

A Week in the Horn

11th May 2012

- **The World Economic Forum for Africa meets in Addis Ababa**
- **Non-Aligned Movement's Ministerial Meeting in Sharm El- Sheikh**
- **The Italian Foreign Minister's official visit to Ethiopia**
- **Ethiopia and Norway's MOU on Bilateral Political Consultation**
- **The 27th Kenya-Ethiopia Joint Border Commissioners' meeting**
- **The Conference of Somali elders continues in Mogadishu**

News and Views:

- **Ban Ki- Moon urges member states to coordinate efforts for international peace**
- **Bill Gates hails Ethiopia's health and agriculture sectors**
- **An EU Business Forum set up to encourage EU/Ethiopia trade and investment**
- **Somaliland and Djibouti agreed to boost diplomatic relations**
- **Somali Reporter named One World media journalist of the year**

The World Economic Forum for Africa meets in Addis Ababa

The 22nd World Economic Forum for Africa 2012 officially opened yesterday in Addis Ababa with its 1st Plenary Session in presence of Heads of State and Government, and eminent international personalities, civil society, academic and media personalities and hundreds of business leaders. The forum, from 9th to 11th May, held panel discussions on different themes throughout two days. The theme selected for the Forum is **"Shaping Africa's Transformation"**, for consideration under the three main pillars of **"Strengthening Africa's Leadership"**, **"Accelerating Investment in Frontier Markets"**, and **"Scaling Innovation for Shared Opportunities."**

Ethiopia was selected as host nation at the 21st forum held in Cape Town last year. Apart from the fact that Ethiopia is becoming a major conference centre for global and continental organizations, the choice was also determined by Ethiopia's fast growing economy which according to an IMF study, was first among the continent's non-oil economies. Equally, the meeting comes at a time when Africa is on the brink of a real transformation as the home of seven of the world's ten fastest growing economies. It compares favourably with the relative problems of the rest of the global economy, and one of the main foci of the forum is on the key issues that can further encourage Africa's growth and unleash its potential.

Prior to yesterday's official opening there was an award-giving ceremony for **"Social entrepreneurs of the year 2012"**. The award was given to five African social

entrepreneurs for implementing innovative solutions to social and environmental problems with financially sustainable models. The awards were presented to Bethlehem Tilahun, co-founder and manager of **SoleRebels, Ethiopia**; Sameer Hajee, Chief Executive Officer, Nuru Energy Group, Rwanda; Paul Scott Matthew, Director Africa, North Star Alliance, South Africa; Andrew Muir, Executive Director, Wilderness Foundation, South Africa; and Seri Youlou and Thomas Granier, co-Founders, Association la Voute Nubienne, Burkina Faso. The awards were presented by Klaus Schwab, the Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum. The event was followed by a panel discussion under the theme “Africa’s innovators”, where those given awards took part in a discussion moderated by Olanrewaju Akinola, Editor of *This is Africa* of the UK’s Financial Times. The discussion focused on how to encourage entrepreneurs in Africa, the problems hindering innovation in Africa and possible solutions. The group shared their experiences and discussed the role of innovation in transforming Africa’s economy.

One panel was held under the theme “Africa in the World Economy -- From Tigers to Lions?” with panellists Gao Xiqing, President of the China Investment Corporation (CIC) ; Bekele Geleta, Secretary-General, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC); Monhla Hlahla, Chairperson, Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa; Donald Kaberuka, President, African Development Bank; Doug McMillon, President and Chief Executive Officer, Wal-Mart International; all co-chairs of the Forum.

Mr Kaberuka noted the importance of not confusing economic growth with economic transformation. He said the structure of African economies was not changing fast enough. Countries remained vulnerable to external shocks. Public policy choices should target ways to leverage wealth from natural resources for broad-based, sustainable development. He emphasized the importance of education of children of the poor as a tool to address generational change, and of the development of small and medium enterprises to close the wealth gap as two key drivers for Africa’s transformation. Kofi Anan, former UN Secretary General similarly indicated that “government policies need to create equal access to opportunities to avoid dissatisfaction in the future.” Referring to the dismal economic conditions of many Africans, he said, “We cannot talk of growth when millions of people are left behind”. Overall the panellists agreed on the need to ensure all-inclusive economic growth and underscored the imperative for Africa to chart its own future development as well as underlining the need to prioritize economic transformation to end poverty.

Other panels have dealt with the themes of “Advancing Africa’s trade”, “African Agriculture”, “African Leadership”, ‘Accelerating Infrastructure Investments” and “Rethinking South-South Relations” in which the discussion primarily centred on ways to improve south-south relations and with the question as to the effect this relationship may have on Africa and the growing southern economies of India, China and Brazil. “Advancing Africa’s trade” was moderated by Jim Fredrick, editor of *Time International*, USA and the discussions emphasized myriad bottlenecks including inadequate or non-existent infrastructure, lengthy complex procedures, inefficient border administrations and regulatory discrepancies that hampered trade and economies of scale, and, more recently, the tightening of trade finance. This in particular was a problem given the new financial regulations that have been developed worldwide since the financial crisis.”

Ethiopia's Minister of Industry, Mekonnen Mayazewal, stressed the importance of expanding infrastructure and the need to diversify the economic base and reduce costs of production as important policy decisions to boost intra-Africa trade. He called on the private sector to increase productivity. Egypt's Minister of Industry and Foreign Trade, Mohammed Eisa, also noted that the lack of harmonization of trade rules was a serious impediment to trade in Africa. Speakers all agreed that in addition to rectifying problems, there must be a transformation for Africa, to add value to the continent's natural resources, in order to realize its potential and create economic benefits for its people.

Prime Minister Meles and President Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania together with Fahad Bin Abdulrahman Bin Sulaiman Balghunaim, Minister of Agriculture of Saudi Arabia, participated in the panel on "African Agriculture". Prime Minister Meles also participated in the panel on "Africa's leadership" together with President Ali Bongo Ondimba of Gabon; President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan of Nigeria; and Prime Minister Nahas Gideon Angula of Namibia. They spoke on the challenges of leadership as Africa prepared to move forward to meet the complex issues of today and tomorrow. The discussion was moderated by Klaus Schwab. The panellists agreed that Africa's leadership needed honesty, vision, clear priorities, responsibility, accountability and perseverance. These were the characteristics necessary for leadership today and would be required to lead Africa's transformation from growth into shared opportunities for sustainable development and progress over the next 20 years. Prime Minister Meles underlined the importance attached to decision-making leadership qualities, and said a leader must be prepared to say "no" when a decision is not in the long-term interest of the country or the continent. A leader must be aware that he cannot please everybody all the time. He went on to add that "Africa needs leadership with clear plans and priorities to overcome structural problems focusing exclusively on [inclusive] economic growth. We need leadership with perseverance to continue on the chosen path when the going gets rough. And if there is going to be transformation, the going will get rough." President Jonathan emphasized the rule of law, pointing out that leaders should not be above the law.

Non-Aligned Movement's Ministerial Meeting in Sharm El- Sheikh

The 17th Ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) took place in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, this week from 10th to 11th May. It was preceded by a meeting of senior officials tasked with preparing documents and draft resolutions to be considered and adopted by the Ministers for the 16th NAM Heads of State and Government Summit to be held from 26th to 31st August in Tehran, Iran. The Ministerial Meeting was attended by Ministers, Senior Officials and representatives of 120 countries as well as ten observers and guests from eighteen countries and eleven organizations. The Ethiopian delegation was headed by Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos, State Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The Ministerial Meeting was opened with a welcoming statement by Mohamed Kemal Amr, Foreign Minister of Egypt and current Chair of the NAM Coordinating Bureau, who reviewed NAM's achievements and the implementation of the Bali Declaration adopted in May 2011. Representatives of the various Regional Groups also addressed the meeting on major global political, economic and social issues as well as matters of particular regional interest.

The Ministerial Meeting discussed and adopted a NAM Final Document which included 688 paragraphs dealing with different global, regional and sub-regional political, security, economic, social, human rights and humanitarian issues. This is for final endorsement by the NAM Heads of State Summit in Tehran. Sustainable development (Rio+20), Climate Change, South-South Cooperation, Global economic development, food crisis, promotion of multilateralism, reform of the UN and Security Council, disarmament, terrorism, the current situation in Syria and other topics were among the issues at the centre of discussion. At the end of its deliberations, the Meeting also adopted the Declaration on the Centenary Year of the African National Congress as a Liberation Movement and a Declaration on Palestinian Political Prisoners. It accepted the offer by the Republic of Venezuela to host the 17th NAM Summit in 2015.

The meeting also evaluated how far the 2009 Sharm-el-Sheikh declaration has been achieved. This focused on promoting disarmament and on international security and stability, noting that total and complete Nuclear Disarmament remained the only route to establish a world free from Nuclear Weapons. It emphasised the necessity for full implementation of such agreements as the Monetary Consensus, the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation as well as comprehensively evaluating the progress achieved in the implementation of the MDGs and developing a strategy to help developing countries to achieve these. Other areas covered included ensuring food security for all members of the Movement and other developing countries, promoting full implementation of commitments to the special needs of Africa, strengthening cooperation with regional organizations and programs including NEPAD, enhancing home grown democracy, stability and rule of law. It also detailed strengthening NAM's solidarity in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

In his statement to the meeting Ambassador Berhane noted over fifty years after its inception, the NAM stood vindicated as a great moral and political force providing an alternative vision to the bloc politics of the past and as a cardinal element for the shaping of a new world order of peace, justice and common prosperity. He drew attention to the threat of global terrorism which, he said, presented a challenge testing NAM's core principles. The movement must take a clear and unequivocal stand on this scourge. There could be no justification for terrorism; no cause could justify the shedding of the blood of innocent people. The movement remained a beacon of undying hope even though its achievements had been overshadowed by new and old problems, continued conflicts and a steadily widening prosperity gap between developed and non-developed nations. The NAM needed to adjust itself to effectively address contemporary challenges. Its members must strengthen their unity and solidarity as well as enhance their role in influencing global issues by upholding the principles of multilateralism, promoting and defending the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Ambassador Berhane noted that Ethiopia, as one of the founding member states of NAM, had committed itself, in a tangible manner for many years, to the maintenance of international peace and security. Its unreserved commitment to the collective security and peace work of the United Nations has been a hallmark of its active foreign policy since the 1920s. It had consistently contributed troops to UN Peacekeeping Operations, and indeed currently ranked fourth in the list of troop-contributing countries.

Ambassador Berhane stressed that peace and security must not be treated as standalone issues, but viewed as part of the broader sustainable development challenges. That was why Ethiopia had launched, over a year ago, a National Growth and Transformation Plan, with the aim of fundamentally transforming its economy by boosting agricultural productivity to address food security and eventually to eliminate poverty. The country has averaged 11% growth in GDP for the past eight years.

Ambassador Berhane called on NAM member-states to enhance their support for the efforts of the African Union to build on the momentum and optimism generated by successful TFG and AMISOM military operations against terrorist and extremist forces in Somalia and help Somalia towards successful completion of the transitional period and the establishment of a new political framework after August. He called upon the leaderships of both Sudan and South Sudan to live up to their commitments and refrain from taking unilateral actions that could jeopardize peaceful neighbourly relations between them.

During the conference, Ambassador Berhane held bilateral talks with the Foreign Ministers of Kenya, Yemen, North Korea, Senegal and Bhutan, as well as with the State Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Angola, Nigeria, UAE, and Sudan and with the Special Envoy of Australia's Prime Minister. Discussions on the side-lines of the meeting covered a wide range of global and regional matters as well as bilateral issues.

The Italian Foreign Minister's official visit to Ethiopia

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Italy, Giulio Terzi Di Sant' Agata, paid an official visit to Ethiopia at the head of a substantial Italian business delegation from 3rd to 4th May. During his two-day visit, Foreign Minister Terzi held discussions with Prime Minister Meles, and with Ato Hailemariam Desalegn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Prime Minister Meles said that existing cooperation activities should be enhanced. He stressed the need to prepare a road map to transform the existing economic cooperation. He also urged the Government of Italy to support efforts to stop the conflict between Sudan and South Sudan and help ensure stability in Somalia.

The Prime Minister detailed the significance of the carefully proportional response by the Ethiopian Government to the attacks from Eritrea and Eritrea's continued attempts to try to destabilize both Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. Italy had originally issued a statement condemning Ethiopia's attack on the terrorist training camps in Eritrea, but it had subsequently retracted its statement. Foreign Minister Terzi said that Italy must have a leading role in the international community's activities in the Horn of Africa. He said that Ethiopia and Italy were linked by "very strong traditions and by a future of political cooperation in terms of security and economic cooperation." He added that "if our two nations can work together, they can make a real difference to the stability of the Horn of Africa."

During the discussions with the Deputy Prime Minister, both sides hailed the level of strengthened bilateral relations between Ethiopia and Italy and promised to work together to strengthen these further. Minister Terzi said that his country viewed its bilateral relations with Ethiopia as strategic, describing it as special. He called for a

continued exchange of views and political consultations between the two countries on matters of common interest.

The Deputy Prime Minister for his part expressed his satisfaction for the measures being undertaken by Italy to strengthen its bilateral relations. Drawing attention to the historical relations of Italy with the region, he emphasized the role that Italy was playing in tackling issues of peace and stability in the Horn of Africa. He said that Ethiopia and Italy had a common position on peace and stability in Africa, and he expressed Ethiopia's desire to work jointly with Italy in bilateral and multilateral areas to ensure lasting peace and stability. The Italian delegation was given a detailed briefing on Ethiopia's Five-Year Development Plan, the Growth and Transformation Plan, and on the business opportunities available under the Plan. Ato Hailemariam called on Italian investors to engage in the areas given prime attention in the Plan, including mining, horticulture and floriculture development, railways and sugar production. On regional issues, both sides agreed to hold regular consultation and to coordinate their efforts towards ensuring peace and stability in the region.

Minister Terzi praised Ethiopia and IGAD's efforts in Somalia and noted that Italy provided support to the efforts of Ethiopia and the AU to prevent further worsening of conflict between Sudan and South Sudan. The two ministers identified areas where Ethiopia and Italy could work together including global threats, terrorism and piracy. Minister Terzi announced that his country had earmarked 65 million Euros of assistance for Ethiopia. He also noted that Italian exports to Ethiopia had increased by 150% since last year and imports from Ethiopia had significantly increased as well. Members of the Italian business delegation, who included representatives of nine major companies, also held fruitful discussions with their Ethiopian counterparts over trade and on the investment opportunities existing in Ethiopia.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister Terzi had earlier met and held useful discussions during the Ethio-Italian Business Forum which took place in Rome in March when they signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together in trade and investment. Minister Terzi's visit to Addis Ababa was in response to Deputy Prime Minister Hailemariam's attendance at the Forum in March.

Ethiopia and Norway's MOU on Bilateral Political Consultation

A Memorandum of Understanding between Ethiopia and the Kingdom of Norway on conducting bilateral consultations was signed on Wednesday [9th May] here in Addis Ababa by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hailemariam Desalegn and Norway's Minister for International Development, Heikki Homaas. The Memorandum of Understanding essentially expresses the desire to enhance mutual understanding and the promotion of friendly relations and cooperation between the two countries. It establishes a mechanism to hold political consultative meetings regularly at senior official level to discuss issues of common interest. It also enables officials of the two countries to exchange information, consult, coordinate and cooperate on issues of common concern to both countries on bilateral, regional and international issues.

Opening the bilateral discussions, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hailemariam welcomed Mr Heikki Homaas and his delegation to Ethiopia. This was Mr

Homaas' first visit to Africa since his assumption of office. Ato Hailemariam expressed satisfaction with the remarkable progress in bilateral relations made by the two countries in the last few years. This was the result of the conviction and commitment of the respective governments. He underlined and commended the decision made by the Government of Norway to double its development cooperation with Ethiopia and its intention to double it again in the coming years. He noted that the MOU undoubtedly signified the importance of the strategic relationship between the two countries.

Mr Homaas expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome he and his delegation had received in Addis Ababa. He stressed his satisfaction at the enhancement of bilateral cooperation between the two countries, appreciated the developmental undertakings of the Government of Ethiopia in various sectors and assured Ethiopia of the assistance of Norway in relevant areas, in particular in the agriculture, mining, health and clean energy sectors. The Norwegian Minister also underlined the importance of cooperation in the development of a 'green economy'.

The 27th Kenya-Ethiopia Joint Border Commissioners' meeting

The 27th Kenya-Ethiopia Joint Border Commissioners' and Administrators' Meeting was held in Mombasa, Kenya between 30th April and 1st May. The Kenyan delegation was led by Mr James Ole Serian, Provincial Commissioner, North Eastern Province while the Ethiopian delegation was led by Ato Shiferaw Shigute, President of the Southern Nation, Nationalities and People's Regional State. The next meeting is to be held at Adama, Oromia State in Ethiopia, later this year at a date to be agreed.

The meeting was conducted in a frank and friendly manner characteristic of the excellent relations between the two countries and focused on a wide range of issues. These were discussed under two sub-committees covering political and security matters and economic and social issues. The meeting was officially opened by Professor George Saitoti, Kenya's Minister for Provincial Administration and Internal Security, who praised the warm and cordial relations that have existed between the two countries. These laid a strong basis for the realization of the mutual commitment of the two countries to entrench peace and mutual co-existence among their border communities.

On political and security issues, the two sides reaffirmed their strong commitment to boost cross-border peace and security and undertook to implement joint measures to boost this in particular to prevent attacks by criminals on either side of the border. They resolved to hold regular security meetings and carry out joint deployment of security personnel on both sides of the border to bring to justice perpetrators of criminal activities. They also agreed to deal expeditiously with security related issues as soon as possible after they occurred, carry out joint disarmament exercises and to draw up bilateral legal instruments to cover cooperation in addressing the issue of small arms and light weapons.

The two sides agreed to undertake an inspection of the common border during May, mandating survey experts from both countries to survey the border demarcation beacons. They have agreed to ensure regular joint inspection of the pillars and beacons along the border. Over the issue of immigration, agreeing that human trafficking and other illegal movements of persons across the Kenya-Ethiopia border was a matter of

concern, the two sides agreed to hold joint meetings to sensitize border communities of the importance of using agreed and specified cross-border routes. They also agreed to share information between the concerned agencies and to carry out an exchange of each other's arrested criminals before the next session of the Joint Commission.

With reference to economic and social matters, the two sides appreciated the decision to sign a Special Status Agreement in order to strategically transform bilateral relations. In order to boost cross border trade, they agreed to establish a Joint Border Trade Committee, and to expedite negotiations to conclude a Bilateral Trade Protocol as well as finalize the common list of commodities agreed under COMESA-facilitated negotiations on a Simplified Trade Regime, and to establish a Joint Trade Review Committee to implement their Bilateral Trade Agreement signed in June 2011.

The two sides expressed their support for the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on Mutual Assistance (signed in March 2010) and for the joint Moyale border operational action plan to further harness cross-border trade and improve customs activity. They agreed to urgently conclude a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Public Health to formalize already existing collaboration on cross-border activities to improve access to health services and joint efforts for disease surveillance, control and prevention. The two sides further agreed to cooperate in eliminating illegal movements of drugs and other medical goods.

They agreed to expeditiously set up a Joint Technical Committee to implement the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding reflecting Cooperation in Agriculture Development. Agreeing that cross-border education was an essential component of cross-border relations, the two sides agreed to establish a Joint Border Education Committee and sign an agreement on Basic Education in order to increase the benefits of cooperation in education along the border. The two delegations underscored the importance of the livestock sector as the backbone of livelihoods of the border communities and emphasized the need for cross-border cooperation. They agreed to explore joint activities to boost the sector and urged the conclusion of the Memorandum of Understanding on Livestock Development and Animal Health and Veterinary Services in order to create the necessary mechanisms for collaboration. Each side also expressed support for sustainable solutions to the challenges arising from climate change and exploitation of these resources.

The two parties thanked IGAD's Conflict and Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) for a presentation on the status of security in the border area, noting the recommendations for measures to reduce conflict and boost border security. Following a recent incursion by bandits from Ethiopia, Kenya has established an army base in Todonyang, Turkana County, to curb any cross-border militia attacks and asked Ethiopia to do the same on the Ethiopian side of the border in order to allow security personnel to tighten surveillance and address security issues as they arise.

Last week, CEWARN convened a three-day National Consultation meeting at Hawassa in the Southern People's Regional State on development of CEWARN's strategic plan for 2012-2019. Similar meetings are being convened in Djibouti, Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Uganda and Somalia to develop the plan. This follows decisions taken by the Technical Committee on Early Warning and the Committee of Permanent Secretaries in Mombasa in May a year ago. CEWARN has adopted a strong focus on local community

needs and perspectives for cross-border peace and security dynamics. The present discussions aim to make the strategy responsive to local priorities and emerging concerns as articulated by local populations.

The Conference of Somali elders continues in Mogadishu

The conference of Somali elders in Mogadishu which opened last Saturday [5th May], has continued all this week. It is supposed to come to an end this weekend but may be extended. The conference has brought together some 135 Somali traditional elders to decide on the nomination and selection of the 825-member Constituent Assembly that will discuss and adopt a new constitution and choose a new parliament later this month. The meeting is taking place at the heavily guarded police academy in Mogadishu's Abdiiaziz district. Al-Shabaab, which rejects the whole process, threatened to derail the meeting and to target elders who take part in the conference, saying those who attended should be considered as 'outside Islam'.

President Sheikh Sharif, the Speaker of the Parliament, Sharif Hassan and Prime Minister Dr. Abdiweli Mohamed Ali Gaas were among those who attended the opening of the meeting along with other ministers and MPs. They received the traditional elders with enthusiasm and praised their leadership. President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed expressed his "confidence in the elders" and his belief that the elders' conference would lead the nation to "national unity". The President also expressed his appreciation to the donors that had supported Somalia throughout the transitional period. The Prime Minister stressed that the fact that the government could host a major conference on this scale underlined the improvements that had been achieved in the security area. The Minister for the Constitution, Mr Abdirahman Hosh Jibril, took the opportunity to criticize some of the misinformation being disseminated by certain groups about the draft constitution. He stressed it complied with Islam and with the faith of the Somali people. He encouraged the public to support the traditional elders in delivering their mandate. The Transitional Government has made it clear it considers this conference a significant milestone in completing the still outstanding benchmarks in the Roadmap.

The meeting has not been without controversy. The start was delayed amid reports that President Sharif and Speaker Sharif Hassan had "disagreed over the selection process" for the elders. If so, they must have subsequently settled their disagreement as both attended the opening session. There were delays in the arrival of some representatives, and complaints that others from south-central regions had been "hand-picked by TFG officials". There were also reports that Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a representatives had not been invited. In fact, the Ahlu Sunna administration from areas of south-central Somalia was well aware of the importance of the meeting. Omar Sheikh Mohamed, an Ahlu Sunna official in Guri'el, noted the importance of attending the elders meeting in Mogadishu and stressed the administration had set up a committee to select traditional elders to represent central Somali regions during the meeting.

Although Al-Shabaab has not disrupted the meeting, it has prevented some traditional elders from towns in Hiiraan, Lower and Middle Shabelle regions in Buqda-Aqable, El-Ali and Mukeyle from travelling to Mogadishu. It was part of Al-Shabaab's efforts to threaten traditional leaders intending to participate in the meeting, apparently to try and persuade the elders to nominate and select people from Al-Shabaab-controlled

areas for the Constituent Assembly, and make sure those who will be in the next parliament will be pro-Shabaab.

The Secretary-General's Special Representative and Head of the UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS), Ambassador Mahiga, welcomed the inauguration of the meeting. He said it was an important step on the road to ending the country's transition, calling it "a moment of optimism for all Somalis". Mr Mahiga emphasized that the credibility of those chosen by the Elders would have a "profound effect" on the constitution-making process and the selection of the new legislative body. He called on all parties to ensure that this was done in a timely, consultative and efficient manner as it was an essential first step on the long path ahead. It was "critical to get it right". Ambassador Mahiga encouraged the elders to choose the best representatives for both the Constituent Assembly and the Parliament. He added that both the UN and the international community would be giving their full support to this process for the successful ending of the transition and eventual lasting peace and stability in Somalia. Attending the conference as observers were Somali civil society groups who stated their commitment to support the traditional elders in "embodying not only the interests of civil society groups, but also the larger society as well".

The draft constitution itself also remains an object of controversy. A number of people have criticized specific articles and elements, including President Abdirahman Mohamud Farole of Puntland. President Farole has written to Ambassador Mahiga, copying his letter to the Ambassadors of the UK, the US and the EU, arguing that the draft does not clearly define the expected fundamental principles of a federal system of government. "The draft does not distribute power and resources between the federal and state institutions as well as define competency in the delivery of public goods to citizens of Somalia but rather it is highly centralized, confusing and contradictory." He said Puntland had appealed for wider consultations but it was also deeply disappointed with those groups who rejected the draft without reading it. President Farole called for an emergency meeting of Somali principals and diplomats of the international community "to discuss and address contentious issues... before it is too late."

Meanwhile, the National Joint Security Committee which includes representatives from the United Nations, the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as government and defence officials, met early this week under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Dr Abdiweli Mohamed Ali. Also present were representatives of Puntland and Galmudug states and of Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a. It agreed to proposals to unify all pro-government forces and put them under the command of the TFG Defence Ministry. Mr Hussein Arab Issa, Defence Minister of the TFG, said it was time to centralize the operations of the various groups fighting under the TFG's banner against militant Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda extremists. Prime Minister Dr Abdiweli also noted that there was little need to have forces operating outside the central command of the government defence structure. Defence Minister Hussein said the Committee, which meets every two months and whose overall objective is to coordinate efforts in support of Somalia's security institutions, had also requested the international community's help to establish military camps to be used by the unified forces.

Ban Ki- Moon urges member states to coordinate efforts for international peace

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon urged the UN Security Council this week to create the position of a UN Counter-Terrorism Coordinator to promote better coordination, collaboration and cooperation. He made the suggestion during a Security Council debate on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts. Member states should work together to strengthen law enforcement, to tackle the underlying drivers of extremism, to reduce the threat to international peace and security. He hailed the collective efforts that had disrupted attacks and disabled terrorist networks but cautioned that recent attacks in Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria and Yemen demonstrated the threat was still 'formidable' Mr Ban ki-Moon noted that terrorist organizations continued to look for new havens, adopt new tactics and seek new targets. This highlighted the need to pursue an integrated approach to terrorism and violent extremism as embodied in the Global Strategy. Mr Ban urged member states to make full use of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force. The UN General Assembly is planning to review the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Strategy next month.

Bill Gates hails Ethiopia's health and agriculture sectors

Bill Gates posted a note on his website this week following a recent visit to Ethiopia. He describes the health system in Ethiopia as a model system "because it reaches everyone in the country", adding that "with effective governance and coordinated support from our foundation and other donors, the advances I saw in health and agriculture may be the key to unleashing Ethiopia's potential and that of other African countries," he said. He commended Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and his leadership team as a factor in Ethiopia's progress. They have, he said, played a key role in reinventing the country's agricultural and health systems. It was particularly impressive in Ethiopia which has the second largest population of any country in Africa but only limited economic infrastructure. Mr Gates noted that the Gates Foundation had been working with the Ministry of Agriculture, the new Agricultural Transformation Agency, and other partners to help farmers plant higher-yielding, drought-tolerant seeds, improve soil health and fertility, and get higher prices for their crops by selling to global markets. He was optimistic that the big investments being made in health and agriculture would pay off and that Ethiopia could serve as a model for activities in other African countries. Improving agricultural productivity and the quality of life through better health services was the key to unleashing the potential of Ethiopia and other poor countries.

An EU Business Forum set up to encourage EU/Ethiopia trade and investment

On Monday [7th May], the European Union Delegation to Ethiopia launched the **EU Business Forum (EUBF)** to strengthen trade and investment relations between Europe and Ethiopia. This aims to ease conditions for existing EU companies to do business in Ethiopia through improving exchange of information, developing a platform for networking and business linkages between EU companies and allowing for a system dialogue with Ethiopian authorities. There are over 300 EU companies active in Ethiopia. The forum will also provide a contact point for potential new EU investors, providing information and creating networking and business linkage opportunities. The government of Ethiopia, the European Union and EU companies in Ethiopia on the occasion signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work together. It will help

to expand Ethiopia's export destinations and investment opportunities in EU member states. The EU is currently Ethiopia's main export destination with coffee and flowers the two main export products.

Somaliland and Djibouti agreed to boost diplomatic relations

The Governments of Somaliland and Djibouti have signed agreements to enhance their diplomatic, economic and security relationship following the visit of Somaliland's Foreign Affairs Minister, Dr Mohamed Abdilahi Omar to Djibouti this week. Dr Omar and his delegation met with President Ismail Omar Guelleh in the presence of Foreign Affairs Minister Mohamed Ali Yusuf. Dr Omar brought an official message from President Silanyo to President Guelleh. Discussions covered issues relevant to pertinent political and security matters in the region, as well as consideration of how Somaliland could be integrated into regional development activities as an equal player and partner. The visit by Dr Omar followed a visit by Somaliland's Minister of Interior, Duur Arale, who visited Djibouti following a problem arising from poor communications when two Djibouti cabinet ministers were denied entry into Somaliland by immigration officials based at the Lughaya border point.

Somali Reporter named One World Media journalist of the year

A Somali reporter, Jamal Osman, has been named journalist of the year at the One World media awards in the UK for a collection of his films made for Channel 4 News. The awards, presented by Channel 4 News Presenter, Jon Snow, on Tuesday [8th May], recognise outstanding journalism about the developing world. Osman's winning submissions included a report about a Somalia runner determined to compete in the London Olympics, highlighting some of the difficulties of daily life in Mogadishu. Another report looked at coverage of the drought in south-central Somalia. Ben de Pear, head of foreign news at Channel 4, said Jamal Osman had brought the Channel 4 News audience a unique understanding of Somalia's struggle with natural disaster, famine and internal conflict.

=