

A Week in the Horn

7th November 2014

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News in Brief

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President Michael D Higgins of Ireland on a visit to Ethiopia held talks with Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission. The meeting, attended by senior ministers from African Union member states, covered the humanitarian situation in South Sudan as well as other key pan-African issues, including climate change, provision of education, gender inequality and the ongoing Somali refugee crisis. The President was also updated on AU supported efforts to combat combating the Ebola outbreak. **(See article)**

US philanthropist Bill Gates has announced the Gates Foundation is committing more than US\$500 million to fight malaria and other infectious diseases in the developing world. He said in addition his foundation has boosted its annual funding for malaria by 30 per cent.

[Ethiopia](#)

Ireland's President Michael Higgins visited Ethiopia this week (November 2-7), holding talks with President Dr. Mulatu Teshome and Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn and visiting Irish NGOs and Irish funded development activities in Gambella and Tigray Regional States. **(See article)**

Ethiopia and Ireland signed three bilateral agreements this week on avoidance of double taxation, a transport agreement to allow for direct flights by Ethiopian airlines from June 2015 between Dublin and Addis Ababa., and bilateral co-operation agreement providing a framework for a five-year development partnership, estimated to be worth €136m. **(See article)**

President Dr Mulatu Teshome opened the 4th General Assembly of the African Ombudsman and Mediators Association on Tuesday (November 4). He said Ethiopia was committed to guarantee and respect the human rights of citizens and the Government was also working to ensure good governance, the rule of law, and administrative justice.

President Dr Mulatu also met with the Chair of the Board of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), Ms. Clare Short, this week. Ethiopia applied for EITI candidature in October last year in order to improve transparency in its extractive industry and was admitted as an EITI Candidate country in March. Ms. Short said the EITI would provide support for Ethiopia to further strengthen transparency.

Prime Minister Hailemariam attended UNIDO's Participatory and Sustainable Industrial Development Forum in Vienna. Ethiopia, along with Senegal, has been selected as a recipient of UNIDO's Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development Programs in Africa. **(See article)**

The Fifth Ethio-Egypt Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) was concluded Monday (November 3) with the meeting of Dr. Tedros Adhanom, Foreign Minister of Ethiopia and Egyptian Foreign Minister, Sameh Shoukry, as well as Ministers and senior level officials of the two sides. **(See article)**

The Ethio-Egypt Business Forum was held on Sunday (November 2) in Addis Ababa on the sideline of the Fifth Joint Ministerial Commission Meeting. It was attended by Ethiopia's Minister of Trade, Kebede Chane, and by Egypt's Minister of Industry, Trade and SME's, Mounir Fakhay Abdeol Nour,. **(See article)**

Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros, on Friday (October 31) briefed the Foreign Affairs, Defense and Security Standing Committee of the House of People's Representatives on the recent activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its plans for the next year. **(See article)**

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dewano Kedir, held discussions with representatives of ECOM, a major US trading company in coffee and other commodities, on how to improve the mechanisms of coffee trading, coffee farming and agricultural investment on Wednesday (November 5).

State Minister Dewano also met on Tuesday (November 4) with representatives of Green Fuel Solutions and its partners who want to work with Ethiopia in green energy development.

The third International Ethiopian Coffee Conference, organized by the Ethiopian Coffee Exporters Association (ECEA) was held on Thursday and Friday this week (November 6-7) in Addis Ababa.

State Minister of Agriculture, Sileshi Getahun opened the 9th International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR) Council Meeting on Tuesday (November 4) in Addis Ababa.

Dr. Ray Muntida, advisor to the IGAD Sustainable Tourism Master Plan (ISTMP) says Ethiopia will be one of the top five tourist destination countries in Africa if it properly implements its own Sustainable Tourism Master Plan by 2020. Ethiopia's plan is being developed with support from the United Nations in partnership with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. It follows the Prime Minister's decision to set up a National Tourism Transformation Council.

Djibouti

A leading long time opposition figure Aden Robleh Awaleh, died in Djibouti on Friday (October 31). Founder and chairman of the opposition National Democratic Party, he had been general secretary of the Front for the Liberation of French Somaliland before independence and was Minister of Trade 1978-83 before going into exile for a decade. President Ismail Omar Guelleh described Aden Robleh as "a model of courage".

Kenya

Foreign Affairs Cabinet Secretary and International Trade, Ms. Amina Mohamed, told a forum on peace building and conflict management in Nairobi on Monday (November 3) that the need to strengthen regional peace and security arrangements was a pressing priority. She said peace diplomacy was now among the five pillars of the country's Foreign Policy and was a key to the realization of other foreign policy objectives.

Somalia

IGAD Special Envoy to Somalia, Ambassador Mohamed Abdi Afey, arrived in Mogadishu on Tuesday (November 3) to try to bring an end to the differences between President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed. The Envoy said he hoped they would put an end to their dispute. Somali MPs have tabled a no confidence motion against the Prime Minister.

UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and visiting Somali Defense Minister Mohamed Sheikh Hassan Hamud, signed on Thursday (November 6) a Memo of Understanding (MoU) to bolster military cooperation with the Republic of Somalia and to improve ties between the two countries.

A team appointed by the African Union to investigate allegations that AMISOM troops in Somalia raped women and girls arrived in Mogadishu on Monday (November 3rd). The four-member team led by Assistant Commissioner of Zimbabwe Police, Sergio Isabella, has begun holding meetings with key stakeholders.

AMISOM and Interim Jubaland Administration troops on Friday (October 31) liberated the Island of Kudhaa, 45km south west of Kismayu, a strategic point controlled by Al-Shabaab for the last six years and used as a major center for illicit charcoal exports.

The Speaker of the National Assembly, Professor Mohamed Osman Jawari, has welcomed the Government's help to establish the new south western regional state and praised the efforts by Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed's office to bring together the three regions of Bay, Bakol and Lower Shabelle.

The Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (DSRSG) for Somalia, Ms. Fatiha Serour, attended the 7th High Level Aid Coordination Forum on Monday and Tuesday (November 3-4) in Hargeisa. Representatives from the UK and Denmark and Engineer Mahboub Maalim, Executive Secretary of IGAD, attended. A donors' statement noted that the draft annual report of the Somaliland Special Arrangement would be presented at the High Level Partnership Forum in Copenhagen later this month.

The President of Somaliland Ahmed Mohamed Silanyo told a donor's meeting in Hargeisa that Somaliland had rejected an invitation from the Federal Government of Somalia to attend the Copenhagen Conference to discuss implementation of the New Deal Compact for Somalia in mid-November. The conference was about Somalia, he said; it was not relevant to Somaliland.

South Sudan

The 28th IGAD Extraordinary Summit convened to discuss South Sudan opened on Thursday (November 6). Present at the meeting were the Presidents of Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda and the Prime Minister of Ethiopia. Prime Minister Hailemariam, the current chair of IGAD, told South Sudan's warring leaders that the regional peace process is almost "at the end of the line" as they have not sought a political solution to the crisis. He said "it is time the issue be given the full attention it deserves by the United Nations Security Council for meaningful strong action to be taken." The Summit continued on Friday (November 7)

President Kenyatta appealed to the warring parties in South Sudan for a speedy resolution to their conflict. He was speaking after arrival in Addis Ababa for the IGAD Summit. He urged the parties to shelve their differences: "This conflict has to come to an end. We need to focus our attention and resources on development for the benefit of the people of the region", he said.

The United Nations Security Council issued a strongly worded statement on Wednesday (November 5) condemning the renewed fighting in South Sudan and threatened to impose sanctions on those impeding the ongoing peace process.

More than 50 South Sudanese and international human rights and humanitarian organizations have called on South Sudan's neighbors to ask the United Nations Security Council to establish an arms embargo on South Sudan. In a petition they say regional leaders should make a clear request to the UN Security Council to impose

a comprehensive arms embargo on South Sudan. "South Sudanese civilians are desperate and need regional leadership to help protect them... Now is the time to take action."

Sudan

President Kiir's visit to Khartoum on Tuesday (November 4) was described by Foreign Minister Barnaba Marial Benjamin as a success. The two Presidents discussed the implementation of 2012 cooperation agreement which includes provisions on security, trade, oil and citizenship. They made a renewed commitment to end alleged support to rebel groups and agreed to form a joint committee to work towards the cancellation of Sudan's foreign debts.

Thabo Mbeki, head of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) in Khartoum on Wednesday (November 5) urged the Sudan National Dialogue Mechanism (7+7) to meet rebel groups in Addis Ababa later this month.

Defense Minister, Abdel Rahim Hussein, signed a military cooperation agreement with Qatar on Sunday (November 2). The agreement covers training, exchange of expertise, joint exercises, exchange of visits and cooperation of military academic institutions. The Defense Minister, who delivered a message from President Al-Bashir to the Emir of Qatar, also announced that Qatar would supply natural gas to Sudan starting next year.

Ireland's President Michael Higgins visits Ethiopia

Ireland's President, Michael Higgins made his first visit to Ethiopia this week (November 2-7) at the start of a three nation tour of Africa which will also take him to Malawi and South Africa. The tour is aimed to elevate Ireland's partnership with Africa as well as look at the activities of Irish NGOs and see how Irish aid is being used. . The President, accompanied by his wife Sabina and by Ireland's Minister for Development, Trade Promotion and North South Co-operation, Seán Sherlock, was greeted at Bole International Airport by Ethiopia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Tedros Adhanom, and Ireland's Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ambassador Aidan O'Hara.

During his visit to Ethiopia, the President, in addition to paying a visit to Ethiopia's National Museum to see Dinkinesh (Lucy), the skeletal remains of a female hominid who lived 3.2 million years ago, went to Gambella Regional State and met with South Sudanese refugees, and visited Irish NGOs in Tigray Regional State to see the progress made in development. He also held talks with President Dr Mulatu Teshome, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn and Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros and made a key note address to the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) on the issue of independence and inter-dependence.

President Higgins visit to Ethiopia was intended to consolidate historic and friendly ties, and recognizing the fruits of the bilateral cooperative partnership in various development programs, chart a course for the future development of bilateral relations between the two countries in all areas. He said his visit was to open up new fields of cooperation, push bilateral cooperation forward through building on the historic relationship of diplomatic exchanges, development cooperation and friendship with the view to entering a new period of expanding relations as well as "to listen to and encounter the new departures being considered by Africans for the future of their people". The President also aimed to address issues of sustainable development, poverty, instability, climate change, food security, unemployment, and other potential challenges posed by population movements and the Ebola crisis.

President Higgins' bilateral talks with Prime Minister Hailemariam covered the issues of bilateral relations, Ethiopia's efforts to reduce poverty and increase prosperity, Ireland's contribution to Ethiopia's rural development programs, human rights, the refugee crisis in the region and the Ebola crisis, as well as regional and global affairs of common interest. The Prime Minister noted the historic development partnership between Ireland and Ethiopia and briefed the President on the substantial progress Ethiopia was making in reducing poverty and hunger, providing social services across the country and investing in the transformation of the lives

of rural populations. The Prime Minister praised Ireland for its support for the gains being made, and he emphasized that the contributions of Ireland were complimentary to Ethiopia's development model and experience and the Government's policies and strategies. This fruitful development partnership could, indeed, be considered as a very real sign of a practical Europe-Africa partnership for common development. Beyond government-to-government cooperation, the Prime Minister stressed the importance of strengthening business-to-business ties between the business communities of the two countries. He noted that Ethiopia's surging economic growth was attracting international investors and he urged Irish investors and business persons to network with their Ethiopian counterparts and engage in the country's promising business environment. The Prime Minister also briefed President Higgins on the political and security developments in Somalia and on the IGAD-led mediation to resolve the South Sudan crisis.

President Higgins referred to Ethiopia's growing regional and international standing in safeguarding peace and stability and its strides in socio-economic development. He said Ethiopia was a front-runner in spearheading rural economic transformation in Africa with the aim of changing the lives of small-holder farmers. He said the irrigation projects and other development programs in Tigray Regional State, funded by Irish development partners, were excellent examples of the direction of pro-poor development. The President also appreciated Ethiopia's open door policy to refugees coming from neighboring countries, and an important strand of this policy was its extraordinary demonstration in integrating refugees and equipping them with the necessary skills and education to sustainably change their livelihoods. He also urged African countries to prioritize value addition so as to embody the structural transformation of their societies and economies. The planning and actual implementation of structural transformation needed to put the rural economy at its heart. This would deliver job opportunities and provide economic diversification and social development.

President Higgins underscored the importance of multilateralism to secure the survival of humankind, the need for the democratization and reform of international relations, the promotion of multi-polarization and the development of a more just and fair international order. He also underlined the urgency for Africa to take its rightful place in the new international arrangements and play a full part in the current global dispensation. He also referred to the Ebola crisis, noting that it was not only an African problem but also an international security threat. The problem had far-reaching implications in reversing the promising prospects of African economic growth as well as the development gains registered so far. A collective partnership was needed to tackle the challenge, he said. Ireland, he added, was supportive of African and international efforts to combat Ebola, and he appealed to the international community to provide all possible assistance to African countries currently tackling the Ebola outbreak.

Following his talks with Prime Minister Hailemariam, President Higgins witnessed the signing of three agreements on transport, double taxation and development cooperation. These would maintain the already existing excellent cooperative diplomatic relations. The transport agreement will allow Ethiopian Airlines to make direct flights from Addis Ababa to Los Angeles, with a stopover in Dublin, beginning June 2015. The double taxation agreement will facilitate the business-to-business ties of the two countries. Irish exports to Ethiopia are currently worth €20 million, but as Prime Minister Hailemariam emphasized Ethiopia offers immense business opportunities for Irish companies operating in Africa and this agreement will assist in the further development of bilateral economic cooperation of the two countries. The final agreement will expedite development cooperation, providing a framework for a five-year development partnership, estimated to be worth €136m. President Higgins said the agreements would encourage and help both countries tap the huge potential and the prospects available.

During his key note address at Africa Hall, President Higgins said that partnership with African countries was an important element of Ireland's foreign policy in the face of emerging security threats. These, he said, included climate change, food security, refugee crisis and an upward surge in religious intolerance as well as Ebola virus. He expressed his hope that "we can endeavor, together, to build a cooperative, caring and non-exploitative civilization, based on the firm foundations of each people's own institutions and traditions, experiences and memories...and also on recognition of the solidarity that binds us together as human beings." He drew comparisons between Ireland's national history and the history of African countries', noting that they had both experienced the "scourges of colonization and hunger." African leaders had succeeded in decolonizing the continent in the past fifty years and the Africa of today, with its emerging economies, was experiencing

economic growth with growing investment and trade ties. He pointed out that the continent was at a critical juncture, filled with opportunities but also facing challenges. The interplay of food security, booming populations, inequality, climate change, and unemployment was surfacing across the continent. He suggested African countries needed to imagine and devise inclusive agricultural development policies based on the “need to feed an expanding regional population, while also taking care of a fragile and exhaustible natural environment.” He also stressed the need to develop effective industrial policies and commodity-based industrialization, and the urgency to harness cooperation between regional economic communities to enhance the breadth and depth of inter-African trade and prioritize value addition for its own commodities. He concluded by underlining that “All this can happen only if African governments, individually, and in concert with the AU and other fora for regional cooperation, do deliver on the aspirations for peace and security of their citizens.”

Later, during his visit to a refugee camp in Gambella Regional State, run by the Irish NGO, GOAL, the President spoke of the need for the international community to act to prevent disaster in the growing refugee crisis confronting Ethiopia along its borders with South Sudan. He said that as “a head of state” he was addressing himself to “those who are well aware of what has happened here . . . the international community”. Ethiopia, with its open borders, now had more than 650,000 refugees, with 190,000 in Gambella. If the conflict in South Sudan continued, the President said, “the numbers coming into the already overstretched camps could be as high as an additional 100,000 people.” He called on governments to honor their commitments and intensify assistance to these camps, adding that “a quick decision at all of the institutional levels” was needed: “I mean within weeks, by the European Commission and the European Council, to make sure that not only is there a net increase in assistance but that it is delivered with logistical speed.” The President said a major Irish agricultural contribution in Tigray was one of the manifestations of the fruitful results produced with the spirit of mutual help between Ethiopia and Ireland, and he noted the role played by Trocaire which has helped some 24,000 women become self-sufficient through the organization’s Women in Sustainable Employment project. President Higgins praised the efforts of the Irish NGOs and said they could only be described as heroic. He said he was proud of the way Ireland had helped and of the efforts of Goal and Concern and other NGOs. It was announced earlier that the Irish Government would provide an additional €2 million in aid for refugees from South Sudan, bringing the total funding from Ireland to €8.5 million this year.

In his meeting with Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros Adhanom, the President expressed his appreciation to the government and people of Ethiopia for “the generosity of and the human spirit of Ethiopia in keeping its borders open – receiving so many people, caring for them and doing so in a way that is seeing the continent of Africa as something in which all African lives must be respected”. He added that Ethiopia’s generosity was deeply impressive and “at a time when our planet is probably experiencing the largest movement of people, displaced refugees obviously fleeing from different and new forms of threatening fundamentalism, it gives a great lesson to the world.”

Ethiopia chosen for Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development by UNIDO

Ethiopia, along with Senegal, has been selected as one of two pilot recipient countries in Africa for the Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID) program of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Speaking at the Second Participatory and Sustainable Industrial Development Forum, which opened in Vienna on Tuesday (November 4), both Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia and Prime Minister Mahammed Dionne of Senegal commended UNIDO for implementing this program.

The Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID) program aims to achieve industrialization in developing countries in order to reduce poverty and create prosperity. UNIDO Director General Li Yong says “there is not a single country in the world which has reached a high state of economic and social development without having developed an advanced industrialized sector”. The ISID program, he says, is intended not just to promote industrialization but also ensure it is both inclusive and properly sustainable, unlike current modes of industrialization. It is not merely promoting industrialization but also taking note of the needs and challenges of the globalised world for the future. In promoting sustainability UNIDO says the ISID program is taking into account environmental factors as well as encouraging a process that is inclusive in sharing the benefits for all

parties involved. This will promote social equality within populations as well as an equal gender distribution to ensure that nobody is excluded from the benefits.

The program is one of UNIDO's contributions to the post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Director-General Li Yond said Ethiopia and Senegal were selected because of the ways they chose to expand industry and the good policies they pursued as well as the measures taken to ensure sustainable and participatory development. He urged them to further integrate their efforts with their partners to meet the Millennium Development Goals and become middle income countries. He emphasized the importance of giving attention to micro and small enterprises in order to sustain their economic growth. The Program for Country Partnership (PCP) for Ethiopia and for Senegal would, he said, be based on the priorities of the national development strategy, as well as the programs of the development partners and development finance institutions. In Ethiopia, the program will focus on the light manufacturing sectors to create a high number of jobs and have strong linkages to create markets and improved incomes for millions of smallholder farmers. These sectors include the leather and textile sector, livestock development (meat and milk), the food and beverages sector and agro-food value chains, institutional capacity-building (investment and export promotion, including improvements to meet international standards) and program management

In an opening statement at the Forum, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon said: "We have a vision of a just world where resources are optimized for the good of people. Inclusive and sustainable industrial development can drive success." The UN Secretary-General, a strong advocate of sustainable development, said that in order to achieve this objective, "industrial development must abandon old models that pollute. Instead, we need sustainable approaches that help communities preserve their resources."

Speaking at the Forum on Tuesday (November 4) Prime Minister Hailemariam, welcoming the selection of Ethiopia as one of the two African countries designated by UNIDO for industrial development assistance, noted that Ethiopia was already involved in transforming its economy from agriculture to industry led economy in its endeavor to become a middle income country. He said it needed support so that it could sustain the achievements it has been registering and attracting foreign direct investment was the main focus to maintain growth. He said Ethiopia was working extensively with different countries and development partners like China and other Asian countries as well as Turkey, and he called on partners to assist in its efforts to introduce broad-based industrial development and attract foreign direct investment. Ethiopia's State Minister of Industry, Mebrahtu Meles, referring to the example of China, also emphasized that building industrial zones would accelerate industrialization.

In the discussions, forum participants expressed optimism for Ethiopia to achieve economic growth through inclusive and industrial sustainable development provided that the leadership and vision focused on the country's comparative advantages while improving infrastructure. They also underlined that regional integration could be the key for the development of the country, and called for further exploration of UNIDO's role as a catalyst for transformational change. Emphasis was given to the efforts needed to enhance productivity of existing light industries such as agro-food processing, textiles and garments, leather and leather products. There was a need to diversify by launching new industries such as heavy metal and chemicals and to build up high-tech industries like packing, biotechnology, electronics, information and communications. The Ambassadors of China, Japan and Italy to Ethiopia as well as business stakeholders and development banks gave assurances of their continued support to help Ethiopia on its UNIDO path towards Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development.

Fifth Ethio-Egypt Joint Ministerial Commission in Addis Ababa

The Fifth Ethio-Egypt Joint Ministerial Commission meeting was held at the beginning of this week with a senior officials meeting on Saturday (November 1). The senior officials' session was chaired by Ambassador Solomon Abebe, Director General for African Affairs in Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ambassador Sabri Magdi, Assistant Foreign Minister of Africa Affairs of Egypt. Experts drawn from various ministries of the two sides took part in their two-day session. The senior officials and experts deliberated in three clusters; political, economic and social affairs. In his opening speech, Ambassador Solomon said the establishment of the Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) and its previous four meetings which provided a guide for our relations and

cooperation was a manifestation of the common desire of the two countries “to enhance our cooperation in multifaceted areas.” He stressed the meeting should focus on reviewing the implementation of the previous agreements as well as discuss the different proposals and draft cooperation documents in front of them. He also underlined the importance of exploring mutual areas of cooperation to further strengthen relations. Ambassador Sabri Magdi highlighted the longstanding bilateral relations of the two countries and the need to further enhance them. He noted that their trade relations fell short of expectations and underlined the need to improve these further. Between 2004 and 2013, the volume of trade had increased by 21%, rising in value from US\$41 million to US\$165 million; Egypt’s share of this was over 75%. He also noted the need to build on the momentum of the positive spirit of cooperation now apparent between the two sides.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the political cluster agreed to hold the meeting of the Joint Ministerial Commission every two years and for the experts to meet annually in Addis Ababa and Cairo alternately. To strengthen the bilateral relations, it was also agreed to encourage inter-sectoral meetings between the two countries in order to follow up the implementation of the more than 20 agreements that have been signed between the two countries but whose implementation is said to have been poor. The two sides agreed to expedite the sending of a planned Ethiopian public diplomacy delegation to Cairo as soon as possible.

The economy cluster agreed that the two sides should work to enhance the volume of trade between the two countries and expand both the amount and diversity of items involved. The Egyptian side agreed to support Ethiopia’s bid to join the WTO through technical support and offered training expertise. It was further agreed that the business community should be encouraged to work closely through business-to-business meetings and other links. In the area of investment, the Ethiopian side requested Egypt to encourage Egyptian investors to invest in Ethiopia and strengthen cooperation between them.

In social affairs, the two sides agreed to reactivate the Agreement on Higher Education signed in 2011 and to reinvigorate the twining of Addis Ababa University with the Alexandria and Suez Canal Universities. Egypt also promised to offer scholarships for Masters and PhD programs and encourage research facilities between universities of the two countries. Both sides commended the implementation of existing Memoranda of Understanding in the provision of medical services, short and long term training, and medical missions. Egypt offered to receive Ethiopian patients suffering from such ailments as renal transplantation, cancer and hepatitis and seeking tertiary medical services. The two sides also agreed to work closely in areas of culture, women’s affairs, agriculture, mining, industry and other sectors.

The Ministerial segment of the Fifth Ethio-Egypt Joint Ministerial Commission took place on Sunday (November 2) following the arrival of Egyptian Foreign Minister, Sameh Shoukry who was warmly welcomed by Dr. Tedros Adhanom. The two sides exchanged views on bilateral, regional and continental issues. They underlined the need to explore all avenues of cooperation to further strengthen their long standing bilateral ties. They commended the activities undertaken by the Senior Officials meeting. The ministers underlined in particular that despite growth, the trade and investment relations between the two countries needed to be further enhanced for the benefit of the people of both countries. Dr Tedros highlighted the importance of encouraging the business people to turn the geographical proximity of the two countries in advantage in expanding trade ties. The level of trade was below what is expected and it needed to be enhanced. The two sides commended the progress made in the three-rounds of discussions of the Tripartite National Committee established to implement the recommendations of the International Panel of Experts on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. They underlined the importance of further deepening the spirit of cooperation between the two governments.

The Fifth Ethio-Egypt Joint Ministerial Commission meeting was concluded on Monday (November 3) adopting the draft agreed minutes. The two sides signed a Cooperation Agreement on General Education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training, and on Trade, as well as Memoranda of Understanding on Health, Women Affairs, and Diplomatic Training. In addition to Dr. Tedros and Mr. Shoukry, a number of ministers and other senior officials from both sides attended. The trade agreement was signed between Egypt’s Minister of Industry and Foreign Trade and Ethiopia’s Minister of Trade. The Memoranda of Understanding on health and education issues were signed by the respective ministers. A potential Egyptian-Ethiopian industrial zone is being studied.

Opening the session, Dr. Tedros underlined the long-standing relationship between Egypt and Ethiopia stressing that “we have, of course, been linked indissolubly by the great River, Nile,” and noting that “the historic relationship that binds our two nations is deeply rooted.” He said this gave a firm foundation on which to build mutually beneficial relations. He also highlighted the importance Ethiopia attached to the expansion of cooperation in the areas of economy and trade, pointing out that a lot needed to be done to increase the level of engagement in these areas. In his speech, Dr. Tedros also emphasized the need to work more effectively to implement any agreements signed between the two countries. The record of implementation had been poor, he said. Dr. Tedros reiterated the need to build on the spirit of positive cooperation that had developed following the Malabo and New York meetings of Prime Minister Hailemariam and Egypt’s President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

Mr. Shoukry said the two sides had common goals and opportunities and the areas of possible cooperation were immense. He said it was important to explore all avenues through the concept of win-win cooperation and mutual respect. He stressed the Egyptian side was deeply satisfied with the outcome of the two-day senior officials meeting. In a final communiqué the two sides outlined their views on current regional political and security issues, including the situation in Somalia, South Sudan, Libya, Burkina Faso, and the Palestinian issue. They agreed that all issues should be resolved through peaceful means. They appreciated the role of IGAD and AU in South Sudan; and supported the Comprehensive National Dialogue in Sudan. They reaffirmed their position on Palestine, calling for a just and lasting peace based on the two state solution. They expressed the importance of achieving stability, unity and the preservation of territorial integrity and sovereignty of Libya. They also called for a peaceful resolution of the situation in Burkina Faso and for that country to regain its stability. They condemned all acts of terror and agreed to enhance efforts to combat terrorism, organized crimes and control human trafficking. They stressed the importance of adopting a comprehensive vision and approach to deal with the Ebola epidemic and to collaborate with regional and international efforts to deal with this “grave and serious challenge” to the continent.

In a press conference after the conclusion of the Joint Ministerial Commission meeting both Ministers reiterated that the meeting had been held in a spirit of brotherhood. Dr. Tedros said the signing of the agreements covering General Education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Trade, Health, Women Affairs, and Diplomatic Training, was testimony to the broad nature of their partnership. He stressed that there had been good progress in the political and diplomatic engagement of the two countries. He said that reiteration on the need to boost trade “does not mean that there is no progress; there is progress, but we are saying that it is not enough.” He also mentioned health as an area where there was good progress in cooperation. In relation to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), Dr. Tedros said Ethiopia was doing the right thing, not because the Egyptian people requested it, but because “we do the right thing on the basis of accepted international norms and laws.” He emphasized that the GERD will have far reaching benefits for all the people of the region, and reiterated that the fact that the purpose of the Dam was hydro-power generation. He also mentioned the added benefits of building the dam at a high altitude was a vital factor in saving water from evaporation. Some research, he said, suggested the water saved could amount to as much as 6 billion cubic meters. He detailed the process that led to the Comprehensive Framework Agreement on the Nile and emphasized the importance of Egypt participating in this. Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry affirmed that Egypt respects Ethiopia's right to development, provided that this right does not harm Egypt's interests, adding that both countries were keen on solving any issues relating to the Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. He said the Joint Egyptian-Ethiopian ministerial meeting had taken place in a cooperative atmosphere and there had been real progress in the ties between Egypt and Ethiopia. Mr. Shoukry agreed on the importance of further developing bilateral ties, especially economic and trade links. He also voiced his appreciation of the insistence of Dr. Tedros that Ethiopia would not harm Egypt's water interests.

... and a Joint Ethio-Egypt Business Forum meets

The Ethio-Egypt Business Forum was held over the weekend on Sunday (November 2) on the sidelines of the fifth Joint Ministerial Commission Meeting. The Forum brought together Ethiopia’s Minister of Trade, Kebede Chane; Egypt’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sameh Shoukry; Egypt’s Minister of Industry, Trade and SME’s, Mounir Fakhay Abdeol Nour; Ethiopia’s Minister of State for Industry, Tadesse Haile; the Director-General of Ethiopia’s Investment Agency, Fitsum Arega, the respective Ambassadors and the Chairpersons of the Ethiopian and Egyptian Business Council. Also attending were 40 Egyptian business representatives involved in

agriculture, agro-processing, education, tourism, manufacturing, business and trade and some 65 Ethiopian business people working in similar areas of industry and trade. They were able to exchange views on how to scale up business interaction of the two countries and expand their cooperation.

The Forum was organized by the Ethiopian Egyptian Business Council with the aim of expanding the commercial ties of Ethiopia and Egypt, exploring areas of business cooperation and the opportunities that existed, tapping into the potential economic benefits, cementing people-to-people and business-to-business ties, maintaining the development momentum of the bilateral relationship and working to shape the future of the two countries' cooperation through increased economic partnership. The high-level officials of both two governments gave compelling accounts of the priority areas, of the business and investment opportunities and of the far-reaching relevance of business-to-business dialogue and close cooperation between the business communities. In addition to the presentations and question and answer sessions, there were numerous business-to-business meetings between respective business representatives.

Opening the forum, Ethiopia's Minister of Trade, Kebede Chane, noted that centuries-old historic, political, commercial and religious ties that defined the two countries' long-standing bilateral relations. He went on to note that Ethiopia was deeply committed to make business cooperation a driving force for the mutual advancement of the relations of the two countries and peoples. He said the Ethio-Egypt Business Forum was a manifestation of the commitment to make an economic partnership the centre of the cooperative relationship between the two countries. He said Egyptian investors had been engaged in the fields of education, construction, and transport in Ethiopia, adding that there were sixty development projects operating in Ethiopia owned by Egyptian investors, forty in partnership with Ethiopian and foreign nationals. This, he emphasized, showed that the private sector was at the heart of this joint partnership, adding a new vigor and impetus to the transformation of their respective economies with the view of consolidating gains made so far. This practical cooperation also featured employment opportunities for Ethiopian nationals. He said Ethiopia was willing to work in concert to renew its partnership with Egypt in various other fields of business and investment. Egypt, he pointed out, was one of the most important trading partners in Africa. He called on Egyptian businesses to work together with the Government of Ethiopia and Ethiopian business counterparts in areas providing value addition. He also underlined the need to increase and enhance the existing volume of trade. He urged the Government of Egypt to encourage its business community to participate in Ethiopia's investment and business environment. The Government of Ethiopia, he said, stood committed to help support Egyptian investors interested to invest in Ethiopia. The Minister also explained the Government's development policies, strategies, and plans, noting the areas of cooperation as well as outlining Ethiopia's success stories and the status of the trade and investment relations of the two countries.

Mounir Fakhay Abdeol Nour, Egypt's Minister of Industry, Trade and SME's also reminded the Forum of the historic relations of the two countries, including the contacts between the two peoples and the strong ties between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Egyptian Coptic Church as well as the close relations of Egyptian and Ethiopian Muslims through the Al-Azhar University. He said the two countries needed to turn these strong historic ties and links into an equally strong economic partnership. The Forum, he said, sent out a clear signal that both countries and peoples were determined to revive and revitalize their centuries-old political, commercial, religious and historic relations. He said the meeting demonstrated the strong resolve and political will of both states of the need to strengthen the interaction of the two business communities and deepen and elevate existing ties to a new level. He underlined that Egyptian investors were keen to participate in Ethiopia's well-managed economy and promised that the Government of Egypt was ready to improve the trading environment and bilateral relations. He stressed the importance of joint development of tourist projects as well as of industrial zones. He said the involvement of a large number of Egyptian business persons attested to the opening of a new page of economic partnership for better development. Ethiopia, he said, could export meat, coffee and other agricultural products to Egypt, and Egypt could in turn export chemical products, fertilizers, automobiles and engineering products to Ethiopia. He emphasized that the Government of Egypt was committed to provide support and share experiences for Ethiopia's small and medium enterprise development.

Solomon Afework, President of Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations and Ethiopian Co-Chairperson of the joint Business Council, gave a key note address underlining the historic engagement of the two countries. He pointed out that bilateral relations had shown steady development through a regular

engagement and frequent visits of higher officials. A telling example of these growing ties was economic partnership. He said Ethiopia had made great strides in its impressive economic success. This was the result of the right economic policies and of the favorable investment environment. He underlined the already existing engagement and significance of Egyptian companies in Ethiopia's agriculture, manufacturing and other areas, and urged the business communities of the two countries to become the dynamo for transformative and continued growth in bilateral relations. He noted that the total trade turnover of the two countries reached over a billion dollars between 2004 to 2013. During that period Ethiopia's total exports to Egypt were worth over US\$246 million; and its imports had been over US\$775 million. He said Egypt's investment in Ethiopia had grown considerably over the last 20 years and 58 projects had been implemented with a registered capacity of over 37 million USD.

Ayman Essa, Egyptian Co-Chairperson of the Business Council, said that both countries had entered on a new era of engagement based upon trust, transparency and mutual benefit. He stressed that the business communities of the two countries could benefit from this positive engagement, and that they could also expedite the relations for better development. He suggested the need to build business interests based on mutual benefit and stressed the importance for long-term business relations to work together for greater development of the two countries. Egypt has proposed the importance of establishing industrial zone in Ethiopia to further promote the business cooperation.

Ethiopia participates in the Landlocked Developing Countries Conference in Vienna

The Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries was held in Vienna, Austria (November 3-5) with participation from the governments of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC), transit developing countries, donors, UN and other international organizations and the private sector. It brought together UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Sam Kutesa, President of the UN General Assembly, Heads of State and Government, Ministers, and senior representatives from international organizations to share views and experiences on how to enhance LLDCs' economic diversification and competitiveness through strengthened investment and policy measures in the areas of transport, infrastructure development and trade facilitation, sustainable energy and sustainable transport, through partnerships on vocational training, through increased regionalization of aid for trade, and particularly for the LLDCs, effective implementation of the Enhanced Integrated Framework.

The conference was intended to provide a comprehensive ten-year review of the Almaty Program of Action (APoA), and also to shape the new development agenda for the LLDCs for the next decade. Thirty two countries are classified as Landlocked Developing Countries and more than half of these have an annual income of less than US\$1005 per capita and also belong to the group of poorest developing countries. Landlocked countries suffer from isolation from direct links with the world market and a lack of sea access as well as long transit routes and high transport costs. They are also dependent upon decisions made by transit countries which can seriously affect their possible benefit from global trade.

To ease the problem of the LLDC's in particular, the UN adopted the Almaty Program of Action in 2003 in Almaty, Kazakhstan. This had the aim of reducing customs' processes and fees to minimize costs and transport delays, improve infrastructure with respect to existing preferences of local transport modes, concentrating on road access in Africa and rail in South Asia, implement preferences for landlocked countries' commodities to boost competitiveness in the international market and establish relationships between donor countries and landlocked and transit countries for technical, financial and policy improvements. The Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in Vienna this week was called with the specific objective of producing a comprehensive and critical assessment of the implementation of the Almaty Program of Action. It also had the additional aims of identifying effective international and domestic policies in response to the outcome of the comprehensive appraisal of the program, as well as looking at new and emerging challenges and opportunities and the means to address them and developing a new common action-oriented strategic framework for the next decade.

A second objective included reaffirming the global commitment to address the special needs of the landlocked developing countries with particular reference to problems related to infrastructure development, transit and

trade facilitation and policy framework, in order to reduce prohibitive transit costs and enable these countries to fully participate in global trade. The third objective was mobilization of additional international support measures in favor of the landlocked developing countries with the intention of formulating and adopting a renewed partnership between the landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries and their development partners. The conference also aimed to develop a more efficient monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the successful implementation of the new program of action by effective operation of existing arrangements at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels.

The Ethiopian delegation to the conference was led by the Minister of Transport, Workneh Gebeyehu, who told the meeting that the special needs of LLDCs for sustainable development were well established “and cannot be questioned.” He said that Ethiopia fully aligned itself with the statements of Bolivia, speaking on behalf of the group of 77, and of China and Zambia speaking on behalf of the LLDCs. He noted that Ethiopia had been implementing the Almaty Program of Action since 2003. Apart from issuing legislation locally in relation to transit and maritime issues, it had also taken part in the development and adoption of the African Maritime Transport Charter. It was actively participating in COMESA’s transport initiatives. Minister Workneh gave some details of Ethiopia’s significant achievements in infrastructure development over the last decade. The national level road length had increased from 37,018 kms in 2002/03 to 100,000 kms in 2011/12. Road density had increased from 33.65 km/1000 km² in 2002/03 to 90.9 km/1000 km² in 2011/12. As a result, the average travel time to reach an all-weather road had fallen to 1.8 hours. Under Ethiopia’s Growth and Transformation Plan, a total of 2,395 kms of railway were being constructed including 34 kms of the Addis Ababa Light Rail Transit project. Of these 2,395 kms of railway under construction, 756 kms linked Addis Ababa to the nearest sea port of Djibouti. This will have a significant impact in reducing transportation costs enabling bulk transport of exports and imports.

The Minister noted that some of the key problems facing Ethiopia that needed to be addressed included “high transit transportation costs, limitation of technical and technological capacity, imported inflation, limited investable resources and low mobilization of domestic financial resources to finance the massive investment requirement for rapid growth, implementation and management capacity.” He also highlighted the problems of financing infrastructure projects in LLDC’S. Noting the global development agenda, he urged the international community “to be innovative and forward-looking in addressing the concern of developing countries, particularly LLDCs priorities as set out in the program of action and to be effectively addressed in the post-2015 Development Agenda.” He also underlined the necessity for international attention to LLDCs to continue, and not to end with the conclusion of the Vienna conference.

The conference which concluded on Thursday (November 6) with the adoption of the Vienna 10-year Action Plan aimed at accelerating sustainable development in the world’s 32 landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and allow the 440 million inhabitants of the world's poorest Landlocked Countries to have the possibility to partake in international trade under fair and competitive conditions. The Plan of Action contains six clearly defined priorities and encapsulates a unified stance by the international community on a broad array of crucial issues, ranging from concrete steps toward the structural transformation of LLDC economies and infrastructure development, to improving international trade and bolstering regional integration and cooperation. The 23 page document expressed an unambiguous commitment by all governments to ensure greater emphasis on reducing transit time, promoting infrastructure development and maintenance and ensuring trade facilitation measures in an accelerated manner, and linking them with the promotion of economic diversification, structural transformation, connectivity to global value chains and regional integration.

The UN High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Gyan Chandra Acharya said “The Vienna conference has come out with a holistic, forward looking and action oriented program which can be clearly seen in the document that has been adopted.” Mr. Acharya emphasized that the outcome stressed renewed and strengthened partnerships between the LLDCs, transit countries and development partners within the context of north-south as well as south-south and triangular cooperation. He added, however, that while the action-plan recognized that LLDCs have the primary responsibility for their own development this group of countries also required support “to effectively mobilize adequate domestic and external resources for effective implementation of the Program of Action.” A recurring theme throughout the Conference was that while LLDCs have seen incremental economic gains over

the past decade, this progress has not yet made a meaningful dent in the levels of poverty among these countries and that the progress remained fragile in many of LLDCs.

The UN Secretary-General in Somalia and Kenya

Last week, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, leading a high level delegation including World Bank's President Jim Yong Kim, was on a four nation tour of the Horn of Africa, starting in Ethiopia and Djibouti and then travelling on to Somalia and Kenya (October 29-31). The visits were aimed at the promotion of development and the consolidation of peace and security across the wider region following the launching of the Horn of Africa Initiative. This is a parallel UN initiative to rank alongside the Sahel and Great Lakes Initiatives and which will be implemented in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda.

As we noted last week, the Horn of Africa Initiative will commit US\$8 billion over the coming years to spur economic growth and reduce poverty through various programs aimed at boosting cross-border cooperation on security and development. As part of the finance, the World Bank announced US\$1.8 billion for cross-border activities. In addition, the European Union said that it would support the countries in the region with a total of around \$3.7 billion until 2020, of which about 10 percent would be for cross-border activities; the African Development Bank announced a pledge of \$1.8 billion over the next three years for countries in the region; and the Islamic Development Bank also committed US\$1 billion in new financing for its four member countries in the Horn of Africa (Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda).

Following his visit to Ethiopia where the Horn of Africa Initiative was launched, and then Djibouti, the UN Secretary-General headed to Somalia and Kenya. He arrived in Mogadishu on Wednesday last week (October 29), leading a high level delegation including the World Bank President Kim as well as Islamic Development Bank President, Ahmad Mohamed Ali and senior representatives of the African Development Bank, the African Union, and the European Union. As a sign that the Secretary-General saw the situation as safer in Mogadishu now than for many years he made a point of not bothering to wear flak jacket.

Speaking to the media after landing in Mogadishu, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon acknowledged that after two decades of internecine conflict and humanitarian crises, Somalia was finally waking from a "long nightmare," and the situation, he said had reached a "pivotal moment" with Al-Shabaab appearing to be on the wane and political progress finally seeming to take root as the country's institutions steadily strengthened. Mr. Ban Ki-Moon appreciated the progress achieved in Somalia and the way all the regional actors had contributed to the improvement in peace and stability and the administration of the country. In regards to the political progress and administration inclusiveness he emphasized that the country "is coming together like never before," and he especially commended "agreements to form regional administrations", adding that "these bodies must be inclusive with strong representation of women and young people."

The Secretary-General praised regional countries and bodies for their continued support for the developments pacifying the region and eradicating terrorism. He had particular praise for the Somali National Army and the African Union Mission (AMISOM) forces for their recent successes against Al-Shabaab and their contributions to the overall peace and stability of the country. Nevertheless, he also underlined the need for additional progress, pointing out that it remained "critical that they now secure roads to newly recovered areas to enable commercial traffic." He also expressed his serious concern over the humanitarian situation.

During his visit to Somalia, underlining the commitment to reinforce and support development and consolidate peace and stability in the Horn of Africa, in Somalia Mr. Ban Ki-Moon met with Somalia federal government leaders and representatives of international organizations. He discussed issues of peace, stability and development and how to sustain the development achieved so far. He agreed that "Many of the indicators are finally pointing in the right direction," and stressed that "Somalia needs continuity and stability at this critical time."

From Somalia, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon travelled to Nairobi where he met with President Uhuru Kenyatta and members of his cabinet. The discussions covered peace, security, and development issues affecting the country and the wider Horn of Africa. The Secretary General highlighted these issues and pressed for Kenya's continued

engagement and leadership. Mr. Ban Ki-Moon also commended Kenya's contributions to international efforts to promote peace and security in Africa, particularly in Somalia and South Sudan.

The UN Secretary-General also visited the Dadaab refugee camp complex while in Kenya. He thanked the Kenyan Government and people for providing a safe haven to refugees. He encouraged Kenya to continue to provide full support to the refugees, including medical services and other humanitarian assistance as well as to implement a program of safe and voluntary return. He praised Kenya for the resilience it had shown with more than 350,000 Somali refugees close to the Kenyan-Ethiopian border.

Mr. Ban Ki-Moon also visited other sectors of the Kenyan economy including the iHub/Ushahidi technology incubator in Kenya's 'Silicon Savannah'. He praised the work being done there by young creative entrepreneurs and developers, he told them that the technology and ideas they were developing there would promote "a great transformation for our society" in the same way that steam power had revolutionized the 19th century. He emphasized that their "technology and creativity should be used not only by you Kenyans, not only by Africans, but should be used everywhere."

Dr. Tedros briefs the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Security of the House of People's Representatives

Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros Adhanom briefed the Foreign Affairs, Defense and Security Standing Committee of the House of People's Representatives on the main activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Friday (October 31). Giving an account of the Ministry's activities over the last nine months of 2006 and outlining the 2007 annual plan of the Ministry, Dr. Tedros explained that the major areas of the Ministry were its creation of its diplomatic army and governance, engagement with the Diaspora, business and economic diplomacy, the fostering of strategic partnerships and image building. Dr. Tedros gave an account of last year's performance and the results achieved against the planned targets set out in the five year strategic plan highlighting these areas. He emphasized that the coming year's main direction, and the priority of the plan, was economic diplomacy designed to attract foreign direct investment, and provide support for the socio-economic development and democratization process of the country and to reduce poverty by intensifying trade, investment and technology transfer, Diaspora engagement and image building. This involved giving specific attention to core priority areas and to major companies and investors in order to create a conducive environment to encourage skills, knowledge and technology transfers, and for the promotion of trade and tourism as well as encourage development finance.

Referring to Diaspora engagement, the Minister noted that although there had been growing participation, the achievement had not been as substantial as expected nor in line with the known potential. The Ministry would, therefore, be giving special attention to creating an effective Diaspora movement, naming the year as "the year of Diaspora movement" in which all federal and regional government bodies and law makers could participate in the operation. He noted that missions across the world would have an important role to play in this regard. He also explained that the Ministry was exerting every effort to encourage transfer of demand driven technologies for different sectors, and missions abroad had supported the transfer of 52 different technological elements for other sectors including telecommunications, manufacturing, industry, agriculture and health.

Dr. Tedros stressed there was no doubt that the great majority of Ethiopian Diaspora supported the country's policies and development efforts. Many, indeed, he said, were participating in different investment areas. Indeed over 3000 were now engaged in investment activities in Ethiopia. There was no doubt that the majority of the Diaspora in the US for example supported the country's development efforts and were prepared to rally behind the national flag and respect the sanctity of the Ethiopian embassy. They also supported the excellent relations between the US and Ethiopia. At the same time, noted, there were few, very few, members of the Diaspora who belonged to opposition parties such as G7 and other terrorist groups, who were interested to try and create chaos, as for example attacking the Ethiopian Embassy in Washington on September 29. These were only a tiny minority, he said, but G7 and ESAT and other terrorist organizations did use official channels to call on their members to carry out violence against government officials visiting the US as well as Embassy diplomats. The Government, said Dr. Tedros, had therefore had to call on the US Government to take all legal measures necessary to bring those responsible for that attack on the embassy to justice. The Minister also

mentioned that when he had recently been in Oslo, in Norway, attending a very successful business forum and profitable holding discussions with members of the Diaspora, there had also been a few people who had tried to carry out acts of violence against him. Again, however, it was clear from his meetings the vast majority of the Diaspora in Norway was supportive of the country's development efforts

Concerning strategic partnerships, the Minister said that the major focus of this priority area was on the countries in the neighborhood, because their peace, development and security was the same as Ethiopia's peace, development and stability. This indeed was why Ethiopia was playing such an unprecedented role to maintain peace and security in the region, in Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan. The Minister stressed Ethiopia had been committed to consolidating peace and stability in Somalia as well as peacefully resolving disputes between Sudan and South Sudan, and in South Sudan. He said the Ministry had made significant and encouraging contributions to resolving the crisis in South Sudan. Ethiopia, he added, remained resolute in support of the future consolidation of the unity among IGAD countries and will carry on in its efforts to make IGAD's position reflect the collective stance of its members. Another aspect of this was the strengthening of IGAD through its minimum integration plan aimed to encourage and hasten economic integration. With the exception of Eritrea, Ethiopia had excellent relationships with all neighboring countries. Eritrea, however, was still providing military and logistical support to a number of armed rebel Ethiopian groups. It was still involved in destabilizing the region by supporting the rebel groups in Somalia, Ethiopia and now in South Sudan. As a result, of course, the UN Security Council had once again extended its sanction regime against Eritrea.

The Minister also mentioned Ethiopia's role in the wider arena in fostering strategic partnerships and aiming to win support for peace and security and for development and the democratization process in the country. He said that Ethiopia's diplomacy was improving, and had an impressive effect, deepening relations and gaining all round support from many nations, including neighboring countries as well as major partners. In this regard he mentioned the official visits made by officials from different countries including the US, the UK, Japan, China, Turkey and others. He also noted the comments of President Obama when Prime Minister Hailemariam and his delegation had met the President in New York. President Obama had said: "...I spoke previously about some of the bright spots and progress that we're seeing in Africa, I think there's no better example than what has been happening in Ethiopia -- one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, and played a leading role in maintaining peace and stability of the region under the IGAD framework."

The Minister pointed out that establishing new strategic allies in its efforts to protect Ethiopia's national interests and strengthening existing ties was crucial. Also important in this regard was the establishment and consolidation of diplomatic relations with other friendly countries which were prepared to work together for mutual gain in different social, political and economic spheres. In this respect, the Ministry had carried out various successful diplomatic activities that have won support in different areas. He noted the work in border areas with neighboring countries on issues of peace and infrastructure development to enhance economic integration. These efforts underlined the leading role of the Ministry in maintaining peace and stability in the region under the IGAD framework.

On image building, Dr. Tedros said that the rapid economic growth of Ethiopia today enjoyed broad public support locally and has won the backing of many countries further afield. Nevertheless, there are still some who still held negative views of Ethiopia. It was necessary to offer a better understanding of the country and the country's on-going nation-building exercise. He said "we have to aim to reduce negative reporting and improve the opportunity for balanced and positive reports on Ethiopia". These, he pointed out, were crucial for soliciting support and developing the necessary enabling environment for successful diplomatic activity abroad. He said the Ministry had begun to develop a working relationship with international media outlets, both at home and abroad, to provide them with accurate and timely information to help produce objective and balanced reports. Communications and relations with think-tanks and advocacy organizations had also made some progress, and public diplomacy activities had also improved twining between universities and cities. The Ministry planned to increase these activities this coming year. The diplomacy program on EBC's TV was proving successful.

Dr. Tedros also responded to questions raised by committee members. The Chairperson of the Foreign Affairs, Defense and Security Standing Committee concluded the session with an appreciation of the Ministry's recent achievements and welcomed the account of this year's priorities, planned activities and directions. He

commended the Ministry for its concerted efforts to continue to play its required role in development, good governance and democratization of the country.