

A Week in the Horn 16th November 2012

- **Somalia's new cabinet endorsed by Parliament.....**
- **...and Turkey promises to rebuild the Somali Parliament building**
- **Conference of Energy Ministers of Africa**
- **US-Africa Agri-business Investment Forum 2012**
- **Religious freedom unchanged despite the views of the UNCIRF**
- **Rehashing old and jaundiced views about the Nile**

News and Views (page 10):

- **Ethiopia elected to the UN Human Rights Council**
- **Conference of the African Nuclear Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty**
- **EU Parliamentarians meet Acting Foreign Minister Berhane**
- **UK Parliament Delegation in Ethiopia**

Somalia's new cabinet endorsed by Parliament.....

On Tuesday (13th November), the Parliament of the Federal Republic of Somalia with a full quorum of its 225 members approved the Prime Minister's choice of a cabinet of ten members and its government programme. Prime Minister Abdi Farah Shirdon announced his 'lean' downsized Cabinet two weeks ago. The Cabinet and the government programme were approved by an overwhelming majority of Parliament with 219 in favour, three against and three abstentions. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud addressed the Parliament at the opening of the session, telling members, among other things, that they should not punish the Prime Minister and the new Cabinet members, for the decisions taken by the Prime Minister during the consultation process, against much advice, to change and limit the size and composition of the new Cabinet. After the vote, the Prime Minister gave a cheerful statement to the session, praising the Parliament and its manner of handling the event. He also promised that the government would concentrate on efforts to strengthen security and rebuild the country. There had been speculation by a number of Somali political analysts that the Prime Minister might have difficulty defending his choice of ministers but with the support of the Parliament Presidium and a number of key MPs, there was little difficulty. The newly approved ministers have now been sworn into office by a High Court Judge in front of the Speaker and members of Parliament. The Speaker expressed his relief that there was now a proper and functioning administration in place in Somalia.

The endorsement of the Cabinet by Parliament was also welcomed by stakeholders and other interested parties. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, Ambassador Mahiga, described the vote as "another important milestone in the history of Somalia [and] the appointment of clean slate of just ten Ministers conclusively demonstrates the will of the Somali leadership to move away from the mind-set of the past and bring about positive change." He said he was particularly pleased with the historic appointments of two women to substantive high profile posts as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and as Minister of Development and Social Services. Ambassador Mahiga also commended Prime Minister Shirdon and President Hassan Sheikh for their extensive consultations with a wide cross-section of Somali society inside and outside of the country to produce an "inclusive Cabinet which bears all the positive hallmarks of a potential good government...The new Council of Ministers represents a broad spectrum of political shades and membership while taking clan balance, equality and

representation into account. It also reflects the cultural and social realities of today's Somalia." Dr Mahiga said the UN Political Office (UNPOS) would continue "to work with our Somali partners to improve the Government's capacity, enhance political reconciliation, strengthen the security and judiciary sectors and facilitate reconstruction, especially in the recently recovered areas, in accordance with the President's six pillar policy." Ambassador Mahiga said the Parliament's vote of confidence "signifies the dawn of a healthy relationship between the new Executive and Legislative Institutions in Somali politics. It symbolizes enlightened leadership, unity and determination of all Somalis to invest in a brighter future for the nation."

A statement from the office of Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy said the "The High Representative congratulates Prime Minister Abdi Farah Shirdon "Said" on the appointment of his new government, following the endorsement of the government and its work programme by the Federal Parliament. The limited number of ministries fits well with the necessary focus on implementing the key priorities spelled out in the work programme to provide security, livelihoods and services to the Somali people. The appointment of two women to prominent Cabinet positions shows appreciation of the vital role played by women in building the future of Somalia." The UK's Minister for Africa, Mark Simmonds, also welcomed the Somali parliament's approval saying it provided a clear signal of their support for the new council. He commended their action which would "allow the Council to get straight to work on delivering the change the people of Somalia deserve." He added that the British Government looked forward to working closely with the new Somali Council of Ministers and reaffirmed its commitment to working with the Somali Government in tackling the President's priorities of: strengthening security and justice, taking forward political reconciliation, stimulating the economy and strengthening public financial management.

In a speech on Wednesday (14th November) President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud spoke of corruption, federal state formation and security. He stressed the importance of battling corruption which has plagued previous governments, and referred to creating supervisory organizations that would operate independently of the Ministry of Finance to account for aid money. The President referred to the issue of Jubaland, urging local clans in Lower Juba to put aside their differences and work on ways to establish an all-inclusive local administration for the region. He said the government would support and facilitate any such efforts while emphasizing that the region is part of the larger federal republic of Somalia. At the same time, he stressed "I am not saying that Mogadishu will provide the officials that make up the Jubaland state; the process belongs to the community of those regions." A conference on the future of Jubaland, attended by local stakeholders, opened in Kismayo this week.

...and Turkey promises to rebuild the Somali Parliament building

On Wednesday this week [14th Nov], Turkey's Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, promised Somali MPs that "the Turkish Government is going to demolish the old building of the parliament and completely rebuild it, and work would start 'soon'. Mr Davutoglu was on a working visit to Mogadishu on Wednesday. He was received by Interior and National Security Minister Abdulkarim Husain, Social Services Minister Mariam Kasim and other officials at the airport, and after joining the session of Parliament where he congratulated Somalia on the establishment of a central government after more than two decades of civil war, met with President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud later in the day.

In mid-2011, in the wake of the reports of drought and famine in Somalia, Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, set off to Mogadishu accompanied by his wife and children, as well as several ministers, their wives, and businessmen. The purpose of the visit, the media

reported, was to draw world attention to the magnitude of the human tragedy in Somalia and also offer humanitarian aid and assistance to the legitimate government of Somalia and to help its war against terrorism. The visit coincided with a two-day long fundraising campaign aired on Turkish television that raised \$300 million for the Somali humanitarian assistance. Mr Erdogan's Justice and Development Party was instrumental in inspiring both its supporters and opponents to dig deeply into their pockets to help a country which, as Deputy Prime Minister Bekir Bozda said, was finally seeing a glimmer of hope after so many years of being caught between the extremism of Al-Shabaab and piracy.

Subsequently, Istanbul hosted two conferences in the space of less than four months to raise awareness and drum up support for Somalia. The Second Istanbul International Conference on Somalia took place on 31st May to 1st June and was attended by representatives of 54 nations, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, and 300 delegates representing all segments of Somali society.

Ankara and Mogadishu signed two agreements on the establishment of regional development offices and their activity in Somalia. In March this year, Ankara initiated regular Turkish Air flights to Somalia via Khartoum, four times a week. The agreement on Military Training Cooperation signed on 22nd May came into operation on 7th November. Under the agreement Turkey's Military Medical Academy and Mapping General Command will provide training for a military academy, military medical schools, NCO vocational colleges and branch schools, as well as training for police and coast guard personnel, and assist in providing training and courses for on-the-job training in units and at headquarters and institutions. The agreement outlines ways to boost cooperation on military logistics, peace support and humanitarian relief and counter-piracy. Other designated areas of cooperation include exchange of delegations and personnel, and observation and participation in joint military exercises, and offers mutual exchange of information between the parties on various topics including military history and publications.

Turkey has also agreed to sell a coastguard vessel to Somalia to use against pirates. According to reports, however, Somalia felt it could not afford the cost, of over US\$10 million. Turkey's procurement office, the under-secretariat for Turkey's Defence Industries, however, came up with an ingenious payment system. The cost of the vessel is to be covered by the sale of fish. Under the agreement, Somalis will be able to catch fish to raise the money needed for the coast-guard ship. "We have reached a full agreement for Somali fish for our coast guard ship. This is a win-win situation for everybody involved," a Turkish procurement official told reporters.

Conference of Energy Ministers of Africa

The African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, and the Economic Commission for Africa have been co-organizing this week (12th to 16th November) here in Addis Ababa the second regular session of the AU **Conference of Energy Ministers of Africa** (CEMA) jointly with the second All-Africa Energy Week which includes the African Investment Forum and the Energy Exhibition. The theme of the CEMA meeting is: "Renewable Energy for Sustainable Development; Renewable from Potential to Infrastructure and Services", and the Investment Forum has the overall objectives of achieving more efficient, coherent and coordinated action for increasing energy access and ensuring energy security for development in Africa. It is also aiming to accelerate progress through dialogue and partnerships toward scaling up investments in the African energy sector, as well as informing decision-makers and influencing sector policies for scaling up energy infrastructure and services for increased productivity on the continent.

The African Union Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, Dr Elham Ibrahim, told the meeting that Africa was endowed with **vast, untapped, renewable energy resources that**

could provide electricity for all at affordable cost. Africa, he said, could benefit from the recent progress and cost reductions in renewable power generation technologies to leapfrog the development path taken by other regions and move quickly to a renewable-based system. He noted some of the existing challenges to the energy sector including inadequate access to modern energy services, an obstacle to poverty reduction efforts, inadequate generation capacity and badly maintained facilities, the high cost of power generation because of the small scale of most national power systems and the reliance on expensive oil-based generation. In addition to these, he added, there was poor management, poor performance of utilities and low quality of services, weak project preparation capacity, implementation and monitoring coordination, and growing concern about the impact of energy production and consumption on the environment and climate change as well as lack of sufficient finance mobilization. The Commissioner also indicated that the magnitude of investment required to meet the growing energy demand was huge. He advised African governments to seek public-private partnerships in order to scale up investments in generation capacity, network expansion, improvement in reliability and increases in electricity access.

Abdalla Hamdok, Deputy Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa warned that as Africa continues to register remarkable economic growth with an overall average of 5% GDP rate per annum, and six out of the ten fastest growing economies in the world today, the increasing demand for energy needed urgent and alternative solutions. Africa's efforts were still geared towards investing in fossil and hydro-based electric generation and as a result, Mr Hamdok suggested "other alternative sources of energy such as wind, solar and bio-mass resources have been overlooked".

Making the case for investment in renewable energy sources, Mr Hamdok noted these were well suited to rural areas, particularly where national grids were less accessible: "In such areas, abundantly available energy sources such as off-grid and stand-alone solar and wind power could meet the needs of localized areas." Mr Hamdok stressed renewable energy was a domestic resource and as such, provided alternatives to uncertain and increasingly expensive imports of fossil fuels which he said, "often put African economies at the mercy of foreign and volatile supply chains." He said renewable energies could open new export opportunities by generating revenues in much needed hard currency through carbon crediting on the international carbon market. In order to address the estimated funding gap of US\$26 billion a year in Africa needed for building an energy infrastructure, Mr Hamdok advised increased domestic public investment as "no external sources can ever address all the continent's power needs." He therefore recommended improving utilities' corporate standing and creditworthiness as this would provide companies with the advantage of accessing resources directly from capital markets. To reduce the cost of energy production and address growing demands, the Deputy Executive Secretary called for enhanced regional power trading. To achieve this, he suggested a continental power-transmission network, harmonization of standards and regulatory systems, and tariff designs based on market mechanisms. He also noted that in addition to investing in new generating plants and transmission capacities, the continent also needed to focus on improving the operating efficiency of existing power utilities.

Ethiopia's Minister of Water and Energy, Alemayehu Tegen, in an interview on the side-lines of the Conference, noted that Ethiopia now had plans to invest more than US\$12 billion to harness its water resources to generate more than 40,000 MW of hydropower by 2035 and make the country Africa's leading power exporter. The Minister said the centrepiece of the plan, the US\$4.1 billion Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) along the Nile River was on course to be completed on time in 2015. Two other smaller dams should also have come on line by that point, he said, generating a total of more than 8,000 megawatts of power at full capacity.

"Everything is going according to plan", said the Minister who added that 13 per cent of the total construction of GERD had been completed so far, and Ethiopia had raised more than 5 billion birr (US\$277.1 million) for its construction to date, most from sales of government bonds. The Minister also indicated that the (power) utility could also finance some part of the Dam. "The option we have designed is financing by the people of Ethiopia, the utility and the government," he explained. The Gilgel Gibe III dam on the Omo River, set to generate 1,870 MW from the end of 2013 is now more than two thirds complete. **Ethiopia has already started exporting electricity to its neighbours, to Djibouti, to the Republic of the Sudan and to the Kenyan border town of Moyale.** The link will gradually expand to other places in eastern Kenya. **Plans for exports to Somaliland are in hand,** and a memorandum of understanding to construct a transmission interconnection to export power to the **Republic of South Sudan** has also been signed. According to the Minister **a 3,000 km 500 kV project line linking Ethiopia with Sudan and Egypt is in the pipeline.**

The first Session of the AU Conference of Energy Ministers of Africa held in Maputo, Mozambique, two years ago, decided to organize the All Africa Energy Week every two years, with the objective of bringing together all stakeholders to evaluate progress made in energy infrastructural development and regional energy services, to build a consensus on emerging issues, and to enhance high-level coordination of all activities in the energy sector across the continent.

US-Africa Agri-business Investment Forum 2012

This week, a highly successful two-day US-Africa Agri-business Investment Forum was held in Addis Ababa. The forum was organized by the Corporate Council on Africa, an independent body that works to facilitate commercial relations between the United States and the African continent. Attended by a number of industry members drawn from the USA, Canada, Nigeria, Uganda, South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Swaziland, Zimbabwe and Burkina Faso as well as Ethiopia, the conference brought together U.S. and African businesses, investors and financiers, policy makers, representatives of the public sector, capital market experts and service providers. They were able to discuss various cross-cutting issues, including finance, risk mitigation, value-chain development, and industry best practices and trends. The forum also intended to introduce the U.S.-Africa Business Centre and its role in facilitating U.S.-African trade as well as to highlight other initiatives designed to boost agricultural growth, trade and investment. The opening session was attended by the Minister of Agriculture, Ato Tefera Derbew; by the US Ambassador to the African Union, Ambassador Michael Battle; the US Ambassador to Ethiopia, Donald Booth; the AU Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, and other dignitaries.

In an opening speech, Ambassador Battle told the Forum that despite the vast opportunities and potential for agriculture in Africa, the continent was still spending 15 billion dollars to import food. The US, he said, is ready to partner Africa in using this potential to reverse the situation and make Africa a food exporter through optimal utilization of its resources. He cited NEPAD's plans to bring about 6% annual agricultural development by 2015 as one major venture to realize increases in agriculture productivity. He lauded the steady growth of agriculture's contributions to GDP as emblematic of the focus accorded to the sector. He noted that the US was participating through the Grow Africa platform particularly in agricultural insurance, risk management and in expansion of best practices. In addition, following the development of the G-8's New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, 45 US companies would be investing US\$3 billion in a bid to meet the goals of the alliance which envisages lifting 50 million Africans out of

poverty in 10 years' time. Ambassador Battle pointed out the New Alliance would be aligned with the AU's "comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme."

Minister Tefera, in his opening speech, highlighted the point that "the agricultural sector in Africa is in the process of making a fundamental transformation from subsistence farming to market oriented production". He spoke of the agricultural transformation taking place in Ethiopia, evident in the double digit economic growth over the last nine years. Noting the dual tracked approach to agricultural development he said that the Government had identified increasing productivity for small-holder farms and expanding large-scale commercial farms as two priority areas. This, he said, also meant immense opportunities overall in Ethiopia for agricultural investment including the areas of "agricultural and agri-business investment in food and cash crop production and processing, agro-industrial value-chains, large-scale commercial farms and processing facilities, the supply of agricultural machinery, irrigation equipment, fertilizer and improved seeds as well as biodiesel crop production and processing." He pointed to the establishment of the Agricultural Investment Support Directorate within the Ministry of Agricultural and the Agricultural Transformation Agency as evidence of the commitment of the government to increased investment in the sector.

Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, AU Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, underlined the need for a multidimensional and multi-partner effort to revolutionize African agriculture, which she categorized as still plagued by problems of market access, lack of appropriate technology, and low opportunities for credit access, among other things. To unleash the development potential of agriculture African Heads of State had launched the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CADAP) in Maputo in 2003, she said. Reflecting on the implementation of the programme she noted that many African countries were sticking to the commitment of allotting 10% of their annual budget to agriculture; Ethiopia was exemplary in exceeding this percentage. Commissioner Tumusiime also highlighted the point that "efficient agri-business has a linchpin role in creating backward and forward linkages, having a multiplier effect for expediting development, with added benefit of complementing the value chain."

The opening session was followed by a plenary under the theme: "The Role of Business in Inclusive Agricultural Development", and Tewolde Gebremariam, CEO of Ethiopian Airlines, spoke on the national carrier's efforts to cater to the increasing demands for air transport of agricultural products. He pointed out that Ethiopian would be building "a cargo terminal with a capacity of 1.25 million tonnes and state-of-the-art cold store facilities for perishable goods." He further noted that the airline would be increasing its number of carriers to 120 by 2025. He underlined the importance of logistics as a significant element of the value chain to boost intra-African trade which is now no more than a dismal 10%. He emphasized the importance of the private-public partnership and of policy coordination to support the role of businesses in attaining inclusive agricultural development. Adama Colibally, Chief of the Agricultural Section at the UN Economic Commission for Africa, stressed the importance of rethinking the relationship between producers, entrepreneurs and policy makers. He stressed the importance of engaging with small-scale farmers to ensure inclusiveness of agricultural development. He identified the lack of intensive investment in irrigation, the absence of adequate market infrastructure, difficult access to land and lack of tenure security and the absence of linkages between the rural and urban areas as problems hindering agricultural development. Mark Carrato, of USAID, noted the ineffectiveness of the donor support approach and praised the growing focus on public-private partnership as a significant step forward.

During the two days of discussion and networking, there were panels and workshops covering numerous subjects including: Leveraging, Public and Private Resources in African Agriculture,

Sustainable Models for Tomorrow's Farmers, Market Development, Opportunities at the End of the Value Chain, Financing Inclusive Agricultural Growth, Technological Solutions Supporting Agricultural Growth, Agricultural Growth Reducing Agricultural Risk in a Rapidly Evolving Market, Aligning African Agricultural Initiatives and Private Sector Goals and The Role of Regional Economic Communities in Facilitating Trade and Investment.

Religious freedom unchanged despite the views of the USCIRF

Islam and Christianity have co-existed in Ethiopia since their appearance. The integration of Islam into the national identity has been a steady process that has operated through much of the history of the country. The freedom of religious communities, whether Islamic or Christian, to practice, express or manifest their beliefs has been the respected and cherished right of individuals for millennia. Ethiopia provided a safe-haven to early Muslim converts fleeing persecution from Arabia. This grant of asylum indicated fundamental respect for religious freedoms even fourteen centuries ago. The history of this nation has been characterized by the growing contributions of Islam to the betterment of Ethiopian society. The Islamic community is integral, as are all religious communities in the country, to the continuing strength and development of a better Ethiopia. There is in fact no reason to associate Ethiopia with the challenges afflicting many societies around the world today; the current dynamics of religious relationships are clearly located within traditional integration narratives.

In these circumstances, it was profoundly disappointing, even bewildering, to see the press statement of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) on the alleged "deterioration of religious freedoms for Muslims in Ethiopia" last week. The commission's principal accusations against the Ethiopian government were centred on claims of Government interference in the religious affairs of the Muslim community and on the imprisonment and charging of protestors and leaders opposed to this interference. The USCIRF's request to the US government to "raise with the new leadership in Addis Ababa the importance of abiding by Ethiopia's own constitution and international standards on freedom of religion" merely adds insult to injury.

The Commission claims to operate as a would-be defender of Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which provides that "everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest this religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance". Despite the allegation of the USCIRF, the Ethiopian government has always stood for these same principles. It has consistently been the position of the government, both in theory and in practice, that religion is constitutionally excluded from the dominion of the state. Article 11 (sub-article 3) of the Ethiopian Constitution stipulates that "the state shall not interfere in religious matters and religion shall not interfere in state affairs". Supplementary to this, Article 27 (sub-article 5) states that "freedom to express or manifest one's religion or belief may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, peace, health, education, public morality or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others, and to ensure the independence of the state from religion". At the international level this is consistent with Article 18 (3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The Constitution also asserts and protects the judicial independence and impartiality of the courts: "courts of any level shall be free from any interference or influence of any governmental body, government official or from any other source" (Article 79-2). Moreover, the judiciary operates on the basis of Article 20 (sub-article 3) of the constitution which enshrines the right of

accused persons “to be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to law...” The USCIRF not only ignores the evidence of the Constitution, it makes accusations based on minimal or non-existent evidence and in effect tries to undermine the same constitution it is urging the government to abide by. It claims, for example, that “The individuals detained were charged under the nation’s anti-terror law which has been used to target dissent, rather than stop terrorism”. These cases have yet to come to judgment and we can make no further comment except to emphasize the well-known dangers of commenting on the details of a case prior to judgment. The undue pressure and prejudice that the UNCIRF is trying to exert on the judicial process with the publication of its allegations cannot, in any way, empower or promote the rule of law. We should not need to remind it of the importance of the judiciary in implementing and upholding the constitution and its principles, one of which is freedom of religion. Ethiopia has made tremendous progress in continuing democratization over the last two decades. It is to be regretted that the Commission appears to undermine that process.

The Commission describes itself on its website as “an independent, bipartisan federal [US] government entity”. The ‘US strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa’, published in July 2012, explicitly states that one of four pillars which directs its policies towards the region is to ‘promote accountable, transparent and responsive governance’. It says it “will expand efforts to support and empower key reformers and institutions of government at all levels to promote the rule of law...” The views of the Commission, as noted, are hardly aimed at supporting or empowering the Ethiopian judiciary. The Commission’s press release does not contribute to nor exemplify US efforts to help democratization and the rule of law in Ethiopia. By allowing the judicial process to take its course, the USCIRF would be better placed to implement its mandate. In the meantime, the Ethiopian government will reaffirm its unwavering commitment to the Constitution and to the complete protection of religious freedom afforded to its people, Muslims, Christians or those of any other religious persuasion.

Rehashing old and jaundiced views about the Nile

The Los Angeles Times, a respected newspaper, carried a story entitled ‘The Nile, Egypt’s lifeline in the desert, comes under threat’ on 10th November under the by-line of Jeffrey Fleishman. The title of the article underlines its theme – an old, well-beaten (and totally inaccurate), claim of an Egypt threatened by sinister upper riparian countries with no legitimate right to use the Nile waters. It is ridiculous that a writer of such a paper as *the Los Angeles Times* can still fall for this nonsensical age-old myth that Abyssinia might one day divert the Nile waters and dry up Egypt. Its sheer falsity has been proven over millennia despite all the fears that used to haunt Egyptian elites. Ethiopia contributes 85% of the Nile Water but all it has ever required is just and equitable use of the water. This has not changed throughout its long history whatever government has been in power. The plan to build the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam makes no exception in this regard. It will not threaten Egypt’s use of the River.

Jeffrey Fleishman, however, comes up with convoluted arguments and inflammatory rhetoric to portray Egypt as a powerless nation whose survival is under real threat. Much of his argument is in fact simply wrong. He claims, for example: “African countries at the river’s source, notably Ethiopia, no longer feel bound by colonial-era agreements on water rights and are moving to siphon away larger shares of water for electricity, irrigation and business to meet demands of burgeoning populations”. In fact, of course, Ethiopia never signed any binding treaty with Egypt and Sudan on sharing the Nile water. Ethiopia has consistently opposed the colonial-era division of the water between Sudan and Egypt which totally disregarded the interests of the upper riparian countries. Indeed, at the time of the 1959 agreement, Ethiopia sent a critical aide memoire on the subject to all diplomatic missions in Cairo. Ethiopia and other riparian countries

did not previously implement any projects on the Nile. This was not because they accepted the 1929 and 1959 agreements. They were unable to use the water because of economic problems, political instability and, most importantly, because of the refusal of the world's biggest financial institutions to provide assistance. In addition, there was the continued intransigent demand by the lower riparian states that the status quo must continue to be maintained. Any suggestion that upper riparian countries accepted colonial era treaties, tacitly or otherwise, is completely wrong. Now, of course, things have changed. Indeed, although Mr Fleishman appears not to have noticed, the world has changed. These old treaties have lost their relevance under current norms of international law.

Mr Fleishman argues that "The biggest challenge to Cairo is the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. Experts estimate that the hydropower project, which is under construction and is expected to cost at least \$4.8 billion, could reduce the river's flow to Egypt by as much as 25% during the three years it would take to fill the reservoir behind the dam." This ignores the fact that Ethiopia as a riparian state has a right to use the water in accordance with the principle of "equitable and reasonable utilization" of the water, the basis of the Comprehensive Framework Agreement, which enjoys wide support under international water laws. Mr Fleishman also fails to provide any source for the claim of a 25% loss of water, a claim for which there is no evidence, and which also ignores the fact that both Sudanese and Egyptian scholars and hydrologists have noted that the construction of the dam will have such benefits as significantly reducing the loss caused by evaporation from Lake Nasser, cutting the siltation in dams lower down the river, and the maintenance of a regular flow of water to downstream countries.

Mr Fleishman entirely ignores any facts that provide alternative views to his alarmist beating of the drums of war. A more sober, and accurate, analysis would note the cooperation that has become visible between Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan, in their participation on the International Panel of Experts to study if the Dam might offer any harm to downstream countries. Another positive development is the recent resumption of Egypt and Sudan's participation in the Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office. There have been a number of other more understanding statements from Egyptian scholars and politicians in recent months.

Equally surprising, perhaps, is the way Mr Fleishman presents the death of the late Prime Minister Meles as a major setback to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project. One of the more obvious and visible points, clearly visible on all Ethiopian media outlets and in all government and private announcements and writings was the very clear resolve to ensure the success and completion of the Renaissance Dam. The death of Prime Minister Meles, who initiated the idea of the Dam, was a real loss, but the effect has only been to harden the resolution of the people to bring the project to a successful end. The evidence is clear in the continuing purchase of bonds and of repeated donations to fund the project.

Mr Fleishman appears to have been trying to make an "appeal to sympathy" for a thirsting Egypt threatened by Ethiopia, fanning rhetoric of conflict or war. It is an approach that can have the effect of exacerbating suspicion and mistrust, but these are dead ideas. This sort of vituperation, aimed at rekindling a haunting spectre of dead ideas, should have no place today. It is outdated and false. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is a spectacular project which will profit Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan, and will benefit the development of all three countries, directly and indirectly. It is a project that will provide for the mutual benefit and prosperity of all three states.

News and Views

Ethiopia elected to the UN Human Rights Council

On Monday, (12th November) Ethiopia was elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council, together with four other African countries, Kenya, Gabon, Côte d'Ivoire, and Sierra Leone. They were chosen along with a total of seventeen other states to serve as members of the Council for a three-year term, beginning on 1st January 2013. Ethiopia has always been committed to the advancement of human rights within the country, establishing, for example, its own national Human Rights Commission and setting up the Office of Ombudsman. It has also made important contributions to the establishment and strengthening of the Human Rights Council over many years. The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system made up of 47 States. It has the responsibility for promotion and protection of all human rights around the globe. It was created by the United Nations General Assembly on 15th March 2006.

Conference of the African Nuclear Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty

The Second Conference of the African Nuclear Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty, the Treaty of Pelindaba, was held this week at African Union Headquarters here in Addis Ababa (12th to 13th November). The Conference discussed the establishment of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) and other related issues. The Pelindaba Treaty entered into force on 15th July 2009, and has been ratified by 34 states. It prohibits the search, development, manufacture, stockpiling, acquisition, testing, possession or stationing of any nuclear explosive devices in the territories of the signatories as well as the dumping of any radioactive waste. The Conference was opened by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, and the Chairperson of AFCONE, Ambassador Abdul Samad Minty. Speakers stressed the important contribution of the African Nuclear-Weapons-Free-Zone to global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. They also highlighted the opportunities related to the peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology, as well as the challenges to be overcome in this respect. The Conference discussed progress made in the implementation of the Treaty of Pelindaba, and other issues pertaining to the operationalization of the AFCONE, including its rules of procedure, structure, budget and scale of assessment.

EU Parliamentarians meet Acting Foreign Minister Berhane

This week, Ambassador Berhane, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, met a European Union Parliamentary Delegation from four new EU member states, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. Ambassador Berhane told the delegation that Africa was changing fast, and it felt that this century would be an African Century. He, therefore, urged the MPs to encourage their countries, as well as the EU as a whole, to continue to be strong partners for Africa. He noted Ethiopia's proximity to Europe made the continent an important trading partner and the relationship Ethiopia had with their countries was excellent. Ethiopia was aware there was great potential for closer relationships and sought to strengthen its cooperation in various priority development sectors. Ambassador Berhane also briefed the delegation about Ethiopia's contributions to building lasting peace in the region of the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia, he said, had an excellent relationship with all its neighbours, except Eritrea with which Ethiopia was always ready to resolve its differences through dialogue. Ethiopia did not want to see any conflict in the region or any obstacles to its development efforts. The visiting MPs said that, as new entrants to the European Union, they were looking to engage more with Africa. They saw Ethiopia, the seat of the African Union, as the best place to start; they also emphasized their interest on

cooperating in various development sectors through both governmental and private sector activity.

UK Parliamentary Delegation in Ethiopia

This week a nine-member UK parliamentary delegation, including representatives of the business community, has been in Ethiopia for a four-day working visit. During discussions with Prime Minister Hailemariam on Monday (12th November) both sides emphasized the value of strengthening existing development cooperation between the two countries in a variety of sectors. The Prime Minister also stressed that Ethiopia and the UK should continue to work closely on issues related to peace and security. MP Laurence Robertson, Chairman of the All-Party Ethio-UK Parliamentary Friendship Committee, praised the government's successful implementation of UK development cooperation projects and said discussions on furthering these partnerships were on-going. Ethiopia and the UK share a long-standing relationship, one that has seen the two countries cooperate significantly on projects designed to help realize Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan.