

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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News in Brief



Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros Adhanom and an Ethiopian Delegation attended the African Union Special Summit on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, under the theme “Ownership, Accountability and Sustainability of HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Response in Africa: Past, Present and the Future”, in Abuja, Nigeria. (See article)

The African Union Special Summit adopted the Abuja Action Plan Toward the Elimination of HIV/AIDS Tuberculosis, and Malaria in Africa by 2030. (See article)

In discussions with a delegation of European Union Parliamentarians this week, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos emphasized once again that Ethiopia’s Charity and Society Organizations (CSO) and Anti-Terrorism Proclamations are in no way aimed at restricting or curbing the human rights of Ethiopia’s citizens.

Ethiopian Airlines’ CEO Ato Tewelde Gebremariam was awarded the 2013 Airline Strategy Awards for Regional Leadership on Sunday July 14, given for a management team demonstrating excellence in leading a carrier which has successfully utilized regional markets, produced good growth and controlled costs.

The UN World Food Program has launched a pilot project at the Sheddar refugee camp outside Jijiga in Ethiopia’s Somali Regional State, to provide monthly cash entitlements in addition to food rations.



The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET) has warned of the danger of food insecurity among poor households in Djibouti City. FEWSNET also says pastoral households in rural areas are among those most affected by food insecurity.

The World Food Program (WFP) in Djibouti received the first part of a US\$4 million (719-million franc) contribution from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to aid rural populations experiencing food insecurity caused by drought.



A military spokesman in Somalia says that AMSIOM and Somali Government forces will be replacing the Ethiopian troops who vacated Baidoa on Sunday and Monday.

On Sunday (July 14), Puntland suspended the local council elections scheduled for the next day. The President of Puntland State, Abdirahman Mohamed Mohamud “Farole”, said the decision had been taken because “destructive forces of instability and terrorism” were using the Local Council Elections as a tool to try to destroy Puntland State’s unity and stability.

UN aircraft can now resume flights to Somaliland. This was announced by the Somaliland Minister of Civil Aviation and Air Transport, Mahmud Abdi Hashi, who said that as of July 15 all UN flights are again able to land and take off in Somaliland airports.

A three-day meeting, attended by the Somali National Security Agencies, AMISOM, officials, representatives of troop and police contributing countries as well as from Ethiopia, South Sudan, IGAD, the African Union, the African Center for the Research and Study on Terrorism, and the Center for Intelligence and Security Services in Africa, took place in Mombasa this week. The objective of the meeting was to set in motion and sustain a process of regular exchange of information and intelligence between AMISOM, Somali security agencies and all relevant regional and continental structures.



News in Brief



The Sudanese Government has accused the rebel Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi (SLA-MM) of a "brutal" assault last Saturday (July 12) against troops belonging to the joint United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID).

Sudan's ruling National Congress Party has called upon the government of South Sudan to implement the cooperation agreement between the two countries before the stoppage of the flow of southern oil through Sudan's territory.

This week the World Bank announced that a meeting of the technical team on Sudan's debt would take place in October in Washington with the participation of delegates from Khartoum and Juba. The purpose of the meeting would be to review progress regarding Sudan's external debts estimated to be reaching US\$45.6 billion this year.



South Sudan's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nhial Deng Nhial, told reporters this week that the Government of South Sudan had received notification from the Sudanese government that it will stop the oil flow through its pipelines next month, and the pumping stations would be shut off by August 7.

A top United Nations official voiced alarm over deteriorating humanitarian conditions in South Sudan, where an estimated 100,000 civilians have been cut off in fighting between two ethnic groups in Jonglei state. U.N. humanitarian chief Valerie Amos said the recent resurgence of intercommunal fighting is threatening the lives of "ordinary people" and reducing the ability of humanitarian organizations to provide urgent help.



The Kenyan cabinet has approved the repatriation of more than 600,000 refugees beginning in January 2014. Refugees of Somali origin will be top priority in the repatriation initiative.

The Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) called off its four-week teachers' strike on Wednesday (July 17), accepting a \$193 million settlement offer from the government. KNUT decided to accept the offer, which they had previously rejected, after Deputy President William Ruto reiterated that the government would not offer any more money.

Four months after Kenya's presidential vote, the country's election commission released vote totals for all electoral races.

Fighting between north-eastern Kenya's feuding Degodia and Gare clans has ceased as their leaders agreed to a truce during Ramadan and vowed to continue working towards peace even after the Muslim holy month.



The African Union Special Summit on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

The African Union Special Summit on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria was held on Monday and Tuesday this week (July 15 and 16) in Nigeria's capital, Abuja, under the theme of "Ownership, Accountability and Sustainability of HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Response in Africa: Past, Present and the Future". The Summit was preceded by a special session of the African Union Executive Council at the weekend. In his address to the session, the Chairperson of the Council, Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros Adhanom, told participants that encouraging achievements had been registered over the past decade in the fight against HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria in Africa, and this had been made possible through the joint efforts of governments, development partners and communities. In Ethiopia, he said, progress had been achieved through "strong country ownership and leadership, active community involvement, and improved health system and unprecedented global support in creating access to and delivery of life saving services." There were, however, still enormous socio-economic challenges posed by HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and there was "a real need to further enhance efforts towards reversing the impact of these diseases by ensuring universal access to health services and strengthened health systems especially for the poor and most marginalized population". He presented Ethiopia's proposal for the establishment of an "African Center for Diseases Control and Prevention" (African-CDC) or a Health Commission for Africa under the umbrella of the African Union. This he said would go a long way to generate much needed information and research in Africa.

Speakers at the Summit on Monday included Prime Minister Hailemariam of Ethiopia, Chairperson of the African Union, President Goodluck Elebe Jonathan, of Nigeria, President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya and Dr. Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and. They and all other speakers underlined their commitment and readiness to work to make Africa free of diseases.

Opening the Summit, Prime Minister Hailemariam stressed that the main objective of the meeting was clearly reflected in the theme of the response to HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in Africa which, he said, allowed the Summit to review achievements and challenges in reversing the impact of these three diseases. He added that the Special Summit also offered the opportunity to assess the state of maternal, neonatal and child birth in the continent and allow participants to "reinvigorate our commitments to achieve the health related Millennium Development Goals."

Prime Minister Hailemariam said Africa's collective aspirations to bring about socio-economic transformation could not be achieved without healthy and productive human resources. Africa was richly endowed with natural resources but its human capital was the key to unleashing its potential for socio-economic growth and development, adding that "without ensuring the health and overall wellbeing of our peoples, we cannot guarantee the sustainability of the robust economic growth that we have been able to achieve over the last decade". So, expanding universal access to health services was critical. These three diseases had been major causes of morbidity and mortality, taking a heavy toll on productive populations and hampering development.



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Mentioning the recent report jointly prepared by the African Union, UNECA, UNDP and AfDB, he said several African countries had made impressive progress towards achieving health related and other MDG targets. He noted some 22 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa had reduced new HIV infections by more than 25% and made considerable reductions in AIDS mortality. Indeed some states, including Ethiopia, had reduced the incidence of HIV infection by more than 50%. Moreover, he added, 9 countries in Africa are also well on track towards achieving a 75% reduction in malaria case incidence by 2015. The achievements had, he said, been made possible through strong country ownership and leadership, active community involvement and unprecedented global support in delivering lifesaving medicines.

However, there was no doubt that challenges still remained in terms of achieving the objectives outlined in the Abuja call for Action as well as the targets set in the health related MDGs. Many African countries are off track in reducing the burden of maternal and child deaths. This underlined the need to reinvigorate efforts at all levels to address the underlying causes of maternal and child death. There was still a long way to go in terms of expanding access to malaria and TB diagnosis and treatment. The Prime Minister said it was important to draw the right lessons from both achievements and challenges and scale up strategic interventions to further strengthen health systems and ensure universal access to health services with a view to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. He underscored the need to adopt the right policies, programs and strategies and to demonstrate the necessary political will, strong leadership and sustained commitment at all levels. Building health systems from the bottom up by ensuring active community participation was critical in order to ensure universal access to health services and reach out to poor and marginalized groups in society. He mentioned precisely that this was what Ethiopia had been trying to do through its flagship health extension program which involved the deployment of 38,000 health extension workers, almost all of them women, across the whole country. As a result, he said, Ethiopia has managed to achieve tremendous progress over the last decade. The rate of new HIV infection had been significantly reduced; the number of women dying in childbirth had decreased; and the numbers of children immunized sharply increased.

The Prime Minister also drew attention to the role of international development partners in channeling financial resources, describing it as one of the key factors to the successes achieved in the last decade. At the same time he called upon Africa's development partners to increase quality, flexible and predictable financing to assist the continent and its people in making progress towards achieving the MDGs. He underlined the huge resources needed to improve the well-being of Africa's populations, and added that he believed that the continent would benefit from the creation of a vast reservoir of knowledge to better understand the challenges and respond accordingly. This was why, he explained, Ethiopia proposed the establishment of an "African Center for Diseases Control and Prevention (African -CDC). He said he was happy to note that the proposal had been considered by the Executive Council and an agreement had been reached to work on the modalities. This would, he said, reduce over-dependence on foreign CDCs. The establishment of such a Center would go a long way in helping Africa to generate much needed information and research into its unique health problems.

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The Special Summit ended on Tuesday (July 16) with a Declaration adopting the Abuja Action Plan Toward the Elimination of HIV/AIDS Tuberculosis, and Malaria in Africa by 2030. The Declaration thanked all development partners for their support to the "Abuja Commitment" and called upon all to accelerate support for its implementation.



It commended the leadership role of AIDS Watch Africa (AWA) and the African Leadership Malaria Alliance (ALMA) and the work of the Regional Economic Communities, and called upon all partners, including the private sector to support implementation of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa (PMPA). The Declaration urged all to step up mobilization of domestic resources to strengthen health systems and ensure strategies are put in place for diversified, balanced and sustainable financing. It highlighted the need to implement effective and targeted poverty elimination strategies and social protection programs that integrate the anti-HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria policies for all, particularly vulnerable populations, and review relevant laws to strengthen protection for such groups.

The Declaration detailed numerous other areas to strengthen health planning and commitments and help create enabling environments. It called for wider South-South cooperation and more collaboration with BRICS partners to scale up investment in medicine manufacturing, and for action in support of achieving the US\$15 billion target to fully fund the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. It agreed to grant priority to the area of health in the post 2015 development agenda and the AU Agenda 2063 in general, and to focus on the elimination of HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria in Africa and the achievement of agreed upon targets, and to accelerate the implementation of the AU Roadmap on shared responsibility and Global solidarity for ATM response in Africa. It also agreed to align itself with the Report of the Global Thematic Consultations on health on the Post-2015 Development Agenda as well as the Resolution adopted by the Africa Group at the 66th World Health Assembly in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. It also supported the holding of a Southern African Development Community Conference on Tuberculosis in Mines in January 2014. The Declaration concluded by requesting the African Commission, together with the RECs to work with member states to urgently formulate regional and national strategies to address the challenge of human resources for health, and requested the cooperation of UN and Development Partners. It also asked the Commission to work out the modalities of establishing an African Center for Disease Control.



Ethiopia's strong desire to see peaceful and prosperous Egypt

Egypt's new interim government, headed by Prime Minister Hazem El-Beblawi, swore in the new cabinet on Tuesday (16 July). The formation of the new government follows the removal of President Mohamed Moursi on July 3. President Adli Mansour has been appointed by the military to head the interim government as President and Mohamed El Baradei officially becomes Vice-President. The Army Chief of Staff, General Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi, has been sworn in as First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister, and Nabil Fahmy, Egypt's Ambassador to the United States between 1999 and 2008, has been given the foreign affairs portfolio.

With the removal of President Moursi and even after the formation of the interim government, Egypt has suffered from extensive violence and confrontations between supporters of the former president and anti-Moursi protestors. The violence claimed the lives of many Egyptians and has caused extensive property damage. The international community has called for calm and restraint while urging the military to hasten the formation of an all inclusive government to allow for the democratization process to continue.

Ethiopia has also urged "in the strongest possible terms that all sides should exercise restraint and avoid any provocation or escalation of violence." A spokesperson for Ethiopia's Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, said over the weekend that the Prime Minister regretted the confrontation and violence that had been taking place in Egypt. State Minister, Getachew Reda said the Prime Minister deeply regretted any loss of life that had occurred and sent his condolences, and those of the people of Ethiopia, to the families of all those who had died or been injured. The Prime Minister called on the authorities in Egypt to promote dialogue and inclusiveness and to work for reconciliation. All Egyptian leaders should do everything possible to prevent further conflict.

The Prime Minister said there was a real need to set in motion an inclusive process to embrace all shades of opinion and promote peace, stability and development. He called upon all Egyptians to act responsibly and peacefully, to cooperate in an inclusive process involving all political groups in a spirit of responsiveness, cooperation and partnership. He hoped all Egyptians would now work together to restore stability and move forward to a restored stability, peace and development. The Prime Minister said destabilization in Egypt would influence the entire region, and also adversely affect the stability of Africa. Prime Minister Hailemariam said it was in the interests of Ethiopia, as well as of all Egypt's neighbors, that there should be peace and stability in Egypt. He said Ethiopia was following events very closely, and it supported any efforts to stop violence and confrontation, and all attempts to stabilize the situation in Egypt which is a friendly and neighboring state. The Prime Minister urged all sides to avoid any recourse to violence.

The future of Egypt, said the Prime Minister, could and should only be determined by the Egyptian people. Despite the current difficulties, he said he had every confidence that the great Egyptian people and the authorities would now be able to transform the current situation into a political process that would provide for renewed peace and stability for the benefit of the people of Egypt, of the region and of Africa. Ethiopia believes, as it has demonstrated on numerous occasions, he said, that dialogue and discussion provide the necessary way forward to resolve disputes whether external or internal.



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Ethiopia is also a near neighbor and deeply involved in the development of a mutually beneficial relationship with all the states in the Nile Basin including Egypt. It believes that all the riparian states will continue to work together to provide peaceful solutions to all current problems. Prime Minister Hailemariam said that Ethiopia would always remain a friend of Egypt and the Egyptian people. It was committed to continuing peaceful and mutually beneficial relations with the Egyptian people, and fully supported their aspirations for democracy, development and dignity.

This confirmation from Prime Minister Hailemariam regarding Ethiopia's aim to strengthen its mutually beneficial relationships with all the states in the Nile Basin including Egypt has been echoed in bilateral discussions. The point that bilateral relationships between Ethiopia and Egypt are exemplary in many aspects was confirmed by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Mohamed Kamel Amr and Ethiopia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Tedros when they met in Addis Ababa on Tuesday June 18. At the end of their meeting, the two ministers reiterated their commitment to strengthen bilateral relations and both underlined their desire to deepen dialogue on a range of challenges that face the African continent in general and the Nile Basin region in particular.

Ethiopia and Egypt, of course, have a cultural and historical relationship that has bound them together for centuries. Central to this has, however, been the River Nile which has been the strong bond tying the two countries and their peoples together for millennia. The Nile can and indeed should be a source of cooperation and mutually beneficial relations between Ethiopia and Egypt in a number of ways. It was on this understanding that the two foreign ministers agreed in June that they should immediately initiate consultations among Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan, on how to move forward with the implementation of the recommendations of the International Panel of Experts on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, including the conduct of suggested studies. The Panel agreed that the Dam would have no significant negative impact on the downstream states. Indeed, it will solve power shortages in the region as well as make clean energy available at considerable reduced costs. It will also do much to even out the flow of water, prevent floods, and solve the growing problem and costs of siltation affecting dams downstream in Sudan and Egypt.

The newly appointed Foreign Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Nabil Fahmy, has already said that one of his first priorities will be the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. Ethiopia is ready to continue cooperation and dialogue based on the win-win approach that has always been the cardinal principle of its relations among all the countries of the Nile Basin. At the same time Ethiopia also wants to continue its strong relationship with Egypt not just on utilization of the Nile waters but also in other economic sectors. Ethiopian-Egyptian bilateral relations have increased steadily in various trade and investment sectors as Egypt's investment in Ethiopia has grown. This relationship has also been strengthened through technical assistance and cooperation in health, education and agriculture. A 17-member team of doctors, medical experts and nurses arrived in Addis Ababa this week to conduct a series of operations for children and other Ethiopians.



UN High Commissioner for Refugees visits Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia

Antonio Guterres, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, last week arrived in Ethiopia on the third leg of a regional tour of the Horn of Africa that also took him to Somalia and Kenya. The main focus of his trip was the future of the estimated 1.1 million Internally Displaced Persons in Somalia and over 1 million more in neighboring countries, mostly in Kenya, Ethiopia and Yemen. With the increasing stability, countries hosting Somali refugees, particularly Kenya, are beginning to encourage them to return.

In Ethiopia, Commissioner Guterres had meetings with Prime Minister Hailemariam and Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros. The Prime Minister underlined the opportunities to build people-to-people bridges between Ethiopia and Somalia as well as the need to invest urgently in Somalia to create basic infrastructures and services. He emphasized that Ethiopia would continue to help more Somali refugees obtain skills to enable them to be productive when they had returned home. He said there were also plans under way to expand a self-sufficiency program that allowed skilled refugees to work outside the camps. Under this project over 1,200 Eritrean refugees and in addition others from Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia were attending universities in Ethiopia.

In his meeting with Dr. Tedros, the Commissioner expressed his appreciation of Ethiopia's continued support for refugees and commended its open border and protection polices for refugees. He noted that the Government of Ethiopia has accomplished commendable activities in hosting refugees from neighboring countries. According to UNHCR, Ethiopia is currently hosting 404,000 refugees. Among these, some 237,774 are refugees from Somalia while more than 78,000 are from Eritrea. Another 60,558 and 30,090 are from South Sudan and Sudan respectively. Mr. Guterres said "currently no other country hosts such a large numbers of refugees from different countries". He added that Ethiopia was in fact hosting two generations of refugees from Somalia and South Sudan and Eritrea despite the challenges the country was facing in the form of budgetary strains, security challenges and the environmental impact as additional camps for refugees continued to be opened. In this context, the High Commissioner affirmed that in spite of the financial challenges affecting the UNHCR, it will continue to support Ethiopia in its activities of assisting refugees through its Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA). The UNHCR itself is facing budgetary challenges due to a drop in donations which forced it to cut the cost of its headquarters from 14% to 8%.

The High Commissioner briefed Dr. Tedros about his recent visits to Kenya and Somalia. Mr. Guterres said his talks with high level officials of Kenya, including Kenya's Secretary of Interior, Joseph ole Lenku, about Somali refugees were productive. He told Kenyan officials it was time to move from "care and maintenance" of Somali refugees in their country to solutions "where the return of refugees is fully voluntary, and conducted in safety and dignity." He said the UNHCR will work with the Governments of Kenya and Somalia to establish a tripartite commission on standards and procedures for voluntary repatriation. He said there was mutual understanding between the two sides that all repatriation of refugees should be voluntary and that it must be done in an orderly manner.

He said "the UNHCR understands the situation in Kenya", and he emphasized the need not to rush the process of repatriating the refugees.



He said a tripartite committee which will include representatives from Somalia, the UNHCR and Kenya would be established soon to discuss the future of Somali refugees. Mr. Guterres added that Ethiopia could play a crucial role engaging Kenya through IGAD and on the bilateral level to create a common understanding over the orderly repatriation of Somali refugees from Kenya. At the same time, he said, spontaneous repatriation of Somali refugees should be encouraged and supported rather than en masse repatriation. He also mentioned that in a bid to address Kenya's security concerns a proposal to relocate Somali refugees was also under consideration. There are now over 600,000 registered Somali refugees in Kenya.

Speaking about his visit to Somalia, the High Commissioner said the main objective of his visit had been to show solidarity to the people of Somalia as they rebuild the country. He noted that the "UNHCR likes nothing more than to help people go back home, based on their own free will and when conditions are met for a safe and dignified return," but he added that the security situation is still fragile, particularly in central-south Somalia, where most of the refugees came from and humanitarian access to most parts of this region was still limited. Mr. Guterres said: "return to Somalia should be, first and foremost, voluntary; at this time, the vast majority of Somalis in exile are still in need of asylum as conditions are not yet safe for a rushed, large-scale repatriation." He proposed a phased approach for return of refugees, starting by assisting refugees who are spontaneously returning to Somalia. The next step would be a pilot project under which UNHCR could help assist groups of refugees return to a number of selected places in Somalia judged to be safe and stable. As conditions become more conducive this would be followed by enhanced facilitation and finally the promotion of repatriation. In order to better coordinate activities in Somalia, Mr. Guterres said the UNHCR planned to open an office in a border town between Somalia and Ethiopia.

Dr. Tedros stressed Ethiopia's firm stance in supporting its neighbors in times of crisis. He said Ethiopia's open border policy was a means to maintain the people-to-people relation of Ethiopia and its neighbors even amidst crisis. He said the open border policy also had a long term impact in bringing peace and stability within the region. He highlighted Ethiopia's "out-of-camp scheme" which is helping to change the lives of refugees. Ethiopia, he said believed that refugees in many countries had helped in the transformation of their host countries. It was therefore offering scholarships in its universities to make the refugees productive to their host country, to their own countries, and indeed to the world. Speaking about conditions for returning Somali refugees, Dr. Tedros underlined that the key factor to attract them back to Somalia would be success in providing stability and effective reconstruction. He said forced repatriation might have the undesired consequences of encouraging embittered returnees to join Al-Shabaab or other extremist groups. Dr. Tedros also emphasized that it was better to assist Somalis in their own homeland. He said that instead of building facilities in camps it would be better to ensure that there were facilities inside Somalia which would help the refugees resettle in their homeland. Dr. Tedros said Ethiopia was ready to encourage Kenya to help the orderly return of Somali refugees in Kenya to Somalia.



Third Ethiopia–Canada Bilateral Consultation Forum

The third Ethiopia-Canada consultation meeting was held in Ottawa, Canada (July 8-9). Ethiopia was represented by Ambassador Taye Atske Selassie, Director-General of the Americas in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ato Mehret Debebe, Chief Executive Officers of EEPKO, and Ambassador Solomon Abebe, Director of Canada and Latin America in the MFA, while Canada was represented by Patricia Malikhail, Director General of Africa in the Canadian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Karen MacCathur, Director of GFA in the Ministry and Canada's Ambassador to Ethiopia, David Usher.

The two sides reviewed the status of actions taken since the previous consultative meeting held in November last year, and expressed their satisfaction that the necessary follow up activities were being delivered. The Ethiopian side expressed appreciation for Canada's commitment to support Ethiopia's efforts in fighting poverty and its gratitude for Canada's new country strategy development approach, aligned with Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan, and for the allocation of \$165 million dollars for new programs. The new country strategy will focus on food security, support of smallholder farmer access to markets, and the Vocational Education Project in agriculture training colleges as well as financial and business development support for women entrepreneurs, and improvement of the capacity of ten micro-finance institutions that serve women businesses; the new country program will also support the creation of youth-run businesses and the improvement of delivery and business development services for youth.

The two sides also reviewed the impact of the training programs and workshops under Canada's Least Developed Country Market Access initiative and expressed their satisfaction that the workshops had created awareness about the opportunities for Ethiopian export items with zero duty and quota free access to the Canadian market. Textiles and footwear, as well as cut flowers, were identified as products benefiting from the initiative. The Canadian side noted that the aim of the program was to help reduce poverty in Ethiopia by increasing trade and investment.

One of the main topics of the discussions covered Ethiopia's request for Canadian support for the training of a skilled workforce relevant to Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) and market needs. Official representatives from the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges and Canadian University Service Overseas expressed their interest in looking at education programs and devising possible cooperation mechanisms to train a skilled labor force based on Ethiopia's manufacturing and service industry needs. Particular reference was made to the training and provision of technology for railways, energy and mining sector development. A delegation of Canadian Universities and Colleges association will visit Ethiopia and the two sides have reached an understanding to formalize cooperation in the field of technical and vocational training. The Ethiopian delegation gave a presentation of the growth registered over the past two years in implementation of the GTP, underlining that Ethiopia will achieve most of the Millennium Development social development goals by 2015.



With regard to investment promotion and trade facilitation services both sides agreed that to help encourage investors and demonstrate Ethiopia's business opportunities, they should reach an understanding on the need to sign promotion and protection agreements. Ethiopia and Canada with the support of the Canadian Trade Facilitation Office will also work to identify possible avenues to increase trade and investment. Both sides will also discuss further on the possibility of including Ethiopia on the list of priority countries for export to Canada.

Another important discussion topic was energy and a roundtable discussion was held in the presence of twelve major Canadian energy, construction, transmission and distribution companies. The Ethiopia side presented details of Ethiopia's massive energy sector development involving geothermal and wind sources as well as hydropower being undertaken by EEPSCO. EEPSCO is responsible for the generation, transmission and distribution of adequate and dependable electricity for the country's development. There are significant areas for possible cooperation in power generation and electric transmission sectors, including small turnkey power projects and the introduction of dynamic restructuring and capacity building in the energy sector. Canadian companies would be welcome to participate in the huge energy business opportunities now available. Both sides also explored the possibility of holding an energy stakeholder's forum in Addis as well as possible financing of power transmission and distribution.

The Consultation Forum also considered items related to sharing experiences for trade liberalization and Ethiopia's accession to WTO, as well as possible areas of cooperation for international peacekeeping training, cooperation over human rights and religious freedoms, the expediting of visa and consular services and the frequency of Ethiopian Airlines flight to Canada.



UN Security Council discusses protection for journalists

The UN Security Council held a special meeting this week devoted to the protection of journalists in armed conflict. It was the first time the Security Council specifically addressed this issue since it adopted resolution 1738 in 2006. The Council was briefed by four international journalists as well as Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson.

Mr. Eliasson told the Council “every time a journalist is killed or intimidated into silence, there is one less voice to speak on behalf of the victims of conflict, crime and human rights abuses...one less observer of efforts to uphold rights and ensure human dignity.” He stressed that freedom of expression was a fundamental human right, guaranteed in article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It constitutes an essential pillar of any vital society. It depends on and is nurtured by independent and pluralistic media, the lifeblood of democratic and informed discourse and debate. He noted that the debate was focusing on protection of journalists in armed conflict but, he added, journalists were also at grave risk in many non-conflict situations around the world. He also said the majority of the victims were local journalists and media staff in many cases covering corruption and other illegal activities. In most cases, journalists received threats prior to being assassinated. Attacks on journalists could also take the form of abduction, hostage-taking, harassment, intimidation and illegal arrest, and women journalists were increasingly becoming victims of sexual harassment and rape.

Mr. Eliasson said that in the past decade more than 600 journalists had been killed. It was, he said, shocking and unacceptable that more than 90 per cent of the deaths, the assassinations, of journalists go unpunished. He said “the least we can do when a journalist is murdered, is to ensure that the death is investigated swiftly and justice is served.” Stressing the importance of freedom of expression, Mr. Eliasson said the point that ensuring freedom of expression and access to independent media and information was highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. He concluded by quoting the Secretary-General on this year’s World Press Freedom Day in May: “All journalists, across all media, need to be able to do their jobs. When it is safe to speak, the whole world benefits.”

The journalists addressing the Council included Mustafa Haji Abdinur of AFP, a self-taught reporter working in Somalia, who told the Council: “I’m here simply because I’m lucky; because the gunmen who have killed so many of my friends have not yet found me. Still, it’s not a matter of if, but when.” He said scores of journalists had been killed covering the decades-long conflict in Somalia and the vast majority of perpetrators today continued to kill with impunity: “When a journalist is killed, the news dies too,” he said.

The others who gave evidence to the Security Council were Kathleen Carroll, Associated Press executive editor and vice chair of the board of the Committee to Protect Journalists, Richard Engel of NBC News and Ghaith Abdul-Ahad from the Guardian. Ms. Carroll said that journalists represent the ordinary citizen. “An attack on a journalist is a proxy for an attack on the people, an attack on their right to information about their communities and their institutions.” She noted that 5 out of 6 murdered journalists are killed in their own hometowns covering local stories, often related to crime and corruption.

Mr. Engel argued that protecting journalists is harder than ever because of the blurred delineation between who is a journalist and an activist. He noted that professional journalists for State and private media, as well as freelancers who join rebel groups and carry guns, are often lumped together in the same category. “Journalists are perceived by Governments as troublemakers,” he said. He said the “guild of professionals isn’t recognized anymore; it should be,” adding “if you want professionals who are also objective, we need protection as well.” Mr. Abdul-Ahad echoed many of the same sentiments, noting that there is a sense of immunity for all those who captured journalists; they were never questioned and they never paid for it. That created a sense that professional journalists were “asking” for trouble just by being on a particular scene. “But we have to be there; we are telling the story,” he said. Professional journalists were part of a community who deserved protection.

The United Nations “Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issues of Impunity” was launched to create a free and safe environment for the media in conflict and non-conflict situations. It was approved in April 2012 by the United Nations Chief Executives Board, with UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in the lead. The basic rationale is that protecting free media is a prerequisite for freedom of expression and democracy. It is also relevant for the pursuit of peace and security, as well as development. It requires cooperation from Governments, particularly through Ministries of Information and academia, as well as media organizations and civil society to conduct awareness about threats to journalists.

Council members agreed that journalists played a critical role in armed conflict, reporting on events, revealing the horrors of war and spurring investigations of abuse, and that they should be protected as civilians in those situations. This indeed was outlined in the Geneva Convention, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as the Council’s own resolution 1738 (2006), which condemned attacks on journalists and explicitly spelt out their right to protection and respect.

The 30 or more delegations which spoke to the meeting expressed broad support for the role played by journalists, though some speakers underlined the importance of distinguishing between journalists and activists, and noted that journalists should not take “unjustified risks”, as well as abide by reasonable, common sense guidelines and comply with a host country’s laws. There was some concern and uncertainty over how to identify professional journalists from bloggers and other users of the Internet and social media. Professional journalists were encouraged to be responsible, to abide by their code of conduct and avoid siding with one party or inflaming violence. All agreed that independent and truthful journalism must be protected, and there was unanimous concern and condemnation of the increasing violence against journalists and that much more needed to be done to protect journalists and hold accountable those responsible for violence against them.



About

A Week in the Horn, established in 2007, is a weekly online publication dedicated to regional developments in the Horn of Africa. Its aim is to promote good will and brotherly relations between states in the region by highlighting events and publicizing news stories. It features detailed commentary, analysis as well as intelligent discussion of weekly developments throughout the region.

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