation of uncontrolled weapons.

Mr Zerihun in his briefing emphasized that there was now a “tangible sense of security and optimism in Mogadishu”. Across the country, the African Union Mission in Somalia

was deployed at full strength and had been effective in degrading Al-Shabaab's operational capability. However, Al-Shabaab's presence continued to hamper freedom of movement and the Government still faced "daunting challenges" in implementing its six-pillar policy. He said the growing expanse of territory liberated from Al-Shabaab had created an opportunity for the federal Government to extend its control over the country and enhance its legitimacy. He noted the Government was "working to fill the vacuum through an inclusive bottom-up approach" adding that the process was naturally contentious.

Development of the security sector, he emphasized, must be coupled with enhanced support for the judiciary and respect for human rights; and swift progress was needed to build accepted administrations in liberated areas and ensure that the political process was accompanied by other critical elements for stabilization, including security, law and order, and basic service delivery. Mr Zerihun stressed the Secretary-General's concern over the on-going threat to journalists working in the country and by the number of reported incidences of sexual violence.

Deputy Prime Minister Fowzia Yusuf detailed the six-pillar policy framework adopted by the Somali government: security and peace building; law and good governance reform; economic recovery and public finance management reform; effective and targeted service delivery; restructuring of international relations; and safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia. She noted the progress made in the security sector and in establishing local administrations in newly recovered areas where local communities were empowered to select their own leaders. The Government had initiated steps to establish a credible, transparent and accountable public finance system, for which tax collection was a priority. A programme for the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees in neighbouring countries and for resettlement of internally displaced persons was under way. She said the Government was aware of the problems of human rights and was committed to taking decisive action to bring an end to the culture of violence, particularly against women.

She also emphasized the need for institutional capacity-building where, she said, the presence of United Nations agencies could team up with ministries on the ground. Programmes, however, needed the blessing, political will and long-term commitment of the international community to provide the necessary technical and financial resources. With reference to the future of AMISOM, she said Somalia's position was in favour of a fully integrated UN peace building mission. It felt the advantages of a unified structure far outweighed the concerns of those seeking to maintain the status quo.

The Deputy Prime Minister said the government had no illusions about the seriousness of the challenges remaining. Getting rid of the remnants of Al-Shabaab was a top priority and this required strengthening the military capacity of the Somalia Defence Forces. She called for the arms embargo to be lifted as a prerequisite to enabling consolidation of peace in the recovered areas. This, she said would allow the Somali National Armed Forces to assume full responsibility for Somalia's own security. The question of the arms embargo may come in for further consideration later today (Friday 15<sup>th</sup> February) when the UN Monitoring Group on Eritrea and Somalia is scheduled to present its mid-term briefing to the Sanctions Committee.

## **The Speaker of Parliament receives his Somali counterpart**

The Speaker of the House of People's Representatives, Abadula Gemedo, Deputy Speaker, Shitaye Minale and Standing Committees Chairpersons met and held talks on Thursday (14<sup>th</sup> February) with a delegation of Somali MPs led by Professor Mohammed Osman Jawari, the Speaker of the Somali Parliament, and the Deputy Speaker, Mahad Abdalla Awed. Professor Jawari described the occasion as "historic" and emphasized it as one that signified a new chapter in relations between Somalia and Ethiopia which offered a "great opportunity to build our partnership, inter-parliamentary cooperation, and friendship." Professor Jawari underlined the importance of working towards a new relationship based on mutual respect and peaceful coexistence. He said "it is a fact that there are scars from unpleasant chapters in our history," but reiterated the need to bury the past: "we need to start afresh and build peaceful neighbourly relations". He expressed his optimism that the two Parliaments would now champion fraternal relations and help the two peoples to abandon perceptions of prejudice and mistrust and start a new chapter of brotherhood. Speaker Jawari reaffirmed the commitment of his government to putting the relationship of the two countries on a new foundation: "today we bring you a message of peace and goodwill from the people of Somalia. We are desirous of your partnership".

Referring to the newly established Parliament in Somalia, the process of constitution making and the recent adoption of parliamentary procedures, Professor Jawari said that they had taken into account experiences of others, drawing from many emerging democracies including Ethiopia. He praised the Ethiopian Parliament's rules of procedure, and said the House of People's Representatives "must be proud of its Rules of Procedure. It certainly impressed our lawmakers and we have drawn much from it". He described the biggest task ahead for the Somali Parliament as the need to establish a functioning legislature that could help provide for the rule of law to prevail. It had to pass quality legislation, and effectively discharge its duties of oversight of the other branches of the government as well as empowering MPs to ensure government accountability.

Speaker Abadula, in turn, expounded on the fraternal relationship of the Ethiopian and Somali peoples, describing them as "not merely neighbours, but brothers." He underlined how closely the fate of the two peoples were intertwined, and added that there was a lot of room "for us to work together and realize the dreams of our two brotherly people." He praised the recent political changes in Somalia and stressed the importance of strengthening the improvements in security and stability and the establishment of a functioning administration. He pointed out that Ethiopia had done a lot for the stability of Somalia, and underlined the importance of connecting the two peoples through economic development and economic integration as a way of strengthening positive engagement on the political front. Speaker Abadula assured the Somali Speaker that Ethiopia would continue to do all in its power to contribute to the peace and stability of Somalia, and to work with the new government to realize the emergence of Somalia. Ethiopia, he said, had a strong belief that it could only develop itself in a situation in which the entire region was tranquil. It would, therefore, continue to work towards the stability of Somalia and the Horn in general.

Speaker Jawari invited the Ethiopian delegation to visit Mogadishu at their convenience. The two sides agreed to exchange draft Memoranda of Understanding for the establishment of inter-parliamentary cooperation and to table these for signing when the Ethiopian delegation visits Mogadishu. Speaker Abadula announced that the Ethiopian parliament would be establishing an Ethiopia-Somalia Friendship Committee to work to strengthen the relationship of the two peoples and their governments.

### **Elections to Djibouti's Legislative Assembly**

On Thursday last week [7th Feb], Djibouti's Minister of Interior, Hassan Darar Houffaneh, announced the opening of two weeks of campaigning for the elections for Djibouti's Legislative Assembly. Election Day is Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> February. The Minister made a solemn appeal to all candidates to conduct themselves appropriately, "to maintain the necessary tranquility during the electoral period and refrain from rhetoric or behaviour that could disrupt harmony and social peace."

He also called on citizens to exercise their civic duty and vote for the 65 seats in the Djibouti Assembly. More than 173,900 citizens registered to vote. Until now all elections for the Assembly have been held under a majority list system, under which the party which took the most votes, also filled all the 65 seats in the Assembly. The opposition has always strongly opposed this system which has deprived it of the ability to have even a small minority representation in the Assembly. Last November, however, the government approved the replacement of the majority list system with a **mixed-list system**. Under this, the party which gets the most votes will get 80% of the seats in the Assembly, but 20% of the seats will be awarded on the basis of proportional representation. The vote on 22<sup>nd</sup> February will be the first under the new system and it is expected to offer the opposition a greater chance of representation in the Assembly.

Candidate lists from the three coalitions involved were approved last week. The five-party ruling Union for a Presidential Majority (UMP), the party of President Ismail Omar Guelleh, has been in power for a decade. The opposition coalition Union for National Salvation (USN) led by Ismail Gedi Hared was formerly called the Holy Union for Change. The third grouping is the newly formed centrist Centre for Unified Democrats (CDU), led by Omar Elmi Khaireh.

All three parties were presenting their candidates to the public in Djibouti at the weekend and earlier this week. The leader of the Union for a Presidential Majority coalition, Ilyas Moussa Dawaleh, on Sunday [10<sup>th</sup>] called on the public not to be swayed by the promises of opposition parties: "Thanks to the policies implemented by President Ismail Omar Guelleh, and parties that make up this coalition, our country is advancing, changing and building itself. Its future looks bright," he said. Ismail Gedi Hared of the Union for National Salvation coalition renewed a call for free and fair elections at a rally over the weekend, claiming the time of "people who cling to power is now over and the will of the people must speak for change." The Centre for Unified Democrats (CDU) held its rally on Monday [11<sup>th</sup>] and Omar Elmi Khaireh, calling on CDU supporters to be sure to vote, drew attention to the problems facing the current government, which he claimed included corruption, nepotism and favouritism. All of these were, he said, hindering Djibouti's economic progress.

The opposition parties have claimed that they are not competing on a level playing field, as several opposition websites are being censored by the government; while government supporters point out that all the parties taking part in the election have been given equal airtime and this provides the "proof of the government's good faith". Meanwhile, the Djibouti Independent National Electoral Commission began a series of visits around the country at the beginning of this week to monitor election preparations and the distribution of voter ID cards and other material.

### **Average 10% growth over the first two years of the GTP**

Last week, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development put out a "Brief note on the 2004 Ethiopian Fiscal Year National Accounts Estimate Series." This provided an assessment of the major activities of Ethiopia's economy during the year and details of the country's economic growth for the 2004 fiscal year (2011/12). The growth rate, based on the revised version of GDP accounting for the year, is estimated at 8.5%. This revision uses 2003 as the new base year for the calculations, but taking into account the previous year, the mean growth rate for the first 2 years of the Growth and Transformation Plan is calculated at 10%. Over the previous nine years (1996-2004 fiscal years) the government has registered an 11% annual average growth rate for GDP.

The estimate for the 2004 fiscal year on the newly set base year of 2003 fiscal year (2011/12) was made following the Government's decision to change the base year. The previous computations were made using the fiscal year 1999/2000 as a yardstick. Fiscal year 2011/2012 will now be used for GDP accounting and for calculating the country's GDP growth for the next five years.

The change in the national accounts' methodology was made in order to reflect a wider range of new products and services in the equations in response to the newer economic activities and developments that have been taking place in the last decade and becoming part of business activities. There has also been progressive expansion, or downsizing, in different business sectors and various changes in the relative price of commodities. Another reason for the re-basing of the GDP calculation can be seen in the plan to bring about meaningful structural changes in the socio-economic framework on a short-to-medium term basis. The introduction of the new base year will also mean the GDP estimates will conform to the latest version of the UN Systems of National Accounts, last revised in 2008. Moreover it was necessary to make changes in the relative prices of commodities to portray the real growth and evolution of the economy more accurately.

The 2011/12 GDP estimates and figures for economic growth involved some 15 fixed and reshuffled sectors as well as newly identified sectors. Bajaj vehicles and mobile phones, floriculture and horticulture were among different sub-sectors added to the transport and communication and agriculture sectors and considered in the calculations. The result, according to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development showed that Ethiopia's economic growth for the 2004 fiscal year (2011/12), based on the revised version of GDP accounting, was 8.5%.

Among the major sectors, the annual growth rates of agriculture, industry and service were estimated to be 4.9%, 13.6% and 11.1% respectively; and their respective shares in the total GDP, estimated to be 737 billion birr, were 44%, 11% and 45% respectively. Investment volume rose by 6.7%, from 27.9% to 34.6%. With reference to GDP expenditure, consumption accounted for about 83.5% of the total, and the remaining 16.5% was registered as domestic savings. Of the 83.5% expenditure, the share of government was 7.0% and the remaining 76.5% was attributed to private consumption. The Ministry noted that the 16.5% domestic savings registered was a successful development, improving on the 15% set in the Growth and Transformation Plan. A significant increase was also registered in per capita income which grew from **US\$387 in 2010/11 to US\$513 in 2011/12**.

The increase registered in the agriculture sector was lower than the rate of the previous eight years which averaged 9.6%. This was the result of a relatively smaller growth in crop production, the backbone of the agriculture sector and which overall accounts for 30% the country's GDP. This in fact was the main contributing factor to the relatively lower, though still-strong, total GDP growth registered in 2004 [2011-12]. The re-basing of the benchmark to a more recent [year?] was expected to have an impact in the calculations for the year of implementation (2004) and thus affect the figures.

Although the latest calculation provides for only 8.5% growth, from the aggregate perspective, the Government has still managed to continue to achieve its double digit growth target. Over the last nine years (the 1996-2004 fiscal years) the government has registered an average 11% annual GDP growth rate. The average growth rate for the first two years of the Growth and Transformation Plan was also in double figures so the mean growth has been 10%. Nor can a growth of 8.5% be considered a failure, especially when compared to the average Sub-Saharan growth of 5.5%.

The proven track record of the Government's effective utilization of resources, and the right mix of prioritized activities, will continue to make a positive contribution to sustaining double digit growth over the remaining 3 years of the Growth and Transformation Plan (2013-2015), and afterwards. Significant emphasis is continuing to be given both to productivity growth and to capital investment. The Government is simultaneously investing in the means of production as well as actual production for consumption. The Government's mixture of policies and strategies is being successfully implemented. It has set priorities that have helped the country to maintain sustainable double-digit growth for almost a decade. This has involved the allocation of two-thirds of its revenue for capital investment. In sum, the sustainability of rapid growth has been a solid indication that the Government has put in place the right mix of policies and strategies that can deliver the rapid and sustainable growth which will allow for the achievement of the goal of becoming a middle income country by 2025. It will continue to pursue its activities on the basis of these priorities and maintain a balanced approach to growth of both capital investment and productivity.

In the remaining three years of the Growth and Transformation Plan, the Government is committed to continue to register average double-digit growth and **to achieve all the Millennium Development Goals**, including poverty reduction, as well as achieving its aims of **expanding and improving its service provision**. Most of the MDG goals, including a reduction in poverty by half to reach 27.2% in 2015, only require a

consistent 7% growth. Given the average growth rate of 11% over the last eight years and the average of 10% for the first two years of the Growth and Transformation Plan, there should be little problem in reaching this figure and meeting the MDG goals.

The Government is also committed to ensuring the timely completion of the major projects including the construction of the Grand Ethiopia Renaissance Dam, the Gilgel Gibe III dam, the ten planned sugar factories, fertilizer factories and the railway and road projects. It is also committed to deliver on its target of increasing the role of the industrial sector to allow it to become the dominant element in GDP after the end of the Growth and Transformation Plan. The intent is to manage the structural shift from an agriculturally dominated GDP to **industrially dominated economic growth** by focusing mainly on expanding the industry sector and its share of total GDP without compromising continually increasing agricultural output both in quantity and quality.

### **A Global Education and Technology Health meeting in New York**

The first Global Education and Technology Health meeting was held at the United Nations in New York last week. The meeting brought together ministers of health, academics, doctors, business leaders and others to discuss the ways mobile technologies could improve global health. It was organized by the Johns Hopkins Centre for Clinical Global Health Education and Global Partnerships Forum and co-hosted by the International Telecommunication Union together with the governments of Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda, and Norway.

Representatives from various countries shared their experience of community health development and the value of technological developments, as well as covering such subjects as health and media literacy, leveraging social media to address increasing organ donation, and the possibility of translating mobile money systems to the mobile health sector and other subjects.

The Director of e-health at the Rwandan Ministry of Health detailed some of the advances being made in Rwanda where the country currently had three community health workers per 75,000 villagers. Uganda's State Minister for Primary Health Care also cited difficulties in keeping trained doctors, but she also noted that by using mobile technologies, Uganda had improved service delivery and monitoring of medicines, and achieved better quality of data as well as improved anonymous consultation services for HIV/AIDS patients through a national, toll-free hotline. It had also managed to connect regional referral hospitals with the national hospital to improve consultations. Nigeria's Minister of State for Health, Dr Alit Pate, noted that Nigeria had 65,000 registered health extension workers, but said initiatives were needed to evaluate the impact of using mobile technology to improve health. He mentioned an online portal for training midwives that had initially received a lot of hits but then experienced a decline. Incentives, he said, were needed to encourage community health extension workers to continue submitting data for tracking progress. Promotion opportunities for community health workers to supervisory levels, for providing access to medical education via distance learning modules to increase medical student enrolment and retention were two suggested ways to help maintain a trained health workforce.

Ethiopia's Minister of Health, Dr Kesetebirhan Admasu, described the country's three-tier health system, built on health centres and a programme of community health extension which he described as "a pillar of our health system, [which had] trained and deployed **38,000 health extension workers**, providing two workers per village." Many of these professionals were women "tasked to do health promotion, disease prevention, and provide basic curative services." Four areas of support for them included data exchange, improving the supply chain so that they received supplies on a continuous basis, and using mobile technology to improve communication between the community health extension workers and with laboratories and hospitals. This had provided for a real increase in antenatal visits as well as an increase in institutional delivery rates. Dr Kesetebirhan noted the recent expansion of **medical schools from three to 25**.

He noted the difficulty of retaining physicians who leave to practice in other countries; he hoped the increase in medical school enrolment capacity from "**150 five years ago to 3,000 this year**" would have an impact. However, the current challenge was that "we don't have enough faculties", but that he hoped that was where technology would help. Dr Kesetebirhan also noted efforts to create linkages between universities in Europe and the U.S. and Ethiopia's newer medical schools and the creation of a network with the Ethiopian Diaspora. He said he would like to call upon the partners present at the meeting to work together to really improve the quality of medical education in Ethiopia using information and communications technologies, noting that Ethiopia was hoping in the future to use mobile health to address chronic care and to support its vastly expanded medical education system.

Dr Wuleta Lemma, Director for the Centre for Global Health Equity at Tulane University spoke of the development of a pre-service Master's training programme in health monitoring and evaluation, and the implementing an e-health and mobile health strategy, **HealthNet**, operating in collaboration with the Ethiopian Ministry of Health. Dr Enawgaw Mehari, Founder of People to People (P2P) global network spoke of its efforts to implement programmes that contribute to closing the gap through education, training, and research. Ms Amy Lockwood, Deputy Director of the Centre for Innovation in Global Health at Stanford University, underlined the role that individuals from the diaspora could play and urged practitioners to move towards implementing innovative projects using the support and collaboration of diaspora resources. Other speakers supported the idea of creating centres of excellence for ICT in health education and research training to serve as hubs of innovation.

Those attending the meeting said they found it particularly valuable for networking with technology company representatives and medical experts as well as looking at the ways technology could assist in improving health care services and global medical education, and leveraging mobile technology to strengthen health systems. There was however some regret that more healthcare providers and stakeholders had not been present.

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## News and Views

### Kenya's first public presidential debate

At the beginning of the week, Kenya held its first public presidential debate with all eight candidates for next month's presidential election taking part. Millions of Kenyans watched and listened to the debate, broadcast live over local radio and TV stations, as well on YouTube, though observers remained uncertain how much impact the discussions would have on the voting. Prime Minister Raila Odinga and his deputy Uhuru Kenyatta are seen as the front runners to succeed President Mwai Kibaki who is stepping down after two terms. Disputes over the previous election, in 2007, led to ethnic violence in which more than 1,000 died and over 300,000 fled their homes. Subsequently, the International Criminal Court indicted a number of people, including Mr Kenyatta, along with his running mate William Ruto, on charges of fuelling the violence. The trial is due to open in April and both deny the charges. Kenya's Foreign Minister, Sam Ogeri warned European Union ambassadors on Monday [11<sup>th</sup>] of the need to avoid "inflammatory" remarks that could polarize the nation ahead of the vote which is on 4<sup>th</sup> March, pointing out with the elections just three weeks away, "it was a tense moment of national reflection". The other candidates for the presidency are Musalia Mudavadi, Martha Karua, the only woman candidate, Peter Kenneth, Muhamed Abduba Dida, James ole Kiyiapi and Paul Muite. A second public debate will be held on Monday week, 25<sup>th</sup> February. Last week, US President Barack Obama urged the people of Kenya to avoid violence and intimidation. He said the polls were a chance for Kenyans to come together to show they were not just members of tribes or ethnic groups but a proud nation.

### Foreign Minister meets UK's Minister for Africa and the EU's Director for Africa

On Monday (10<sup>th</sup> February) Foreign Affairs Minister, Dr Tedros Adhanom held talks with the United Kingdom Minister for Africa, Mark Simmonds, on bilateral and regional issues. Dr Tedros expressed Ethiopia's interest in having more UK investment in Ethiopia, particularly in the manufacturing sector, and encouraged UK businessmen to invest in the textile, leather and leather products sectors. Mark Simmonds called on the Ethiopian Government to strengthen its on-going efforts to maintain peace and security in East Africa. He said the UK would continue to work towards increasing the volume of trade between the two countries and to support the finance sector and capacity building to help Ethiopia achieve its development goals. On Thursday [14<sup>th</sup>], Dr Tedros met a delegation from the European Union Commission led by the Managing Director for Africa at the EU, Dr Nick Westcott. Dr Westcott thanked the Minister for the positive contributions that Ethiopia is currently making in the on-going mediation between Sudan and South Sudan. He informed the Minister of the upcoming visit in April of a high-level delegation from the Commission which will be led by Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission. The Minister briefed the delegation on the on-going success of the Growth and Transformation Plan and emphasized the attractive investment climate available in Ethiopia.

## **Ethiopian Police College trains South Sudanese Cadets**

As a part of its security and defence relationship with neighbouring countries, the Ethiopian government every year offers scholarships to cadets and military students from around East Africa. Over the weekend a warm reception was held for the arrival of twenty South Sudanese police cadets at the Police University College at Sentara. The Ethiopian Police University College has offered two year scholarships for the training of South Sudanese cadets. South Sudan's Ambassador Paul, who attended the welcoming ceremony, said "Ethiopia's contribution to the peace and stability of South Sudan is immense" and added "the training of the police officers is part of these efforts." All the expenses of training and accommodation for the two year training of the police officers will be covered by the Ethiopian government. Students are trained in military engineering skills, armaments, civil and combat ethics and other police-related and military subjects.

## **A Technical Cooperation Agreement with UNCTAD**

A Technical Cooperation Agreement for Developing a Strategy and Transformation Study of Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Services Enterprise (ESLSE) was signed between the Government of Ethiopia and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva on Thursday last week (7<sup>th</sup> February). This will enable UNCTAD to provide support to the Ethiopian Government's extensive reform programme including bolstering ESLSE's capacity with a state-of-the art shipping and logistics management and operation system. UNCTAD will provide technical assistance and support the transformation of ESLSE into a more competitive, efficient and reliable institution in shipping, logistics port and terminal services. The agreement will also enable the Enterprise to benefit from UNCTAD's capacity-building workshops on various selected topics. The signing of the agreement follows extensive consultations held between the Government of Ethiopia and UNCTAD officials, including discussions with UNCTAD officials during an official visit to Geneva by Ethiopia's Minister of Transport, Derbies Kumar, heading a delegation which included Ahmed Tulsa, the head of ESLSE and Mekonnen Baer, Director General of the Ethiopian Maritime Affairs Authority as well as other senior officials. The agreement will be implemented from March to December.

## **U.N. monitors say Al-Shabaab getting arms through Yemen and Iran**

The U.N. Sanctions Monitoring Group is reported to be concerned about Iranian and Yemeni links to arms supplies for Al-Shabaab. Last month Yemeni coast guards and the U.S. Navy seized a consignment of missiles and rockets which the Yemen government claims were sent by Iran. According to Reuters, the Monitoring Group, which tracks compliance with U.N. sanctions on Somalia and Eritrea, says most weapons deliveries into Somalia are coming into the area between Puntland and Somaliland and then being moved farther south. The supply chain in Yemen is largely run by Somalis. Arms arriving include components for improvised explosive devices as well as PKM machine guns. Iran has denied the allegations, calling them "absurd fabrications." The Somali government has called for the arms embargo to be lifted. The Monitoring Group, however, will apparently suggest that their latest findings offer support for a gradual

easing of the arms embargo rather lifting it completely. A number of members of the Security Council are also said to prefer this option.

### **AU and EU biannual joint task-force meeting**

Senior officials from the African Union and European Union have been meeting in Addis Ababa this week (14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> February) to review the partnership between the two organizations. It is the start of a process which will culminate in the fourth Africa-EU summit, due to be held in Brussels in April next year. This meeting is to take stock of the current relationship and, according to the EU ambassador to the AU, “to build momentum with the new AU commission.” The EU is currently in the process of finalizing its budget for a seven year period, from 2014-20, while the AU is also formulating its strategic plan for the same period. The three year AU-EU joint action plan (2011-2013) expires at the end of this year. The current AU-EU strategy which formalized and delineated the relationship was adopted in December 2007. It was intended to help the two bodies transcend the traditional donor-recipient imbalance, identifying specific areas for partnership, including peace and security, democratic governance and human rights, trade, regional integration and infrastructure, the Millennium Development Goals, energy, climate change and the environment, migration, mobility and employment, and science, information society and space. The EU is one of the AU’s principal donors notably in peace and security and has provided substantial support to the AU’s peace support missions in Somalia and the Central African Republic.

### **A women’s handball tournament in Mogadishu**

The final match of Somalia’s women’s handball championship took place on Friday (8<sup>th</sup> February) in Mogadishu at the recently rebuilt 1<sup>st</sup> July playground. The police club Heegan beat Horseed by 12 goals to 5 in a match watched by thousands of spectators. Senior sports officials watched the game, including General Duran Ahmed Farah, the Somali National Olympic committee secretary who welcomed the way the peaceful atmosphere was encouraging young Somalis, both boys and girls, to show up for sport. The men’s handball tournament is also under way and the final match is expected on Friday next week [22<sup>nd</sup>]. Also on Friday, Mogadishu held its first peace run in more than two decades to encourage calmness in the city. The 5-kilometre run was co-organized by the National Olympic Committee and the Mayor of Mogadishu, Mahmoud Ahmed Nur ‘Tarsan’. General Duran Ahmed Farah said the run was intended “to encourage the increasing peace and stability in the city and demonstrate to the outside world that Somalia has fully returned”. The Mayor said “today we have all participated in the long peace run and this shows the increasing stability in Mogadishu.”