

A Week in the Horn

10th June 2016

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News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

The **Forum on Chinese Investment for Sustainable Trade and Growth in Africa** was held in Beijing, China, from May 31 – June 1, with the principal aim of exploring business opportunities and deliberating on the needs for catalyzing suitable investment in productive sectors in Africa. It was under the framework of Partnership for Investment and Growth in Africa (PIGA), a joint United Kingdom-China effort to increase exports and sustainable economic growth in Africa. The PIGA pilot countries are Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique and Zambia. (**See article**)

The three-day **Global Green Growth Forum (3GF) 2016 Summit** opened in Copenhagen, Denmark on Sunday (June 5). Members of the 3GF are Denmark, Korea, Mexico, China, Kenya, Qatar and Ethiopia, with Vietnam and Chile joining this year. It brings together governments, businesses, investors and international organizations to act together for the implementation of inclusive green growth. This year’s theme was “A Call to Action - Enabling Solutions at Speed and Scale.” (See article)

The Second Ministerial Conference of the African Union-Horn of Africa Initiative (AU-HOAI) opened on Saturday (June 4) at Sharm-El Sheikh, Egypt with a call for more synergies and coordination to address human trafficking and smuggling of migrants in the Horn of Africa. Ministers adopted the Declaration and the Report of the Senior Officials Meeting, held on June 2-3. The conference was attended by from the AU-HOAI Core Countries, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan, and the neighboring countries of Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan, as well as partner governments and institutions.

The 30th Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Committee of Ambassadors Meeting convened in Addis Ababa on Monday and Tuesday this week (June 6-7) to endorse IGAD sectoral strategies and implementation plans for 2016 to 2020. (See article)

Ethiopia

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn was interviewed this week on Ethiopia's economic development and transformation by Dr Greg Mill, Director of South Africa's Brenthurst Foundation for the *Daily Maverick*. (See article)

Dr Debretsion Gebremichael, Minister for Finance and Economic Cluster and Minister of Communication and Information Technology with the rank of Deputy Prime Minister, along with Dr Workneh Gebeyehu, Minister of Transport, and Abdi Mohammed, Chief Administrator of the State inaugurated **Kebridahar international airport** in the Somali Regional State on Saturday (June 4).

State Minister Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie held discussions with Mr Henry Oryam, Uganda's State Minister of International Cooperation on Thursday (June 9). Discussions covered issues of economic integration, peace and security, and development.

State Minister Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie received credentials of the newly appointed Ambassador of the Togolese Republic, Mr Sebade TOBA on Friday (June 10). The two sides agreed to enhance bilateral cooperation.

Belarus has said it wants to diversify and strengthen its relations with Ethiopia. Korchik Dmitry Alexandrovich, Deputy Minister of Industry of the Republic of Belarus, leading a delegation from Belarus' capital Minsk, said it wished to expand political and socio-economic relations with Ethiopia. The delegation concluded an agreement to link Minsk with Adama in industry and manufacturing.

Senior military officials from Ethiopia and Sudan began holding security talks in Addis Ababa on Monday (June 6). Discussions covered ways to combat regional security threats, ensure peace and safeguard their common border with terrorism, extremism, human trafficking, uncontrolled migration, cross-border crime, and illicit trade on the agenda.

The Council of Ministers on Friday last week (June 3) approved a budget of over **274 billion birr** for the next Ethiopian fiscal year (2016-2017). This is a 13% increase over the current year. 68.8 billion is for current expenditure; 105.7 billion for capital expenditure; 87.9 for the regional state subsidies; and 12 billion for sustainable development. The budget has now to be approved by Parliament.

Ethiopian officials on Monday said that over 90 of the children kidnapped by a South Sudan's Murle militia group on April 15 have now been rescued and have returned home safely. Negotiations for the return of the remainder are continuing; the return of the 2,000 looted cattle will be the next step.

Mulugeta Worku, Administrator of Ethiopia's North Gondar Zone and General Mohammed Ahmed Hussein, Administrator of Sudan's Basonda State, signed an agreement in Gondar at the end of last week to ensure peace in Ethio-Sudan border areas and cement people-to-people ties. Mr Mulugeta said this would also help to control human trafficking. They agreed to meet in Sennar State, in September, to review progress.

The World Bank Board of Executive Directors on Friday last week (June 3) approved a US\$300 million International Development Association credit to improve effectiveness of **road safety** in Ethiopia. It will involve expanding existing traffic signal and control systems in Addis Ababa, improving the conditions for pedestrians, modernizing bus operations, building capacity of urban transport agencies, supporting best practice driver training and testing, and establishing a secure database for driver and vehicle licensing country-wide.

The Swedish firm, **H & M**, has signed a long-term sourcing agreement for a new textile factory in Ethiopia that promises to provide up to 4,000 new jobs. Established by development financier Swedfund and the DBL Group, a Bangladesh-based exporter of ready-made garments, the Mekelle-sited facility says it aims to provide “decent working conditions, job creation for women, and satisfactory environmental considerations.”

Ethiopian Airlines won the African Aviation **African Airline of the Year Award for 2016** in recognition of its financial performance, fleet modernization, route network expansion, in-flight service, overall customer care and its outstanding contribution to aviation development in Africa. The award was presented on May 11 during the 25th Anniversary of the African Aviation Air Finance Africa Conference and Exhibition and African Aviation Summit held in Johannesburg, South Africa.

An apology: Last week, we reported that Mr Philip Hammond, UK Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, during his one-day visit to Ethiopia last week, had met with detained Ginbot 7 leader, Andargachew Tsige. In fact, as a statement from Mr Hammond made clear: “At my request, a senior Foreign Office official travelling with me, was given access to Mr Tsige in prison today. Following that visit, I am satisfied that he is not being ill-treated and that he is receiving regular visits from family members in Ethiopia.”

Djibouti

Dr Khalid bin Mohammed Al Attiyah, the Minister of State for Defense Affairs of Qatar, paid a visit to the Qatari peacekeeping force deployed in the disputed border region between the Republic of Djibouti and the State of Eritrea last week. He praised the performance of the troops and thanked them for their efforts.

Issa Khaireh Robleh, a former adviser to the president of Djibouti, has taken over as the director general of the International Islamic News Agency (IINA), a specialized media organ of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Eritrea

A damning new report by the UN Commission of Inquiry (COI), released on Wednesday this week (June 8), unequivocally states that crimes against humanity have been committed in Eritrea over the past 25 years. It lists crimes of enslavement, imprisonment, enforced disappearances, torture, persecution, rape, murder and other inhumane acts as all “part of a campaign ...to control the Eritrean civilian population since 1991”. These crimes are still occurring today, said Mike Smith, chair of the Commission of Inquiry. (See article)

Presidential Adviser, Yemane Gebreab, in a press statement on Wednesday, claimed the report failed to meet “principles of impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity” and “lacked the minimum standards of rigor and professionalism.” He alleged it had produced “no solid evidence or firm legal basis to support its extreme and unfounded charges”. Eritrea, he said, rejected “the politically motivated and groundless accusations and the destructive recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry.”

Kenya

The Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD), a coalition of opposition parties, held a protest march in Nairobi on Monday (June 6) against the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, appointed by President Kenyatta to organize the next Kenya elections in August 2017. CORD is demanding that the IEBC membership should be more inclusive. A court ruling allowed CORD to hold its protest but prohibited them from storming the IEBC offices or forcefully evicting the commissioners from office.

Somalia

President Mohamud made an official visit to Kenya this week, visiting the Dadaab camp. He said Somalia was ready to receive refugees from the Dadaab camp and assured the refugees that repatriation would be orderly, humane and dignified as per the Tripartite Agreement between Somalia, Kenya and the UNHCR. He said later that refugees had already picked out places where they want to be resettled and the government has put in place infrastructure to accommodate them. (See article)

President Mohamud also held talks with President Kenyatta on Tuesday (June 7) and the communique reaffirmed the cordial relationship between Kenya and Somalia. It said both sides would work “on the orderly, humane and dignified repatriation of the Somali refugees back to Somalia as per the Tripartite Agreement.” The two sides reaffirmed their firm commitment to working together on areas of mutual interest and the two Presidents rededicated themselves and their Governments to enhance their cordial relations. (See article)

A statement from President Mohamud’s office in Mogadishu said on Friday (June 3) that Somalia will select a new parliament in August as planned. The President and the regional leaders met last week in Mogadishu to discuss the modalities for the election and will meet again on June 20 in Baidoa to discuss how the parliament will be selected in August. Further procedural details will be discussed at their next meeting in Baidoa on June 20. (See article)

Ethiopian troops and Somali National Forces killed 5 senior al-Shabaab commanders and over 245 fighters, according to the Ethiopian Ministry of Defense. They repulsed an attack on a military outpost at Halgan, on the road between Belet Weyne and Buulo Burde, 300 kilometers from Mogadishu early on Thursday morning (June 9). Many others were captured and a huge quantity of weapons recovered. AMISOM forces remain in full control of Halgan town.

AMISOM said on Friday (June 3) that it would be meeting this week to review tactics against al-Shabaab. Ambassador Francisco Madeira, the AU Special Representative for Somalia and head of AMISOM said the agenda would include revising AMISOM’s concept of operations and developing plans on “how best to degrade and destroy al-Shabaab’s fighting capacity.”

Ambassador Madeira said last week that a new AMISOM Force Commander from Djibouti, General Osman Nur Sugale, had recently been appointed and was due to take up office following agreement by all the AMISOM Troop and Police Contributing Countries.

President Ahmed Silanyo of Somaliland opening Somaliland's 9th High-level Aid Coordination Event on Monday (June 6) said Somaliland "was not part of any federal Somali state and will not participate in Somalia's elections. The people of Somaliland chose the path of independence 25 years ago and we will not turn back."

Sudan

Sudan and South Sudan on Sunday (June 5) signed a series of security agreements, including immediate re-deployment of joint military forces along the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone, and approved a plan to stop supporting and harboring rebels as well as opening the agreed border crossings points. The Joint Political and Security Committee, co-chaired by the Sudan and South Sudan defense ministers, agreed to activate the agreement to operationalize the buffer zone signed last October.

Prime Minister Hailemariam: "Growth has to be shared to be sustainable"

The *Daily Maverick*, a Johannesburg based news outlet that delivers a blend of news, information, analysis and opinion, interviewed Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn this week on Ethiopia's economic development. The interviewer, Dr Greg Mills, concluded by the end of the discussion that "More than a few African countries could learn from this story". Dr Mills briefly discussed the Prime Minister's own history as well as looking at the influence of former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi before moving onto Ethiopia's economic transformation. The *Daily Maverick* noted that the concepts of Ethiopia's developmental state and many of the specific advances first began under Prime Minister Meles whose fingerprints were on such success stories as Ethiopian Airlines' support for the floriculture and horticulture industries; or the personal invitation offered during a trip to China in 2011 led to the foundation of Shoe City.

In discussion about the economic transformation, the Prime Minister identified the priorities, emphasizing that "First and foremost, we have to focus on our comparative and competitive advantages in a global setting." He underlined "agriculture as the first priority along with the need to mechanize and get more out of it." Prime Minister Hailemariam said, "We have a strategy to support smallholder farming, and to increase the demand for agriculture. But this alone is not sustainable. We have to think about the next steps." The first stage, he said, was moving from subsistence to commercialized agriculture. This was already beginning to be implemented in the country. One case in point, he mentioned, was floriculture, flower farming. Ethiopia was a country where twenty years ago there was no commercial flower farming. Now it ranked among the top five global suppliers and employed 75,000 people.

The Prime Minister talked about the next priority in Ethiopia's economic transformation: improving skills. The country's vigorous work to attract Foreign Direct Investment was also

based on the competitive advantages it had developed including labor-intensive qualities. He said, “We have to be focused on technical and vocational training. Otherwise we will have a young population that is not skilled, has the wrong attitude, and does not understand the market. This involves more than just technical skills. It is about preparing people, supporting entrepreneurs and small and medium size businesses,” he said. The investment into Ethiopia from the US alone between 2013 and 2015 totaled \$4billion, including a \$200-million investment in a flower exporting company, and a \$250-million expansion by Coca-Cola.

Dr Mills noted that “the most important task for the government, however, from the Prime Minister’s vantage, is to get investors into the 20 industrial parks dotted around the country.” The Prime Minister noted that the industrial parks offered comprehensive facilities from programs for one-stop services to proper utilities, environmental management, and training and skills development provisions. In fact, all the facilities and services appropriate to a modern city. The government was aiming for each park to provide 50,000 jobs.

The *Daily Maverick*’s interview mentioned some of the challenges of running manufacturing businesses in Ethiopia or in an industrial park. These included the need to import virtually all component parts and materials as well as the unreliability of power supplies which, it suggested, would necessitate investment in back-up generators. In fact, of course, power supplies will be solved through the commissioning of the \$4.8-billion, 6,000MW Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam when completed. In response to the interviewer’s question on balancing the momentum of domestic investment with Foreign Direct Investment, the Prime Minister noted the need to source domestic capital as a stimulus for foreign investment, “especially in textiles, garments, footwear and agro-processing”, all priority sectors for manufacturing development. Prime Minister Hailemariam also mentioned the importance of looking for more areas to move into, including biotech and nanotech sectors, which he stressed, requires “engaging in and spending on Research and Development to enable competitiveness.”

The Prime Minister was forthright. The success of Ethiopia’s transition and its ability to create jobs *en masse* would hinge on encouraging an indigenous business class as a strong domestic base for growth. There is a shortage of capital and the need to make the political economy more receptive. The Prime Minister said “If it is favorable for rent-seeking and if government officials are involved in patronage and in short-term looting, it discourages the local private sector to invest in productive areas. This demands that we stamp out corruption. But it also means,” he added, “that we remove the deficits in infrastructure, rules and procedures, and finance to encourage private sector investment in productive, value-addition activities.”

The Prime Minister stressed the individual responsibility of Ethiopians and the “need to work on attitudes,” underlining that the creation of quality jobs would “take 20 to 30 years at least.” He said, “Our biggest constraint is the attitude, the outlook and the exposure of our people. We have a huge rural population. You need to create an understanding among them of the need for value creation in a way that requires everyone working very hard and working differently, for example in the change from subsistence to rural agriculture. You also have to convince people that white collar jobs are not everything, that agriculture can be a modern occupation.” He added that this required a good communications strategy to explain the dangers of failing. “Our danger”, he

said, “is a danger of poverty and of the country’s disintegration if we don’t tackle these problems, and become active and hard working.”

In answer to Dr Mills’ question on his definition of success, the Prime Minister said: “It is about bringing meaningful change in the lives of our people. It’s not just about figures or growth, but about changing lives.” **“Growth,” he added, “has to be shared to be sustainable.”**

Chinese Investment Forum for Sustainable Trade and Economic Growth in Africa

The “Forum on Chinese Investment for Sustainable Trade and Growth in Africa” was held in Beijing, China, from May 31 – June 1, with the principal aim of exploring business opportunities and deliberating on the needs for catalyzing suitable investment, especially from China, in productive sectors in Africa, as a means of driving export development, economic growth and job creation. The Forum was held within the framework of Partnership for Investment and Growth in Africa (PIGA), a joint United Kingdom-China effort to increase exports and sustainable economic growth in Africa. The Partnership for Investment and Growth in Africa initiative was officially launched in October last year in London on the sidelines of Chinese President Xi Jinping’s state visit to the UK. It seeks to increase exports and sustainable incomes of people living in poverty in Africa through increased investment and greater integration of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) into global value chains in manufacturing and agro-processing. PIGA partners and pilot countries identify exporting enterprises in Africa and foreign investors including those from China, and increase quality investment in key sectors, and increase participation of local business in the regional and global value chains. PIGA, currently in a scoping and design phase, is part of a broader range of UK-China-Africa Collaboration for Investment and Growth. It was supported by Justine Greening, UK Secretary of State for DfID; Hu Huaibang, Chairman of the China Development Bank; Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission; and Ethiopia’s Foreign Minister, Dr Tedros Adhanom.

Last week’s two-day Forum was co-organized by the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID), the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), the China-Africa Development Fund (CAD-Fund) and the International Trade Center. These have forged a collaborative arrangement to work together towards increasing sustainable investment for the greater integration of Small and Medium Enterprises in Africa into global value chains in the manufacturing and agro-processing sectors. Discussions focused particularly on the four pilot PIGA countries, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique and Zambia, and at the way these countries have aspired to get the most out of local development, including the creation of more jobs, adhering to principles of solidarity and mutually beneficial cooperation. The Forum also explored opportunities for Chinese companies to invest in Africa’s productive sectors, aiming to drive export development, economic growth and job creation. It provided a business-networking platform for interested businesses with African investment and trade promotion institutions. The large attendance in Beijing showed the growing interest of Chinese businesses and investment-supporting institutions in doing business in Africa.

Speakers at the Forum included Ethiopia’s Ambassador to China, Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin; ITC Executive Director, Arancha González; the Chairwoman of the Beijing Sub-Council of the

CCPIT, Ms Xiong Jiuling; the Chief Executive Officer of CAD-Fund, Mr Shi Jiyang; and the Director-General of Economic Development of DFID, Mr David Kennedy. It brought together more than 300 representatives from Chinese businesses, government, and trade and investment support institutions in the four pilot African countries, as well as from China and the UK.

Ambassador Seyoum emphatically underlined the importance of partnership, pointing out that successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and especially the goal to “end poverty in all its forms everywhere”, required governments, private investors, civil society organizations, trade and investment-support institutions to enhance synergies to turn such opportunities into concrete and tangible development impact. This could be done through inclusive employment creation, integration of global value chains, expanded production capacities of African countries, and technology transfer. He referred to the greater role a facilitative state could play in terms of spearheading the creation of economic infrastructures to provide a foundation for the desired structural transformation in African economies. This would allow for the creation of an enabling atmosphere for agricultural modernization, export diversification, sustainable industrialization and inclusive development endeavors. Ethiopia, he noted, was providing a favorable investment climate for manufacturing and agro-processing sub-sectors, allowing foreign companies to create a linkage with small and medium scale enterprises of Ethiopia in order to help them take full advantage of developing production capacity and value-creating ventures for job creation and poverty reduction.

Ambassador Seyoum stressed that it was an imperative necessity for African countries to move fast to unlock and utilize the transformative power of the multi-billion-dollar funding package pledged by the Government of China to implement practical projects within the framework of the Johannesburg Declaration and Action Plans of the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). He said Ethiopia was strictly committed to translating the new blueprints into action to realize opportunities for future mutual development and continue the trend of prosperous growth through agricultural modernization, infrastructure development and the harnessing of industrial production capacity through partnership. Effective industrial relocation would, he said, mean igniting local industrialization in Africa. There was agreement that China and Africa’s development strategies were complementary and characterized by mutual gain. He also emphasized the importance of encouraging best practices and the progress of technical and institutional capacities. This would help overcome constraints preventing implementation of these initiatives and realizing the common dream. Ambassador Seyoum said it was the responsibility of Africa, China and other partners, to pursue cooperation actively between industries and encourage promotion of the processes of industrialization and agricultural modernization to achieve win-win results. Addressing hurdles would foster the interest of economic actors on all sides and be a force to bring productive Africa to the global market.

Ms Xiong Jiuling, representative of CCPIT, said that China-Africa cooperation had embraced development needs, aligning the complementarities of both sides, and was in line with the African Union Agenda 2063. In addition, the international capacity cooperation agenda was on track to bring tangible results. She noted that countries like Ethiopia had comparative advantages for localizing value-creating manufacturing and agro-processing industries. Mr Shi Jiyang, CEO of the CAD-Fund, said cooperation in leveraging the economic and trade structures of Africa could move the continent away from being at the wrong end of the global value chain. China, he

said, was best positioned to help lift Africa's production capacity sharply. He mentioned that the CAD-Fund had been participating with Chinese enterprises in productive investment ventures in Africa. It had jointly invested in 36 African countries with an investment outlay of US\$3.4 billion so far, and this had been of assistance in boosting export earnings and fiscal revenue. He said the Fund was willing to promote the tripartite cooperation envisaged in PIGA.

On the issue of integrating African SMEs into the global trade value chain Ms González, of the ITC, pointed out that Chinese investment support should be anchored in productive sectors such as light manufacturing and agro-processing where SMEs were the growth levers to ensure local value addition, export earnings and job creation. Mr Kennedy of DFID welcomed the level of interest and energy generated by the Forum. He said this showed the "great potential of this kind of triangular cooperation to make a real difference in terms of investment and jobs in Africa." He said manufacturing and agricultural investments anchored in export markets would offer enormous opportunities for economic transformation in Africa. Professor Justin Yifu Lin, a former chief economist and senior vice president at the World Bank, and Honorary Dean of the National School of Development, Peking University, said that African countries had the potential for dynamic economic growth. They should focus on their comparative advantages and place themselves ready to capture the window of opportunity for industrialization arising from the relocation of labor-intensive light manufacturing from higher-income countries, such as China. In this regard, he said, the role of the facilitative and developmental state was irreplaceable.

Diplomats from the Ethiopian Embassy in Beijing and representatives of the Ethiopian Investment Commission gave details of the investment potential of Ethiopian agriculture, agro-processing and light manufacturing. They noted Ethiopia was endowed with different agro-ecologies suitable for the production of a wide range of commodities, making commercialization of agriculture an attractive proposition to foreign companies. The sector is indeed well placed to drive agro-industrial development. The demand for the export of processed food products is increasing globally, and Chinese investors were encouraged to participate in the agro-processing industry in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian government had recently launched its Integrated Agro-Industrial Park (IAIP) development program as a core component in the current Growth and Transformation Plan to help integrate small-scale farming into commercial agricultural value chains. There is great potential for Chinese investors in these proposed parks.

The opportunities in the manufacturing sub-sector, such as textile and apparel, leather products, chemical and pharmaceutical production, construction materials and other similar products, attracted a lot of attention from the audience, who were impressed by the low production costs and resource advantages Ethiopia could offer investors. Ethiopia is a good candidate to host Chinese labor-intensive and export-oriented factories when labor-intensive production begins to relocate overseas. The government has been building special economic zones, equipped with the necessary economic infrastructure to attract foreign export-focused investments as a deliberate boost to jump-start industrialization. Localizing industries in Ethiopia would help Chinese investors capitalize on preferential trade programs that allow African countries to export duty-free to US and EU markets, as well as satisfy growing domestic and regional demands.

The giant Chinese shoe manufacturing company, Huajian, currently producing 2,000 pairs of shoes daily in Ethiopia, was showcased as a success story. The Chairman of the Huajian Group

said his company has recently secured close to 138 hectares of land in Ethiopia in order to build a light industry city at a cost of about US\$2 billion. This planned industrial zone would create **employment opportunities for 30 to 50 thousand people** and significantly boost Ethiopia's foreign currency earning capacity. The Chairman urged developed countries to buy products originating from Africa, pointing out the quality of production had steadily improved.

UN Commission of Inquiry indicts Eritrea for crimes against humanity

A detailed and damning report by the UN Commission of Inquiry, released on Wednesday this week (June 8), states unequivocally that crimes against humanity have been committed in Eritrea over the past 25 years. It lists "crimes of enslavement, imprisonment, enforced disappearances, torture, persecution, rape, murder and other inhumane acts]" that were, the report says, all "part of a campaign to instill fear in, deter opposition from and ultimately to control the Eritrean civilian population since 1991". The 94-page report provides detailed evidence of its claims. Mike Smith, chair of the Commission of Inquiry said these crimes were still occurring today.

The Commission's report describes Eritrea as "an authoritarian State without an independent judiciary or a national assembly or any democratic institutions", and Mr Smith said, "There is no genuine prospect of the Eritrean judicial system holding perpetrators to account in a fair and transparent manner. The perpetrators of these crimes must face justice and the victims' voices must be heard. The international community should now take steps, including using the International Criminal Court, national courts and other available mechanisms to ensure there is accountability for the atrocities being committed in Eritrea." The report noted there had been no improvement in the human rights situation in Eritrea documented in the first Commission of Inquiry report published just a year ago.

The report highlights that "Eritreans also continue to be subjected to indefinite national service, arbitrary detention, reprisals for the alleged conduct of family members, discrimination on religious or ethnic grounds, sexual and gender-based violence and killings." The indefinite duration of military and national service programs, it pointed out, are frequently cited by Eritreans as the main reason for fleeing the country. In 2015, 47,025 Eritreans applied for asylum in Europe, many making the dangerous journey across the Mediterranean in unsafe boats, exploited by smugglers in search of safety. The numbers leaving the country have steadily increased in the last few years.

The report said that "particular individuals, including officials at the highest levels of State, the ruling party – the People's Front for Democracy and Justice – and commanding officers bear responsibility for crimes against humanity and other gross human rights violations." It added that "the National Security Office is responsible for most cases of arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance and torture in official and unofficial detention centres." The Commission said that it had compiled dossiers of evidence on a number of individuals whom the Commission "has reasonable grounds to believe bear responsibility for crimes against humanity". It said this evidence will be made available "at the appropriate time to relevant institutions, including courts of law, following strict witness protection requirements, to ensure there is justice for the Eritrean people." For the moment, these dossiers and the names of those in them remain confidential.

The Commission's report also detailed its methodology. In addition to the 833 testimonies it took from Eritreans, including 160 written submissions received during the first term of the Commission of Inquiry, from mid-2014 to mid-2015, the Commission also received another 44,267 written submissions during its second investigation. The vast majority of these were group letters and petitions critical of the Commission's first report. Almost all contained common themes and similar content and were the direct result of an organized Government campaign to try to discredit the Commission of Inquiry. The Commission contacted over two thousand of these and "next to none ... had actually read the report, and many had been provided with sensationalized information about the Commission's findings." The most fervent critics were those who had left Eritrea around 1991 and most based their comments either on an "erroneous understanding, or deliberate misinformation, about the United Nations sanctions regime." Others admitted being illiterate and receiving assistance from an Eritrean Embassy in formulating their letters. In some cases signatures had been forged; in others cases, Eritrean officials had made it known that Eritreans who did not write to the Commission supporting the Government would not have their passports renewed.

Many came from people who said they visited Eritrea briefly during the summer to see relatives. The Commission said that "the façade of calm and normality that is apparent to the occasional visitor to the country, and others confined to sections of the capital, belies the consistent patterns of serious human rights violations." It added: "the types of gross human rights violations in Eritrea documented by the Commission ... are not committed on the streets of Asmara, but rather behind the walls of detention facilities and in military training camps. Torture and rape are not normally perpetrated in the open." The Commission also noted that as on previous occasions, despite repeated requests to the Government, the Commission was refused permission to visit the country.

The conclusions of the report are quite clear and bear quoting in full:

"(341) The Commission finds that there are reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed in Eritrea since 1991. Eritrean officials have engaged in a persistent, widespread and systematic attack against the country's civilian population since 1991. They have committed, and continue to commit, the crimes of enslavement, imprisonment, enforced disappearance, torture, other inhumane acts, persecution, rape and murder.

"(342) In the absence of a constitution, an independent judiciary or democratic institutions in Eritrea, the Commission has found no improvement in the rule of law. The Commission has heard of no plans to hold national elections. While the Commission was informed about the establishment of a committee to consider drafting a new constitution, it has received no further details.

"(343) The Commission finds that the gross human rights violations it documented in its previous report persist, including arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, torture, killings, sexual and gender-based violence, discrimination on the basis of religion and ethnicity, and reprisals for the alleged conduct of family members. In addition, many of those subjected to enforced disappearance in the past remain unaccounted for.

“(344) While the Commission notes the State’s increased engagement with the international community, there is no evidence of progress in the field of human rights. Human rights violations are cited as the main motivating factor for departure by the consistently large number of Eritreans fleeing the country, including by the rising number of unaccompanied minors.

“(345) Eritreans continue to be subjected to indefinite military/national service. The Government has recently confirmed that there are no plans to limit its duration to the statutory 18 months. Conscripts are drafted for an indefinite duration of service in often abusive conditions, and used as forced labour.

“(346) Political power and control are concentrated in the hands of the President and a small circle of military and political loyalists. The Commission has reasonable grounds to believe that the top levels of the National Security Office and the military are responsible for most cases of arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance and torture. Military commanders are also responsible for abuses committed in the context of the Government’s military service programmes and at Eritrean borders. The leadership of the party and the military also benefit from the use of military/national service conscripts as forced labour.”

The Commission provides a comprehensive list of recommendations to the Government of Eritrea, the UN and the UN Security Council, the AU and to member states and international organizations and transnational corporations. These include a call for the Government of Eritrea to implement fully and without delay the Constitution of 1997, to carry out changes in governance, allow political parties and free, fair and transparent democratic elections and establish the rule of law. The Commission says indefinite military/national service should be limited to 18 months for all current and future conscripts, torture, ill-treatment, sexual violence and enslavement of conscripts as well as forced labor of conscripts should be discontinued. It calls for an end to arbitrary detention and the closure of all secret detention centers, and independent monitoring of all places of detention. It wants an end to the arrest of individuals for religious beliefs and protection for all minority ethnic groups, in particular the Kunama and the Afar. It says the Government should implement a zero-tolerance policy for sexual abuse in the army and in detention centers, stop harassment and reprisals against relatives and associates of persons accused of wrongdoing. It should also put an end to extrajudicial killings, and provide accountability for past and persistent human rights violations and crimes, including “enslavement, imprisonment, enforced disappearance, torture, and other inhumane acts, persecution, rape and murder.”

The report recommends that the UN Human Rights Council renew the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, keep the situation in Eritrea on its agenda, and transmit the present report to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and the UN Security Council for follow-up. It also suggests the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights establishes a structure with a protection and promotion mandate to assist in ensuring accountability for human rights violations in Eritrea, especially where such violations amount to crimes against humanity.

It recommends that the UN General Assembly puts the human rights situation in Eritrea on its agenda and that the UN Security Council classify the situation of human rights in Eritrea as posing a threat to international peace and security. It suggests the UN Security Council should

impose targeted sanctions, including travel bans and asset freezes, on persons where there are reasonable grounds to believe they are responsible for crimes against humanity or other gross violations of human rights. It also calls for the Security Council to refer the situation in Eritrea to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. The African Union should establish a mechanism, supported by the international community, to investigate and prosecute individuals in Eritrea who may reasonably be believed to have committed crimes against humanity.

The report says Member States and international organizations should keep Eritrea under close scrutiny until visible progress can be seen in human rights. It calls for the implementation of the decision of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission on the delimitation of the border, though it might have added that Ethiopia has been trying unsuccessfully to get Eritrea to open a dialogue on demarcation of the border for over a decade. It wants the International Labour Organization to keep Eritrea on its agenda and continue to address the issue of forced labor. Member states, it says, should provide Eritrean nationals seeking protection with refugee status. They should also act if any alleged offender, accused of crimes against humanity, arrives in the territory of a Member State. It concludes by calling on all transnational corporations operating in Eritrea to conduct human rights impact assessments. They should specifically look at the possibility that Eritrean contractors rely on the use of conscript labor, as well as issues arising from the problems of freedom of association and expression in Eritrea and the absence of financial transparency.

Despite the plethora of detailed evidence produced, the Commission's report was strongly attacked by Eritrean officials as might be expected. Indeed, the government has been trying to organize a massive petition to present to the UN Human Rights Council against the Commission. In addition to organizing tens of thousands of written submissions criticizing the Commission, the government also **mobilized armed Ethiopian opposition groups based in Eritrea to campaign against the Commission**. Presidential Adviser, Yemane Gebreab, in a press statement on Wednesday, claimed the report failed to meet "principles of impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity" and "lacked the minimum standards of rigor and professionalism." He alleged it had produced "no solid evidence or firm legal basis to support its extreme and unfounded charges", and its methodology was "so deeply flawed as to seriously compromise its findings and render its conclusions null and void." The report, he asserted, was entirely one-sided and its evaluation of the "evidence" it received was "woefully inadequate." It lacked balance as it ignored "any positive development" including, he said "Eritrea's significant achievements in political and civic rights". Eritrea, he said, therefore rejects "the politically motivated and groundless accusations and the destructive recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry."

The Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea was first established by the UN Human Rights Council in June 2014. The Commission's first report was published on 8 June 2015. It documented a number of grave human rights violations in the State's military/national service program and concluded that there might have been crimes against humanity committed in Eritrea. The UN Council of Human Rights then asked the Commission of Inquiry to investigate further. The Commission consists of three independent experts: Chairperson Mr Mike Smith (Australia), Mr Victor Dankwa (Ghana) and Ms Sheila B. Keetharuth (Mauritius), who is also the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea. It will formally present its report to the Human Rights Council in Geneva on June 21.

The National Leaders Forum in Somalia discusses the electoral process for August.....

Somalia's National Leaders Forum met at Villa Somalia on Sunday (May 29), under the chairmanship of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, to discuss the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections later this year. The three-day meeting was also attended by Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke as well as the Presidents of the Jubaland, South West, Puntland and Galmudug administrations. They were discussing implementation of the electoral model previously endorsed at the National Consultation Forum and promulgated by Presidential decree on Sunday (May 22) after the Government had failed to muster enough votes in Parliament to get its proposed election modalities passed by Parliament. After weeks of deadlock, the President, after warnings that time was running out and with the approval of the UN Representative in Somalia and other international partners, opted for a presidential decree to keep the election process on track.

The meeting was closed and little information was released about the discussions. Among the items under consideration reportedly was the question of the extra seven seats for the Upper House of Parliament. The original suggestion was for these to be allocated as extra representation for Somaliland and Puntland as the two longest existing states. Another suggestion was that they should go to Benadir region which includes the capital Mogadishu. Shortly before the meeting opened, President Mohamud said it was "unsustainable for a city of three million not to be represented in the Upper House". However, there was some concern expressed about allocating seats in the Upper House to Benadir region. One Federal MP, Sharif Mohammed Abdulla, said on Monday this week that Mogadishu deserves to have its share in the Upper House and he was optimistic that the leaders would "close the gap about the status of Mogadishu and a solution will be reached." Among other topics were implementation of 2016 poll blueprint, the status of the capital, national security and poll wards. The leaders are reported to have approved Somalia's National Security Policy.

Reports indicated that the leaders had agreed not to spend time on issues that were not part of the original agreement, endorsed by the National Leadership Forum. This meant more contentious issues such as the allocation of seats for the Benadir region in the Upper House were put aside with leaders agreeing "not to waste time". Most of the discussions related to other issues including the replacement of those traditional leaders who had died since the selection of the current parliament in 2012. Conclusions on this were not finalized and will be carried forward to the next meeting. The full schedule and timing of the elections are now set to be officially announced at the next meeting.

A statement issued at the end of last week, on Friday (June 3), from the President's Office emphasized that Somalia would choose a new parliament as planned later this year. It said: "The conference repeats the previous promise that there will be no extension term and the election will take place at the planned time." It also noted that the further procedural details would be discussed at the next conference of regional leaders and the President on June 20, in Baidoa, and this would also finalize the details of exactly how the future lawmakers would be selected.

The Special Representative of the AU Commission and head of AMISOM, Ambassador Madeira, welcomed the statement and the fact that "the Somali leaders have agreed on the

technical and political bodies to oversee the elections in a manner that the election can be credible” He noted that each MP would be elected by 51 voters and “we consider this to a step in the right direction considering that Somalia is coming out from a deep crisis.” He announced the next day that AMISOM was gearing itself up to provide security to ensure a peaceful vote during the upcoming electoral process in Somalia. He said AMISOM had already begun working with the Somali Government and security forces to establish a technical security committee to oversee security arrangements for the August ballot. Ambassador Madeira said “The commitment taken by Somali politicians and leaders is that the 2016 elections be viewed as another transition towards a full-fledged electoral process of one-person-one-vote by 2020. We are happy that they have all agreed on how to go about this.”

The electoral model developed by the National Leadership Forum follows the Garowe Agreement reached between the Federal Government and the Puntland State Administration on April 4 this year. This resolved the dispute over whether to base the electoral model on the 4.5 clan formula or on districts and constituencies, covering the 2016 electoral process, formation of the Upper House of the Federal Parliament, a 2020 roadmap, the constitutional review process, federation and other issues. It was following this that members of the Federal Parliament set up a parliamentary committee to consider amendments and prepare a draft 2016 election law. The process, however, dragged on and the delays began to threaten the timetable and caused concern both with the government and with the international community, which had guaranteed and witnessed the Garowe agreement. In the end the President felt obliged to issue a decree mandating the implementation of the electoral model adopted by the National Leadership Forum on April 12, underlining that this would be used only for the 2016 election after the expiration of the constitutional terms of the legislative and executive institutions. The President said it was imperative the electoral model be adopted into law to prevent any escalation of rifts and protect the interests of the country. According to Somalia’s Provisional Federal Constitution, adopted in 2012, the mandates of the Somali Federal Parliament and of the government would come to an end in August and September 2016, respectively.

....President Mohamud on an official visit to Kenya and the Dadaab camp...

President Mohamud of Somalia paid a three-day official visit to Kenya this week (June 6-8) during which he visited the Dadaab camp and held talks with President Kenyatta on Tuesday (June 7). At Dadaab, President Mohamud assured refugees that the Government of Somalia was committed to receiving them back home to participate in the process of state building, peace building and national reconciliation. He reassured them that the repatriation will be orderly, humane and dignified as per the Tripartite Agreement between Somalia, Kenya and the UNHCR. After talks with President Kenyatta on Tuesday, reviewing bilateral and multilateral issues including peace, security and stability in Somalia, repatriation of refugees from Dadaab and economic cooperation a joint communique was issued, reaffirming “the good neighborliness, bonds of heritage, shared destiny and the cordial relationship” between Kenya and Somalia. The two Presidents also “rededicated themselves and their Governments to enhancing and further deepening the cordial relations that exist between Kenya and Somalia.”

The statement appreciated the contribution of African countries within the framework of AMISOM in stabilizing Somalia and commended the value of cooperation between AMISOM

and the Somalia Security Forces in securing a stable environment for state building in line with Somalia's Vision 2016. It specifically appreciated the key role that Kenya continued "to play in promoting peace, security, unity and stability in Somalia". It also noted the progress made in the political process and expressed confidence that the elections would lead to a foundation for a stable and prosperous Somalia. It committed the two sides "to working jointly on the orderly, humane and dignified repatriation of the Somali refugees back to Somalia as per the Tripartite Agreement," and emphasized that the Tripartite Agreement provided "the framework for fast-tracking orderly, humane and dignified repatriation". It said this cooperation would enhance the spirit of collaboration over and above the framework of the Tripartite Agreement. It also called upon the international community to support this process by providing adequate support to the Federal Government of Somalia to receive the returnees.

On bilateral cooperation, the statement directed the immediate convening of the Joint Commission for Co-operation to follow up on issues of joint border crossing and security, trade and investment, health, education, sports and youth, culture and scientific research and communication. It agreed that in the short term customs and immigration clearance procedures for flights from Somalia to Kenya should be carried out at one point of entry which would be determined shortly; in the longer term, modalities would be developed for a direct flight between Somalia and Kenya.

On regional issues, the two sides agreed to consult the Chair of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government for the convening of the IGAD Summit in Mogadishu. They also reaffirmed their firm commitment to working together on areas of mutual interest.

The Global Green Growth Forum 2016 Summit in Copenhagen

The three-day Global Green Growth Forum (3GF) 2016 Summit opened in Copenhagen, Denmark on Sunday (June 5). The Forum brings together governments, businesses, investors and international organizations to act together for the implementation of inclusive green growth. This year's Summit has been designed specifically to follow-up on the Paris Climate Agreement of December last year, and the Agreement on UN's Sustainable Development Goals reached at the UN in September 2015.

The Global Green Growth Forum (3GF) was initiated by the Danish government in 2011 in close collaboration with Korea and Mexico. Since then, China, Kenya, Qatar, and Ethiopia have joined the platform, and Vietnam and Chile have become official 3GF partner countries this year. The Prime Minister of Denmark invited some 250-300 leaders from corporations, governments and civil society from all over the world, including the 3GF partnership countries: China, Ethiopia, Kenya, Korea, Mexico, Qatar and Vietnam.

This year's Summit is being held under the theme of **A Call to Action - Enabling Solutions at Speed and Scale**. The Forum and the countries involved believe the momentum has never been greater for a "green transformation" of our world. This, of course, is only possible through a genuine partnership between public and private sectors as this is necessary to unleash new sources of ideas, technology, and financing to allow for development solutions. The Forum is working to catalyze such game-changing public-private partnerships to accelerate this transition and bring transformative solutions to a global level.

Last year saw large-scale agenda-setting and substantial public commitment on sustainable development. There was the Agreement at the UN on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Agreement on Climate Change reached in Paris. This year, 2016, is therefore crucial in translating the promises made in 2015 into concrete actions and plans. This, indeed, is what the Global Green Growth 2016 Summit sees as its central task. Its timing was deliberately designed to maximize progress arising from last year's meetings, to try to help move the world beyond promise into positive action.

The aim of the Summit has been to provide a forum to accompany and accelerate delivery of elements to support the Sustainable Development Goals through transformational public-private partnerships. The SDGs and the climate commitments can only be successfully delivered by nations acting together and in unison. A key challenge for implementation is the need to foster solutions which link these two agendas together. So the Summit focused on elements that align with green growth drivers, so the discussions concentrated on: cities, energy, forests, water, land, sustainable production and consumption including value chains, food and hunger, and finance. It also underlined the importance of setting the right frameworks for promoting sustainable lifestyles, making sustainable production and consumption a reality, and on financing of the green transformation.

The unique feature of the 3GF is the way it enables unique and innovative partnerships to be formed, accelerated and scaled-up. The 3GF 2016 Summit builds on previous work achieved in creating innovative and distinctive partnerships. These are driven by knowledge sharing about successful ventures, in turn sparking further innovation, along with the opportunity for very high level networking. The Forum sees the importance of having an on-going and dynamic process - delivering solutions that can be replicated, speeded up and scaled-up to produce a real and lasting impact. One of the examples of this, launched at the Summit is the Food and Waste Protocol, an international multi-stakeholder partnership devoted to reducing food waste along the value chain from production to consumption. Another example is the Race to the Top partnership which focuses on sustainable systems of apparel production characterized by measurable progress both in environmental performance and well-being of workers. It launched a number of new initiatives originating in the work of the Forum's public-private partnerships, including a new initiative to combat climate change and an alliance designed to work to reduce barriers to trade in green energy.

The Forum sees the essence of transformative change as requiring the creation of effective systems which allow for simultaneous action with well-designed frameworks, also involving collaborative action through partnerships and continuous evaluation of impact, in order to tackle global problems of enormous complexity. It emphasizes that cities and urban areas are centers of economic growth and innovation, home to more than half the world's population and the source of 70% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. They must be planned and operate according to green principles, if they are to remain livable as well as create markets for further green development. They are, therefore, crucial for the global transition to a green economy.

Today, the strains on the world's ecosystems have never been greater. More than a billion people currently live in water-scarce regions, and as many as 3.5 billion may experience water scarcity

by 2025. Addressing increasing scarcity of water, deforestation and depletion of natural resources are essential for the Sustainable Development Goals' agenda. Similarly, it is essential to ensure the transformation to a new energy regime driven by renewables. Green transformation must, indeed, be driven by such factors as greening global value chains, which means improving resource efficiency to create growth opportunities, generate new markets and jobs, and promote social and environmental benefits; creating sustainable lifestyles and encouraging a shift to zero waste and clean energy; and importantly, sufficient private and public green finance.

The Global Green Growth Summits feature some of the most innovative systems thinking available, providing the outline of deliverable and transformative solutions. They offer opportunities for sharing new ideas and evidence as well as experience from partnerships. This year's Summit was no exception, underlining the critical importance of moving faster and further than ever.

The Ethiopian delegation to the Summit was led by Dr Arkebe Oqubay, Special Adviser to Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn. Dr Arkebe gave a statement at the opening plenary session and also took part on a conversation on "A Call to Action: a Conversation on Enabling Solutions at Speed and Scale in Ethiopia", exploring green growth in Ethiopia, and the country's experience of climate solutions in the context of mitigation and climate changes in the country. The delegation also included Shiferaw Teklemariam from the Federal Ministry of Health who participated in the sessions on "Unlocking Financial Flows for Restoration" and on "The Role of National Financing in Accelerating Green Growth", described as a session devoted to learning from the practical experiences of those who are making green growth happen on the ground. Ms Bethlehem Tilahun Alemu, of SoleRebels took part in the plenary session on "Going Back in the Value Chain", and "In the session on "Aspirations and Opportunities for the Growing Middle Class".

IGAD Ambassadors endorse strategies and implementation plans for 2016-20

The 30th Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Committee of Ambassadors Meeting convened in Addis Ababa on Monday and Tuesday this week (June 6-7) has endorsed sectoral strategies and implementation plans to be implemented from 2016 to 2020.

The Chair of the IGAD council of Ambassadors, Ambassador Shamebo Fitamo, in his opening remarks pointed out that "The 55th Extra-Ordinary Meeting of IGAD Council of Ministers which was held on 30-31 January 2016, in Addis Ababa has approved the IGAD Regional Strategy 2016-2020 and its implementation plan." The IGAD Council of Ministers also authorized the IGAD committee of Ambassadors to approve the IGAD Sectoral Strategies. The Ambassador noted that the two-day meeting would focus on the IGAD Sectoral Strategies organized in six thematic areas; agriculture, livestock, fisheries and food security; natural resource management and environment protection; social affairs development; regional economic cooperation and integration; peace and security and humanitarian affairs; and gender issues. According to the Ambassador the meeting came at a time when the region was experiencing dynamic problems including climate change, security threats, fragility and conflict. He said the regional strategy has taken these dynamics into account along with new initiatives and the framework of the African

Union Agenda 2063 and of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The meeting stressed that this would maximize opportunities.

Ambassador Shamebo also underlined that formulating a strategy was not an end in itself but was a process that would be followed up through a comprehensive five-year implementation plan and annual operation plans. He noted that most importantly, “there must be appropriate and evaluation mechanisms under which the processes should be carried out with agreed indicators that could measure the impact of activities.”

In his opening statement, the Executive Secretary of IGAD, Ambassador Engineer Mahboub Maalim noted that IGAD is on track and was indeed ahead of other Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on the regional integration agenda. This has led to improved livelihoods and economic development in the IGAD region. Ambassador Mahboub further noted that unless there was Member State cooperation and harmonization sustainability and easy implementation of IGAD programs and projects would not be realized.

After deliberating on the IGAD Sectoral Strategies, the IGAD Committee of Ambassadors gave its approval for their full implementation over the coming five years. Other items on the agenda included the approval of revised clauses in the IGAD Treaty, which were referred to the Council of Ministers for approval, and the implementation of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) for improved financial reporting and management to be implemented by the Division of Finance and Administration.

The Committee was updated on Member State contributions and on arrears and on the general IGAD financial status. Ambassador Catherine Mwangi, Kenyan Ambassador to Ethiopia and Djibouti, requested that the IGAD Secretariat continuously remind the Committee of Ambassadors of their respective state’s contributions and arrears and encourage them to update their capitals, so that IGAD programs can successfully be implemented.

The Committee also discussed with the IGAD Partners Forum how to strengthen coordination and consultation between IGAD and the IGAD Partners Forum. The IGAD Partners Forum expressed its readiness to continue to work in collaboration with the IGAD secretariat in areas of economic development as well as on peace and security issues.

The two-day meeting was attended by Ambassadors from the IGAD Member States, namely Ethiopia, Djibouti, Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan and Sudan as well as senior IGAD staff.

Preparing for post-El Niño impact in Ethiopia and the Greater Horn of Africa

Extreme drought followed by excessive rainfall: the weather phenomenon El Niño is at the root of famine and floods in many African countries including the Horn of Africa. Countries across Horn of Africa are currently facing devastating effects from the El Niño weather phenomenon. Several countries are reporting much heavier rainfall in the most recent rainy season and that appears due to changing weather patterns. El Niño-induced rainfall had already created havoc in parts of Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Somalia and other parts of the Horn. The effects of this El Niño

are putting the world's humanitarian system, already struggling to cope with the fallout from conflicts in Syria, South Sudan, Yemen and elsewhere, under unprecedented strain. At the beginning of last week (May 30-31), the IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC) organized the 43rd Great Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum at Enashipai Spa at Naivasha in Kenya. The event was organized in collaboration with the World Meteorological Organization, the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services, Global Climate Centers and development partners. The aim of the Forum was to develop a consensus on regional climate outlook for the June to September rainfall season, and formulate mitigation strategies to address the implications of forecasts of seasonal rainfall and temperature on the key socio-economic sectors in the Greater Horn of Africa region. The theme of the forum was "Preparedness for Post-El Niño Impacts in the Greater Horn of Africa".

The Director of ICPAC, Dr Guleid Artan, noted that climate-related disasters represented more than **80% of natural disasters** in the Greater Horn, and the socio-economic losses emanating from climate-related disasters affected development in all countries of the region. He said climate change was likely to lead to an increase in frequency, magnitude, and severity of extreme weather and climate events such as drought, floods, a rise in sea levels, and storm surges. Dr Artan also pointed out that the effects of the El Niño rains had led to the current humanitarian crisis, with some countries in the region recording flooding while others experienced harsh weather conditions that affected millions. He identified Ethiopia as the most affected country with 10.3 million people currently in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. Other countries in need of support, according to the director, were Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti and parts of Somalia. In total, he said "over 22 million people in the region required urgent food aid and the number could rise in the coming months as the long rains could lead to [further] flooding." Dr Artan said the mitigation measures put in place by member countries before the El Niño rains began had helped to save lives, as those efforts had minimized the effect of the rains. However, even countries in the North of Africa could be facing flooding from the impact of the long rains that are about to begin.

In a press release, ICPAC forecast the likelihood of above normal rainfall over most of the northern parts of the Greater Horn during June to September 2016. This included the southern parts of Sudan, most of Eritrea, South Sudan and Djibouti; the northern part of Uganda; western Kenya; and central and northern Ethiopia. The press release noted that the other areas of the Greater Horn had a dry season during this period and that these areas were expected to remain generally dry during the forecast period. This included the northern half of Sudan; eastern parts of Ethiopia; eastern parts of Kenya; almost all of Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and much of Somalia; and southern parts of Uganda. The early warning information generated in the forum is extremely important for the region where the vagaries of climate variability and change are continuing to threaten problems for national development plans across the entire region.

There is an obvious need for preparedness and early action to be built into the responses to El Niño and the recovery efforts. Development actors should increase risk and vulnerability-reduction efforts in priority areas, including reprioritizing existing development funding to mitigate the risks where appropriate. Certainly, there is significant need for speedy and continuous engagement by the international community. Equally, the Government of Ethiopia in addressing the situation and preparing for the various forecast options has started to encourage

incentives for water harvesting and provide compensation seeds to reduce the impact of the drought. Similarly, efforts are under way at all levels to prevent damage from the unseasonal rainfall. The established National Committee and structures cascading to *kebele* levels have allowed the government to respond swiftly and follow the situation effectively. It is coordinating resources and logistics of both home and international organizations and partners to reach out to drought affected citizens. There is, however, still a major gap to fill the financial requirements.

In late March, the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) in Ethiopia, together with its humanitarian partners, launched a 90-day campaign to raise money to finance urgently required food aid for Ethiopia. This campaign aimed to bridge the US\$700 million gap between what is needed and what has so far been secured to aid the millions affected by a drought identified as the worst *El Niño* in recorded history. Other humanitarian agencies in Ethiopia are also exerting major efforts to pull together necessary funding and fill the financial gap. Mr Jeremy Konyndyk, Director of USAID's Office of the U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance team, said he was "concerned both at the depth and scale of the need [and] the scale of the challenge." Despite the slow response to the appeal for aid, USAID, however, remained "very confident" that this disaster would be mitigated because of the enhanced capacity and expertise in terms of humanitarian response observed over the past three decades. Even though this drought was more severe than those in the past, "we have far better capability to manage this kind of situation than 30 years ago."

Dr Johann Heffnick, Head of the Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department at the European Union Delegation to Ethiopia (ECHO), said the drought had resulted in the failure of two consecutive harvest seasons: the small *belg* (March to May) and the main harvest season of *meher* (November-December) of 2015. This had significantly reduced the general level of water, both for humans and livestock, causing a serious shortage of fodder for livestock. Both government and humanitarian partners, he said, needed to scale up their efforts in order to simultaneously achieve the speeding up of the amount of aid that is coming, as well as make sure that food, water and seeds are distributed to the people in need sooner rather than later. In an interview with *Addis Standard* he said the necessary response was already underway, but underlined that the loss of agricultural production in most of the affected areas was "massive", with some areas losing from 50 to 90% of their expected harvest. The lack of water was equally severe, with wells drying up and rivers disappearing. He said, "This has led to a considerable number of livestock deaths. Hundreds of thousands of livestock have died in some places."

The Humanitarian Requirements Document produced in December 2015 to cover anticipated needs for the next six months is now being revised for the second half of the year. USAID expects an increase in the number of people estimated to experience Moderate to Acute Malnutrition from 1.7 million to 2.2 million and in the number of children under five facing Severe Acute Malnutrition to rise from 435,000 to 450,000; in addition, the number of farmers needing emergency seed support would rise to 3.3 million. The Government is planning, with support from partners, to vaccinate 25 million children against measles in more than 500 drought-affected *woredas* (districts). The EU is clear that the Government's response has been "commendable," but the challenges remain very considerable. There are concerns over funding, logistics and whether the rains will be sufficient this year. In fact, projections are that the rains should be good. The Government bought one million tons of wheat in October last year and

another 500,000 tons in March. The US Department of Agriculture expects imports this year to increase to 2.5 million tons by September.