

# A Week in the Horn

4<sup>th</sup> November 2016

## News in Brief:

- Africa and the African Union
- Ethiopia
- Eritrea
- Kenya
- Somalia
- South Sudan
- Sudan

## Articles (from page 5)

- The House of People's Representatives approves the Prime Minister's new cabinet....
- ... and the President's speech after the Prime Minister addresses questions
- Prime Minister Hailemariam makes an official visit to South Sudan
- State Minister Ambassador Taye at an Atlantic Council Roundtable in Washington ...
- ...and at the Conference of the Association for Middle East and Africa
- The interactive dialogue on Eritrea's human rights at the UN General Assembly
- The AU PSC and the EU PSC's annual joint consultative meeting last week
- HRW claims "the State of Emergency risks new abuses"
- Ethiopia's Simien Lodge wins prestigious tourism award

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## News in Brief

### Africa and the African Union

The African Union Reform Steering Committee held a two-day meeting with Rwandan President Kagame in Kigali this week (October 31-November 1). African Union Commission Chairperson, Dr Dlamini Zuma briefed the nine person committee, which includes Nigeria's Minister of Environment and Chad's Minister of Economy, as well as former African Development Bank President, Dr Kaberuka, and former ECA Executive Secretary, Dr Carlos Lopes. The 27<sup>th</sup> AU Summit mandated President Kagame to lead institutional reform of the AU Commission and its Organs and ensure AU structures are aligned with the demands of Agenda 2063.

The African Union Peace and Security Council and the European Union Political and Security Committee held their 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Joint Consultative Meeting in Brussels, on October 25. The meeting was part of the regular dialogue within the framework of the Africa-EU partnership. **(See article)**

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has designated Abdullah Hamdok as Acting Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). Dr Hamdok takes up his position effective from November 1, 2016, following the departure of Carlos Lopes of Guinea-Bissau.

The three-day 6<sup>th</sup> African Rift Geothermal Conference was opened on Wednesday (November 2) by Ethiopia's Minister of Mines, Petroleum, and Natural Gas, Motuma Mekassa. He noted regional cooperation and integration were essential to addressing common problems in geothermal energy development in the region. The conference brings together policy makers, technical experts, developers, international and regional delegates.

A Turkey-Africa Economic and Business Forum was held this week (November 2-3) in Istanbul. The Turkish Ministry of Economy, the African Union Commission, the Turkish Foreign Economic Relations Board and the Turkish Exporters Assembly jointly organized the Forum to provide a platform for business organizations in Africa and Turkey to create and expand links. This is part of efforts to enhance bilateral trade and economic relations between Turkey and Africa following the Turkey-Africa Partnership Summit held in Malabo two years ago.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development presented a new report – **"The Rural Development Report 2016: Fostering Inclusive Rural Transformation"** – in Nairobi on Tuesday last week (October 25).

The report noted that the agricultural sector in East and Southern Africa was being transformed but agricultural growth had not always led to poverty reduction; many small farmers continued to live in poverty while struggling to own land and access credit. It concluded agricultural growth was not reaching its poverty-reducing potential. Supportive government action for growth in agriculture could be much more effective in lifting people out of poverty than growth in mining, utilities and services for example.

## Ethiopia

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn made a one-day official visit to the Republic of South Sudan on Friday last week (October 28). The visit underlined Ethiopia's intention to forge closer ties with the Government of South Sudan and discuss ways to strengthen bilateral relations. **(See article)**

The House of People's Representatives unanimously approved the new cabinet ministers proposed by Prime Minister Hailemariam on Tuesday (November 1). The Prime Minister appointed or changed a total of 21 ministers with another 9 ministers keeping their jobs. Among the new appointments was Dr Workneh Gebeyehu, previously Minister of Transports, now appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs. **(See article)**

Prime Minister Hailemariam met Norway's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Borge Brende, at the end of last week (October 28 and 29). Mr Brende said Ethiopia, an important partner country for Norway, represented stability and development in an unstable region. He emphasized that Norway wished to "continue our dialogue also in challenging times" and would continue to support Ethiopia's future planned development and political reforms. The Prime Minister noted Norway and Ethiopia enjoyed broad cooperation on many issues including climate change, education and human rights.

The governments of Somaliland and Ethiopia have agreed to intensify their anti-terrorism cooperation in order to ensure sustainable peace and security in the region. This followed Prime Minister Hailemariam's meeting with Somaliland President, Ahmed Mahmoud Silanyo in Addis Ababa on Saturday (October 29).

The Minister of Federal and Pastoralist Development Affairs, Kassa Teklebirhan, met with Sudan President Omar al-Bashir on Sunday (October 30) in Khartoum to discuss development of economic relations between the two countries as well as exchanges of expertise. Minister Kassa also visited Khartoum State's Legislative Council, and met the Secretary-General of the National Dialogue and Minister of Interior.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie on a visit to Washington last week took part in a roundtable at the Atlantic Council, and gave a keynote speech to the annual conference of the Association for Middle East and Africa. **(See article)**

The first Ethio-Cuban Business Forum was held in Habana, Cuba on Monday (October 31) on the margins of the Havana International Trade and Investment Fair which attracted more than 3,500 companies from over 73 countries. The Ethiopian delegation, led by Foreign Affairs State Minister, Regasa Kifle, included officials from the Ministries of Science and Technology, Trade and Foreign Affairs and the Metal and Engineering Corporation (METEC). Ambassador Dawano Kedir, Ambassador to Cuba, encouraged business-to-business networking and the sharing of information. Cuba's First Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade and Investment, Antonio Luis Carricarte, said Ethiopia's participation in the trade fair helped facilitate and further expand the relationship between the two countries.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ato Yonas Yosef, bidding farewell to the outgoing Economic Commission for Africa's Executive Secretary, Carlos Lopes, noted on Saturday (October 29) that Ethiopia deeply appreciated Mr Carlos Lopes' contribution and leadership to help address Africa's development challenges during his leadership of the Economic Commission for Africa. The State Minister encouraged the outgoing Executive Secretary to remain involved in the promotion of Africa's development in the future.

Three opposition parties, the Ethiopian Federal Democratic Unity Forum (Medrek), the Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP) and Unity for Democracy and Justice (UDJ), have welcomed the Prime Minister's statement that government would work together with opposition parties to make amendments to the electoral system, and bring in some proportional representation in harmony with the majority system.

A peace agreement has been signed between the government and the Ethiopian Unity Patriots Front. Its military commander, Tot Pol Choi, said the current situation was conducive to peaceful struggle. Minister of

Defence, Siraj Fegessa, said the government was always ready to welcome those who want to lay down arms and operate peacefully.

Human Rights Watch's latest criticism of Ethiopia attacks the State of Emergency as risking "new abuses". HRW ignores all the government's proposed measures, as outlined in the President's speech two weeks ago, to respond to the protests, and claims, without any evidence, the government is merely "escalating a militarized response". **(See article)**

Brigadier General Zewdu Kiros Gebrekidan from Ethiopia has been appointed Deputy Force Commander of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).

The Simien Lodge was awarded first place for Community Development Projects in the International Sustainable Tourism Awards at the Skål World Congress on Sunday (October 30) in Monaco, for its work in providing sustainable and innovative projects in the Simien National Park in Amhara Regional State. **(See article)**

## Eritrea

Ms Sheila Keetharuth, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea and a member of the former UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea, told the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly on Thursday last week (October 27) that states must heed the pleas for justice and accountability of the countless victims of crimes against humanity in Eritrea. Speaking for the Commission, she said the Commission's assessment left no room for "business as usual" in the international community's engagement with the Government of Eritrea. **(See article)**

## Kenya

President Kenyatta made a two day official visit to Sudan at the weekend. The two Presidents witnessed the signing of Memoranda of Agreement covering collaboration in oil and in the mining industry. The agreement on mining aims to strengthen cooperation in mineral research and exploration as well as exchanges of expertise and training. During his visit, President Kenyatta also toured Khartoum Refinery Company, the Sudan Gold Refinery and the Cofftea Factory.

The Foreign Ministry said it rejected the dismissal of Lt-General Johnson Ondieki as the Commander of the UN peacekeeping force in South Sudan and announced on Wednesday (November 2) that it was withdrawing its contingent of 1,200 troops from the UN Mission in South Sudan. It also said Kenya was reversing its decision to contribute to a 4,000-strong UN civilian protection force for South Sudan authorized by the Security Council in August.

Reports say the Kenyan government appears to have deported James Gatdet Dak, the spokesperson of the SPLM-IO, to South Sudan on Thursday (November 3), apparently at the request of the South Sudan government. The SPLM-IO has expressed fears for Mr Dak's safety.

The World Bank said on Monday (October 31) that Kenya's economy was expected to grow by 5.9% in 2016, up from actual growth of 5.6% last year. This would be driven by improved performance in the agriculture sector and tourism, and increased foreign direct investment. This compares to an average growth of 1.7% forecast for Sub-Saharan Africa in 2016. It also predicted growth in 2017 of 6.0% and 2018 of 6.1%.

## Somalia

Prime Minister Omar Sharmarke, on a visit to Djibouti this week, said he was optimistic that the Lower House and presidential elections would take place as planned. The Prime Minister briefed Djibouti President Ismail Omar Guelleh on the election processes, and asked Djibouti to send election observers to Somalia.

A statement, on Sunday (October 30) from the United Nations, African Union, European Union, Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, Ethiopia, Italy, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States, expressed grave concerns over corruption and intimidation in the electoral process and over the delays in voting for the Lower House. It called on all stakeholders to take urgent steps to preserve the credibility of the electoral process and reminded state administrations of their responsibility to ensure that every third seat is reserved for women.

The Federal Indirect Electoral Implementation Team (FIEIT) said on Wednesday that it was satisfied with the level of electoral preparedness that it had seen in Adado and Garowe, the capitals of Galmudug and Puntland states. FIEIT had recently carried out visits to Kismayo in Jubaland and Baidoa in the South West to assess election preparations. The fulfillment of the 30% women's quota for the Lower House is one of FIEIT's list of priorities.

President Ali Abdullahi Osoble of Hir-Shabelle state has said Upper House elections for the state will take place on Sunday (November 6). He also said electoral preparations for the Lower House elections were being undertaken.

Galmudug and Puntland agreed on Wednesday (November 1) to an immediate ceasefire in the border town of Galkayo following several weeks of intermittent clashes. This followed UAE-sponsored peace talks in Abu Dhabi, attended by Galmudug's President, Abdikarin Guled, and Puntland's Abdiweli Gaas. The agreement will be sealed in Kismayo on November 20. President Mohamud and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Somalia, Michael Keating, have welcomed the agreement.

The Turkish Ambassador to Somalia, Olgan Bekar, has announced that Turkey will provide US\$4 million to finance Somalia's elections and ensure the elections are secured from any forms of insecurity. He said Turkey attached great importance to the security of the election, which he described as an important component of Somalia's recovery process. Somalia's electoral budget is estimated at US\$14 million of which 60% is to be contributed by the international community.

## **South Sudan**

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon fired Kenyan Lt. General Johnson Mogoia Kimani Ondiek, commander of the peacekeeping force in South Sudan on Tuesday (November 1), after an independent investigation sharply criticized the UN military response to attacks in July in Juba. It said "a lack of leadership on the part of key senior mission personnel culminated in a chaotic and ineffective response to the violence."

China announced on Tuesday (November 1) that it planned to send 925 peacekeepers to Sudan and South Sudan in December. They will be deployed for a year as part of the United Nations peacekeeping missions in Darfur and South Sudan.

## **Sudan**

Foreign Minister Ibrahim Ghandour held talks last week with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing. Mr Yi said political mutual trust had improved and progress made in various fields since the two presidents announced a strategic partnership last year. China, he said, would expand cooperation in energy, production capacity, agriculture, renewable energy and people-to-people exchanges. Mr Ghandour, who said Sudan adhered to the one-China policy and China's stance on the South China Sea, met with Vice-President Li Yuanchao on Friday (October 28).

A four year, joint FAO/EU €8.6 million Food Security Policy and Strategy Capacity Building Program to improve responses to food security and nutrition issues in the Red Sea, Kassala, El Gedaref, and Blue Nile states has just concluded. The program strengthened resilience through improving institutional structures, establishing a food security information system and capacity building. Future responses to food insecurity would now be supported by firm evidence.

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## **The House Of People’s Representatives approves the Prime Minister’s new cabinet....**

The House of People’s Representatives on Tuesday (November 2) approved Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn’s appointment of new cabinet members. The appointments were part of the government’s announced plan for major reforms to provide for effective and qualified leadership for the country.

Before the Prime Minister announced the names of the proposed appointments he told the House that the new cabinet members had been chosen in accordance with their educational background, their performance in their previous positions, their knowledge and skill appropriate for their new responsibilities and for their discipline. Some members of the previous cabinet were to be kept on in their posts on the basis of their previous performance record. The Prime Minister indicated that the previous structure of three Deputy Prime Ministers and advisors to the Prime Minister would be dissolved. He said that as part of the measures to address maladministration, candidates had been selected who were best suited to deliver results. Out of thirty ministers, twelve hold doctorates and two are Professors. Five appointees have been senior officers at government Universities, holding the positions of President, Vice-Presidents or deans. The cabinet is ethnically diverse and includes nine newcomers from the Oromiya region, and five from the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People’s Region.

The nine ministers who retained their positions are: the Deputy Prime Minister, Demeke Mekonnen; Minister of Defence, Siraj Fegessa; Minister of Federal and Pastoralist Development Affairs, Kassa Teklebirhan; Attorney General, Getachew Ambaye; Dr Debretsion Gebremikael, Minister of Information and Communication Technology; Ahmed Abitew, Minister of Industry; Commissioner of Federal Planning Commission, Dr Yinager Dessie; Government Whip, Asmelash Woldesilassie; and Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, Abdulfetah Abdulah.

Dr Worqneh Gebeyehu, who was Minister of Transport, has been appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs in the new cabinet, replacing Dr Tedros Adhanom, who is now running for the position of Director-General of World Health Organization. Dr Abraham Tekeste who was previously State Minister of Finance and Economic Development takes over the Ministry from Abdulaziz Mohammed. Dr Bekele Mulado, Dr Eyasu Abrha, Dr Shiferaw Tekele-Mariam, Tagese Chafu has been appointed Minister of Trade, Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Minister of Education and Minister of the Ministry of Public Service and Human Resource Development, respectively. Professor Yifru Berhane has been appointed Minister of Health. Ahmed Shide becomes Minister of Transport; and Engineer Aisha Mohammed - Minister of Construction; Dr Engineer Sileshi Bekele - Minister of Water, Irrigation and Electricity; and Motuma Mekassa - Minister of Mines, Petroleum and Natural Gas.

Dr Negeri Lencho, the head of the Journalism and Communications College at Addis Ababa University replaced Getachew Reda as Minister of the Government Communications Affairs Office and Government Spokesman. Dr Gemado Dale was appointed as Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The posts of Minister of Animal and Fish Resource Development, Minister of Science and Technology and Minister of Urban Development and Housing went to Professor Fikadu Beyene, Dr Engineer Getahun Mekuriya and Dr Ambachew Mekonnen. Dr Girma Amantea took the position of Minister of Government Development Enterprises. Dr Hirut Woldemariam and Demitu Hambissa have been appointed respectively Minister of Tourism and Culture and Minister of Women and Children Affairs. Ristu Yirdaw and Kebede Chane have been appointed as Minister of Youth and Sport and Head of the Revenue and Customs Authority with the rank of a Minister.

Later in the day, the office of the Prime Minister also announced four other appointments with ministerial rank at the Democratic System Building Coordination Center: Sheferaw Shegute as Chief Coordinator; Abdulaziz Mohammed as Coordinator of Political Parties and Civic Association Affairs at the Center; Fetlework Gebreegziabher as Coordinator for the Urban Sector at the Center; Tefera Derbew as Coordinator for the Rural Sector at the Center.

After the cabinet appointments, the new Minister for the Government Communications Affairs Office, Dr Negeri Lencho, told the media that the people had raised many questions and there had been many challenges for almost a year in different regional states and different parts of the country." He said the answer to the questions raised by the people lay in maximizing "service to the people." He underlined that the new cabinet was "ready to respond and provide a better service with professionals coming from many directions." The Speaker of the House of People’s Representatives, Abadula Gameda, said, "We, as representatives of the people,

now expect better performance and results and the fulfilling of the interests of the people. We believe that all of these will happen soon.”

### **... and the President’s speech after the Prime Minister addresses questions**

The House of People’s Representatives on Tuesday (November 1) approved the motion on the remarks made by President Dr Mulatu Teshome at the joint session of the House of People’s Representatives and the House of Federation on October 10. In his speech, the President had outlined the plans of the government for the current budget year. On Tuesday, Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn defended these plans and addressed questions raised by members of the House of People’s Representatives.

Prime Minister Hailemariam underlined that the government would be giving due emphasis to addressing the economic demands of the youth so that it could create favorable condition for meeting their political and social demands. He noted that agro-processing would be one focus of concentration, in line with the effort to boost agriculture and labor-intensive manufacturing within the agro-industrial sector. The Prime Minister added that 550 investors had already started to join the sector and, he emphasized, fostering participation of the public would be key to ensuring success in this area.

Regarding a question on the need to reform the country’s electoral system, Prime Minister Hailemariam indicated that the government was making preparations for consultations on the way to provide for representation of all voices within the House and to enable other political parties to have a say on national issues. He said: “The last two elections were democratic but we have to create an election system that insures representation of those who lose in elections, at least those with narrow margins. We shall consult with all stakeholders upon this issue.” The Prime Minister also stressed that government was making efforts to fill the gaps in project performance and to minimize the number of delayed projects in different sectors, including roads, railways, dams and other areas.

Referring to issues of identity, the Prime Minister said the public had raised legitimate and appropriate questions. Protests and even conflict had occurred because of the lack of appropriate and quick responses to the questions raised as well as a lack of awareness on how to present grievances or to respond to them. He also noted that some organized groups had on occasions hijacked the questions for their own benefit and contributed to the resulting conflicts.

Commenting on the actions of extremist elements in the Diaspora who had committed trespass at the Ethiopian embassies in Washington DC, London and Stockholm, the Prime Minister said: “we are working with those countries so that they will face justice.” He added, “We have also told these countries to provide the necessary protection for our embassies.” Regarding the interference of Egyptian institutions in the internal affairs of Ethiopia, the Prime Minister said “we have informed the Egyptian government to stop the activities of these institutions.”

The Prime Minister said the State of Emergency was achieving its aim. There had been no more loss of life from violence and properties were becoming safe. He said the Command Post was carrying out many tasks that would allow the country to return fully to sustained calm and stability. He underlined that it was a matter of commitment to serve the public without reservation and this, he said, should be backed by public mobilization in support.

### **Prime Minister Hailemariam makes an official visit to South Sudan**

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn made a one-day official visit to the Republic of South Sudan on Friday last week (October 28). South Sudan’s First Vice President Taban Deng Gai, Foreign Minister Deng Alor, Cabinet Minister Martin Elia and other government officials received the Prime Minister on his arrival in Juba.

The visit provided an opportunity for Prime Minister Hailemariam to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral relations with President Salva Kiir and with the Vice President at State House. Following their discussions, the two leaders witnessed the signing of an agreement on the promotion and protection of Investment and two Memoranda of Understanding on Bilateral Consultations and on Roads and Bridges. The two countries also reached an understanding to cooperate on the energy sector and other bilateral matters in the near future.

Speaking after the signing ceremony President Salva Kiir said that the agreement would benefit both countries and he was hopeful that “many things will change soon.” He said, “We have discussed very important issues

and especially the bilateral issues and we have signed several MoUs and these are things to be implemented. We have agreed on security issues; we will not allow any negative force to use our territory to launch hostile activities on the other.” President Kiir also underlined that the agreements would allow for the improvement of road links between Ethiopia and South Sudan. The road and bridge improvements will be for the Gambella-Joukou, Nasir, Malakal road; the Dima, Raad Boma, Bor road, the Pagak, Maiwut, Paluoch road, and finally the Tergol, Akobo, Ayod road. President Kiir also stressed that South Sudan would be building a refinery in the near future and Ethiopia would also benefit from the oil produced. Ethiopia’s Prime Minister is one of the guarantors of the peace deal signed in August last year, and Ethiopia’s former Foreign Minister, Seyoum Mesfin, was the chief mediator for the agreement, so various issues about implementation of the peace agreement were also on the agenda.

Speaking to the press after the signing ceremony at State House, Prime Minister Hailemariam said that the agreement would benefit both countries. He was hopeful that bilateral relations between the two countries would now be strengthened concomitantly. He said Ethiopia was very keen to see South Sudan become a peaceful and prosperous country as its people had suffered enough for half a century and peace should now prevail. The Prime Minister emphasized the path of peace was the only way for stability in South Sudan. Ethiopia, he said, would never allow the activity of any armed movement that threatened peace in the region. Relations, he said, should be based on mutual trust and confidence, adding that it is high time “for us to turn suspicions and misconceptions into trust and verity.” President Kiir also emphasized that the two leaders had agreed on security issues and that neither would allow any forces to use their respective territories to launch any hostile activity against the other.

During his visit, Prime Minister Hailemariam addressed the South Sudan Transitional National Assembly. He underlined the profound nature of bilateral relations between South Sudan and Ethiopia, linking these to the natural geography they both shared and to economic developments. The Prime Minister said: “we are tied together by firm people-to-people bonds. We share a similar identity, common languages, cultures and heritage. Our shared identity and strong bilateral relations have encouraged us both in our common goals of maintaining regional peace, security, stability and forging economic development and prosperity for the mutual benefit of our peoples.” The Prime Minister underlined that Ethiopia had always been keen for South Sudan to achieve peace, stability and self-determination. “Ethiopia”, he said, “from Addis Ababa to Gambela, from Metu to Gore, has been home at times to millions of South Sudanese”. It was in a very real spirit of friendship and brotherhood that Ethiopia had been fully engaged in supporting the search for peace and stability in South Sudan. He stressed, “We are very keen to see South Sudan be a peaceful country and a prosperous country... because we believe that the South Sudanese people have suffered enough for half a century and peace should prevail in South Sudan.” Equally, the Prime Minister emphasized that Ethiopia has always been a reliable partner in peace keeping. It had, he said, “deployed its peace keeping forces in South Sudan as part of the UN mission to help keep peace. Throughout all this time, Ethiopia has been neutral and impartial in all peace efforts and firm in its belief that problems must primarily be solved by the South Sudanese themselves.” He went on: “Today, we still observe those same principles. Today, we still continue to stand with the peoples of South Sudan as they move forward towards implementing the Peace Agreement and consolidating stability in your country.”

The Speaker of the Assembly, Joseph Bul Chan, recalled that it had been the good offices of Emperor Haile Selassie which had led to the ten years of peace after the Addis Ababa Agreement in 1972 which had ended the military confrontation between the Anyanya 1 and the Sudanese government. He emphasized that South Sudan was grateful for the support Ethiopia had provided on the signing of the CPA in 2005, the continuous efforts in South Sudan’s post-conflict reconstruction and in the signing of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan in August 2015. The Speaker further called on the Ethiopian government to continue supporting South Sudan in addressing its ongoing economic and humanitarian crisis.

### **State Minister Ambassador Taye at an Atlantic Council Roundtable in Washington ...**

Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie, Ethiopia’s State Minister of Foreign Affairs, paid a working visit to Washington, last week, during which he briefed members of Think Tanks, academicians, and various current and former US government officials and representatives of civil society and human rights organizations, on current issues in Ethiopia at a Roundtable meeting hosted by the Washington-based Atlantic Council. Dr Peter Pham, Director of the Africa Center of the Atlantic Council, who welcomed and introduced the State Minister, chaired the Roundtable discussion. Among those present were the Ethiopian Ambassador to the US, Ambassador Girma Birru, and Ambassador Tebege Berhe, Director-General for the Americas at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The State Minister, after noting that Ethiopia had been a model for sustained development for more than a decade with its double digit growth rates, went on to say that the last six months or so had seen unprecedented violent protests. He discussed, in detail, the causes of the violent protests witnessed over the last year, as well as the government's efforts, both to address the root causes of the unrest and the measures taken to control the violence and unrest. Ambassador Taye underlined the principal grievances motivating the protests: lack of good governance and slow response in addressing public demands; questions related to self-administration and the limitations in addressing rights enshrined in the constitution; unfulfilled demand for services and infrastructure at the local level and the limitation leveraging demographic dividend for further economic growth. In other words, the State Minister emphasized, the protesters had legitimate grievances and, indeed, the government had identified the sources of the protests at the time when it launched its second Growth and Transformation development plan.

Soon after the protests began, however, extremist forces, who saw the occasion of the protests and demonstrations as an opportunity to try to take power through unconstitutional means, hijacked the legitimate grievances of the public, turning the protests violent and destructive. It was this, the State Minister explained, which was the main reason for the recent declaration of a State of Emergency. The main concern was to stop the violence and loss of life, put an end to the destruction of property, both private and public, including major foreign investment projects that were being targeted by the violent protesters. Some of these included mobile, armed groups that were roaming around killing people and destroying property on an arbitrary basis.

In addition, the State Minister pointed out, some destructive elements were inciting violence against both religious and ethnic groups. External opposition elements including some non-state actors were quick to try and encourage this unrest. This created a sense of insecurity among the public and the Government had to act quickly to stop the violence and restore calm. Ambassador Taye emphasized that the State of Emergency would continue to observe people's human rights and to ensure this an Inquiry Board had been established to oversee its implementation. He said that although the proclamation of the State of Emergency allowed for six months, depending upon the situation on the ground it may be lifted well before that.

Ambassador Taye concluded his remarks by underlining that the legitimate grievances of the public were not going to be resolved by security measures, but through the reforms that needed to address those grievances. He pointed out that the government was already working on a series of reform packages, and there would be discussions with the public, civil society organizations and political parties to consider further options. Indeed, it was already initiating a national political dialogue aimed at addressing some of the issues behind the protests. This would certainly be inclusive.

Ambassador Taye then responded to participants in a question and answer session. Questions raised were covered points related to the reform of government, the revolutionary democratic principles of the ruling party, reform of civil society and anti-terrorism laws, the role of the Command Post, reform of the electoral law and its impact and the role of the opposition in the reforms.

### **...and at the Conference of the Association for Middle East and Africa**

During his visit, Ambassador Taye also spoke at the opening session of the 9<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa, to a scholarly audience, discussing Ethiopia's relations with its neighbors in IGAD and the Horn of Africa as well as its role in the region.

Ambassador Taye began his remarks by briefly explaining the background to the protests that Ethiopia had experienced over the last year and the reasons for the declaration of the State of Emergency in the country. He explained that although protesters had legitimate grievances extremist and violent elements had hijacked these for their own ends. This had resulted in unnecessary loss of life and destruction of public and private property. This meant that the Ethiopian Government, while working on reforms to address the legitimate issues raised by the public, had been forced to declare State of Emergency in order to stop the violence and restore calm.

Ambassador Taye underlined the importance of Ethiopia's role in the region in terms of helping maintain peace and stability. One major element in this was its contribution of peacekeeping troops. Ethiopia, indeed, was ranked number one in the world in terms of contributions to the UN and to the AU peacekeeping missions. It was a strong supporter of the concept of collective security. Ethiopia, at the request of the Somali

government, had been working closely with the Somali Government to help in restoring peace and stability in Somalia and deal with the terrorist activities of al-Shabaab. It was doing this both as a member of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) and in conjunction with Somali Government Forces under a bilateral agreement. He noted that considerable progress had been made in driving al-Shabaab back and creating a situation in which Somalia was able to hold elections during the next few weeks. Overall, there had been real progress achieved in the formation and strengthening of its federal regional administrations. Ambassador Taye noted, however, that the continued support of the international community to Somalia remained very necessary if the progress made so far was to be consolidated.

The State Minister also emphasized Ethiopia's active involvement in South Sudan, both through the provision of peacekeeping forces and through IGAD mediation. It had played a major role in bringing about the Peace Agreement of August last year, hosting the IGAD and IGAD Plus processes in Addis Ababa after the outbreak of fighting in December 2013. The process hasn't yet been completed. Ethiopia hoped the UN-authorized Regional Protection Force would be deployed very soon in and around Juba. Ethiopia was likely to provide some of the troops for that force.

Another aspect of regional relations comes from Ethiopia's belief that development is not sustainable in isolation. It must be shared. In other words, it should be carried out as regional development. This has driven its vision of support for peace and development, through infrastructural development, for the whole of the sub-region. The creation of economic conditions for regional integration is vital; Ethiopia has taken specific action to promote it through infrastructure. It is developing a series of major hydropower projects which will triple generation capacity to over 12,000 MWs, enough to meet domestic demand and generate significant exports. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam will be of major benefit to Ethiopia, and to Sudan and Egypt, as well as contribute to the East African power pool. Ethiopia already supplies power to Sudan, Djibouti and Kenya and is talking to Tanzania and Rwanda. This will be sustainable power using hydro, wind, geo-thermal and solar resources, part of a green economic strategy to achieve a carbon-neutral economy by 2030. The new rail link to the port of Djibouti will lower high transportation costs and expand Djibouti's trading capacity more widely across the region. Longer-term policies involve further expansion of cross-border roads and railway lines for the whole IGAD Regional Economic Community.

Overall, Ambassador Taye explained that Ethiopia enjoyed warm relations with all its neighbors IGAD, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan and Sudan, with the single exception of Eritrea. The problem with Eritrea, he pointed out, was not of Ethiopia's choosing but arose out of the war launched by Eritrea in 1998 and Eritrea's subsequent defeat two years later. Eritrea has repeatedly claimed Ethiopia refuses to accept the Boundary Commission's decisions and that it therefore remains in a state of war with Ethiopia. In fact, as Ethiopia has emphasized again and again, it has fully accepted the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission's delimitation of the border, and has repeatedly asked Eritrea for dialogue over demarcation on the ground and over normalization of relations. Eritrea has consistently refused to sit down and talk. Indeed, it has continued to use aggression as a central element in its foreign policy. Since independence in 1993, Eritrea has, at various times, attacked Sudan, Djibouti and Yemen as well as Ethiopia. It has also made continuous efforts to destabilize its neighbors and even supported al-Shabaab terrorists in Somalia. One effect of this has been that it was put under UN Security Council sanctions.

This is not a situation of Ethiopia's choosing. Ethiopia is very aware of the advantages to the region that a peaceful Eritrea could provide. Ambassador Taye emphasized that Ethiopia continued to hope Eritrea would change its policies, stop its efforts to destabilize its neighbors, act to normalize relations and resume its rightful place in IGAD, from which it withdrew in 2007. So far, the State Minister said, we have seen no signs of this. Overall, Ambassador Taye concluded, policies towards our neighbors are based on mutual benefit, non-interference, respect for sovereignty and a very real commitment to cooperating in regional development through IGAD as well as bilaterally. Regretfully, he said, "Our only failure is Eritrea."

### **The interactive dialogue on Eritrea's human rights at the UN General Assembly**

Ms Sheila Keetharuth, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea and a member of the former UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea, told the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly on Thursday last week (October 27) that states must heed the pleas of countless victims of crimes against humanity for justice and accountability. The three-member Commission, established by the UN Human Rights Council, ended its mandate in June 2016 when it produced its final report. This recommended that the situation in Eritrea be referred to the International Criminal Court.

Speaking for the Commission, Ms Keetharuth highlighted the Commission's clear findings that crimes against humanity have been committed since 1991 by Eritrean officials. She added that such a dire assessment left no room for "business as usual" in the international community's engagement with the Government of Eritrea. She said: "The crimes of enslavement, imprisonment, enforced disappearances, torture, other inhumane acts, persecution, rape and murder have been committed as part of a widespread and systematic campaign against the civilian population. The aim of the campaign has been to maintain control over the population and perpetuate the leadership's rule in Eritrea." She underlined that "There is still no constitution, no parliament where laws are discussed, enacted, and where questions of national importance are debated; indefinite national service persists, with its adverse impacts on individual rights; there is no free press and no [non-governmental organizations], except for Government-sponsored ones." She added: "The population lives in fear and the Government still controls their daily life, making the enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all Eritreans a remote possibility."

Ms Keetharuth explained that the Commission had concluded the Government of Eritrea had neither the political will nor the institutional capacity to prosecute the crimes documented, and it had therefore recommended that the UN Security Council refer the situation in Eritrea to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and that the African Union establish an accountability mechanism. "My plea to you, Excellencies, on behalf of the three members of the former Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea, Mike Smith, Victor Dankwa and myself, is for you to pay heed to voices of victims of crimes against humanity in Eritrea."

Ms Keetharuth noted that while several foreign delegations, journalists and others had been invited to visit Eritrea over the past year, the rampant human rights violations taking place in isolated locations and detention facilities were not apparent to the casual visitor. She pointed out that Eritreans were among the largest numbers of African nationals seeking asylum in Europe and that the overall recognition rate for Eritrean asylum seekers in European countries remained high. "The findings of the Commission underscore that it is not safe to forcibly return those who have left Eritrea," she stressed, noting that the Commission's first report documented that individuals forcibly repatriated, with a few exceptions, have been arrested, detained and subjected to ill-treatment and torture. In conclusion, the Special Rapporteur said: "I appeal to Member States to grant Eritreans access to their territory and asylum procedures," and reiterated her call to protect all Eritrean asylum-seekers from refoulement and to refrain from any forced repatriation to Eritrea or to third countries where they may still be at risk or unwelcomed.

Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work. The UN's Human Rights Council in June extended the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for Eritrea and she now has to see if the Government of Eritrea shows cooperation in implementing the 92 recommendations made by the Universal Periodic Review or in allowing her into Eritrea.

After last week's debate, Ms Keetharuth welcomed the fact that she had been able to put the Commission's findings before the UN, and said it was "now up to the UN member states to take the matter forward." There were a number of options including possible referral to the International Criminal Court is just one. She said she had also approached the African Union, but this was still at a preliminary stage. Another possibility was for individual victims to take up the crimes committed against them in an appropriate court. She pointed out the findings of the Commission had been made and were public; they could therefore be referred to in evidence. Ms Keetharuth will make a further report to the UN Human Rights Commission in June 2017. She said she hoped that she would by then be able to report that there had been an improvement in the situation in Eritrea. Ms Keetharuth said she had written to the Eritrean government, asking to be allowed to visit the country, so that she could assess the situation on the ground. "I made an appeal for permission when I was speaking before the UN last week, with a representative of the Eritrean government at the meeting," Ms Keetharuth said, adding that she remained "hopeful."

Given the response of Mr Yemane Ghebreab, Adviser to President Isaias, during the Third Committee's interactive dialogue, this seems unlikely. Mr Yemane said there was no point in entering into a polemic with the Special Rapporteur. He said Eritrea preferred "to explain our situation, point to our modest achievements, describe our challenges, elaborate on our programs, reaffirm our responsibility and commitment, emphasize the importance of solidarity and express our readiness for constructive engagement and cooperation." He did not mention any of the areas to which the Commission of Inquiry or the Special Rapporteur drew attention. He claimed that Eritrea, despite its lack of a constitution, any independent media, any electoral procedures or

an effective judiciary, had an “evolving political system”, though he did admit to “some setbacks”. He said it was “working to build a justice system, based on a body of laws, including the supreme law of the land, at the center of which is broad popular participation, including equitable participation of women, in the form of locally elected community courts.”

Mr Yemane also claimed Eritrea was “an independent, constructive, active and consciously modest regional and global actor” that favored “dialogue, engagement and cooperation”. However, he went on: “the policy of seeking to isolate and undermine Eritrea has limited our role.” He said Eritrea was “working steadfastly to advance the political, civic, economic, social and cultural rights of its people,” claiming Eritreans also enjoyed many civic and political rights. He said it was a “willing and proud participant in the Universal Review Process” and that it cooperated effectively with UN human rights bodies to implement the recommendations it has accepted.

The recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review fall into four categories: those concerning the rights of children and women as well as economic, social, cultural and developmental rights; cooperating with UN organizations and submitting reports; accepting capacity-building technical assistance from the international community; and finally recommendations on constitutional and civil liberties. In the past, Eritrea has made some effort to respond to the first three categories. It has totally ignored all the recommendations relating to its constitution and civil liberties.

### **The AU PSC and the EU PSC’s annual joint consultative meeting last week**

The African Union Peace and Security Council and the European Union Political and Security Committee held their 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Joint Consultative Meeting in Brussels, on October 25. The meeting was part of the regular dialogue within the framework of the Africa-EU partnership. The meeting was co-chaired by Ambassador Catherine Muigai Mwangi (Kenya), Chairperson of the AU PSC for the month of October 2016, and Ambassador Walter Stevens, Permanent Chair of the EU PSC. The Joint Meeting brought together the Ambassadors of EU PSC and AU PSC Member States, the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui, the Deputy Secretary General of the EU External Action Service, Ambassador Jean-Christophe Belliard, the Deputy Director General of the EU Commission (DEVCO) and Senior Officials from the AU Commission, the EU External Action Service, the EU Commission and the EU Council Secretariat. The Joint Consultative Meeting was preceded by an informal Joint Retreat of the AU PSC and the EU PSC, held on October 24, which provided a platform for an informal exchange on countering terrorism, radicalization and violent extremism as well as for discussing migration.

Both meetings took place in a constructive atmosphere, facilitating a substantial exchange of views and convergence of approach on different topics. The discussions during the Joint Consultative Meeting focused on conflict and crisis situations in Africa, covering the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Somalia, Sahel/Mali, South Sudan, Burundi and Guinea Bissau, as well as the enhancement of AU and EU cooperation on peace and security issues and the support to AU activities in these areas.

On Somalia, the AU PSC and the EU PSC agreed that continued strong engagement to support the political process leading to democratization and federalization and the fight against al-Shabaab should remain the priorities for both sides. They also agreed on the need for the Somali leadership to adhere to the agreed electoral timelines and to observe the necessary standards for a credible and legitimate process, including respecting the quota reserved for women. They agreed the electoral process should be a milestone towards a more democratic and federal state. They stressed the need for progress on the security sector and the importance of building sustainable national security architecture with balanced federal and regional forces. This would allow AMISOM to withdraw as agreed. They emphasized the need for timely support for such efforts and in particular for financial support to AMISOM. The AU PSC and the EU PSC’s underlined the importance of providing visible peace dividends for the population of liberated areas.

On South Sudan, the two sides expressed alarm at the deep crisis that the country continues to face in terms of security, humanitarian and political issues as well as economic and developmental problems. They reaffirmed their continued engagement in order to avoid an outbreak of renewed violence, especially at the end of the rainy season. To this end, they said the Transitional Government of National Unity should facilitate the immediate deployment of the Regional Protection Force, lift restrictions on operations of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and that all sides should ensure unhindered humanitarian access and respect international humanitarian law. The AU PSC and the EU PSC called for a more inclusive political process in the country. They were pleased that the AU Commission had started work on the Hybrid Court, and

reiterated the urgency of establishing this institution without delay. They stressed the importance of establishing other institutions for the promotion of healing, reconciliation and nation building as provided for in Chapter V of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. The two sides also welcomed the work of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission.

Overall, the AU PSC and EU PSC renewed their commitment to enhancing cooperation between both continents, with a view to consolidating peace where relevant. They underscored their determination to further deepen their existing partnership that aims to promote peace and security and prevent crises and conflicts, as well as provide support to peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction efforts on both continents. The joint consultative meeting concluded with the AU PSC giving a briefing on the AU Peace Fund and the outcome of the Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union on Maritime Security and Safety and Development held in Lomé, on October 15. The African Union Peace and Security Council and the European Union Political and Security Committee agreed to meet again in 2017 in Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia and to undertake a new joint field trip in the region.

The two sides also discussed the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where both the AU and the EU are members of the support Group for the facilitation of Dialogue. agreed on the need to avoid recurrence of violence and stressed that the elections should be inclusive and transparent and that respect for the Constitution must be ensured. On the Central African Republic, they agreed on the need for substantial reforms, in particular in Security Sector Reforms, Disarmament, Demobilization, the creation of integrated national army, DDDR, reconciliation, as well as on the continued need for assistance from its neighbors and international partners. On Burundi, they expressed their continued preoccupation with the security situation in the country and encouraged efforts to continue improving it. They commended the mediation efforts deployed by President Museveni of Uganda, and former President Mkapa of Tanzania. They called on Government and opposition to engage genuinely in the Dialogue and agreed on the need for the full deployment of AU observers in the field, both civilian and military.

On Guinea-Bissau, they welcomed the recent agreement on a consensual solution to the political impasse of the country, and stressed the need for all political actors in Guinea Bissau to engage in good faith to implement and take forward the agreement. On the Sahel/Mali, they expressed their deep concern over the increase in terrorist activities in the center and south of Mali, as well as in the Sahel region as a whole. They reaffirmed their commitment to supporting the implementation of the peace agreement and called on all the stakeholders, particularly the Mali Government and armed groups to ensure its effective implementation. The AU PSC and the EU PSC commended the progress made by the Multinational Joint Taskforce in combating the Boko Haram terrorist group and expressed their willingness to continue working closely together to further support its efforts in combating terrorism in the Sahel. They also stressed the need to address the root causes of terrorism as well the tremendous humanitarian needs in the region.

### **HRW claims “the State of Emergency risks new abuses”**

Responding to HRW and similar advocacy organizations tends to be a lost cause as they seldom, if ever, respond to correction or questions over their approach, nor, normally, do they provide sufficient explanation or detail for their claims to be checked by independent sources. Human Rights Watch, as the title of this latest report shows, remains committed to its own version of events in Ethiopia, a version that, as usual, bears little connection with what is actually happening. The comment that the State of Emergency contains “overly broad and vague provisions” ignores the details that have been provided of exactly what is covered by the declaration. There is no reason to believe that the State of Emergency risks “triggering a human rights crisis”, although that would appear to be what Human Rights Watch would like to see. This latest piece is similar to all the other comments that Human Rights Watch has made on the current situation, ignoring the reality on the ground and, as usual, taking no notice of what the government is actually doing about the situation, rather confining itself to telling the Government of Ethiopia what it should do, or rather what Human Rights Watch wants it to do.

In its latest comments on Ethiopia’s State of Emergency, Human Rights Watch claims “The government has in part blamed human rights groups seeking to document violations of international law for the recent unrest.” We should make the point that this was not, in fact, what the comment suggested. It merely noted that exaggerated figures and alarmist claims repeated, without qualification, by Human Rights Watch and others, could have the effect of fueling anger and encouraging further protests. And, indeed, that is exactly what happened. There is no doubt that the highly exaggerated claims made over social media and repeated by Human Rights Watch, among others, did encourage the series of violent attacks on people and property over

the days following the Ireecha tragedy on October 2. There was, and is, no evidence that more than 55 people died in that disaster. It was totally irresponsible of Human Rights Watch to claim that hundreds might have died, merely repeating opposition Diaspora allegations. It might be noted that in this latest comment, Human Rights Watch has finally modified this to “scores of people” dying during the stampede, though it makes no apologies for its previously misleading comments.

Human Rights Watch does, quite correctly, say as the government itself has underlined, that protesters have voiced a variety of concerns. It might, however, be noted (which, as usual, Human Rights Watch does not bother to do), that the government has referred to these as legitimate and, more importantly, has begun a whole series of extensive measures to take note of the protests and respond to them. It has also made it clear that the State of Emergency is a temporary measure designed to restore law and order and deal with the criminal and extremist elements that tried to high-jack the protests and caused violence. The release of over 2,000 people, briefly detained following the declaration of the State of Emergency, and the significant cabinet changes announced this week, underline that the State of Emergency is designed to stabilize the situation, to restore law and order in order to allow effective responses to the problems revealed by the protests.

In the context of such a series of measures, as outlined in the President’s speech a couple of weeks ago, it is hardly helpful, nor is it accurate, to ignore, quite deliberately, all the government efforts to respond to the situation and to merely describe the State of Emergency as emergency measures sending “a strong and chilling message that rather than dealing with expressed grievances and ensuring accountability for violence by both government forces and protesters, the government will continue and probably escalate the militarized response.” Human Rights Watch has no evidence that the government will continue to escalate a “militarized response”. All the available evidence contradicts this.

The President’s speech mentioned, *inter alia*, extensive efforts to boost unemployment particularly for the youth in rural areas, the creation of industrial parks, and a new strategy to restructure federal and state administrations. The government has also committed itself to establish “a new council to devise a mechanism to ensure the leadership of the Federal and State Governments deliver results-oriented and quality service, guaranteeing government effectiveness and efficiency in implementing the national developmental and democratization agenda.” This new council is also to address problems of incompetence and inefficiency at federal and regional levels of governance. The President addressed the questions of identity and self-administration and the “domination of the ruling party in the parliament and the absence of representatives of other voices in society or dissenting views.” He spoke of the need to widen the democratic space and the setting up of a “dialogue forum” to provide for discussion with opposition parties, to share constructive ideas for development and create space in elections. One major commitment was the proposal to reform the country’s electoral law to place proportional representation and a majority system on an equal and balanced footing. The President stressed this would be undertaken “to ensure that elections effectively reflected the views of representatives of all sections of society” He also reiterated the urgency of speeding up the pace of the democratization.

Given the criticisms that Human Rights Watch routinely makes of the government in Ethiopia, one might have thought that these proposed reforms might be worth perhaps a brief mention. Indeed it might be thought that Human Rights Watch might even welcome such efforts if it had any genuine interest in seeing progress in the areas it claims to support. Equally, it really would be something to welcome if Human Rights Watch could actually look at the situation on the ground rather than continue to operate in its own bubble as a mouthpiece of Diaspora opposition allegations and claims and of groups that openly and publicly support the violent overthrow of a democratically elected government; or even that Human Rights Watch might, just occasionally, admit to making a mistake.

### **Ethiopia’s Simien Lodge wins prestigious tourism award**

The Simien Lodge, in the Simien Mountains National Park, in Ethiopia’s Amhara Regional State on Sunday (October 30) ranked first in Community Development Projects in the 2016 Skål International Sustainable Tourism Awards in the category of Rural Accommodation. The award at the Skål World Congress, taking place in Monaco, recognized the Simien Lodge for its commitment to sustainability and innovative projects that address the needs of the community surrounding the lodge. The projects commended by the Skål World Congress included: educational developments, water safety, sustainable tourism initiatives, medical aid and provision of alternative livelihoods. Other projects acknowledged and praised by the Congress were: the donation of 1,000 energy-efficient stoves for cooking and heating; the delivery of over 800 school benches to

local schools, and more recently the completion of eight new classrooms in three primary schools in the areas around the lodge as well as the restoration of the ancient Saddique Amba Monastery.

Skål is the oldest tourism association in the world and is represented through clubs in 83 countries. The first club was formed in Paris in December 1932. Skål professionals meet regularly and share experiences to further the principal of sustainable and equitable tourism. The International Awards are given annually to those companies, who in the opinion of a panel of judges, are considered to have provided the best sustainable tourism projects in the year. This year, some 450 delegates drawn from 49 countries met at the International Congress in Monaco, between the 29<sup>th</sup> October and 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016. The award of the first prize underlines the international standard reached by the Simien Lodge.

The Simien Mountains National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with its undulating plateau and deep valleys, is often dubbed the Grand Canyon of Africa. The Park, in northern Ethiopia, features remarkable vistas and landscapes in which erosion over millions of years has created jagged mountain peaks, valleys and sharp precipices dropping some 1,500 metres or more. The Simien Mountains make up one of the most beautiful stretches of unspoilt mountain wilderness surviving in the world today. The park includes some of Ethiopia's tallest peaks, including Ras Dashen, which at 4,543 meters is the highest mountain in Ethiopia.

Wildlife is equally rich, with the Simien range providing the last remaining habitat in the world for the rare Walia Ibex, a type of large wild goat weighing up to 120 kilograms, with long, curved densely-ridged horns. Rarely found at altitudes below 2,400 metres, these lovely, shy creatures are hard to approach. Ecology has adapted them to live on nearly vertical cliff faces, where they can often be seen in the morning or evening, browsing on narrow, grassy ledges. The Gelada baboon, which like the Walia is another of Ethiopia's endemic mammals, is also found in the Simien. Nicknamed the 'lion monkey' because of its characteristic mane of fine auburn hair, the Gelada is in fact a polite and cautious creature quite unlike the more common baboons found elsewhere in Africa. The heart-shaped patch of bare, reddish skin seen on the chests of both males and female has given rise to another nickname for this species, the 'bleeding-heart baboon'. A third representative of Ethiopia's endemic mammals, the Simien red fox, or Abyssinian wolf, can also be seen in the national park. In fact, neither a wolf nor a fox, it is a member of the dog family, but is the only example of its genus. The unique character of Simien wildlife is also mirrored in the many unusual kinds of vegetation to be found in the park, making it a botanical wonderland.

Ethiopia is, indeed, an encyclopedia of geology and geography open for all to read under the intense blue of the African sky. More than this, it is a living book in which the whole story of humankind from its first beginnings millions of years ago, through all the stages of evolution and development, can be viewed with awe and wonder. The traveler in Ethiopia voyages in time as well as in space, for here the drama and beauty of the present are illuminated in countless ways by the grandeur and majesty of the past and in a nation that is building itself anew, with glimpses and intimations of a noble future. Upon visiting Ethiopia and looking at such wonders, Rosita Forbes, a popular English travel writer and explorer once said, "When the old gods reigned in Ethiopia, they must have played chess with these stupendous crags, for we saw bishops' miters cut in lapis lazuli, castles with the ruby of approaching sunset on their turrets, an emerald knight where the forest crept up onto the rock, and, far away, a king crowned with sapphires and guarded by a row of pawns."