

A Week in the Horn

5th September 2014

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News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

The **AU Peace and Security Council Summit on Terrorism**, meeting in Nairobi on Tuesday (September 2) called for greater cooperation and information sharing to strengthen response to the serious challenge and threat to African security posed by terrorism (**See article**)

The African Green Revolution Forum was held this week, Monday to Thursday (September 1-4) in Addis Ababa. Organized annually by the Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa, and hosted by the African Union and the Government of Ethiopia, the Forum aims to deliver the objectives of the **AU Year of Agriculture and Food Security**. (**See article**)

Professor Tekalign Mamo officially received the **2014 Yara Prize** in Addis Ababa on Tuesday (September 2) in the presence of senior government officials, distinguished guests and participants at the 4th Africa Green Revolution Forum. Professor Tekalign was awarded the prize for being a champion of sustainable agricultural development through leveraging his scientific knowledge. The Yara Prize recognizes outstanding contributions to African Agriculture.

Ethiopia

President Dr Mulatu Teshome held talks on Tuesday (September 2) with a Chinese business delegation headed by Mr Kong Xiangjun, Board Chairman of Jiangsu Lianfa Textile Company Limited, which is planning to [open] a US\$500 million textile factory in Addis Ababa.

Egypt's Foreign Minister, Sameh Shoukry, delivered a message from Egypt's President El-Sisi on Thursday (September 4) to Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn and held talks with the Prime Minister on bilateral relations and other issues. He also met with Foreign Minister, Dr Tedros Adhanom to exchange views on the Fourth Tripartite meeting in Khartoum and on strengthening of bilateral relations. (**See article**)

A US delegation headed by Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) Chair, Senate Agriculture Committee, met with Prime Minister Hailemariam on Thursday last week (August 28). Discussions covered Ethiopia's agricultural development and its successes in food security and in developing resilience on climate change as well as re-authorization of AGOA and the empowerment of women.

A one-day Forum to strengthen the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' links with the public media took place on Thursday (September 4). The Forum, opened by Dr Tedros, also discussed professional ethics and ways to improve relations between the media and the Ministry.

State Minister, Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos and Germany's Parliamentary Secretary of State, Thomas Silberhorn on Thursday (September 4) discussed ways to boost bilateral relations in a number of areas, including technical and engineering sectors and in economic and trade relations.

Ethiopian Airlines announced on Monday (September 1) that it had launching a new route to Madrid, the capital of Spain via Rome. This will provide Ethiopian Airlines with its tenth destination in Europe.

The Yabelo-Mega road which connects Ethiopia and Kenya was inaugurated this week and is now open. Ethiopia's Minister for Transport, Workneh Gebeyhu, said the road was one of several projects aimed at linking Ethiopia's infrastructure with its neighbors.

Kenya

President Kenyatta told the AU Peace and Security Summit in Nairobi on Tuesday that Africa needed to coordinate efforts both at the national, regional but also at the continental level to strengthen the response to the serious challenge and threat of terrorism to security in Africa. He said "No single state can tackle this threat alone." **(See article)**

The Secretary-General of the Kenya Red Cross Society has called on President Kenyatta to make good on a threat to deploy the army to bring an end to renewed clashes between the Garre and Degodia communities in Mandera County in north east Kenya.

Somalia

The Somali National Army and AMISOM forces finally launched "Operation Indian Ocean" at the end of last week. The town of Jalalaqsi in Hiiraan region was captured on Wednesday (September 3). **(See article)**

The US Department of Defense announced in a statement on Monday (September 1) that the "US military forces conducted an operation in Somalia today against the Al-Shabaab network." The Pentagon said it was still assessing the results. Somali intelligence sources claimed the attack was a drone strike targeting senior officials of Al- Shabaab including its leader Ahmed Abdi Godane and his deputy Abu Abdalla. **(See article)**

Representatives of the United Nations, IGAD and the European Union in Somalia issued a statement on Sunday (August 31) welcoming the agreement by Colonel Barre Adan Shire "Hiiraale" to participate in the Juba reconciliation process, and for his militia to be integrated into the Somali National Army.

South Sudan

On Saturday (August 30) IGAD Mediation called on the South Sudan parties to respect the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. A statement reiterated that the Re-dedication and Implementation Modalities of the Agreement had been signed on August 25, and called on all Parties to honor their commitments and to "end the war in South Sudan immediately." **(See article)**

Sudan

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the International Committee of the Red Cross signed a revised country agreement on Thursday last week (August 28). ICRC activities were suspended in February this year and the new agreement allows for discussions on restarting its humanitarian operations.

The rebel alliance of the Sudan Revolutionary Forces (SRF), together with representatives of the East Sudan Front, JEM and the SLM-MM met with the African Union High-level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), the Darfur Joint Chief Mediator and the UN Special Envoy for Sudan in Addis Ababa on Monday (September 1). This was the first meeting with both the SPLM-N and Darfur rebel groups.

Egypt's Foreign Minister visits Ethiopia

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Sameh Shoukry, visited Ethiopia on Thursday this week (September 4) and held bilateral talks with Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn and with Foreign Minister, Dr Tedros Adhanom. In his meeting with Prime Minister Hailemariam, Foreign Minister Shoukry was accompanied by Ambassador Sherif Eissa, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for Nile Water Issues, Counselor Ahmed Abu Zeid, a member of the Minister's Cabinet, and Mr Mohammed Edrees, Egypt's Ambassador to Ethiopia. The Egyptian Foreign Minister presented a message from President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt to Prime Minister Hailemariam referring to intensifying the cooperative partnership between the two countries as well as turning the Nile into a source of future cooperation for the benefit of all. Prime Minister Hailemariam said that the existing relations of the two countries had shown significant improvement since he met President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in June in Malabo. He also stressed the need to improve economic cooperation, in breadth and depth, in order to deepen Ethio-Egyptian bilateral ties. The Prime Minister underlined the need to cooperate in a number of areas including health, education, air services and agriculture. These, he said, would advance the shared aspirations of the two peoples. Mr Shoukry, for his part, affirmed that Egypt stood committed to ensuring the growth of bilateral ties between Egypt and Ethiopia.

The discussions between the two Foreign Ministers focused on strengthening all-round bilateral relations, deepening of people-to-people and government-to-government ties, and an exchange of views on the successful discussions at the Fourth Tripartite Dam Talks held in Khartoum (August 25-26). They also spoke on charting the way forward, with the view to building a new era of comprehensive friendly cooperative partnership between the two countries. Dr Tedros extended a warm welcome to the Foreign Minister of Egypt and thanked him for making a visit to Addis Ababa to underline the principles of cooperation, mutual respect and the advancement of common interests. He noted that nature and history had entwined Ethio-Egyptian relations. He emphasized that current Ethio-Egyptian relations featured the strong will and bold determination of both countries to create a mutually beneficial cooperative partnership. Dr Tedros expressed his hope that the moves towards common ground would usher in a brighter future for Ethio-Egyptian relations. He pointed out that the Fourth Tripartite GERD talks held in Khartoum (August 25-26) had shown that Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan were determined to achieve win-win results in the spirit of mutual trust and confidence. He said Ethiopia appreciated the strong desire of the Egyptian leadership to overcome the differences between them and to maintain their historic ties. He also noted the urgency to keep up the momentum for lasting friendship and mutual advancement under the spirit of shared benefit for all. Dr Tedros also stressed the need to improve the scale and level of economic cooperation, to tap into the potential for all-round cooperation to the fullest level, and expand people-to-people and government-to-government ties. The Minister noted that Ethiopia was intending to send a public diplomacy delegation, comprising religious leaders, artists, students and others to Egypt to help put bilateral ties firmly on the road towards a new chapter of mutual understanding and common prosperity.

Dr Tedros also highlighted that Ethiopia was committed to working in concert with Egypt with the view to making "a bigger pie of common interests." He reminded Mr Shoukry that the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi had eloquently described Ethio-Egyptian ties as an old marriage fastened by the River Nile, emphasizing that nothing could separate the two nations from these age-old links. He said that the "swimming together" principle could sow the seeds of trust and confidence within the region and help to write a new chapter in the continued struggle against poverty. Dr Tedros emphasized that the meeting between Prime Minister Hailemariam and President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, in June, Malabo, at the 23rd ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, had laid the foundation for a new spirit of partnership to carry forward and elevate existing bilateral relations to a new and higher level. He stressed that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam was a catalyst for mutual rejuvenation and for the renewal of Sudan, Ethiopia, Egypt and the region.

Foreign Minister, Sameh Shoukry, reiterated that Egypt remained committed to maintaining a cooperative partnership and sustaining the post-Malabo spirit of meaningful engagement. The discussions that had been conducted in June between Ethiopia's Prime Minister Hailemariam and Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in Malabo, he said, had become a milestone to scale up dialogue and understanding, uphold mutual respect, and recognize the shared interests that far outweighed the differences between Egypt and Ethiopia. Mr Shoukry said the discussions would help the two nations embark on a new path of friendly cooperative engagement and collaboration at bilateral, regional and continental levels. He said the recent Fourth Tripartite Dam Talks had injected a new impetus into forging a point of convergence and compromise with

the aim of meeting the mutual interests of the two peoples. The talks, he said, had shown a new desire to solve the issue within the spirit of flexibility, compromise and confidence building from all three delegations. Egypt, he said, regarded Ethiopia as a crucial partner and was willing to increase cooperation to turn the positive progress achieved so far into something more tangible. He suggested the need for identifying ways to crystallize and capture the spirit and momentum of fruitful consultations made in Malabo. He affirmed that Egypt was committed to the creation of key enabling conditions to ensure the achievement of common interests, and praised Ethiopia's economic successes of the last decade. The Ministers agreed to the convening of an Ethio-Egyptian Joint Ministerial Commission meeting in November in Addis Ababa, in order to nurture their historic ties and encourage continued growth of bilateral cooperation in the spheres of tourism, agriculture, urban development, health, education, air services and other areas of common interest. Both sides agreed to uphold the principle of amity and mutual benefit as well as to expand converging interests to meet their common interests. They agreed that a centerpiece of expanding bilateral relations should be the organization of a business forum as a valuable instrument to embark on closer partnership of their business communities. Dr Tedros proposed that the two countries' Chambers of Commerce should sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the view to enhancing cooperative relations and tapping trade and investment potentials. The two Ministers agreed to encourage a high-level political dialogue to institute an innovative cooperative partnership for positive outcomes.

A key point in these developments has been the meeting between Egypt's President el-Sisi and Ethiopia's Prime Minister Hailemariam in Malabo. Guided by the seven points on which they agreed, the Tripartite Ministerial Meeting of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan on the GERD project was successfully reactivated, and demonstrated mutual trust and good will in the decision to follow up on the recommendations of the International Panel of Experts. The three countries agreed on the setting up of a Tripartite National Committee (TNC) comprising four members from each country to follow up and conduct the studies recommended by the IPoE. These were the Study on Water Resources/Hydropower System Simulation Model, and the Study on Trans-boundary Environmental and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment. It was agreed that TNC would take decisions unanimously, and would report within six months from September 1. An International Consultancy Firm would be hired to carry out the two studies according to the "Draft Scope of Work" presented in the IPoE final report, and the studies would be implemented according to an agreed timetable. The Water Ministers agreed that the three countries may provide the TNC with any national studies regarding GERD project, adding that the TNC would have the duty to check and validate all the individual country data before these were submitted to the International Consulting Firm(s) involved. They also agreed that in future additional International Experts might be nominated to provide technical opinions in case the Ministers were unable to agree over the outcome of the two studies. In contrast to the earlier Tripartite meetings, this fourth session was seen by all three parties as producing positive results.

The African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) 2014 held this week in Addis Ababa

This week the African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) 2014 has been taking place in Addis Ababa. Hosted by the African Union and the Government of Ethiopia, it has been focusing on promoting investment and policy support for increasing agricultural productivity in environmentally sustainable ways, on ways to strengthen the livelihood and wellbeing of smallholder farmers, and on methods to add value to the agricultural and green initiatives value chains. The forum was organized primarily to deliver in practical terms on one of the main objectives set out when the African Union designated this year as the "Year of Agriculture and Food Security", namely broad-based, inclusive consultations and dialogue on African agriculture and on ways to achieve sustainable food and nutrition security across the continent. This is an objective of the African Union of whose importance international and local stake holders have frequently been reminded by Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia and others. The organizers brought together a large and diverse range of stakeholders to discuss Africa's future prosperity, including Heads of State and Government, parliamentarians and ministers, representatives of farmers' organizations, women and youth groups, NGOs, civil society organizations, private agribusinesses, commercial financial institutions and venture investors, agricultural scientists and others. The nearly 1,000 participants from 60 countries, including a 100 from Ethiopia, came to develop and share new ideas and concrete plans for achieving a uniquely African "Green Revolution". Among the sponsors of the Forum were the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), the African Union, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU).

Strive Masiyiwa, chairman of AGRA said that "Africa's smallholder farmers produce the vast majority of food grown on the continent and they are the backbone of a sector that employs more than 65 percent of all

Africans, so when businesses, governments, researchers and farmers work together to strengthen our food production and distribution systems, they are seeking commercial success that will be shared across African society - and particularly for the poorest among us." AGRA released its second annual Africa Agricultural Status Report at the Forum, focusing on the issue of African agriculture and climate change, and how to accelerate the adoption of climate smart agriculture by Africa's smallholder farmers. Kanayo Nwanze, president of IFAD, said "I am proud that many African nations are becoming economic powerhouses, but without a viable agricultural sector and a strong rural economy, there cannot be a viable future for Africa," adding that "calling up productivity in African agriculture so that it contributes to the prosperity of the women and men living in rural areas is an absolute pre-requisite of prosperity for our continent."

The Forum is the most significant Africa-wide gathering of agriculture experts, investors and farmers since the African Union issued its Malabo Declaration in June pushing for accelerated agricultural growth. The African Heads of State called then for the doubling of food productivity in Africa, the halving of poverty and for significant progress towards the elimination of child under-nutrition by 2025. In advance of the Forum, African Union Chairperson, Dr Dlamini Zuma said "These goals represent a renewed political commitment, at the highest level, for agriculture-led growth across our region: we need to go further, faster. AGRF gives us the opportunity to hit the ground running and set in motion the plans and measurable steps needed for an inclusive, sustainable transformation of African agriculture by all actors." The theme of the Forum (September 1-4) was "Beyond the Tipping Point: A New Vision and Strategies for Inclusive and Sustainable Transformation". Numerous pre-events, plenary and breakaway sessions took place over the four days. These were framed around six tracks drawn from the AU Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Framework: increasing food productivity and ending hunger; research and technology; sustainable agriculture; and commodity markets and trade; inclusive agriculture; and whether increased financing along the value chains is a tool of the past. Areas explored included global commodity markets, the future of the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Framework itself, ecological sustainability and climate change. Other critical issues for Africa's food security discussed were increasing food productivity as climate change presents more challenging growing conditions; promoting agricultural investment to generate benefits at all economic levels; increasing financing for agricultural development; and support for modernizing commodity markets and removing barriers to intra-regional trade.

The Forum also looked at how to address the ambitious and comprehensive vision of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program which aims for an average annual growth rate of 6 percent in the agriculture sector by 2015. It also aims to help African countries reach a higher path of economic growth through agriculture-led development. Opening a session, Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary-General, and Chairperson of the African Progress Panel (APP), said, "we have enough resources to feed not just ourselves but other regions too. We must seize this opportunity now." He noted that "such revolution will transform the face of our continent for the better. Beyond the valuable jobs and opportunities they will provide, they will generate much needed improvements in Africa's food and nutrition security." Equally, he explained that, "The farmers and the peoples of continent need their governments to demonstrate more [how to] scale up the appropriate infrastructure and ensure that financial systems are accessible for all." Ethiopia's Minister of Agriculture, Tefera Deribew, said that Africa must harness strategies to help small sector farmers since helping them to flourish means helping the whole effort for green growth. The Minister reminded the audience that agriculture was the source of over 60% of the total employment, 20% of the total exports, and 15% of the GDP of Africa. He said "presently about 25% of the African population, around 245 million people, do not have enough food to meet their basic nutritional needs and between 30-40 percent of children under 5 years continue to suffer chronic under-nutrition." He noted Ethiopia had made agriculture its primary priority with its Agricultural Development-led Industrialization (ADLI) Strategy. He welcomed that the Forum would address "the real transformation needed in agricultural research and technology adoption, agricultural input and commodity markets for the products of smallholder farmers and sustainably increased financing of the agriculture sector for the practical realization of the African Green Revolution." He called for a commitment to increased soil fertility and to encourage better agronomic practices as well as improvements to Africa's seed systems. He stressed that smallholder farmers must have access to more affordable credit facilities, and urged the Forum to call for the global community to honor its commitments for climate change adaptation.

South Sudan's warring parties both signed the ceasefire's Implementation Matrix

The fifth session of the Assembly of IGAD Heads of State and Government Summit on South Sudan at the beginning of last week underlined the determination of IGAD Member States and of the international

community to help all parties of South Sudan find a lasting solution to the conflict and chart the way out of the still deteriorating humanitarian, political and security situation in South Sudan. The Assembly of IGAD endorsed the signature by the warring parties of the Implementation Matrix of the Cessation Hostilities Agreement and endorsed its addendum, which obliges the parties to bring the conflict to an end. The Assembly also endorsed the Protocol on Agreed Principles on Transitional Arrangements Towards Resolution of the Crisis in South Sudan. The Government of South Sudan agreed to this; other stakeholders have their reservations. The Assembly then called on the SPLM/A-in-Opposition to sign the Protocol, and further appealed to all stakeholders to capitalize on this to operationalize the Protocol within 6 weeks, emphasizing that even if any party boycotted the negotiation process the mediation should continue. It also underscored “its resolve to take action against those who obstruct the attainment of peace in South Sudan” and stressed those who did would “be held responsible for their actions and denied participation in the future governance arrangements for South Sudan.” Despite the Assembly’s political commitment and determination to consolidate the progress achieved in the mediation so far, the SPLM/A-in-Opposition, headed by Dr Riek Machar, promptly issued a statement that claimed that IGAD’s role in the peace process and during the Assembly showed a bias towards President Salva Kiir. Its statement demanded that IGAD address the underlying causes of the conflict. It also denied that the SPLM/A-in-Opposition had signed the Cessation of Hostilities Matrix.

Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin, Chairperson of the IGAD Special Envoys, subsequently briefed the media on Saturday (August 30). He said firmly that the SPLM/A-In-Opposition had signed the Implementation Matrix of the Cessation Hostilities Agreement; and he urged the two conflicting parties to comply with and fully commit to its prompt implementation. He said the SPLM/A-in-Opposition’s statement was inaccurate: “They signed it. Having signed the matrix, if they come days later and say they haven’t signed it, it is just a gimmick exercise.” He said if the SPLM/A-in-Opposition was determined to make the agreement a debilitating failure there would be “robust and decisive action” by IGAD. He advised the SPLM/A-In-opposition “to play a critical role in the resolution of the crisis which has put the lives of millions of South Sudanese at risk. Any violations”, he said, “will be met by robust and decisive action by IGAD, which will take all measures in its power to prevent the humanitarian crisis from deepening.”

After the signing and endorsement of the Protocol by the IGAD Heads of State and Government, the SPLM/A-in-Opposition strongly rejected Principle 2, which stated that the Head of State and Government, and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Transitional Government should be the elected, incumbent President of the Republic. It also rejected Principle 3 that the Prime Minister should have to be acceptable to the President, and Principle 6 that the Prime Minister should not be eligible to stand for any public office in the national elections at the end of the Transitional Period. These two later principles have also been objected to by the SPLM leaders (Former Detainees), Political Parties and representatives of civil society. In all these cases the objections are largely the same: that the Protocol unduly favors the incumbent President.

These issues have overshadowed the other aspects of the protocol. The IGAD Heads of State and Government made those decisions on the basis of sustaining a constitutional order in the Republic of South Sudan, which might also consider the need to bring sustainable peace and national reconciliation in the country. It is clear that the parties are preoccupied by the question of power sharing. If progress is to be made, it is necessary for all the parties, and in particular both the warring parties, to be reassured that a way can be found to (re)negotiate and/or elaborate this issue at an appropriate point. At the same time, it is very clear that the warring parties must urgently embark on a new path of practical implementation of the pledges made so far, consolidating the hard-won gains of the mediation. They need to concentrate rather more firmly on the long-term future of the people of South Sudan and focus on the larger picture of building a new, united and stable South Sudan that can reflect the pluralistic nature of its various communities.

One immediate element is, of course, the absolute necessity to implement the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in order to enable humanitarian agencies to provide the necessary aid to the more than one million people facing famine. The UN says more than 1.5 million have been forced to flee their homes and at least 50,000 children are threatened by death from malnutrition. As the EU Envoy to the Horn of Africa, Alexander Rondos said last week, a deal is critical to stabilizing the country. “It is action on the ground on the security front that has to occur, and this needs to see immediate implementation and this is entirely in the hands of the South Sudanese parties.” According to the Joint Technical Committee both sides have been responsible for repeated violations of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. Of 14 major violations since mid-April, six were classified as being the responsibility of the SPLM/A-in-Opposition, and four of the Government of South Sudan. The two sides were considered jointly responsible for two other incidents and

another two were described as inconclusive. The mediation is due to resume on September 13 with the aim that the multi-stakeholder negotiations will then work [towards] reaching a final settlement within 45 days, as laid down in the Protocol. Failure to make progress towards a negotiated settlement in the next session of mediation will challenge the entire IGAD-led peace process, as well as water down or even end the continuing support and sustained efforts to end the violence offered by IGAD Member States and the international community. It will also disperse and scatter the hopes and aspirations of the people of South Sudan for peace for the indefinite future. If the warring parties cannot move firmly towards a negotiated settlement of the crisis, if they refuse to compromise over power sharing, and if they continue to fight regardless of all the consequences, the people of South Sudan will inexorably suffer, making the crisis even harder to bring to an end or reverse. For every political, social and humanitarian reason, it is incumbent upon the leaders of the warring parties to consider the interests of their peoples and end the suffering and displacement of this senseless war. They must remember the high price paid by the people of South Sudan in its long liberation struggle. Their people do not deserve the tragedy of this current situation; they cannot afford it. It is no longer appropriate for displacement, bloodshed, famine and destruction to be a defining marker for South Sudan, or anywhere else in the Horn of Africa, or indeed in Africa. An acceptable response lies squarely in the hands of all the stakeholders.

Somali and AMISOM forces launch “Operation Indian Ocean”

Over the last few weeks, Somali officials and AMISOM officers have repeatedly warned that the Somali National Army and AMISOM have been about to launch “Operation Indian Ocean” to liberate the remaining major towns and large areas still held by Al-Shabaab. The offensive was loudly signposted with a number of announcements and forces moving steadily towards major Al-Shabaab bases steadily over several weeks with no attempt at concealment. The aim, in part, appears to have been to encourage Al-Shabaab to leave its strongholds. Last week, the offensive started and has shown some immediately positive results. Somali National Army and AMISOM forces moved north from Jowhar into Hiiraan region and on Wednesday (September 3) Somali troops supported by Burundi units of AMISOM liberated the town of Jalalaqsi in Hiiraan region as part of operations aimed at liberating more towns from the militants group. Jalalaqsi is an important trading and farming town located along the banks of Shebelle River and the road connecting the towns of Jowhar and Bulo Burdo, It is the second biggest town in Hiiraan region. The joint forces advanced from Jowhar [and] captured a number of small towns on the way including the important crossroads at Dangaras. Al-Shabaab fled in advance of the arrival of the SNA and AMISOM forces. AMISOM Sector 5 commander Colonel Ndayambaje Reverien said the strategic town of Jalalaqsi had been used by Al-Shabaab as a base to launch attacks on SNA and AMISOM bases. “We are happy to help the Somali Government regain more territory and help the people who have been suffering under the brutal leadership of al Shabaab, who have held the population hostage,” he said. Colonel Reverien added that “the local populations welcomed the joint forces during the operation and continue to work with the forces in a bid to liberate them from the terrorists.” The Acting African Union Special Representative for Somalia Honorable Lydia Wanyotto said the capture of Jalalaqsi town is a welcome victory for Somali security forces and AMISOM because of its strategic location. She said it would help alleviate the suffering of the Somali population, opening up the route between Mogadishu and Belet Weyne and allow more free movement for business people and the population.”

Another aspect of “Operation Indian Ocean” is aiming to cut Al-Shabaab supply lines through the port of Barawe and other smaller ports along the coast south of Mogadishu. SNA and AMISOM forces have been moving through Lower Shebelle towards Barawe, a major Al-Shabaab center. On Saturday (August 30) Somali National Army forces and Ugandan units of AMISOM liberated the town of Bulo Marer in Lower Shabelle region, capturing the two smaller towns of Golweyn and Jerlio as they advanced. Bulo Marer, held by Al-Shabaab for several years is seen as the gateway to Barawe. It was used as an Al-Shabaab recruitment center and tax collection point. Al-Shabaab made a considerable but unsuccessful effort to resist the advance. Bulo Marer’s capture was a necessary step in the operations to liberate Barawe. Another significant town captured in this area is the town of Kurtunwaray. On Thursday the United States Representative for Somalia, James P. McAnulty, the European Union Ambassador, Michele Cervone d’Urso, and the British Ambassador to Somalia, Neil Wigan, in a joint statement congratulated the Government and AMISOM on these latest security advances. A statement said the liberation of the key towns of Jalalaqsi, Bulo Marer, and Kurtunwaray, had delivered significant blows [to] Al-Shabaab, denying it critical recruitment and staging grounds for future attacks. On Monday (September 1), the US Department of Defense announced that US military forces had conducted an operation in Somalia against the Al-Shabaab network. Rear Admiral John Kirby, the Pentagon press secretary, said “We are assessing the results of the operation and will provide additional information

as and when appropriate." However, according to Abdikadir Mohamed Nur Sidii, the Governor of Lower Shabelle region, the operation was an airstrike against top Al-Shabaab commanders who had been meeting in a forest near Sablale district, 170 kms south of Mogadishu, and not far from Barawe. The meeting had been to discuss ways to respond to the offensive aimed at Barawe. The Governor claimed that commanders at the meeting included both Ahmed Abdi Godane, the Amir of Al-Shabaab, and his deputy Abu Abdalla. The Pentagon has yet to confirm the aim or the results of the attack, but an Al-Shabaab commander was quoted on Tuesday as saying that two vehicles were hit by the airstrike and six militants had been killed. He refused to give any names.

In 2012, the U.S. offered a reward of up to \$7 million for information leading to the arrest of Ahmed Abdi Godane, "Abu Zubeyr". A Somali government spokesperson, Ridwaan Hajji Abdiweli, who said the current offensive was aimed at rooting out terror groups from Somalia, noted that "the airstrikes in the Lower Shabelle Region were targeted at the Al-Shabaab leadership and it has had debilitating effects on the group and this will be sustained." The Government welcomed the US airstrike that targeted leaders of Al-Shabaab on Monday. Operation Indian Ocean has not been confined to Hiiraan and Lower Shebelle. Elsewhere, SNA and AMISOM troops have been making advances Bakool region, and on September 2 there were reports that AMISOM and SNA forces had been moving out of El Buur and Dhusamareb towns in central Somalia to clear villages around these areas. The Chief of the Somali Army, General Dahir Adan Elmi, said the forces will continue to liberate areas from Al-Shabaab as the Somali Government asserts control in the newly liberated areas. He said that already over the last few weeks, Somali army units assisted by AMISOM had successfully liberated various towns in Hiiraan, Bakool, Lower Shabelle and Middle Shabelle regions. "The momentum will continue", he said, "until the terrorism threat is dealt with." On Tuesday, Somalia's Council of Ministers convened in an extraordinary session chaired by Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed to discuss the security situation and the ongoing security operations. It agreed that the Government would continue to enhance the ongoing offensive and called on people to support the national forces. It also called on Somali religious scholars to play their role in this important initiative and "to debunk the fallacies and misinterpretation of Islam." The Government has also offered a 45-day amnesty to those misled into joining terror groups, but anyone who does not take this up will then be regarded as a criminal and face the law. Those who take up the offer will have the opportunity of a new start in life and opportunities to better their future.

The objective of the offensive is not just military gain. Southern Somalia is experiencing severe drought with hundreds of thousands in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. The UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, Philippe Lazzarini said in a statement on Tuesday (September 2) that he was "deeply concerned by the serious deterioration in the food security situation in Somalia." He said a new assessment by the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit and the Famine Early Warning Systems Network showed a significant decline "owing to a lethal mix of drought, surging food prices and conflict." The findings indicate that an estimated 1,025,000 people face acute food insecurity today and are classified as Crisis and Emergency (IPC Phases 3 and 4). Mr Lazzarini said this was up by 20 per cent from the 857,000 six months ago, and he added the food security situation of over 2.1 million additional people remains fragile and is classified as Stressed (IPC Phase 2), bringing the "total number of people in need of humanitarian assistance or livelihood support to over 3 million." As a result of delayed and erratic rainfall, the Gu 2014 cereal harvest in July/August is estimated to be 37 percent below the long-term average and 28 percent below the five-year average. The situation is likely to continue deteriorating further until the start of the Deyr rains in October. The poor rains have also contributed to water shortages, poor livestock performance and reduced access to milk in several pastoral areas, particularly in parts of the Northeast and the Gedo region.

Mr Lazzarini said the country's fragile gains, made since the 2011 famine that cost over a quarter of a million lives, were now being eroded and malnutrition rates were again on the rise. "Coping capacities are severely stretched and vulnerable families risk being pushed further into destitution. As many as 218,000 acutely malnourished children under the age of 5 require emergency nutrition supplements, access to clean water and better hygiene; 43,800 children are so severely malnourished that they will die if they do not receive medical treatment and therapeutic food." Aid organizations have begun to use air cargo flights to areas with no road access, but this is insufficient to deliver the volume of aid required. Mr Lazzarini said the securing of road access for commercial and humanitarian supplies was necessary for sustained delivery of needed assistance. He said concerted efforts were urgently required to save lives and prevent a free fall, adding that "as we enter the last third of the year, more than half a billion US dollars are still required for life-saving activities." Decisive measures, he said, are required.

The AU Peace and Security Council's Terrorism Summit in Nairobi

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU) met at the level of Heads of State and Government, on Tuesday (September 2) in Nairobi, Kenya, to consider prevention and combating of terrorism and violent extremism. The Summit was attended by nine Heads of State and Government, a Vice-President and Prime Minister, several Ministers and a large number of invited guests. Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos, State Minister of Foreign Affairs, led the Ethiopian delegation at the Summit. The Summit, which held extensive discussions on how to combat the scourge of terrorism in Africa in all its forms and manifestations, recalled that the OAU/AU has been actively engaged in the fight against terrorism since the 1990s. The adoption of an OAU Heads of State and Government resolution in 1992, on the strengthening of cooperation and coordination among African States, as well as the adoption of a convention on the prevention and combating Terrorism in 1999, and the additional Protocol of 2004, were highlighted. A number of speakers also alluded to the creation of the African Center for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) in 2004 as an important step in fighting the heinous crime of terrorism. ACSRT is located in Algiers.

However, the Summit also recognized that despite tremendous efforts to fight this horrendous crime, the scourge of terrorism has increasingly become a major challenge for the peace and security of Africa. The Summit exchanged views about the terrorist attacks committed by groups such as Al-Shabaab, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MOJWA), Al-Murabitoun, Ansar al-Sharia, Boko Haram, Ansaru and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The Summit strongly condemned all terrorist acts committed wherever, by whomever and for whatever reasons, in Africa. The Summit expressed its solidarity with all the affected countries and victims. It also reiterated the AU's conviction that terrorism cannot be justified under any circumstances. A number of delegations also emphasized the linkage between terrorism and trans-national crime including drugs, and human and arms trafficking. Extremist ideologies, poverty and support from external actors were also raised as major factors that enabled terrorism to gain ground in Africa. The Summit, therefore, urged Member States to take appropriate comprehensive measures that took into account all these aspects of the problem. It also emphasized the need for enhanced collaboration between the AU and international partners in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, as the scourge of terrorism is a global phenomenon which poses a serious threat to international peace and security. In his statement to the Summit, Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos recalled that long before terrorism became prominent on the international stage, Africa had been confronting appalling acts of terrorism and violent extremism. It had developed an elaborate legal and institutional framework to address this monumental challenge. He, therefore, emphasized that the existing legal instruments and institutional mechanisms already in place could provide a useful framework to mobilize Africa's collective efforts in countering terrorism. In this context, he proposed a number of measures for consideration of the Summit:

- To put in place a mechanism for sharing intelligence and the exchange of relevant experiences and best practices in the area of countering terrorism between and among African security organizations and structures;
- To establish a regional coordination mechanism in regions most affected by frequent terrorist attacks to address the specific challenges posed by terrorist organizations in their respective areas of operation;
- To establish practical cooperation among relevant national institutions to identify and control and dry up the sources of finance for terrorist activities; and
- To fight collectively against the ideology of terrorism and violent extremism.

High on the agenda of discussion was consideration of Boko Haram Islamist militants in Nigeria, which has murdered more than 2,000 people so far this year in its campaign to impose Islamic rule, and the activities of Al-Shabaab in Somalia and Kenya. Both Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan and Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta have called for increased international support to deal with the threats posed by terrorism and extremism. The African Development Bank and the World Bank said earlier this year that bombings and other incidents in Nigeria and Kenya was sparking concern that investors might begin to shy away from the continent unless the violence eases.

At the Summit, President Jonathan, who read a speech on behalf of Dr Dlamini Zuma, African Union Chairperson, said there was a need for more cooperation and information sharing in the region. He said "the problem we are confronting is global in nature. Terrorists operate in a network that can only be defeated through concerted action and cooperation." Chadian President, Idriss Deby, current chairman of the AU

Peace and Security Council, also called for a more united approach in the war against terror. President Kenyatta told the conference that radicalization of youth was a major hindrance to the gains made in fighting terrorism which remained “the major threat to regional and global peace and security.” He noted that terrorists had adopted the use of the internet and social media to recruit members, and said this was a “challenge that requires a combined effort on the part of all of us, if we are to defeat it.” He said “we need to coordinate our efforts both at the national, regional but also at the continental level to strengthen our response to the serious challenge and threat to our security in the continent.” He said “No single state can tackle this threat alone. It is particularly worrying in Africa today that terrorist organizations have grown both in terms of number and capability.” A report by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security emphasized the need for the African continent to adapt an action oriented approach. The report which indicated that terror threats could only be defeated by concerted efforts from all parties, pointed out that porous borders, corruption, lack of coordination between security forces and the weaknesses of the criminal justice system were some of the issues hampering the efforts to fight terror. It recommended the need for a common plan to enhance border control and sharing of intelligence. There is awareness in the donor community that many African countries need assistance, given the difficulties they face in dealing with a growing terrorism threat, not least because of the lack of resources. At the same time there is an understanding that much needs to be done in training, funding and counter-terrorism strategies that need to be improved and implemented. U.S. President Obama’s administration committed itself to supporting African efforts to fight extremism at the U.S.-Africa Summit in Washington a month ago. President Obama said the US would continue to help build the capacity of Kenya's security services and better equip them to deal with the problem of Al- Shabaab and other security threats. This support was also extended to Niger, Mali, Nigeria, Ghana and Tunisia. The President said “We’re launching a new security governance initiative to help African countries continue to build strong, professional security forces to provide for their own security.” He also announced the US was entering into a rapid response partnership with six African countries, **Ethiopia**, Ghana, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda, which had demonstrated a track record as peace keepers.

At its conclusion, the Summit emphasized the need for closer coordination among the relevant security institutions of AU Member States to fight the barbarism of terrorism and extremism. The Summit, while calling on those Member States that have not yet done so, to ratify the AU's legal instruments against terrorism, stressed the imperative necessity for all Member States to fully implement these instruments. The Summit also urged Member States, to ensure that their territories were not used as recruiting grounds for terrorist activities. A request was also made by the Summit for Member States to take the necessary measures to close off the financial sources of terrorism. The Summit further stressed the need for the intelligence agencies of AU Member States to coordinate their efforts, to exchange information and learn from each other's best practices to combat terrorism in an effective and efficient manner. The Summit also expressed its deep concern over the reported financial flows in support of terrorist and extremist groups emanating from outside the continent. It requested the Committee on Counter Terrorism of the AU’s Peace and Security Council to investigate this issue with the aim of determining the extent of the problem and of making recommendations on how to address it. The Summit called for an immediate end to any such practices. The leaders also proposed creating a special fund to combat Islamist militant groups that have been growing in strength across the continent.

The use of Forced Labor at Eritrea’s Colluli Potash Project

Next month, Eritrea is holding an Asmara Mining Conference (October 1-5). Eritrea has a variety of mineral deposits: the Canadian company, Nevsum, has produced gold for two years at its Bisha mine, switching to copper production at the end of last year; and the Colluli Potash Deposit is currently undergoing a feasibility study by South Boulder Mines of Australia. The Conference is being hosted by the Eritrean Ministry of Mines and the Eritrean National Mining Corporation (ENAMCO), and it is billed as providing a number of presentations on Eritrea’s mining prospects as well as providing a forum for discussion. One subject that is unlikely to be raised is the use of forced labor in the mining industry, the subject of another report last week by Human Rights Concern – Eritrea. Eritrea has no human rights organizations and HRC-Eritrea is forced to operate in exile. This report deals with the use of forced labor at the Colluli Potash Project, a joint project between Australia’s South Boulder Mines, based in Perth, and ENAMCO. Human Rights Concern – Eritrea says ENAMCO, the mining investment arm of the Eritrean government negotiates all the terms and conditions with foreign investors. It provides “no transparency or accountability and neither the Eritrean Ministry of Energy and Mines, nor the Commercial Bank of Eritrea are aware of the management of the mining resources and revenue in Eritrea. They do not know what is going on and they are not allowed to

ask.” South Boulder Mines are currently carrying out a feasibility study of the substantial Potassium Sulfate deposits at Colluli. This is now due to be published in February next year, but South Boulder has already been highly optimistic about the prospects for the project. Colluli is about 350kms from Asmara and some 180 kms south of the port of Massawa in the south east of Eritrea. It lies in the area of the Danakil Depression, the hottest place on earth. The Colluli potash deposit site is about 400 sq. km, within the Danakil depression, and its estimated expected production amounts to two million tonnes of potash per year, producing an estimated annual revenue of around up to 2 billion dollars. The HRC-Eritrea report says that while the feasibility studies are being carried out, part of the preparation for future development is already under way, including the construction of a road from Colluli to the nearest part of the coast, which is about 70kms away. Other planned developments include the construction of a port and storage facilities as well as local infrastructure. The road, currently under construction, is being “rebuilt using the forced labour of underfed and overworked Eritreans in terrible living and working conditions.”

The report notes that the road construction is being done by Mereb Construction, a military construction company, set up by the Ministry of Defense, and run under the overall authority of the Segen Construction Company, which is owned by the country’s only political party, the Peoples Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ). The report claims all the workers for Mereb Construction are conscripts who are forced to work for six days per week and up to 12 hours per day, and are paid 500 Nakfa (equivalent to 10 US dollars) a month. This is the standard wage paid to all national conscripts. “They are citizens who have been held in the military against their will for many years, and treated like slaves.” Eritrea’s National Service, now the Warsai-Yikaalo Development Campaign, and originally required 18 months from its members when started in 1994: six months military training and a year’s development activity. However, since 1998 when Eritrea attacked Ethiopia leading to a two-year war, the Eritrean Government has never demobilized more than a handful of conscripts. The original conscripts have now been in service for well over a decade, and more are recruited every year. This, the report underlines, is why some 4,000 Eritreans are fleeing across the borders into Sudan and Ethiopia every month. The report underlines that Mereb Construction will also be responsible for building the accommodation at the mine and for other infrastructure, all being similarly built with its conscript labor force, in other words by forced labor. Mereb and Segen are two companies which have been frequently named as being responsible for the use of forced labor in other mining sites, notably Nevsum’s Bisha mine.

In 2009, an article by noted Eritrean academic, Gaim Kibreab, on the basis of fieldwork in Eritrea going back a decade or more earlier, concluded that the national service and the Warsai-Yikaalo Development did qualify as forced or compulsory labour as defined by relevant international conventions. The author noted that whatever the original ideas and benefits of the National Service program, the Warsai-Yikaalo Development in May 2002 turned the program into an indefinite and open-ended obligation, and concludes that “the Eritrean government ...uses forced labour as a means of political education and mobilisation, and for purposes of economic and infrastructural development, as well as for instilling work-ethic and discipline under a rigorously enforced punishment regime. It has also failed to suppress the use of forced labour by the ruling party’s firms and high-ranking officers of the armed forces... [and] in addition, the government also hires out conscripts to the private sector” All this is contrary to the international conventions to which Eritrea is a party. He also noted that the major beneficiaries of the national service and the Warsai-Yikaalo Development were the government, the ruling party and senior army officers. He visited “construction sites where the large majority of the workers in the PFDJ construction firms were *agelglot* (conscripts).” In 1997–8, “Segen, the PFDJ’s construction company, built fifty-eight villas behind the Cagnew Station in Asmara. The villas were subsequently allocated to generals, high-ranking security and party officials, and selected ambassadors. Soon afterwards, about fifty additional houses were built by the same firm in the same area using conscripts’ unpaid labour, and given to high-ranking members of the armed forces... When the asphalt road between Agordat and Tessenei was built, I was undertaking fieldwork in the area and most of the workers were conscripts. I also saw conscripts working in different ministries, departments, regional governments, agricultural schemes, digging wells, etc. The party’s firms, such as Segen, Bidho and Horn Construction, are the main property developers throughout the country, and the large majority of the manual workers, engineers, consultants, guards, cleaners, etc. are *agelglot*”.

More than a decade ago, former Eritrean Attorney-General, Adhanon Gebremariam, described the use of national service conscripts to provide workers for party, military and government companies, and even for individuals from these organizations, as a system of “slave labor”. He described it as a process defying “all standard international laws”. The services exacted from the conscripts, he said, had only been used for the benefit of the government, the ruling party and senior military officers, not for the benefit of the people. He

noted that “the most productive section of the workforce in the country is tied to the army and is forcibly engaged in road construction or toiling in farms belonging to army officers and the ruling party while the rest of the population are dependent upon international handouts. When such handouts [do] not arrive in time, the people [are] left with no alternative but to flee to neighboring countries.” In fact, he said, the main reason for the displacement of labor from life-sustaining economic activities to other areas was to provide for “the enrichment of the ruling party and high-ranking military officers.” Other reports have detailed the use of conscripts in government agricultural and construction projects. A report in 2011 noted that all the big farms were owned by the PFDJ as were all the main construction companies, among whom it mentioned the major national companies, “Asbeco, Bidho, Ghedem, Rodaab and Segen and smaller ones such as Badme, Haben, Mereb, Musa Ali and Sawa.” Several reports on Nevsum’s Bisha mine identified Segen and Mereb as the major contractors, with both employing largely conscript labor. They said the overwhelming majority of Segen’s employees and labor force come from “the slave labor pool of youngsters brought from the national service and army.” Interviews of former workers provided detailed evidence of the poor treatment of Mereb’s workers and of the fact that the national service conscripts were paid no more than the then national service “salary” of 400 Nakfa a month. The second report of the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Eritrea, submitted to the UN Human Rights Council on May 13, focused on the country’s indefinite national service and on arbitrary arrests and detention. In its conclusion the report says firmly: “violations of human rights in Eritrea included indefinite national service; arbitrary arrests and detention, including incommunicado detention; extrajudicial killings; torture; inhumane prison conditions; infringement to freedoms of movement, expression and opinion, assembly, association and religious belief; sexual and gender-based violence; and violations of children’s rights.” The Special Rapporteur specifically labelled the endless compulsory national service as “forced labor” under the laws and norms of international law. The report says: “since the length of national service in Eritrea is of an indefinite nature, it effectively constitutes forced labor as provided for in article 8, paragraph 3 (a) of the Covenant on forced labor. The ILO Committee of Experts has also declared the practice of National Service as incompatible with ILO Abolition of Forced Labour Convention No. 105.”