

A Week in the Horn

29th August 2014

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News in brief

Africa and the African Union

At a five day pledging conference for the Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF) in Kigali which ended on Friday (August 22), Burundi agreed to contribute one battalion (850) of light infantry; Uganda, Ethiopia and Rwanda pledged one motorized battalion each, and Kenya a mechanized battalion. Comoros, Djibouti and Somalia will each contribute a squadron or company. The force's first joint military exercise training is due to be held in Ethiopia in November

The Italian coastguard confirmed on Sunday (August 24) that another eighteen people were found dead on an inflatable dinghy that was floating south of the Italian island of Lampedusa. 73 others were rescued bringing the number rescued over the weekend to more than 3,500. By mid-August this year, UNHCR said over 100,000 migrants, most refugees from Eritrea, Somalia and Syria, had crossed into Italy.

Ethiopia

President Dr. Mulatu Teshome attended the inauguration of the newly elected President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Ankara in Thursday (August 28).

The President received a Public and Private Joint Business Delegation for Trade and Investment Promotion between Japan and Africa, led by Mr. Ishihara Hirotaka, Japan's Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, on Tuesday (August 26). The delegation also met with Prime Minister Hailemariam to discuss trade and investment partnerships between Ethiopia and Japan.

Prime Minister Hailemariam held talks on Sunday with Sudanese Vice-President, Bekri Hassen Saleh in Addis Ababa. He expressed Ethiopia's desire to take its economic cooperation with Sudan to a higher level. Vice-President Saleh said Sudan would like to reinforce its ongoing infrastructural interconnection with Ethiopia via road and power networks.

Dr. Debretsion Gebre-Michael, in charge of the Economy and Finance Cluster with the rank of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Communications and Information Technology, met an Italian business delegation, headed by the Italian Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ambassador Giuseppe Mistretta and by Roberto Luongo, CEO and Managing Director of the Italian Trade Agency on Thursday (August 28).

The 4th Tripartite Ministerial Meeting of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan on the GERD project took place on Monday and Tuesday (August 25-26) in Khartoum. The Ministers agreed to establish a Tripartite National Committee (TNC) comprising four members from each country to follow up and conduct the studies recommended by the International Panel of Experts. (See article)

Dr. Khalid bin Thani Al Thani, Chairman of Ezdan Holding Group of Qatar, leading a Qatar business delegation to Ethiopia this week held talks on Tuesday (August 26) with President Dr. Mulatu and also with Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros Adhanom.

Dr. Tedros met an EU Heads of Delegation, led by the EU Charge d'Affaires, for an Article Eight discussion on Thursday (August 28) to discuss political developments and regional relations.

The Japanese Joint Public-Private business delegation led by Mr. Hirotaka Ishihara, participated in a seminar on Monday and Tuesday this week (August 25- 26) to discuss widening existing investments and promoting new trade and investment ties between Africa and Japan. Among those present were Dr. Yinager Dessie, State Minister of Foreign Affairs and Neway Gebreab, Special Economic Advisor to the Prime Minister with the rank of Minister.

Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, held talks on Wednesday with Hugh Powell, Britain's Deputy National Security Adviser, on the current state of affairs in East Africa, particularly Somalia. The UK is intending to host an international conference on Somalia in September.

The Yara Prize 2014 is being awarded to Ethiopian Professor Tekalign Mamo Assefa, State Minister and adviser to the Minister of Agriculture for his "remarkable efforts in lifting millions of farmers' income and developing targeted interventions for soil management and winning farmer acceptance of technologies and modernizing Ethiopia's fertilizer advisory service. "

A trade mission from Addis Ababa, led by Shisema Gebresilassie, head of the trade and industry development bureau of the Addis Ababa City Administration, is in Dubai to discuss increased trade prospects with the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Djibouti

The Djibouti authorities on Wednesday (August 27) released three religious leaders, Abdurahman Bashir, Abdurahman Barkat and Guirreh Meidal, of the unofficial Movement for Democracy and Freedom (Model) party. The three were arrested in February 2013 on charges of inciting insurrection and disturbing public order.

A member of Djibouti's presidential guard opened fire on his colleagues at the Djibouti International Airport on Monday (August 25) just after President Ismail Omar Guelleh arrived back from the IGAD Summit in Addis Ababa. Colonel Idriss Abdi Galab, personal physician to President was one of three people injured. The President reportedly left the airport ten minutes before the incident.

Kenya

Kenya this week has been hosting two security conferences, the 16th Annual General Meeting of the East Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (EAPCCO) in Mombasa, and the 11th conference of the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA) in Nairobi. (See article)

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) said Tuesday (August 26) that it plans to start a pilot project to support the ongoing spontaneous return of Somali refugees from Kenya's Dadaab camp to Somalia. The UNHCR Country Representative in Kenya, Raouf Mazou, said the process would be voluntary. Somali Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed Mohamed paid an unexpected visit to Dadaab which houses over half a million refugees, mostly Somalis, on Friday (August 22).

Somalia

Defense Minister, General Mohamed Hassan Sheikh Hassan led a Somali delegation to Turkey this week. He held talks in Ankara with Turkish Defense Minister Cismad Yalmas who assured the delegation of Turkey's extended support for Somalia's security recovery efforts.

The Minister of Interior and Federal Affairs of the Federal Government of Somalia, Abdullahi Godah Barre, has appointed a 27 person technical committee to accelerate the process of forming the proposed new Central Administration of Somalia from the regions of Mudug and Galgadud.

Somali National Army and AMISOM troops on Monday (August 25) took control of the town of Tiye glow in Bakool region, the last town in Bakool Region held by Al-Shabaab. Tiye glow is a strategic point on roads linking Baidoa, the capital of Bay region, and Hoddur, the capital of Bakool region with Belet Wayne, connecting the south to the north of the country.

AMISOM's Spokesperson, Colonel Ali Adan Humud, said on Wednesday (August 27) that massive operations to push Al- Shabaab out of its last territories are due to start. He said AMISOM and Somali National Army troops were fully prepared to carry out the final assault against all Al- Shabaab controlled areas.

AMISOM on Wednesday (August 27) completed a training course for 230 Somali soldiers at Belet Weyne, the capital of Hiiraan region. The closing ceremony of the three month course was attended by senior officials from AMISOM, the Somali National Army, Somali MPs and officials from Hiiraan regional administration.

South Sudan

IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government held its 27th Extraordinary Session in Addis Ababa on Monday (August 25) to discuss South Sudan. The two warring sides signed another ceasefire agreement, promising to end more than eight months of conflict. IGAD called for a Transitional National Government to be formed within 45 days and said any more delays would be unacceptable. (See article)

A member of one of the IGAD Monitoring and Verification Teams in South Sudan died of a heart attack on Sunday (August 24) after some of the monitors were detained by rebels in the north of the country. IGAD currently has eight groups of monitors in flashpoint areas, including Juba, Malakal and Bentiu, in Unity State and Bor.

Sudan

The UN Security Council on Wednesday (August 27) extended the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) for another year. It requested UNAMID to focus on its revised strategic priorities including improved protection of civilians and humanitarian workers, facilitation of aid and mediation activities.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Sudan said this week that representatives from the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan have approved an operational plan to open a humanitarian corridor and allow the World Food Program to deliver around 63,000 metric tonnes of food assistance to 744,000 people in the northern parts of South Sudan.

Security arrangements for integrating about 1,350 former combatants from Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)- Sudan into government military and police were launched on Monday (August 25) in a ceremony in El Fasher, Darfur. This was one of the provisions of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD).

The Fourth Tripartite Ministerial meeting on the GERD Project

The 4th Tripartite Ministerial Meeting of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan on the GERD project took place on Monday and Tuesday (August 25-26) in Khartoum, attended by Prof. Dr. Hossam El Din Mohamed Moghazy, Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation of Egypt; Alemayehu Tegenu, Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy of Ethiopia; and Ambassador Mutaz Musa Abdalla, Minister of Water Resources and Electricity of Sudan.

The first three meetings of the Tripartite Ministerial committee of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan on the GERD project were held in November and December 2013, and January this year. They ended in deadlock. There were further consultations among the leaders of the three countries, and after the joint statement issued by President El-Sisi and Prime Minister Hailemariam at Malabo on June 27, the three ministers were directed to reactivate the Tripartite Ministerial Committee on the basis of developing the seven main points that Egypt's

President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi and Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn discussed/agreed at Malabo in late June. These included fostering dialogue and cooperation between Ethiopia and Egypt as well as encouraging regional projects to meet the growing demand for water.

In his opening statement on Monday, Ethiopia's Water, Irrigation and Energy Minister, Alemayehu Tegenu affirmed that Ethiopia had delivered on facilitating the issue for both Sudan and Egypt, adding that Ethiopia was committed to the recommendations of the International Panel of Experts and had already started the implementation of the suggestions in regard to GERD safety measures. He asserted the equal use of Nile waters for all three countries, adding that Ethiopia was committed to transparent cooperation and mutual benefit of all three States. He repeated that Ethiopia had no desire or intention to harm Sudan or Egypt. Minister Alemayehu noted the tripartite meetings had been arranged to discuss a framework for the follow up of the IPoE recommendations. He emphasized the importance of focusing on the establishment of a Panel of National Experts and completing the earlier discussions on this committee's composition, timeframe and mandate, and urged the meeting to focus on the remaining issues without introducing issues that had no relevance of the subject at hand. Minister Alemayehu recalled Ethiopia's provision of the study and design documents to Egypt and Sudan and its implementation of the recommendations of the IPoE "in a very proper, responsible and transparent manner", and had immediately agreed to the two studies suggested by the IPoE. The International Panel of Experts composed of equal representation drawn from Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan, and four other international experts, was established, at Ethiopia's suggestion, to assess the impact of the dam project on downstream countries. Ethiopia had submitted 153 drawing, maps and reports to the IPoE, and from the outset had conducted hydrological simulation studies and studies of the environment and socio-economic impact. In its final report, the IPoE said the project would not result in any significant harm to the two downstream countries, Sudan and Egypt.

Sudan's Minister of Water Resources and Electricity, Mutaz Musa Abdalla, emphasized the importance of cooperation in the Eastern Nile and Nile Basin. He said "It is incumbent upon us to put in place good neighborhoods and cooperative practices and mechanisms to harness and manage our water resources to ensure that the people of the three countries enjoy the benefits from their shared water resources, to meet their current and future needs without causing significant harm to each other and to also realize and assure adequate regional development." He said Sudan supported agreement on inclusive Nile Basin cooperation and was ready to work in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration with all Nile Basin countries. He asserted that many other challenging and pressing matters within the Basin could be solved under a spirit of cooperation without being obstructed by a lack of trust and confidence. He spoke of the "need to re-orient our vision to be that of achieving and sharing benefits with mutual responsibility and respect." He said "our countries are in a good position, politically, technically and economically to reach an agreement on the GERD differences and make a big stride on the future to lay the foundation of a rich, prosperous and safe region."

Egypt's Minister of Water Resources and irrigation, Dr. Hossam El Din Moghazy, affirmed the great importance of the three Eastern Nile Basin countries activating the agreed upon measures to implement the recommendations of the final report of the IPoE. He said Egypt hoped that the common motivation to move forward would enable the meeting to overcome outstanding issues and reach a win-win agreement. He stressed that Egypt had never been and never would be against the development of the Nile Basin as long as the aim remains to achieve mutual sustainable development and integrated management of the Nile water resources in order to attain mutual benefits and aid development in all the countries. He said cooperation and coordination were the best ways to achieve development goals in the Nile Basin.

After the opening session, Sudan presented a summary on the general outcomes of the previous Tripartite Ministerial Meetings, and reminded the meeting that close to one and half years had elapsed since the submission of the IPoE report without the three countries being able to carry out the Panel's recommendations. It also gave an account of the measures it was taking to assess the impact of the Dam for itself. Ethiopia gave a briefing on "The Status of Implementation of the IPoE Recommendations" and outlined the benefits the GERD offered both to Ethiopia and to Sudan and Egypt, once again assuring them that the Project would have no significant impact on the downstream countries. Egypt presented the meeting with a report summarizing the developments that had arisen since the last meeting. This included a list of national studies that had been undertaken. It expressed its concerns on the adverse impact of the GERDP on its water resources, and presented a proposal entitled "The Recent Egyptian Proposal", which was discussed. Ethiopia and Sudan expressed some concerns about part of the proposal. An ad hoc task force of two representatives from each country then prepared a draft agreement on the outcome of the first day's meeting which was discussed, improved and finally adopted by the meeting.

A meeting of technical teams from Egypt and Ethiopia, also attended by Sudan, took place on the side lines. The Ethiopian teams provided details of updates to the design of the dam and its main spillway. These were carried out in order to ensure the water needs of the downstream countries in case of shutting down the power house if levels in the dam reservoir fell too low, or accommodate high floods under PMF conditions. The technical teams agreed to continue their consultations on relevant technical matters in the future.

Based on good faith and in an atmosphere of trust, the three countries agreed on the establishment of a Tripartite National Committee (TNC) comprising four members from each country to follow up and conduct the studies recommended by the IPoE. These were the Study on Water Resources/Hydropower System Simulation Model, and the study on Transboundary Environmental and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment. Ethiopia agreed to provide the Tripartite National Committee with the Dam Safety Study and the Saddle Dam Design. The Ministers agreed that the TNC would take decisions unanimously, and would report within six months from September 1. An International Consultancy Firm(s) would be hired to carry out the two studies according to the "Draft Scope of Work" presented in the IPoE final report and the studies would be implemented according to an agreed timetable. Costs would be shared equally. The Ministers agreed that the three countries may provide the TNC with any national studies regarding GERD project, adding that the TNC would have the duty to check and validate all the individual country data before these were submitted to the International Consulting Firm(s) involved. The Ministers also agreed that in future additional International Experts might be nominated to provide technical opinions in case the Ministers were unable to agree over the outcome of the two studies.

Egypt's Dr. Moghazy said after the meeting that this was an agreement on the mechanism for implementing the recommendations of the IPoE which was important to Cairo in order to ascertain that its share of water was not affected and to verify the integrity of the dam structures. Ethiopia's Minister Alemayehu Tegenu said the agreement enhanced confidence between the three countries but noted that there was no reason to stop the construction of the dam. He added "we understand the concerns of the Sudan and Egypt". He invited the Egyptian and Sudanese Ministers to visit the dam in the near future.

IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government discuss South Sudan

IGAD Heads of State and Government on Monday this week (August 25) held its fifth Extra-ordinary Summit to discuss the political, security and humanitarian situation in South Sudan. The meeting, in Addis Ababa, was chaired by Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, current Chairperson of the IGAD Assembly, and brought together President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti, President Salva Kiir of South Sudan, President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya, Vice-President Bakri Hassan Saleh of Sudan and Prime Minister Abdiweli Ahmed Mohammed of Somalia. Also present were Ambassador Engineer Mahboub Maalim, Executive Secretary of IGAD; Dr. Elham Mahmood Ahmed Ibrahim, Acting Chairperson of the African Union Commission; and representatives of the UN, the People's Republic of China, Denmark, Japan, the EU, the Troika (the Governments of US, UK and Norway) as well as the IGAD Partners Forum. The Summit was preceded by an IGAD Council of Ministers meeting on South Sudan centered on discussions of the country's humanitarian situation, the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, and other issues in preparation for the Summit.

The meeting was the fifth session that the Assembly of IGAD Heads of State and Government Summit has held in its efforts to encourage the warring parties and other stakeholders resolve the crisis in South Sudan and address the underlying causes of the conflict. This meeting was specifically called to consider the failures of the warring parties to carry out their pledges, address the challenges to the IGAD-led peace process, discuss the steps that ought to be taken to help advance the cause of peace through a negotiated political settlement and chart the way forward for a lasting peace and a just solution to the crisis in South Sudan. Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin, Chairperson of IGAD Special Envoys, presented a progress report on the mediation process and the deteriorating political, security and humanitarian situation. Extensive discussions on the report considered the overall situation, defined the impediments in the ongoing peace talks and looked for possible ways to speedily implement commitments pledged earlier during the mediation process. The Summit endorsed this stated report and its recommendations following the discussions.

In the communiqué at the end of the Summit, the Assembly of IGAD Heads of State and Government expressed its disappointment that there had been no progress in forming a Transitional Government of National Unity within the 60 originally required; and called upon stakeholders to negotiate and complete this agreement within the next 45 days. It recognized that the overall crisis in South Sudan could not be solved by the two conflicting parties alone, and that it therefore required an inclusive and broad based

approach to the negotiations. This meant “the inclusion of all stakeholders in the IGAD-led peace process.” The Assembly reiterated the call made on June 10 for the parties “to immediately honor their commitments to an inclusive process.”

The Assembly, which commended the efforts of the Special Envoys and emphasized their mandate to direct the negotiations on behalf of IGAD, recalled their earlier decisions in December, January, March and June and expressed disappointment at the failure of the warring parties to implement these. They deplored the violations of signed agreements, and particularly condemned “the willful breaches of the 23rd January Cessation of Hostilities Agreement.” It endorsed the modalities developed by the mediation, which required the full participation of all stakeholders, in accordance with the agreement signed on May 9. They demanded the parties cooperate fully with the Monitoring and Verification Teams and reminded the parties of their obligations to provide for the safety and security of MVTs. Any party that jeopardized the safety and security of MVTs would “result in robust and direct consequences for those responsible.” They condemned the detention of the MVM helicopter and MVTs on August 22 in Unity State by the SPLM/A-In-Opposition.

The Assembly welcomed the conclusion and signature by the warring parties of the Implementation Matrix of the Cessation Hostilities Agreement and its addendum which obliges the parties to bring the conflict to an end. It also endorsed the Protocol on Agreed Principles on Transitional Arrangements Towards Resolution of the Crisis in South Sudan, and called on the SPLM/A-in-Opposition to sign the Protocol. It was called on stakeholders to conclude the negotiations of the details to operationalize this within 6 weeks. The Assembly called on the parties to empower their representatives to proceed without further delay, adding firmly that the mediation should continue even if any stakeholder boycotted the negotiations. It underlined “its resolve to take action against those who obstruct the attainment of peace in South Sudan” and stressed they would “be held responsible for their actions and denied participation in the future governance arrangements for South Sudan.”

The Assembly also reiterated its serious concerns over the dire humanitarian situation in South Sudan that threatened the national security of the IGAD region states, and appealed to the international community to provide sustained support to prevent further suffering and help save the lives of millions of South Sudanese from the dangers of famine, suffering, disease and insecurity whether in South Sudan or in neighboring countries. .

In his opening speech to the Assembly, IGAD chairman, Prime Minister Hailemariam of Ethiopia, urged the parties to embody and safeguard the interests and aspirations of the people of South Sudan. He noted there had been some developments but strongly emphasized that IGAD Member States were dismayed by the slow progress of the peace process, particularly since the people of South Sudan were faced by a catastrophic humanitarian, political and security situation. He expressed his concern over the dire humanitarian situation, combined with widespread displacement in and outside the nation. There was a looming famine, malnutrition and “untold human suffering” in South Sudan. He strongly urged the parties to enter into substantive negotiations to end the fighting and the suffering of their people. He emphasized that the primary responsibility for the slow progress of the mediation rested on the shoulders of warring parties, and underlined that those who did not comply with the agreements would bear the consequences. He said the “repeated flagrant violations” of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement was a cause of the slow progress of the mediation process, and made it clear that IGAD Member States and the international community would not tolerate or ignore any further obstruction that undermined or impeded moves towards peace, stability and national reconciliation and healing.

IGAD, said Prime Minister Hailemariam, remained committed to expediting the peace process as a genuine regional initiative best serving the interests of the people of South Sudan. The parties, however, must live up to their pledges and honor their signed agreements and immediately end the political and humanitarian crisis. He expressed his gratitude to the Special Envoys for their continued engagement in the mediation process, and thanked the international community for its sustained support to the IGAD-led mediation process. He repeated that the only way out of this debilitating situation was peaceful negotiations to consolidate peace, stability and development and pointed out that these had been the banners during South Sudan armed struggle. It was time the participants of that struggle finally honored the commitments that they had made then, he said.

Dr. Elham Mahmood Ahmed Ibrahim, Acting Chairperson of the African Union Commission, emphasized the AU’s regret over the delays in the negotiation process, and urged the parties to immediate practical implementation of the commitments they had pledged. She appreciated the role of Prime Minister

Hailemariam, the IGAD region, the international community and the Special Envoys in their support for a peaceful resolution of the crisis, and added that the AU Commission would remain engaged with IGAD in trying to help the parties find a way out of the crisis. Haile Menkorios, UN Special Representative to AU, who commended IGAD's unwavering efforts to establish a political dialogue, spearheading the multi-stakeholder negotiations as well as helping the parties to commit to the establishment of a Transitional Government of National Unity, warned that further violations of agreements and delays to the peace process would not be tolerated. IGAD must tolerate the suffering of the people of South Sudan no longer. He said there could be no military solution and emphasized that the IGAD-led mediation must be resumed as the way to restore peace and end the crisis. He also warned that those who violated the signed agreements would face consequences, adding that the UN would stand ready to fully back the IGAD-led mediation process. UN Security Council members, who visited South Sudan earlier this month, warned both the Government and SPLM/A-in-Opposition leaders of the "consequences" of continuing conflict.

Meanwhile, two days after the Summit, the SPLM/A-in-Opposition rebels led by Riek Machar issued a statement strongly criticizing IGAD for what they said was a bias towards President Salva Kiir in the peace process. Riek Machar declined to sign the Protocol on Agreed Principles on Transitional Arrangements Towards Resolution of the Crisis in South Sudan signed by the IGAD Heads of State and Government, and by President Salva Kiir. The Protocol laid out the transitional governance arrangements under which IGAD said a Transitional Government of National Unity should be headed by the present, elected President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir, for the next two-and-a-half years until elections are conducted. He would also remain Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. A Prime Minister, acceptable to the President, should be nominated by the SPLM/A-in-Opposition, but this official would not be eligible for subsequent election. The IGAD leaders also laid down a time frame for the transitional period (of 30 months) which was to be preceded by a pre-transition period of 90 days. IGAD also gave a 45-day ultimatum within which the two parties should work out details of the peace agreement. The SPLM/A-in-Opposition's chief negotiator, Taban Deng Gai, was quoted this week as saying this was "not the way to get peace in the country. We believe they've imposed Salva to be president for life. We're not going to sign it." The SPLM/A-in-Opposition, however, did sign the Implementation Matrix of the Cessation Hostilities Agreement and its addendum which obliges the parties to bring the conflict to an end. It also reiterated its commitment to the peace process and called for continued talks in order to negotiate a peace agreement. The IGAD mediators have adjourned the peace talks for three weeks to hold consultations with stakeholders. They are expected to resume on September 14.

Kenya is hosting a meeting of the East Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization....

Kenya, this week, has been hosting the 16th Annual General Meeting of the East Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (EAPCCO) in Mombasa, and the 11th conference of the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA) in Nairobi. The East African Police Chiefs' Association conference is being attended by police chiefs from 12 East African states, while the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA) is being attended by Directors General and Heads of Intelligence Services from 51 African countries.

Police commanders and heads of criminal investigations from Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Comoros, Eritrea, Seychelles, South Sudan and Tanzania are being joined by security experts from Germany, Turkey, France, Algeria and Nigeria as well as the head of the Interpol secretariat and are expected to share vital information on poachers as well as discuss strategies to enhance critical linkages and minimize intra and inter border crimes.

Kenya's Inspector General of Police David Kimaiyo, now chair of EAPCCO, said the five-day meeting will devise ways of combating serious crimes that involve networks across countries, and there will be a follow up to fast-track implementation of resolutions passed. He said the meeting is expected to come up with appropriate recommendations which will serve to make policing in the region more effective and provide ways to tackle challenges facing the region especially the Al-Shabaab threat and the poaching menace. It also aims to share security related experiences, gains and challenges within the regional policing institutions over the past year.

President Kenyatta, who formally opened the conference on Wednesday (August 27), said that in the last five years the region has seen a rise in terrorism, drug trafficking, money laundering and crimes against the environment. He said it was in everybody's interest to tighten collaboration in intelligence gathering, and in the execution of agreed programs. He encouraged the police chiefs to meet regularly and ensure their resolutions were implemented. He called for harmonization of laws and regulations in the region, saying

that the region's unity and solidarity were its sharpest weapons in the fight against terrorism, adding that the region should also learn from the experience of other nations that have faced and defeated terrorism. President Kenyatta also referred to the upsurge in illicit trade in wildlife products, especially ivory and rhino horns as a crime that should be stopped immediately. This illicit trade, he said, fed into terrorism and also harmed the region's reputation, standing and trade with the world as well as directly threatening the livelihoods of communities that benefit directly and indirectly from wildlife.

The President told participants that Africa lacked the potential to deal with insecurity or the emerging security issues such as terrorism, hi-tech and cyber-crimes without countries cooperating with one another. He said terrorism was incompatible with the values and aspirations of Africa: "International terrorism threatens our societies: in choosing violence over dialogue, terrorists reject the basic premise of any democratic nation; in choosing spectacular, murderous violence, terrorists reject the respect for life shared by African societies across the continent." He said the threat "as we have so painfully learned in recent years, is not confined to any one country or region," adding that "we have a common interest in working together to defeat the terrorists so that our people would enjoy security and prosperity in whatever they do for their livelihood. He called on regional police chiefs to consolidate their efforts in combating terrorism and other organized crimes, and said the war against crime would only be won if police forces in the East African region worked in solidarity and mustered self-belief. The President pledged Kenya's support to EAPCCO's regional operations and institutional reforms necessary to make the organization more effective in combating crime. He said he would do all he could "to secure the most modern equipment and training for those charged with protecting our common life."

Interior Cabinet Secretary, Joseph Ole Lenku, also emphasized the need for EAPCCO member countries to work together in fighting terrorism. Kenya's Deputy Inspector General of Police, Grace Kahindi, told the meeting that "Our borders have been an easy target for drug traffickers and terrorists who have been able to compromise various sectors within our region." She called for improved border surveillance and said updating and sharing of national and international data bases were necessary for screening of criminal elements to stop poachers, drug traffickers and human traffickers taking advantage of weak controls.

The Conference was addressed on Monday (August 25) by Rwego Francis, head of the International Police Organization (Interpol) Regional Bureau for Eastern Africa, who warned of new security threats by organized criminal gangs including terrorist militants which have caused instability in the Eastern Africa Region. He said these gangs had become more sophisticated with advanced technology. There was therefore a need for concerted efforts among countries. He said all crimes had become transnational so fighting crime without a regional approach was no longer possible: "We need to strengthen cooperation in carrying out simultaneous operation." He underlined the importance of a legal framework for cooperation and the need to keep ahead of criminals using technology to carry out their activities. "Criminals", he said, "are getting well connected through modern technology and are becoming more sophisticated in their operations." Mr. Francis noted that Al-Shabaab continued to pose a threat to the region and said cyber crime was widely assisting in funding the group's activities in the region. He said there was a real need for improved counter terrorism efforts and for the establishment of Financial Intelligence Units (FIU) in every country to in tracking their funding. He also urged a regional approach for the timely sharing of information, joint investigation and capacity building.

...and of the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA)

The 11th Conference of the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA) bringing together African heads of intelligence and security services met in Nairobi this week with a conference theme of "Enhancing Intelligence Co-operation and Co-ordination to Address Radicalization and Extremism in Africa," to discuss continental security threats and exchange intelligence to develop a shared understanding of common security problems.

CISSA works closely with the African Union and its organs to tackle the continent's security challenges. The most urgent current problems are the radicalization and extremism that drive the terrorist activities of groups such as Nigeria's Boko Haram and Somalia's Al-Shabaab. CISSA Executive Secretary, Isaac Moyo, said human trafficking, poaching, money laundering, cybercrime and small arms proliferation as well as radicalization and extremism and their links to terrorism were also being discussed during the week-long meeting, and the conference will also analyze profiles of the most notorious terror gangs in the continent. The meeting will assess operations over the last year, and exchange intelligence experiences to develop a shared understanding of common security problems in the continent. It is also expected that discussions will

cover the question of corruption, an issue that all-too-often arises out of the nexus between poverty and terror. Corruption has been described as “terror’s handmaiden in Africa, weakening societies, structures, institutions and security personnel”, and preventing the continent from securing its own peace and stability effectively.

In a keynote speech, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Counter-Terrorism Co-operation, Francisco Madiera told the conference that terrorism was the biggest security threat facing Africa and local governments must take steps to prevent youth recruitment into terrorist groups. Terrorists attacking Africa, he said, come from as far away as Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as Yemen and other countries where extremists had radicalized the youth. He said many young Africans were being recruited into extremism and “we must address why that is happening,” adding “We need to stop youth recruitment. We need to understand why the youth are falling victim and are attracted to radicalization. We need to act on this.”

Mr. Madiera said “We advise the politicians to create jobs, give counter narratives to these groups, share intelligence in time, create laws that can help and allocate enough resources to address the menace.” He noted that while Al-Shabaab represented the greatest threat in East Africa and Boko Haram in West Africa, the entire continent was threatened by the increasing influence of al-Qaeda and other radical groups in Iraq and Syria. In addition to terrorism, Africa was confronting threats from human trafficking, poaching, money laundering, cybercrime and small arms proliferation. He said African countries need to engage in serious diplomacy to stop countries that support extremist groups from funding and sending them weapons. He said military solutions also need to be used to flush out the extremists.

The Head of the UN’s Somali Office (UNSOM) visits Somaliland and Puntland

The Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) Ambassador Nicolas Kay paid a two day visit to the capital of Somaliland last week at the invitation of Somaliland Foreign Minister, Mohamed Behi Younis. Mr. Kay’s previous visit in June last year was not a success. Somaliland refused to allow UNSOM a base in Hargeisa, and Mr. Kay said later that he had been told, very politely, by President Ahmed Silanyo that “being the Head of UNSOM we ask you not to return to Somaliland for you are in the wrong country. Your mandate from the UN is to promote Federalism and a constitutional review in Somalia that is the neighboring country next door.”

Mr. Kay’s visit on Monday and Tuesday (August 18-19) was more productive. On his arrival he noted that Somaliland had made tremendous progress in past years, for which, he said, the Government and people deserved full credit. He added that he was grateful for the opportunity to visit Somaliland “to explore how we can deepen and strengthen the cooperation between UNSOM and the Somaliland authorities for the benefit of the people.” At a joint press conference, Foreign Minister Mohamed Behi said that after meetings between Ambassador Nicholas Kay and Somaliland institutions and leaders, including President Ahmed Silanyo and other officials “a commitment has been made towards enhanced cooperation with the UN.” The Foreign Minister said the Government was fully committed to letting the people benefit from the twenty UN organizations that operate under the UNSOM umbrella run by Ambassador Kay.

Ambassador Kay said that the diversified consultations undertaken during his two days stay provided him with better understanding of issues pertinent to diverse aspects of the politics and livelihoods of Somalilanders as well as the challenges they face. He said the UN had identified “various areas where it can provide support under the offices of UNSOM, among them the rule of law and capacity building for various institutions like the police and the media.” Mr. Kay said that a new chapter of cooperation had been agreed and the next step would be more working visits geared towards strengthening UNSOM’s presence on the ground in order to respond better to Somaliland needs in line with the general mission of the UN body which is to support people to enjoy better peace, security, lives and freedoms. He said that was what UNSOM would be happy to do in partnership with the government in Hargeisa. Following his visit, UNSOM announced it would open an office in Hargeisa.

Ambassador Kay also visited Puntland last week to help celebrate a year of UNSOM activities in the state. Arriving in Garowe, the capital of Puntland, on Sunday (August 17) for a two day visit, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Somalia and Head of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), Nicholas Kay said Puntland had made “important political, economic and security progress in the last year for which the Government and people deserve full credit.” Mr. Kay also noted that more remained to be done, including establishing a federal system of governance, working together with the Federal Government

and other emerging states on reviewing the provisional Constitution, and preparing for elections in 2016. Mr. Kay said it was essential for all parties to cooperate including the State of Puntland, interim and emerging national administrations, and the Somali Federal Government. All of Somalia could learn and benefit from Puntland's experience and achievements since 1998, he added.

Puntland recently said it was cutting links with the Federal Government and it recalled Puntland MPs from the Federal parliament after the announcement of plans to organize a Central State which could include parts of Puntland. Mr. Kay said he was convinced that "the formation of other federal member states within Somalia is in the interest of Puntland and all Somalia." He added that "Puntland should not lose any territory that it currently administers, and final boundaries will be determined according to the process prescribed in the Provisional Federal Constitution." He pledged that continued international support for peace and state building in Puntland would continue to be guided by the principles of Somali ownership, leadership and respect for the Constitution.

Puntland President, Dr, Abdiweli Mohamed Ali Gaas, has reiterated his government's willingness to open talks with the Federal Government. He said Puntland was ready to invite the Federal Government to reinstate cooperation. A statement said the Puntland Government and members of the Federal Parliament had agreed Puntland did have real concerns and grievances against the Federal Government, and the MPs had therefore requested talks between Puntland and the Federal government to take place within a month from August 20. Puntland agreed to this but the statement added that if the attempted talks failed and these concerns were not addressed by the Federal Government, then the Government of Puntland would take "the next appropriate steps according to the Puntland Constitution."

Ethiopia now hosts nearly 630,000 refugees, the largest number in Africa, says UNHCR

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva said on Tuesday last week (August 19) that Ethiopia had become the largest refuge-hosting nation in Africa and was providing shelter for 629,718 refugees. Of these 247,000 were from South Sudan; 245,000 from Somalia and 99,000 from Eritrea. It had overtaken Kenya after hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese arrived in the country this year, and the civil war in neighboring South Sudan was the main factor behind Ethiopia's soaring refugee population said the UNHCR. About 188,000 South Sudanese had arrived in Ethiopia since conflict there erupted in December, bringing the total number in the country to 247,000. The UNHCR said East Africa's refugee infrastructure had been heavily strained by fighting in South Sudan, which has driven nearly half a million people into camps around the region, with most settling in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Sudan. It estimated up to 1 million South Sudanese could be displaced in neighboring countries by the end of this year, of which well over 300,000 are likely to come to Ethiopia.

Kisut Gebre-egziabher, public information officer at UNHCR's Ethiopia office, said Ethiopia was poised to bear the brunt of South Sudan's refugee crisis. "Resources", he said, "have always been scarce but the continuing influx of refugees from South Sudan in particular is putting further strains on our operations". Kitty McKinsey, UNHCR's spokeswoman for East Africa also noted that close proximity to South Sudan made Ethiopia's western regions accessible for many refugees, adding that "when a person's life is in danger, they flee to the closest safe country, and most of these people walked to get to Ethiopia".

Three of the camps and the three transit sites for South Sudan refugees are new, opened since the beginning of the year to handle the growing number fleeing the fighting there. Already all three camps are at capacity and UNHCR is developing two more. While refugees wait to be moved to the new camps, more than 18,000 are sheltered in three temporary sites in Gambella Regional State. However, in recent weeks heavy rain has flooded these sites, as well as Leitchuor Camp, where the situation is most serious. Some 10,000 refugees, more than a fifth of Leitchuor's population of 47,600, have been affected by flooding, damaging tents and shelters and affecting sanitation. The flooding was causing health concerns as the heavy rains threatened to undermine efforts to prevent outbreaks of waterborne diseases. A UNHCR spokesperson said many of the refugees arriving in neighboring countries were children who had particular vulnerabilities to such diseases as Hepatitis E which had appeared in the camps. The UNHCR is now working with the Ethiopian government, WHO and other partners to try to contain the disease, and improvements to sanitation were now under way. The UNHCR says that with the rainy season set to last until October, it was speeding up development of the new Nip Nip camp, some three kilometers from Leitchuor, which will be able to accommodate 20,000 refugees.

As well as coping with refugees from South Sudan, Ethiopia is also seeing an increasing number coming from Eritrea with people fleeing from the harsh authoritarian government. The UNHCR says the number of Eritrean refugees has shown a steady increase over the last several years, from an average of as low as 250 to 300 a month in 2009 to an average of 2,000 a month in 2014, with people saying they are fleeing “persecution at home, including gross human rights violations and forced and open-ended military conscription.”

The UNHCR says that the UNHCR, partner agencies and the Ethiopian government were providing protection and humanitarian aid at 23 refugee camps and five transit sites across Ethiopia. In its last annual report, the UNHCR noted that Ethiopia, due to its geographical position, as well as environmental and geo-political developments in the region, was likely to continue to receive large numbers of asylum-seekers from neighboring countries in 2014 and 2015. It noted the country’s history of receiving people displaced by cross-border movements due to droughts, conflicts, political events and civil wars in neighboring countries, including Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. The Government maintains an open-door-policy and has continuously allowed humanitarian access and protection to those seeking refuge on its territory, and the UNHCR said it had been generous in allocating land for the existing camps, including those in Dollo Ado, Shire, Gambella and Assosa, and in agreeing that new camps should be opened now the majority of existing camps were reaching maximum capacity. The UNHCR welcomed the fact that the Government provided police forces in the camps and facilitated customs clearance for internationally procured items. It also appreciated the Government’s out-of-camp scheme, allowing refugees to live outside refugee camps and engage in informal sector activities as livelihood opportunities. The main beneficiaries thus far have been students absorbed into universities, whose fees are paid for by the Government (75 per cent) and UNHCR (25 per cent).

The UNHCR’s main Government counterpart and implementing partner in Ethiopia is the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA), with whom it has set up coordination forums such as the Refugee Task Force, co-chaired by UNHCR and ARRA. Donor and NGO meetings and fora are held regularly at central level, and with inter-agency meetings at the field and camp levels, and agencies are fully engaged in the Humanitarian Country Team in Ethiopia, where refugee programs are discussed strategically to ensure that the needs of refugees are adequately presented and addressed.

Wind farms and the Climate Resilient ‘Green Economy’ are expanding in Ethiopia

The matrix of a resilient ‘Green Economy’ which includes multi-faceted dimensions and well-managed green economic and environmental strategies can result in economic, social and environmental development with little negative social and environmental impact. Ethiopia, building on its recent positive development record, aims to achieve middle-income status by 2025 while developing a ‘Green Economy’. As the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) lays down, reaching this goal will require boosting agricultural productivity, strengthening the industrial base, and fostering export growth. Aware that following the conventional development path would, among other adverse effects, result in a sharp increase in GHG emissions and unsustainable use of natural resources, the government has developed a strategy to build a ‘Green Economy’. Equally, as a responsible member of the world community, Ethiopia is very conscious of the important role that developing countries can play in fighting climate change. It has consequently taken on a constructive role in international climate negotiations. Ethiopia’s ambition to become a “green economy front-runner” is an expression of its potential for and belief in a sustainable model of growth; it is now starting to transform these strategies into action. To that end it has made it clear it welcomes collaboration with domestic and international partners.

The four pillars of Ethiopia’s Climate Resilient Green Economy strategy (CRGE) are agriculture, forestry, transport and power, within which the CRGE initiative has analyzed 150 potential green economy initiatives across seven different sectors, taking into account their potential to simultaneously support the country to reach its GTP targets and reduce GHG emissions in a cost-efficient way. In terms of agriculture, this is about improving crop and livestock production practices to increase food security and farmers’ incomes while also reducing emissions. The CRGE has prioritized three basic mechanisms to limit soil-based emissions from agriculture and lift the pressure on forests despite expansion of land under cultivation. First is the intensification of agriculture through improved inputs and better management resulting in decreased requirements for additional agricultural land and a consequent limit to deforestation. Secondly, it is encouraging the increase exploitation of degraded lands through small, medium, and large-scale irrigation. This will also reduce the pressure on forest areas. Thirdly, it is introducing lower-emission agricultural techniques, ranging from the use of carbon and nitrogen-efficient crop cultivars to the promotion of organic

fertilizers. Related mechanisms are also being put in place to increase the productivity and efficiency of the livestock sector.

The second pillar in building a Climate Resilient Green Economy is forestry itself. As the strategy notes, this involves protecting and re-establishing forests for their economic and ecosystem benefits, including the increase of carbon stocks. Deforestation and forest degradation must be reversed to support the continued provision of economic and ecosystem growth. Current projections indicate that unless action is taken to change the traditional development approaches, an area of 9 million more hectares might be deforested by 2030. Reversing this requires reducing the demand for wood fuels through the dissemination and usage of fuel-efficient stoves or alternative-fuel cooking and baking techniques, including electric, LPG, or biogas stoves). It also involves changes in such basic factors as reforestation and forest management as well as promoting area closures through rehabilitation of degraded pasture and farm lands, enhancing soil fertility and improving basic farming mechanisms.

Transport, industrial sectors and construction is the third major strategic group in the national green growth matrix. The CRGE aims to leapfrog current inefficient structures and introduce modern and energy-efficient technologies. One example of this would be shifting transport from road to rail which will decrease transport costs and improve the trade balance through reduced import of fossil fuels. It will also lower emissions and improve congestion and air pollution as well as decrease traffic accidents. In terms of industrial development the textile, leather, and fertilizer industries, among others, are classified as priorities and as important parts of the envisaged green growth development model.

Power is the final pillar of the CRGE development strategy. The central element in this is the expansion of electricity generation from renewable energy sources for domestic and regional markets. Power, whether for agricultural irrigation, provision for industries or lighting cities and electricity for households, is the central mechanism creating synergy between the major sectors of green economic development and overall growth. Ethiopia requires expansion of power supplies at a rate of more than 14% per year to continue the fast economic development that the country has maintained for the past decade.

The CRGE strategy states “Ethiopia is endowed with ample natural resources to meet this demand, primarily by exploiting its vast potential for hydro, geothermal, solar and wind power all of which would deliver electricity at virtually zero GHG emissions. If adequately captured, the projected power supply could even exceed the growing domestic demand: while the demand is projected to be nearly 70 TWh in 2030, energy efficiency measures exists to decrease the demand by 19 TWh. Hence, increasing the supply and at the same time maximizing energy efficiency offers the possibility to export clean energy to neighboring countries.”

There is, in fact, every need to opt for renewable sources of energy. While hydropower is, of course, a major element in this and one that has been given most prominence in recent years with the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and other developments, wind power offers the cheapest source of energy. There is every need to opt for renewable sources, among which wind energy is the cheapest. Wind power also offers some of the most diverse uses including wind turbines to make electricity, windmills for mechanical power, wind pumps for pumping water or drainage and even sails for ships. It is a crucial element in the effort to produce climate resilient green economic growth. Indeed, today Ethiopia is actively expanding its wind power as one of the major efforts to diversify power resources. Africa's biggest wind farm, the Ashegoda Wind Farm, producing 120mw and costing around US\$289 million, began production in October last year. It is the second such project in the country after the 51mw Adama I Wind Farm, which began production in 2011. Current plans allow for raising wind power generation to more than 800mw. Experts put Ethiopia's overall hydropower potential at around 45,000mw and its possible geothermal output at about 5,000mw, and its overall wind power potential also runs into tens of thousands of megawatts. A number of international firms, including the French firm Vergnet SA and U.S.-Icelandic, are already involved in wind power development.

More are showing interest. Last week, Dr. Tedros Adhanom met with representatives of a US Virginia-based global energy group, Tristar and Tritente Global Energy Group LLC, to discuss expanding the energy sector and in particular wind power. The Minister noted that Ethiopia was working aggressively to achieve the goals of the Growth and Transformation Plan and emphasized that it needed green energy partners to build up the sector comprehensively. He explained the Government was always ready to support companies in partnership and investment in the energy sector. Mr. Paul Delkaso, President and CEO of Tristar and Tritente Global Energy Group, said the company is seriously interested to invest in Ethiopia in the wind farm development, and the company was preparing to conduct research as well as planning to invest in various regions. It also hoped to collaborate in technical and vocational education development.

Ethiopia becomes a “quintessential embodiment of the “Africa rising” narrative”

Good news has recently been appearing in various media and other reports detailing Ethiopia’s impressive economic, social and political developments and its moves towards becoming one of Africa’s centers for “millions of middle-class households’ with the additional comment that these trends will “will keep increasing in the next 15 years.” At the heart of the growth narrative and its promising economic, social, environmental and political trajectory, are the aims of freezing underlying impediments of national renewal, significantly improving poverty reduction, improving the lives and livelihood of the people sustainably, attaining the aims of the Growth and Transformation Plan (2010-2015) and achieving the Millennium Development Goals and reaching middle income status by 2025.

The nation’s resurgence and current economic successes come from the Government’s considerable public investments in infrastructure, agriculture, services, and manufacturing within the framework of pro-poor development. The country’s outlook economic growth and political stability has recently gained appreciation and attention from major international rating firms including Standard, Poor’s, Moody’s and Fitch. They assigned a credit rating of “B”, “B1” and (B+). These ratings highlighted the strength of the current development and future growth of Ethiopia’s “strong economic performance” with its average real GDP growth of 10.9% over the past five years, the considerable decline of inflation and budget deficits, low levels of current spending, sustainability of the nation’s development model, and moderate fiscal debt. They concluded that this economic success was accompanied by “significant poverty reduction and fairly homogenous wealth levels” combined with a “political stability since its new constitution in 1995, under the leadership of the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) coalition.” In sum, by becoming a champion of macro-economic and political stability, and joining the fastest growing economies of Africa, Ethiopia’s growing importance in international trade and investment has ushered in a new period of development, advancement and prosperity.

One tangible result of this can be seen in the growing attention of international businesses, the increase business visits, economic partnerships and increasing Foreign Direct Investment. The country’s economic partnership are particularly aimed at increasing agri-businesses and manufacturing as well as acquiring technology with the view to bringing about the structural transformation of the economy, creating employment and especially for the youth and expediting the country’s socio-economic growth. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the overseas embassies and the country’s economic agencies and other promotional bodies are agents of this progress, deployed as catalysts for the economic transformation agenda. According to FDI Intelligence magazine, the FDI report 2014, The Global Greenfield Investment Trends, placed Ethiopia as “one of the top ten foreign direct investment destination countries in the Middle East and Africa in 2013. Last year, in fact, Ethiopia amassed US\$ 4.5 billion and stood eighth”, doing better than both Algeria and Kenya.

The seriousness with which Ethiopia’s growing importance is being taken, can be seen this in the series of visits of business delegations from Qatar, Italy and Japan, during which it has been able to showcase the opportunities, incentives, and the overall climate of the country’s investment, business and trade potential and possibilities. In the discussions with the Qatari business delegation headed by Sheikh Khalid bin Thani Al Thani, Chairman of Ezdan Holding Group of Qatar, President Dr. Mulatu highlighted the Government’s readiness to offer all possible support to encourage foreign investment in Ethiopia through available facilities and incentives and policies that protect investments in the country. Sheikh Al Thani said he observed a clear interest from the Ethiopian side in Qatari investment and a serious attempt to provide a suitable and attractive environment for investments that could play an influential role in moving development forward and finding new job opportunities. Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros, who also briefed the delegation noted that Ethiopia was a champion of macro-economic stability and socio-economic development, and recommended the value of participating in the country’s efforts to make Ethiopia a nucleus of medical tourism and manufacturing in Africa. Sheikh Al Thani said Ethiopia’s present economic takeoff and future economic and political trajectory were major driving forces to encourage investment and add value to the areas of health, real-estate development and hotels in which his company was ready to invest.

The Public and Private Joint Business delegation for ‘Trade and Investment Promotion between Japan and Africa’, led by Mr. Ishihara Hirota, Japan’s Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs also met with President Dr. Mulatu and with Prime Minister Hailemariam. The delegation was briefed on the abundant options and incentives available in its investment and business environment. Japanese government support for Ethiopia’s development in technical and financial areas was welcomed. The importance of investing in

the sectors of leather and leather products and the textile to offer the most value to Japanese companies was underlined. Mr. Hirotaka, noting the long established relationship between the two nations, said Japan much appreciated Ethiopia's development and transformational efforts. He said Japan would like to strengthen its trade and investment with African countries like Ethiopia where there were good investment opportunities, and said a number of major Japanese companies were prepared to expand their investment in Ethiopia.

Dr. Debretsion Gebre-Michael, in charge of the Economy and Finance Cluster with the rank of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Communications and Information Technology, also received an Italian business delegation, headed by Ambassador of Italy to Ethiopia, Giuseppe Mistretta, this week. He noted that Ethiopia valued the engagement of Italian business and investors in the country and was strongly committed to support those who intended to engage in manufacturing, infrastructure, green energy infrastructure development, construction and agri-business. He said Ethiopia welcomed participation in its major aim of building of a climate-resilient green economy and underlined the importance of a green energy partnership for power developments in the region and in Africa. He said he hoped Italian support would inject additional impetus to speed up the nation's move to sustainable development. Mr. Roberto Luongo, CEO and Managing Director of Italian Trade Agency, said Italy was keen to invest in the spheres of manufacturing, infrastructure, green energy development and construction. He also noted that Italy was planning to open a commercial office in Addis Ababa. Members of the delegation briefed the Minister on their possible participation in Ethiopia's investment and business potential.

These developments underline the Government's increasing reliance on the practical implementation of well-chosen development policies and strategies for the improvement of peoples' needs and aspirations as well as acceleration of an equitable national economic and social transformation. Equally important is the Government's deep commitment to the nation's renaissance and emancipation of people from poverty and disease, to entrench a common national identity, unity and national cohesion. It demonstrates the way the economic diplomacy of the country is at work improving the image of the nation and the promotion of its economic opportunities. Ethiopia's economic successes are helping the people to challenge one of the major ironies of Africa, that it is, in the words of Salim Ahmed Salim, former Secretary-General of the OAU, "a rich continent inhabited by the poorest people."

Ethiopia's focus on manufacturing, increasing FDI and trade inflows as well as the changing image of the country and its expanding development projects are laying solid foundations for people-centered and sustainable development to produce accelerated structural transformation of the nation's economy. Equally, it is dedicating much resource and investment to charting the way forward in support of the economic integration of Africa with the aim of playing a central role in the "Africa Rising" narrative of the 21st century.
