

A Week in the Horn 30th November 2012

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Somalia's President on a three-day state visit to Ethiopia

The President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has been on a three-day state visit to Ethiopia this week 28th to 30th (November). Prime Minister Hailemariam and other officials welcomed President Mohamud at Bole International Airport on Wednesday [28th], and the two leaders held discussions on a number of bilateral and regional issues of mutual interest. During their talks, the Prime Minister said that the people of Somalia had suffered the consequences of selfish political pursuits and predatory ambitions, which had led to widespread civil conflict over the last two decades. No one, except the Somali people and a few friends had expected the country to survive. The Prime Minister, however, noted that Ethiopia was one of the few countries that had never lost faith in the Somali people's perseverance and will to survive. This was why the youth of Ethiopia fought and died in the valleys and hills of Somalia, side by side with their Somali brothers, in the search for peace and stability. Ethiopia had invested a great deal of time and energy to bring the case of Somalia to the attention of the international community and to bring its Somali brothers together. It remains determined, the Prime Minister added, to assist Somalia until it can stand on its own feet, in peace and stability, and bring the recent chapters of war and destruction to a close.

Prime Minister Hailemariam expressed his strong belief that Somalia has now opened a new chapter of peace and tranquility with the election of its new leadership. Somalis and friends of Somalia were beginning to see a light on the horizon for the first time in twenty years. He said the last five months must be considered historic by any standards as Somalia has achieved a new federal constitution, a new parliament and a president legitimately elected by a system reflecting Somalia's social organization and its political realities. He noted the peaceful and transparent manner of the election and said these changes were an excellent omen for Somalia's political future.

The Prime Minister said he was impressed by the gains made so far in Somalia, but at the same time, he appreciated the magnitude of the remaining tasks. He expressed his belief that the Somali people have legitimate expectations from their elected leaders including jobs, social and administrative services and a justice system, all things of which they had been deprived for so long. He said the Ethiopian government knew very well that the problems of twenty years of

conflict, war and destruction could not be easily solved. He expressed his hope that, though the challenges might remain substantial, the new leadership would apply the same wisdom and sense of responsibility it had shown in recent months in tackling the continuing problems of reconciliation, governance and reconstruction.

Prime Minister Hailemariam underlined his government's assurance that the new Somali leadership would not be alone in this new phase of its journey towards a reconciled and reconstructed Somali state. He said Ethiopia would happily share whatever experiences it had in institution building, human resource development, agricultural growth and infrastructural improvement. Ethiopia, he said, would continue to assist in the training and development of Somalia's national armed forces and in other ways as required. He expressed his belief that now was the time to broaden the cooperation between the two brotherly countries into areas of trade and investment as well as in social services, suggesting that it was now appropriate to institutionalize the two countries government-to-government relationship to accommodate and manage the increasing bilateral relations in an effective and mutually beneficial way.

President Mohamud agreed. The two leaders have therefore accepted to establish a Joint Ministerial Commission to allow for regular deliberations and provide the ability to follow up implementation of agreements, and help to consider ways to discuss and decide on new areas for cooperation in the future. It has been agreed that the first session of the Commission will be held in Mogadishu. This will also allow for the extension of cooperation in the areas of capacity and institution building, and of the civil service. President Mohamud, who thanked the Ethiopian government for its efforts to bring lasting peace and stability in Somalia in bilateral and multilateral fora including IGAD, the African Union and the UN, also expressed Somalia's desire to cooperate with Ethiopia in agriculture and infrastructural development. He said Somalia could learn from Ethiopia's experiences and expertise in federal arrangements, and he requested Ethiopia's assistance in the area of leadership skills in the military. Prime Minister Hailemariam assured the Somali President that Ethiopia would continue to assist Somalia and would provide support in all the areas requested; the two leaders agreed to continue the cooperation previously carried out during the previous Transitional Federal Government.

President Mohamud also met with Ambassador Berhane Gebrechristos, Acting Foreign Minister, who stressed that Ethiopia attached great importance to its relations with Somalia. Their links were rooted in the long cultural and historical ties between two brotherly peoples and was not based merely on political issues. They were infused with their common efforts for peace and tranquility in the sub-region. Ambassador Berhane said Ethiopia had identified numerous areas for further cooperation with Somalia and noted that the series of discussions held between the two sides underlined their practical similarity of position on almost all major issues of common interest. This was due to a similar vision on matters of regional peace and security and on the future direction of their bilateral relations.

On Wednesday evening, Prime Minister Hailemariam hosted a State Banquet in honour of President Mohamud, and in a speech reiterating his welcome of the President, the Prime Minister expressed his heartfelt satisfaction over the open mindedness, fraternal spirit and determination of the new Somali leadership to lift the two countries' relationship to an even higher level. He assured President Mohamud that there were equally committed and reliable partners in the Ethiopian government's leadership. Now was a historic time not only for Somalia but for the entire region. A stable Somalia was a positive force for all peace and security efforts in the sub-region and would provide a central element of the regional integration processes now underway. He expressed his belief that the legendary entrepreneurial and hard-working skills of Somali brothers would provide a positive addition to the whole process of regional economic

integration. Ethiopia wanted to see Somalia becoming part and parcel of the whole integration process of the Horn of Africa as the interconnections of the sub-region increase, with common infrastructural developments, major projects in energy, water and other areas both underway and in the planning stages. He said Ethiopia does not want Somalia to be left out from these history-making projects, designed to provide regional prosperity and offering mutual benefit and development.

The Prime Minister emphasized that the balance of forces in the sub-region, and in Somalia, had moved significantly towards peace and stability. This offered a real chance for development. At the same time, it was important not to be complacent. Those same forces which have caused terrible devastation to the people of Somalia and elsewhere, are still working to try to reverse the progress made by the new Somalia leadership and its allies. The negative forces might be seriously weakened and isolated both domestically and internationally but they had not yet been destroyed. They were still trying to take Somalia back into the dark years of war and destruction. Nevertheless, he said, these were the forces of a dark past that the new leadership and the people of Somalia had shown so clearly they were determined to shut away forever. The Prime Minister expressed his belief that the future was now a time with abundant possibilities for the peace and prosperity of all the people of Somalia. He reiterated Ethiopia's readiness to continue to assist in any way possible in the Somali government's and peoples' noble efforts.

During his visit, President Mohamud also met with Dr Nkosazana Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission and held meetings with other Ethiopian and AU officials as well as diplomats and Somali citizens in Ethiopia. President Mohamud is on a tour of neighbouring countries. He visited Djibouti earlier in the week and left for Kenya on the morning of Friday (30th November).

COMESA: 16th Summit in Kampala

The 16th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Common Market for East and Central Africa (COMESA) Authority was held in Kampala from 23rd to 24th November, under the theme "Boosting Intra-COMESA trade through Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development". The Summit was preceded by the 31st Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee, the 12th Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the 31st Meeting of the Council of Ministers. The Summit was attended by the Presidents of Comoros, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda and Zimbabwe, the Vice-Presidents of Burundi and Seychelles and the Prime Ministers of Ethiopia, Rwanda and Swaziland as well as the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. The Summit paid special tribute to the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and commended Ethiopia for the smooth transition of power. It also congratulated Ato Hailemariam on his assumption of the office of Prime Minister of Ethiopia.

The President of Uganda took over the Chairmanship of COMESA from the President of Malawi, and in his opening Statement, President Museveni underscored the importance of the Summit's theme to enable the region to address the challenges faced by Small and Medium Enterprises. Indeed, the Summit then called for the elimination of all Non-Tariff Barriers constraining intra-regional trade, with a specific focus on enhancing market access opportunities for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. It urged COMESA Member States to continue consolidating the COMESA Free Trade Area by removing all Non-Tariff Barriers using the Tripartite Online Reporting and Monitoring Mechanism. Furthermore, it decided to extend the transition period for the Customs Union by a further two years and called for the adoption of a comprehensive Roadmap for the two-year period to address outstanding issues and concerns.

The Summit considered and adopted the report of the 31st Meeting of the Council of Ministers and the 12th Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, and noted the report of the Secretary-General of COMESA on the state of integration in the region. According to the report, intra-COMESA trade had increased to US\$18.4 billion by 2011. The Summit recognized the crucial role of transportation and communication in fast-tracking economic integration and boosting intra-COMESA trade. It endorsed the decision to expedite the implementation of infrastructural projects such as railways, energy supplies, roads and ICT. It directed the Secretary-General to liaise with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and other Regional Economic Communities and partners to mobilize funds for the implementation of those infrastructure projects.

On issues of peace and Security, the Summit underscored the importance of ensuring peace and security in order to create an enabling environment for sustainable economic development in the COMESA region. It welcomed the recent encouraging developments in Somalia and congratulated President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud on his election as President of the Federal Republic of Somalia. It welcomed the progress made by Sudan and South Sudan in their negotiations under the auspices of the AUHIP, but expressed its concern over the worsening security and humanitarian situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the resumption of hostilities by M23. It called upon the rebel group to immediately withdraw from all occupied areas and allow the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region a mechanism to find a durable solution through its political and diplomatic processes.

On administrative matters, the Summit renewed the mandate of Sindiso Ndema Ngwenya of Zimbabwe as Secretary-General of COMESA for another five-year term with effect from 1st July next year and appointed Ambassador Kipyego Cheluget from Kenya as Assistant Secretary-General in charge of programmes. The Summit also congratulated Admasu Tadesse and Ibrahim Zeidy from Ethiopia for their appointments as the new President of the PTA Bank and the Director of the COMESA Monetary Institute respectively.

In his remarks to the Summit, Prime Minister Hailemariam expressed his heartfelt thanks for the special tribute in honour of the late Premier. He went on to highlight the tremendous efforts exerted by Ethiopia over the years in laying the infrastructural basis for consolidating economic ties with countries of the Horn of Africa sub-region, emphasizing the fundamental importance of putting in place an integrated network of roads, railways, maritime transport, inland waterways and civil aviation to foster intra-regional trade as part of Ethiopia's efforts to enhance its position in global trade.

The Prime Minister also referred to the significant progress made in the search for the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the COMESA region. He mentioned the series of agreements signed between Sudan and South Sudan on 27th September this year in Addis Ababa under the auspices of the African Union High Level Implementation Panel. He also noted the smooth conclusion of the transition period in Somalia with the adoption of a new provisional constitution, the inauguration of a new parliament and the election of a new president. These, he said, opened a new chapter in the history of the country, rekindling a new sense of hope and optimism for peace and stability as well as for post-conflict reconstruction and development.

The situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, however, remained a matter of serious concern to the peace and security of the region. The Prime Minister indicated that the resolution of the problem required a deeper understanding of the complex political history of the area as well as a comprehensive approach involving all the countries of the Great Lakes Region. He, therefore, expressed Ethiopia's support for the efforts being made by the International

Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the African Union to find a peaceful solution to the problems of the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

An EU delegation visits Mogadishu

A delegation of twelve ambassadors from the European Union, led by the EU's Special Envoy to Somalia, Ambassador Michele Cervone d'Urso, visited Mogadishu for consultation with the executive and the legislative branches of the new Somali government on Tuesday (27th November). The delegation held talks with the new Somali Prime Minister, Abdi Farah Shirdon, other cabinet ministers and Members of Parliament. After meeting the delegation, Prime Minister Shirdon, in a joint press conference, said he had been delighted to receive the EU's Special Envoy for Somalia in Mogadishu. He noted that Somalia and the EU had now agreed to enhance their excellent existing bilateral relations. The EU envoy, Ambassador d'Urso, expressed the EU's readiness to work with the new Somali government. He noted that the EU had now offered 158 million euros (US\$200 million) to the Somali government to improve education, the legal system, reconstruction and security.

The Parliament's Second Deputy Speaker, Mahad Abdalla Awad, said the purpose of the meeting between MPs and the EU delegation was to share experiences with European countries that had a long history of democratic traditions and to provide 'mentorship' in areas like participation and the building of democracy. Since the new Parliament assumed office earlier in the year, the EU has been insistent that Parliament should support the agenda of the executive branch and avoid the former habits of bickering between the different branches of government. Parliament requested that the EU delegation provide more financial support to the government and, according to reports, the EU delegation agreed to consider possible ways to cover the salaries of the 224 Parliament staff members for a year. It also expressed the EU's readiness to provide direct support to Parliament in the areas of capacity building to help the parliament fulfil its mandate of representation, of executive oversight and financial policy and the scrutiny of public finance, for maintaining the balance of power between Parliament vis-à-vis the executive branch, developing bilateral relations between the Parliament and various legislatures in Europe, and in the overall exchange of expertise. The EU delegation said its members were extremely impressed by the encouraging progress shown by the new Somali Parliament including the fact that it had managed to convene an impressive total of 34 sessions within a three month period.

The Speaker of the Parliament, Mohamed Osman Jawaari, told the delegation that Parliament had accomplished a number of key tasks during this period. It had fulfilled its role in establishing the executive branch, including the election of the President and a vote of confidence for the Prime Minister and the members of Council of Ministers and its government programme. It had put in place comprehensive rules of procedure and these are expected to be enacted next week. It has also developed a four-year strategic plan for parliamentary activities. It has established the Parliament's staff policy; analyzed and approved the last quarter's budget for 2012; prepared the Parliament's scheme of budget allocation for 2013 as part of the national budget; produced an outreach and reconciliation plan for the federal government in the regions; and visited liberated areas of south-central Somalia with a view to consolidating peace and stability. Reports from Mogadishu indicate that the Parliament has carried out a series of consultations over the last three weeks on issues related to House by-laws. These include preparations of a preliminary draft of the legal instrument of the House by-laws, and discussion of the draft document for correction, alteration and additions. Parliament has incorporated practicable legal enactments from experienced countries into its draft including elements of Ethiopia's Parliamentary Rules of Procedure. It is expected this may pave the way for incorporating other legal enactments from parliaments of federal states.

The Speaker also answered questions about parliament's role in regard to the IGAD-sponsored deal aimed at putting in place workable directions to help establish strong and all-inclusive local administrations in the Juba regions. He said there was no Parliament involvement yet on this issue as Parliament had decided not to complicate the situation further and instead had opted to give the executive branch the responsibility and a leading role in handling the matter. In reply to concerns raised by members of the EU delegation over the matter of charcoal, the Speaker said the export of charcoal has been illegal in Somalia since 1960. He said the charcoal trade should remain illegal until parliament, as requested by the executive, comes up with a legal framework to regulate all charcoal activities. He asked the EU delegates to help to convince states receiving charcoal exports to denounce the illegality of the trade and bring it to an end.

The 125th anniversary celebrations of Addis Ababa come to an end

The months of celebration for the 125th anniversary of the founding of Addis Ababa ended on Saturday (24th November) in a ceremony at Addis Ababa's stadium. Those attending the closing event included Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Ato Demeke Mekonnen, senior government officials, representatives of the public, mayors of various African cities, Ambassadors and diplomats in Addis Ababa and other dignitaries. Representatives of nearly thirty twin towns and sister cities attended the celebration.

In a speech, the Deputy Prime Minister noted that: "the rapid growth of the city within a short period of time has made it one of the best cities of the world". He said the government fully understood the problems that remained, despite the encouraging improvements that have already taken place in terms of the city's development. A lot still needed to be done to make the city more hospitable for urban life. He expressed the federal government's readiness to support the city administration in all its development efforts. Addis Ababa's Mayor, Kuma Demeksa, noting that Addis Ababa, in its one hundred and twenty five years of history, had passed through many historic trajectories, said many activities had been carried out to improve the infrastructural interconnectivity of the city and its welcoming hospitable friendliness. Indeed, the city could now be "considered as a second home to all Africans". Addis Ababa, established during the reign of Emperor Menelik II in 1879 (Ethiopian Calendar) is of course now an important administrative centre not only for Ethiopia but also for the whole of Africa. During months of celebrations, a series of documentary films depicting the city's infrastructural development, its socio-economic changes and its current situation was shown. Numerous discussions and workshops were organized, and, overall, the celebrations created a unique opportunity to promote the city as well as to preserve and extend its heritage.

Recently, *Lonely Planet*, one of the biggest travel publishers, identified a top ten cities throughout the world, in its "Best in 2013" rankings, that, it said, visitors should include in their preference for places to visit. A team of travel experts, authors, commissioning editors and members of Lonely Planet's travel community chose Addis Ababa as one of the ten cities. The city was lauded for its "multifaceted assets" and Lonely Planet also named it best for "culture, food, value for money." Addis Ababa is the diplomatic hub of Africa, hosting the headquarters of the African Union, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), as well as being home to a number of other international multilateral organizations. It's the central hub for Ethiopian Airlines, now one of the largest airlines in Africa, offering connecting services to more countries and airports in Africa than any other airline, and offering Americans another "best in travel".

Addis Ababa is green and fertile, with a wealth of trees, and it has a significant number of attractions located both in central areas and nearby. These include the National and Ethnological

Museums, Holy Trinity and Giorgis Cathedrals, Adadi Mariam, the Beza Entoto Workshop, the Lion Zoo with its unique population of Black-maned Ethiopian Lions and the Mercato, the largest market in Africa. There are a number of natural hot swimming pools in the city and nearby, as well as Menagesha and Wachacha Forests, with their 400-year-old juniper trees, and the Entoto Hills above the city. As tourists repeatedly testify, Addis Ababa is arguably one of the safest cities in Africa and its facilities for tourists have been given a notable boost this year with the completion of a number of first class hotels and guest houses as well as restaurants to suit all tastes; its people are warm and friendly.

Ethio-Kenya Special Status Agreement: moving towards regional integration

The 34th session of the Ethio-Kenya Joint Ministerial Commission held last week in Nairobi and preceded by an experts' meeting, ended with the signing of a number of agreements aimed at boosting bilateral relations between the two countries. One of these agreements was the Special Status Agreement, an idea to elevate the relationship between Ethiopia and Kenya agreed between the late Prime Minister Meles and Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki during their talks in Nairobi last March.

The signing of the Special Status Agreement attracted close attention from all those following relations between the two countries and within the region as a whole. Not surprisingly, given the long-standing warm relations between the two countries, the reaction was positive from both sides with commentators regarding the signing as positive, reflecting shared optimism between the two countries on the ability to elevate relations to an even higher level. As various media outlets reported, the importance attached to the agreement related specifically to its aim to improve trade, investment, infrastructure and economic ties between Ethiopia and Kenya. These are areas that have been less than satisfactory despite the generally warm relationship in other areas. Indeed, the Agreement was seen to be giving impetus to the weak relations in some priority areas; trade for example stands at no more than US\$35million. The symbolic value of the agreement was demonstrated by the warm reception it received from the Kenyan business community during their discussion with Prime Minister Hailemariam on the side-lines of the meeting.

It should be noted that the general purport of the Special Status Agreement, rather crudely, is to aim to remove tariff and non-tariff trade barriers and ease investment hurdles through bilateral arrangements as opposed to multilateral avenues. This is clear from the provisions which require the two countries to work towards reducing tariffs, to improve market access, to ease procedures of issuance of permits, and to develop an economic corridor. Overall, the concept of a free-trade area, outlining trade relations between the two states, underpins the entire framework of the agreement.

The accord sets out five priority areas in which the Special Status Agreement applies between Ethiopia and Kenya: these are trade, investment, infrastructure, food security and sustainable livelihoods. The agreement envisages the establishment of a Joint Private Investment Council made up from the private sector of each country to play the role of liaising with respective investment agencies. In addition, a High Level Joint Tripartite Council, a triangular body with representatives of the two governments as well as of the Joint Private Investment Council, is to be established by the agreement to facilitate the implementation of the 'special status' in the four priority sectors.

The agreement makes a number of commitments in the priority areas. In respect to trade; the agreement commits the two countries to working towards the gradual lifting of non-tariff and

tariff barriers. It provides a legal obligation to work towards progressive tariff concessions, the harmonization of tariff lines, the streamlining of standardization procedures and to increase market access to goods produced in either country. The agreement also allows for the free movement of commercial vehicles in accordance with a prior agreement signed concerning road transport services last year. This has been welcomed as a demonstration of the commitment shown by both countries to encourage cross-border trade and as an alternative to maritime transport in the movement of goods between the two countries. The agreement commits both countries to giving full market access to each other in accordance with their respective investment legislation. Other aspects of the Agreement in the service sector include removing non-tariff barriers such as easing bureaucratic red tape in the issuance of permits, guaranteeing free movement of tourists, the exchange of programmes and collaboration in research and development.

To encourage investment, the Agreement commits the two parties to working towards the conclusion of an agreement of avoidance of double taxation as well as to developing a joint investment programme to be launched by the respective private sectors. In dealing with infrastructure, the Agreement gives special emphasis to the development of energy along the economic corridor, the areas dedicated to economic development in Kenya and in Ethiopia. It encourages the two sides to work closely to further cooperate over power generation along the economic corridor. This is in addition to a 2011 power-purchase agreement under which Ethiopia will be selling 400 MW of power to Kenya.

In the areas of sustainable livelihood and food security, the Agreement reflects the aspiration of both countries to jointly develop trans-boundary waters and cooperate in agricultural development. It also commits the two sides to working together in ensuring food security to their respective citizens living in border areas, as well as to working closely over the cross-border livestock trade.

Overall, the significance of the signing of the Agreement can be broadly categorized as twofold. It brings bilateral relations between Ethiopia and Kenya to a higher level and specifically in areas where the relationship had been deficient. It also adds another dimension to the efforts of IGAD to integrate the region under the Minimum Integration Plan, going a long way towards augmenting multilateral efforts. More than anything else, it is clear that the opportunities that may flow from the Agreement will allow businesses in both countries to develop in terms of competitiveness and in gaining access to a market of no less than 130 million peoples. This is, indeed, the most significant aspect of the Agreement.

The Special Status Agreement, as a framework agreement, aims to bring closer cooperation between Ethiopia and Kenya in the areas of trade, investment, food security and livelihood and infrastructure. To achieve these it is going to be drawing on a number of significant strategies of joint collaboration: negotiating trade tariffs; establishing expert committees to study sectoral issues; launching investment programmes; exchanging and sharing knowledge. All of these will also lead to the signing of other specific agreements in the future. The advantages for both the bilateral relationship and for the possibilities of regional integration, to which both countries are committed, are very clear. The Special Status Agreement is, indeed, a welcome development in the relations between the two countries.

The Doha Climate Talks open

The 18th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP18), and the 8th session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, opened

on Monday 26th November in Doha, Qatar. The meeting, which will continue until 7th December, is being attended by close to 17,000 representatives from 195 countries drawn from government delegates, and representatives of business and industry and environmental organizations. Over 100 ministers will also be expected to attend a four-day high-level decision-making plenary session to be opened by UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki Moon on 4th December 2012.

The Doha Climate Talks have three main agenda areas for discussion and decision. There are a considerable number of possible sticking points that are likely to see heated debates between developing and developed countries in the areas of reduction of carbon emissions and climate finance, as well as the issue of a framework agreement.

The first agenda of the summit is concerned with the proposed Long-Term Cooperative Action. At the Climate Talks in Durban last year the conference decided to aim for a comprehensive and binding agreement on climate change by 2015 and bring it into force in 2020. As a corollary, the parties to the UNFCCC agreed to extend the term of the Kyoto Protocol, setting carbon emission abatement limits on signatories beyond the expiry of Kyoto in 2012. The block of developing countries allied itself with Europe at Durban and successfully fought for a second round of commitments instead of a new binding treaty.

Many environmentalists are gloomy about the prospects for Doha to make progress in the light of the Copenhagen Accord, which produced a new bottom-up approach to global greenhouse emissions. Over the past three years, 141 countries, including all major emitters in the developed and developing world, responsible for more than 80 per cent of global emissions, have made voluntary mitigation pledges. The criticism levelled against voluntary mitigation pledges, however, is that the major greenhouse emitters in effect signed a controversial agreement, the Copenhagen Accord, which sought to bring together climate pledges under a new framework but without legal sanctions.

Proponents of the Copenhagen Accord hailed it as a mild success, arguing that it had broken the divide between developing and developed countries which had for so long prevented the world from taking any meaningful concerted action against greenhouse emissions. The Durban Long - Term Cooperative Action plan also favours voluntary mitigation, though it carefully blurs whether the Doha negotiators are anticipated to come up with a Kyoto-type protocol or a legally binding treaty which penalizes defaulters. Many environmentalists claim most countries have failed in their commitment to the voluntary elements of the Copenhagen Accord to attain the pre-industrial 2 degree temperature rise, and argue this is unattainable without a legally binding treaty. This will be a major issue at Doha.

The second issue is related to the extension of the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. Discussions are expected to focus on the extension of the Protocol for a second period that would end in 2020 at the latest. The main contention relates to the divide between the developing countries and developed countries, since many developed countries including the USA, which is not a signatory to the protocol, oppose it because it sets emission targets for developed countries, but not for the developing countries, many of which are growing emitters of carbon. The result is that the proposed legal obligations for a second extension of the commitment period would apply only to a fraction of global emissions, amounting to less than 15% of the total carbon emissions. In spite of this, however, many poorer nations, including most African nations, want the wealthier states to take on substantial new and additional cuts in carbon emissions over the next five years. They argue that the more than 150 years of industrial activity carried out by the developed countries are a major cause for climate change and therefore the burden of reduction of emissions should go to these countries.

Africa, as demonstrated at Durban, has shown its firm support for the continuation of quantified emissions reduction in the second commitment period. The figure it put on this was of at least 40 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020; and between 80–95 per cent by 2050. It based this on the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities”. Reflecting on the prospects of hammering out a second extension, analysts speculate there may be a tug-of-war between developing countries and developed countries on the exact length of the extension, what new commitments for reductions developed countries will agree to, what level of ratification parties will agree to, and whether the Clean Development Mechanism should be open to any developed countries that sign up to the Kyoto Protocol, or only to those that articulate an official Quantified Emission Limitation and Reduction. The Clean Development programme, which allows developing nations to trade carbon emissions in exchange for green energy programmes, has remained largely ineffectual. This is likely to become another bone of contention; indeed, overall, the discussions of this part of the agenda and of the extension of the Protocol are likely to be no less contentious.

The third agenda area is related to an important aspect of the Long-Term Cooperative Action track, implementation of two institutions previously agreed to at the meetings at Copenhagen and at Cancun earlier this year. These have been designed to help developing countries in adaptation and mitigation of the adverse effects of climate change. These are the Green Climate Fund and the Climate Technology Centre and Network. The financial commitments made as part of the Long-Term Cooperative Action track negotiations are perhaps the most critical at this point. In 2009, parties agreed to targets for climate finance of US\$30 billion from 2010 to 2012, and the creation of a global fund to help mobilize the bulk of a further commitment of US\$100 billion annually in public and private funds by 2020. Developing countries attending the meetings in Doha will be concerned that a funding gap should not develop between 2012 and 2020. Equally, given the various contradictory reports on the performance of the developed countries in implementing the US\$30 billion commitment, the ways to acquire the necessary finance for the US\$100 billion commitments will be at the top of the agenda.

Prime Minister Hailemariam appoints new ministers

On Thursday this week (29th November) the House of People's Representatives approved Prime Minister Hailemariam's appointment of five Ministers. The appointments followed recent changes in the organization of the executive following the Prime Minister's own appointment in September. Accordingly, Ato Muktar Kedir is appointed to co-ordinate the Good Governance and Reform Cluster with the rank of Deputy Prime Minister, and as Minister of the Civil Service. Dr Debretsion Gebremichel, keeping his post as Minister of Communication and Information Technology, has been appointed to coordinate the Economy and Finance Cluster also with the rank of Deputy Prime Minister. Dr Tedros Adhanom, previously Minister of Health, has been appointed as Minister of Foreign Affairs, a post previously held by Prime Minister Hailemariam. Dr Tedros has headed the Ministry of Health for the past seven years. The other two ministerial appointments are of the Acting Minister for Trade, Ato Kebede Chane, confirmed as Trade Minister; and of Dr Keseteberhan Admassu, formerly State Minister of Health, taking over as the Minister of Health.

A posthumous award for the late Prime Minister

Bright Entertainment Network Television has honoured the memory of the late Prime Minister Meles with a posthumous award, the Order of Kilimanjaro. The award, a tribute to the outstanding and life-long commitment of Prime Minister Meles to the development of Ethiopia and of Africa, is given by Africans resident in the UK. Ambassador Berhanu Kebede, Ethiopian Ambassador to Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries received the award from Burundi's Minister of Finance, Mr Tabu Abdallah, the guest of honour at the award ceremony. Ambassador Berhanu said the Embassy in London was honoured to receive the award, noting that the late Prime Minister had been a staunch freedom fighter and a man of the people, at the forefront of efforts to put in place a democratic order. Under his leadership, Ethiopia had launched a Growth and Transformation Plan and its predecessor, the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty. These were massive efforts lifting millions out of poverty. At the same time he had proved himself a real Pan-Africanist, arguing for fair prices for African commodities, increased investment and financial flows, for payments for adaptation and mitigation for climate change, and for a fair regime of international trade. MP Simon Hughes, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, said that the late Prime Minister Meles had changed the culture and perception of Africa by arguing for the need for international global responsibility: "We need more African leaders like him...to make sure more and more African countries practice good governance, anti-corruption governance, democratic governance and representative governance...and that every country in Africa in our lifetimes will become an example of good governance and good leadership." Mr Hughes said there was now a much greater consciousness of the potential of Africa; and the UK government was determined to increase its trade and links with every part of the continent.

Somaliland municipal council elections held

Somaliland municipal council elections took place on Wednesday (29th November) for the second time since 2002. The poll will determine Somaliland's future politics, as under the Somaliland's constitution, the three most successful parties will be allowed to compete in national elections over the next decade. The elections were contested by two existing political parties, KULMIYE and UCID, and another five new political associations: UMADDA, DALSAN, RAYS, WADANI and XAQSOOR. One of the other three existing parties, UDUB, withdrew from the

election, citing bias and a lack of transparency on the part of the electoral bodies. The Somaliland National Electoral Commission said it had dispatched more than 20,000 election staff and ballot boxes to over 1,800 polling stations across Somaliland's 23 districts. The Minister of Interior Affairs, Mohamed Nur Arraleh, said 6,000 members of the security forces had been deployed to guard election precincts. A fifty-five strong team of international observers, including members of the Somaliland Diaspora, were deployed to observe the election and the Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum also added another 700 local observers. Representatives from civil society organizations in Mogadishu in Somalia and Garowe in Puntland also participated in observation of the election for the first time. International observers categorized the campaigning as lively and largely peaceful with a noticeable lack of serious tension. Somaliland held successful Presidential Elections in 2003 and in 2010 and a Parliamentary election in 2005, all monitored by International Election Observers.

UNCTAD launches its Least Developed Countries Report 2012

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) yesterday (26th November) launched its Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Report 2012. The Report, with the sub-title "Harnessing Remittances and Diaspora Knowledge to Build Productive Capacities", was made public at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) conference centre in Addis Ababa. Ato Tesfachew Tafere, the Least Developed Countries' Division head in UNCTAD, said remittances from overseas citizens of 48 countries had shown a marked increase, and indeed the report indicated that remittances to Africa had steadily increased from US\$3.5 billion in 1990 to US\$27 billion in 2011. It also noted that remittances to sub-Saharan Africa in 2010 could have generated an additional US\$6 billion if the costs of sending the money had matched the global average. Indeed, according to the report, transfer fees run as high as 12% of the amount transferred. It therefore recommended a reduction of transfer costs as a way to further increase the flow of remittances. The report showed that remittances continued to increase during and after the recent global financial crisis, even as investment and tax revenues declined. In addition to remittances, the report also covered "brain drain" statistics and looked at ways that LDCs could compensate for the loss of skilled labour. UNCTAD is now proposing a new international support mechanism aimed at enabling highly skilled members of LDC Diasporas to contribute to specialized knowledge transfer and to channel investments to their home countries.