

A Week in the Horn

13th June 2014

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News in Brief

African Union/IGAD

The AU reiterated its insistence, during the 26th Extra-Ordinary Summit of IGAD Heads of State and Government (June 10), on a political solution that would lead to a democratic dispensation in the country, and address the legitimate demand and aspirations of the people of South Sudan to democracy, good governance and the rule of law.

The 26th Extra-Ordinary Summit of IGAD Heads of State and Government and the 52nd Extraordinary Session of IGAD Council of Ministers were convened on Monday and Tuesday (June 9,10) in Addis Ababa and discussed the current situation in South Sudan. The Extra-Ordinary Summit was opened and chaired by Hailemariam Desalegn, Prime Minister of Ethiopia and current Chairperson of the IGAD Assembly. There was an in-depth discussion and deliberations on ways to resolve the crisis and the future of IGAD-led mediation efforts were made. (See article)

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, during the 26th Extra-Ordinary Summit of IGAD Heads of State and Government, said IGAD Heads of State and Government were encouraged by the recommitment of the two leaders to speed up and finalize the inclusive dialogue on the formation of a transitional government of national unity within sixty days and to promptly provide unhindered humanitarian access to the conflict-affected population of South Sudan.

Ethiopia

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn has underlined that Ethiopia is committed to the creation of a stable, prosperous and united Somalia, noting that the Government of Ethiopia would extend its ceaseless support to the people of Somalia till Al Shabaab insurgents were dislodged from their strongholds. Prime Minister Hailemariam said this when he met (June 11) Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed of the Federal Republic of Somalia in Addis Ababa.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn met (June 11) President Salva Kirr Mayardit of the Republic of South Sudan and promised him that the Government of Ethiopia always stood ready to help both sides of the conflict seek a political solution to the crisis within the framework of IGAD, adding that Ethiopia would

continue to extend support for the attainment of the aspirations of the people of South Sudan and for the creation of an integrated, peaceful and prosperous country.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, at the Great Lakes Private Sector Responsible Investment Roundtable, said (June 11) that responsible investment has to be the way forward to contribute to inclusive business and sustainable development in the Great Lakes region. The roundtable has provided a unique space for dialogue on efforts undertaken individually and in partnership to mobilize private sector engagement in support of the implementation of the peace, security and cooperation framework of the region.

Foreign Minister Dr Tedros Adhanom attended the inauguration of Egypt's new President Abdul Fata al-Sisi (June 8). He met President El-Sisi and Foreign Minister Nebil Fahmi, assured them of Ethiopia's commitment to cooperation based on trust and confidence which opens a new era of partnership; agreed to reactivate the technical dialogue between Sudan, Egypt and Ethiopia complemented by high-level political consultations.

Ethiopian Airlines, the country's national flag carrier, became the largest airliner on the continent in terms of annual revenue and profit. The International Air Transport Association (IATA), the industry's top global body, announced that globally Ethiopian Airlines now ranks 37th and 18th, in terms of total revenue and operating profits respectively, while ranking first in Africa in both categories.

Eritrea

Four Catholic bishops in Eritrea said the Horn of Africa nation's lack of freedom is forcing youths to flee abroad. People are leaving Eritrea for "peaceful countries, to countries of justice, of work, where one can express oneself openly," the bishops of the regions of Keren, Segeneiti, Barentu and the capital, Asmara, said in a letter dated May 25 that was published online. They said the deaths of Eritrean migrants in October, when a boat carrying them to Europe capsized near the Italian island of Lampedusa, "shouldn't have happened in modern times."

Somalia

United Nations' special representative for Somalia, Nicholas Kay, said (June11) the Somali army and African Union forces have seized control of 10 or 11 towns from the Islamists in the last few months; warned "unless we can consolidate those gains, unless the people in those areas feel the benefit of being in a government-controlled area, they get better services, better governance and also their basic needs for food and medicines are met, unless we can do that, then there is a risk that this will not be a success," and the hard-won security gains in Somalia could be undermined. He urged that the world step up support to improve Somalis' lives.

Mohamed Said Mohamed 'Atom', former commander of Al-Shabaab extremist forces operating in the Galgala Mountains and in the Golis area along the border of Puntland and Somaliland, has surrendered to the Government in Mogadishu, announcing on Saturday (June 7) that he had renounced violence.

The Federal Republic of Somalia and the Republic of Malta signed (June11) a cooperation agreement on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Malta and the Federal Republic of Somalia.

Djibouti

The African Union (A.U.) Commission has appointed former Djiboutian Prime Minister Dalita Mohamed Dalita as its special envoy to Libya in a move that reflects the AU's keenness on following up developments in Libya.

The Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa during a three-day official visit to the Republic of Djibouti (June, 6-8), met Government Officials, including Prime-Minister of Djibouti, Abdoukader Kamil Mohamed, Ministers of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Mahamoud Ali Youssouf, Minister in charge of Commerce in the Ministry of Finance and Economy, Hassan Ahmed Boulaleh and the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Ali Yacoub Mahamoud.

Kenya

Cabinet Secretary for Kenya's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Amina Mohamed, in her meeting with Seychelles' Minister of Tourism, Allan St Ange, criticized travel advisories issued against her country saying "Issuing of advisories is like saying terrorism has succeeded. The best approach should be to share intelligence."

The World Bank's executive board supported by the group's International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency has approved a new 'Country Partnership Strategy' (CPS) for Kenya; announced plans to "target investments" of more than \$4 billion between now and 2018 to help Kenya "realize its potential to become one of Africa's enduring economic powers".

South Sudan

President of the Republic of South Sudan Salva Kiir, who attended the 26th Extraordinary Session of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government, discussed bilateral relations with Sudanese vice-president Barki Hassan Saleh, and reaffirmed their shared determination to lift bilateral ties and cooperation to higher levels and bring more benefits to their peoples.

President of the Republic of South Sudan Salva Kiir and leader of the SPLM/A-In Opposition Riek Machar met (June 10) on the side-lines of the IGAD's summit and agreed to end the ongoing conflict in the country and fully engage in the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD)-led peace process.

Sudan

Members of a troika group comprising of Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States welcomed (June 10) Sudan's ruling National Congress Party (NCP) initiative to undertake a process of national dialogue.

IGAD renews commitment to South Sudan at this week's Extraordinary Summit....

The IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government held its 26th Extraordinary Summit on Tuesday this week (June 10) in Addis Ababa to discuss South Sudan, under the Chairmanship of Ethiopia's Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, current Chairperson of IGAD. It was attended by President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, President Salva Kiir of South Sudan, Deputy President William Ruto of Kenya, First Vice President Bakri Hassan Saleh of the Sudan, Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed Mohammed of Somalia and Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Djibouti. Also present were Ambassador Mahboub Maalim, Executive Secretary of IGAD; Ambassador Ismael Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union Commission; and representatives of the United Nations, the IGAD Partners Forum (IPF), the People's Republic of China, the European Union, and the Troika Governments of Norway, the UK and the US.

In his opening remarks, Prime Minister Hailemariam noted the extreme urgency of the need to stop the war and advance peace in South Sudan; and he thanked President Salva Kiir and the South Sudan Government for releasing political detainees to participate in the ongoing IGAD-led peace process. He said the May 9 Agreement between the two principals of the conflict was a significant development in the pursuit of peace, reconciliation and healing, noting that the face-to-face discussions between President Kiir and Dr Riek Machar, leader of the SPLM/A-In Opposition, in the presence of IGAD Heads of State, had recommitted that the principals comply with the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in order to resolve the crisis and deliver peace. Both sides, he added, had agreed that they would rededicate their efforts to continue with the ongoing IGAD-led mediation process. The Prime Minister said the IGAD Heads of State were encouraged by the recommitment of the two leaders to implement their inclusive dialogue on the formation of a transitional government of national unity within sixty days, and to provide unhindered humanitarian access to conflict-affected people, but he stressed that any attempt to move against the path of sustainable peace and reconciliation would have serious consequences for those involved. The Prime Minister commended the successful conclusion of the inclusive, and multi-stakeholder Symposium held on June 6-7 in Addis Ababa as part of the IGAD-led peace process.

General Lazaro Sumbeiywo, one of the IGAD Special Envoys, presented a summary of the progress and activities of the Special Envoys to the Assembly. He noted that IGAD had brought the parties to a series of round-table dialogues to bridge their differences and to listen to the demands and aspirations of their people. He pointed out the multi-stakeholder symposium held aimed to initiate an inclusive political dialogue, and said its conclusions demonstrated a strong desire to stop the war and address the humanitarian crisis. The symposium had urged the warring parties to seek genuine and inclusive dialogue, endorse the May 9 Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and hasten the deployment of a Monitoring and Verification Mechanism. It also called on the international community to continue its support to the people of South Sudan. General Sumbeiywo told the Assembly that all those at the symposium wanted to see the speedy deployment of a regional protection force to monitor and verify violations of the ceasefire. He said this could become the basis for building a collective future. Emphasizing that the IGAD Special Envoys would remain active in pushing all parties towards a peaceful settlement of the crisis, he said they were pledged to work relentlessly to identify any encumbrances on the way to peace, reconciliation and healing.

Ambassador Mahboub Maalim, the Executive Secretary of IGAD, praised the commendable efforts and determination of the IGAD Special Envoys to help South Sudanese parties build trust and confidence, to discuss the future of their country and find areas of agreement. He thanked development partners for their continued financial, technical and diplomatic support for the IGAD-led mediation efforts and commended Norway for taking the lead in mobilizing resources for the looming humanitarian crisis and famine. Ambassador Ismael Chergui, the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, thanked Prime Minister Hailemariam for convening the Summit and stressed it was high time for both parties to rise above their differences and address the legitimate interests and aspirations of the people of South Sudan. Ambassador Donald Booth, US Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan, thanked the IGAD Special Envoys for their efforts and dedication and stressed the time had come for the principals to prove their commitment to peace and reconciliation. He said they should be creative and flexible and called on all parties to act responsibly, work to silence the gun and overcome divisive elements. The EU Ambassador to Ethiopia, Chantal Hebberecht, said the Summit was a testimony of the region's commitment to putting an end to further fragmentation of the situation in South Sudan, emphasizing that deployment of the IGAD protection force would help bring back security and stability.

The Summit held detailed deliberations on the political and security situation in South Sudan considering the IGAD Special Envoys' report in a closed session. It commended the recommitment of the two principals to stop the infighting, allow unhindered humanitarian support and speed up inclusive dialogue on the formation of a transitional government of national unity. It described the signing of the May 9 agreement as a milestone in the process of creating a transitional government and finding an inclusive, broad-based solution to the crisis. It underlined the significance of the inclusive approach of all stakeholders to "determine the composition of their representation in consultation with the mediation; and urged both sides to promptly endorse the modalities of inclusive engagement, expedite the inclusive peace process and not to stand against the genuine, inclusive and multi-stakeholder peace process." The Assembly reiterated the significance of the inclusive and multi-stakeholder symposium which had concluded on Saturday (June 7), and said it offered possible ways to guide the political transition and peaceful resolution of the crisis.

The Summit, however, also expressed its "deep disappointment" at the failures of both parties "to honor their commitments to date, to engage the peace process meaningfully toward political resolution of the crisis and to bring an end to senseless killings." It expressed its regret over the "continued and flagrant violations of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreements," and called on all parties to comply and promptly undertake the "necessary Modalities in accordance with the 9 May 2014 and other relevant Agreements." The Summit said the two sides must commit themselves to allowing unimpeded humanitarian access to conflict-affected people, and cautioned that if they failed in this the two parties would have to take "full responsibility." It warned that any attempt to stand against the agreements signed on January 23, May 6 or May 9, would oblige IGAD Member States to take joint action to stop the violations, "including through imposition of punitive measures." It also reaffirmed support to the AU Commission of Inquiry headed by former Nigerian President Obasanjo, and urged both sides to coordinate efforts with the Commission to bring any and all criminals to justice to advance the cause of national reconciliation and healing.

The Summit commended the UN Security Council decision to allow expeditious deployment of a regional protection force as part of a strengthened United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), and urged troop contributing countries to complete the necessary steps and collaborate on deployment. It welcomed the progress made in deploying Monitoring and Verification Teams (MVTs) to Bentiu, Bor, Malakal, and Nasser along with the intended MVTs going up to 20 sites. It called on all parties to collaborate with

UNMISS and its protection force to support the full implementation of MVTs. It also welcomed the sustained financial, diplomatic, political and technical support of the international community to the IGAD-led mediation efforts and the results of the humanitarian conference held in Oslo, Norway on May 19-20. It urged the international community to continue humanitarian support and increase resource mobilization to support relief services and the peace process. The Summit also stressed its decision to continue to stand firmly behind the peace process to support the parties in the efforts to reach an agreement in order to ensure peace and stability in South Sudan.

... after IGAD's Council of Ministers Extraordinary Session

The Summit was preceded by the 52nd Extraordinary Session of IGAD Council of Ministers earlier the same day. This was chaired by Dr Tedros Adhanom, Ethiopia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, who welcomed IGAD representatives and international partners. Dr Tedros noted that the meeting had followed the successful conclusion, on June 7, of the multi-stakeholder symposium which aimed to initiate a genuine, broad-based and inclusive dialogue to resolve the crisis in South Sudan. He said that encouraging measures had been taken by national, regional and international communities to help the Government of South Sudan and the SPLM/A-In-Opposition find areas of agreement, bridge divisive issues and commit to an inclusive and lasting political solution and deliver peace to the people of South Sudan. He stressed the IGAD-led mediation process had produced some encouraging developments including the signing and recommitment to the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement on May 9; the release of political detainees by President Salva Kiir in order to expedite the peace negotiations; and the successful conclusion of a genuine political discussion of various representatives to ensure inclusivity.

Dr Tedros welcomed the UN Security Council resolution on the deployment of a three- battalion IGAD Protection Force to provide security for the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism teams to carry out the implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. He reminded the meeting that there was a "daunting task" ahead to save the people of South Sudan from the "dire humanitarian crisis", the fragile security situation and from "immense human suffering", and said that all parties must respect the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and pursue a political dialogue in a spirit of good faith and inclusivity. He praised the work of the IGAD Special Envoys and IGAD member states as well as the AU, the UN and the Troika for their sustained efforts to stop the war and help the affected population.

General Lazaro Sumbeiywo, IGAD Special Envoy, also presented a summary report of the work of the Envoys to the Council of Ministers, briefing them on the whole process from the outbreak of the war. He gave an account of the multi-stakeholder symposium that had concluded three days earlier which, he said, had aimed to initiate an inclusive political dialogue. It had underlined the necessity to stop the violence and to address the humanitarian crisis, to respect the May 9 Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and hasten the deployment of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism team across the country. It had also called on the international community to continue support to the people of South Sudan and emphasized the need to seek a genuine and inclusive dialogue in the country.

The inclusive multi-stakeholder Symposium on South Sudan

A three-day multi-stakeholder Symposium held in Addis Ababa to initiate an inclusive phase of the IGAD-led peace process for South Sudan concluded on Saturday (June 7). Marked by the prayers of religious leaders for peace in South Sudan, the theme of the Symposium was "Towards Sustainable Peace in South Sudan" based on "a consensual, roundtable, multi-party dialogue." As part of the continuing IGAD-led peace talks, the Symposium centered its discussions on the provision of crucial thematic and foundational presentations for peace negotiations, an exchange of views on the comparative experience of other countries' peace negotiations and on possible transitional arrangements as well as the exploration of ways for advancing and realizing the coming peace talks.

The Symposium brought together over 250 representatives from South Sudan, including senior officials from the Government, the SPLM/A-in-Opposition, political parties, religious leaders, community leaders, civil society organizations and other stakeholders. It was attended by Dr Tedros Adhanom, Ethiopia's Foreign Minister; General Lazaro Sumbeiywo of the IGAD Special Envoys; the IGAD Peace and Security Director, Ambassador Tewolde Gebre-Mariam; Ambassador Tim Morris, UK Special Envoy to South Sudan; Jens-Petter Kjemprud, Norwegian Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan; Nicholas Haysom, Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan; the Chinese Ambassador, Xie Xiaoyan and international experts.

In a key note address, Dr Tedros Adhanom noted that peace was a central element as well as a prelude for the pursuit of an integrated, peaceful and prosperous South Sudan. He said peaceful settlement of differences based upon genuine and inclusive political dialogue would push forward efforts for the restoration of stability and the recovery of those conflict-affected. Dr Tedros commended the efforts of Prime Minister Hailemariam, Chairperson of IGAD, in the mediation efforts and emphasized that Ethiopia was committed to the support of peace for the people of South Sudan and the prevention of any further deterioration of the humanitarian situation. He welcomed the signing and the re-dedication of the May 9 Agreement by the two warring leaders and said this signalled a new paradigm shift in the quest for peace, laying the foundation for the engagement of different stakeholders and for the enhancement of a peaceful, inclusive and participatory dialogue as well as the promotion of a broad-based problem-solving approach to the coming peace talks.

Dr Tedros said there were some signs of optimism but at the same time the world had recently witnessed violations of the commitment to the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, killings of civilians and a worsening of the humanitarian situation throughout the country. He said efforts to enforce the May 9 truce, signed by President Salva Kiir and Riek Machar in Addis Ababa, must be encouraged and maintained with new vigor and vitality as part of the IGAD-led mediation effort. He said the full engagement of all South Sudan constituencies at this meeting should be considered as a historic opportunity to turn the country away from the ongoing violence towards progress in both political and economic spheres. Both parties, he said, should place the safety and security of the people of South Sudan at the heart of their political negotiations. Dr Tedros said genuine and inclusive political discussion could only open the window of sustainable peace, stability and development. Ethiopia, and other IGAD member states and partners, he underlined, would continue to assist the people of South Sudan to move their country out of violence.

Ambassador Tewolde, IGAD Peace and Security Director, said the Symposium's discussions on various thematic issues would help various representatives reflect on ways to end the crisis, adding that their in-depth deliberations would shape and advance the IGAD-led peace negotiations. He gave an account of the IGAD-led mediation and of the contributions made by regional and global partners. He said the IGAD-led peace talks reached a crucial stage in assisting the South Sudanese to pursue a political solution to their differences and bring an end to violence. He applauded the recommitment to the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, the agreement to cooperate in full operationalization of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism and the release of political detainees. Characterizing the Symposium as an historic gathering, he reminded those present of the need to dedicate time to the peace process to tackle the humanitarian crisis.

Special Envoy, General Lazaro Sumbeiywo, said the objective of the Symposium was to put all stakeholders and representatives of South Sudan on an equal footing and share experiences to assist in a peaceful resolution of the crisis. He said the Symposium provided an opportunity to all stakeholders to express their views on the elements of the peace negotiations including justice, reconciliation and healing as well as the necessary modalities for talks, comparative experiences; the need for a permanent constitutional process, transitional government arrangements and interim institutions. Attaching special importance to political solutions rather than military ones, he said it was a manifestation of inclusivity to craft a win-win solution for a just peace. General Sumbeiywo said "failure is not an option" in the pursuit of a mechanism to put an end to devastation in South Sudan, adding that the international community would contribute financial, political and diplomatic support to stop the fighting and end the humanitarian crisis.

Nicholas Haysom, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, indicated that inclusive engagement of all the representatives of the people of South Sudan was a prelude to the effective establishment of peace and reconciliation across the country. He called on all parties to end the fighting. There were, he said, no winners in an ongoing war. He added that the UN was ready to support the ongoing IGAD-led South Sudan peace negotiations and the people of South Sudan. Jens-Petter Kjemprud, Norwegian Representative in the Troika of the US, UK and Norway, said the Symposium was a testimony to the sincere desire of South Sudan stakeholders to seek common ground and hold a dialogue on issues of major differences. He said discussion, listening, self-reflection, collective responsibility, broad-based ownership and trust were keys to reach an agreement, resolve differences and build a collective future: adding "there is no time for further talks about talks, delaying tactics or wishful thinking about gaining military advantages or a military solution." The most urgent need and responsibility was to put people first to fulfil the aspirations of the people of South Sudan. Chinese Ambassador, Xie Xiaoyan, who said China was committed to supporting IGAD-led peace negotiations, thanked Prime Minister Hailemariam and the Government of Ethiopia for their contributions

to mediation and peace-building efforts. He said inclusive dialogue was crucial to the future of South Sudan and the Symposium could enable all stakeholders to design the future of South Sudan.

The Symposium held four plenary sessions on issues including modalities for talks and comparative experiences; transitional governance arrangements and interim institutions; justice, reconciliation and healing, permanent security arrangements, reform of the security sector, and demilitarization of the state. International experts gave detailed overviews of presentations and explanations of these thematic issues. Following presentations, stakeholders held detailed in-depth discussions and exchanged opinions on all the thematic issues and concepts in the presence of the experts. At the close of the Symposium, General Lazaro Sumbeiywo concluded that the three days of discussion was an important enabling factor “to educate, inform and share knowledge and experiences with participants” and serve as the basis for “a platform for negotiations.”

Dr Tedros attends inauguration of Egyptian President El-Sisi

On Sunday (June 8), Foreign Minister Dr Tedros headed an Ethiopian delegation to Cairo, to attend the inauguration ceremony for the newly elected President of Egypt, Abdul Fatah El-Sisi. During his visit to Cairo, Dr Tedros held bilateral discussions with President El-Sisi and with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nabil Fahmy, on various areas of bilateral cooperation and on issues related to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).

President El-Sisi reiterated his readiness for cooperation with Ethiopia based on trust and confidence with a view to opening a new era of partnership between the two countries. Dr Tedros assured the President of Ethiopia's full commitment to these principles of trust and confidence. As an important outcome of the discussion, the two sides agreed to reactivate the tripartite technical dialogue between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt and agreed that this should also be complemented by high-level political consultations. The Water Ministers of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan met three times in Khartoum for consultation at the end of last year and early this year to discuss the way forward in regard to implementation of the recommendations from the International Panel of Experts following the submission of the Panel's report to the three countries.

Ethiopia has, from the outset, consistently worked to build trust between the three countries in regard to the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. It first suggested the idea of establishing the International Panel of Experts, whose report made clear that the construction of the Dam would pose no significant harm to downstream countries. Ethiopia has also repeatedly emphasized and made clear that it is willing to go the extra mile to reassure Egypt and Sudan that the construction of the GERD is beneficial for all. To underline the point and demonstrate its commitment to this, Ethiopia has set in motion the implementation of all the unilateral recommendations of the International Panel of Experts and done so without delay. Ethiopia has also made it abundantly clear that it believes the bounty of the Nile waters should be shared among all the riparian states on the basis of the principle of equitable and reasonable utilization as envisaged under the Comprehensive Framework Agreement. It is on the basis of this principled stance that Ethiopia has repeatedly called on Egypt to continue with the tripartite discussions on the recommendations given to the three countries by the International Panel of Experts. Ethiopia is delighted that this has now been endorsed by President El-Sisi.

Dr Tedros also met and held discussions with Egyptian Foreign Minister, Nabil Fahmy. During the discussion the two Foreign Ministers agreed to further strengthen the bilateral relations of the two countries in investment, trade and tourism and other areas. The two Ministers reiterated that it is through cooperation that Egypt and Ethiopia can gain most from their various areas of engagement. They also emphasized the need for the respective private sectors of the two countries to engage in investment and other areas of cooperation.

During his stay in Cairo, Dr Tedros also held talks with the chairman of the Almoez Holding Group, Engineer Mustafa Almoez. Almoez Holding is currently engaged in tourism sector investment in Ethiopia; and the Chairman thanked the Ethiopian government for providing assistance for his company to start investment in Ethiopia. He expressed his readiness to expand the company's investment activities into other sectors of the economy.

The second report of the Special Rapporteur on Eritrea on worsening human rights situation in the country

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea, Ms Sheila B. Keetharuth, is due to present her second report later this month. Special Rapporteur Keetharuth was appointed on November 2012 following the UN Human Rights Council's decision to appoint a rapporteur under resolution 20/20 on the ground that the allegations of the situation of human rights in Eritrea warranted an independent report. Despite the Council's recommendations to the Eritrean authorities to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur, and the repeated requests for the Rapporteur to enter Eritrea, the Rapporteur was denied entry throughout the first period of her mandate. In her first report, issued on May 28, 2013, the Rapporteur had to largely base her findings on the testimonies of Eritrean refugees. These revealed grave and extensive violations of human rights in Eritrea and a complete absence of the normative institutions of justice as well as an absence of any political commitment to uphold the rights and freedoms enshrined in international human rights instruments to which Eritrea is a party. The Eritrean Government's lack of willingness to listen to the recommendations of the global human rights body was clearly reflected in the second Universal Periodic Review of Eritrea.

The second report of the Rapporteur, submitted to the UN Human Rights Council on May 13, is scheduled to be presented for the Universal Periodic Review in the middle of this month during this 26th session of the Human Rights Council. This second report once again has had to be prepared without any cooperation from the Eritrean authorities, despite the UN Human Rights Council's repeated call for cooperation in resolution 23/21. In the absence of any visit to Eritrea, the Special Rapporteur has prepared her new report on the basis of alternative information sources including visits to Malta, Tunisia, Germany and Switzerland to meet Eritrean refugees and consult publicly available documents. Her new 21-page report focuses on the country's indefinite national service, frequently referred to as forced, even slave labor, and on arbitrary arrests and detention, often incommunicado and under inhumane prison conditions. In its outspoken conclusion on the general situation of human rights in Eritrea, the report says firmly: "violations of human rights in Eritrea included indefinite national service; arbitrary arrests and detention, including incommunicado detention; extrajudicial killings; torture; inhumane prison conditions; infringement to freedoms of movement, expression and opinion, assembly, association and religious belief; sexual and gender-based violence; and violations of children's rights." It added that "Information gathered for the present report confirms that the above-mentioned violations continue unabated."

The report confirms that Eritrean parents are forced to pay fines of 50,000 Nakfa if their children escape from Eritrea even when the parents had no knowledge or information of their children's plans. Despite this, the number of refugees leaving Eritrea currently amounts to nearly 2,000 a month according to UNHCR estimates. This haemorrhage of productive members of society means that Eritrea, despite a population estimated between three and four million, is tenth in the list of refugee originating countries. According to the report "as at mid-2013, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that the total population of concern originating from Eritrea was 313,375 people, including 292,969 refugees or people in refugee-like situations and 20,336 asylum seekers." Recent reports from the UNHCR indicate that over 93,000 Eritreans refugees are in Ethiopia showing the size of the influx of refugees from Eritrea, thousands of whom continue to cross to Ethiopia despite Eritrea's shoot-to-kill policy. It might be noted that unsuccessful asylum seekers and other returnees, including those who have tried to evade the mandatory 'national service' or tried to escape, continue to face torture, detention and disappearance. The Special Rapporteur, in her report, felt obliged to urge countries "to end bilateral and other arrangements between Eritrea and third countries that jeopardize the lives of those seeking asylum as returnees are facing grave consequences." The report underlines that "the indefinite national service and arbitrary arrests and detention, or fear thereof, are the top push factors for flight" and provide the main reasons, though other human rights violations are also factors.

The report notes that although the law governing National Service limits it to 18 months, in practice it has been unlimited since the 1998-2000 war with Ethiopia and it continues through forced round-ups, locally known as "giffa". The report says: "opposing such a round-up can lead to on-the-spot execution, as deadly force is permitted against those resisting or attempting to flee, in violation of the fundamental right to life, liberty and security of the person, provided for in article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." A graphic illustration of the severity of official responses to resistance is described by a group of Eritreans who campaign to end this 'slavery' in Eritrea: "many recruits die during those punishments or subsequently as a result of injuries sustained. The nature of hard work recruits are required to engage in, often under the harsh climate of the training facilities and areas of deployment, in the absence of basic

provisions, often means many recruits become ill and those with pre-existing conditions are even more vulnerable to health deterioration.”

The Special Rapporteur labels the endless compulsory national service as forced labor under the laws and norms of international law. The report says: “since the length of national service in Eritrea is of an indefinite nature, it effectively constitutes forced labor as provided for in article 8, paragraph 3 (a) of the Covenant on forced labor. The ILO Committee of Experts has also declared the practice of the National Service as incompatible with ILO Abolition of Forced Labour Convention No. 105.”

The report accuses Eritrea of violations of numerous human rights and freedoms. One is recruitment of underage soldiers in violation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict to which Eritrea is a party. Eritrea’s laws that outlaw avoidance of national service by “escaping abroad” provides for fines or imprisonment of up to 5 years until the age of 50 and suspension of rights to hold licenses, visas, land or jobs, is said to violate freedom of movement, the right to property and the right to work. The same is true of Eritrea’s rejection of the right to conscientious objection for Jehovah Witnesses. This is in violation of its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The report details that 56 Jehovah Witness followers are currently in detention for their refusal to take part in military training on the ground of conscientious objection.

The report categorizes the conditions of the National Service as a violation of other fundamental rights. It argues that a punishment for military offences such as desertion which exposes a person to extremely harsh climatic condition endangers their right to life and security of person. It adds that such places as “Wi’a prison camp, situated on the Red Sea coast, south of Massawa, is a notoriously harsh one [where] punishment amounting to torture, inhuman or degrading treatment appears to be a norm.” The section of the report that deals with conditions at the Sawa Training Camp reveals that students requesting a limit to the endless national service have been given grave punishments, amounting to complete curtailment of freedom of speech. The same holds true in reference to freedom of religion as the practice of religion is prohibited in Sawa.

The report confirms that detentions in Eritrea are made without due process of law often without formal charges, leaving detainees no more than speculation on the causes of their detention. This, the report notes, is in contradiction to due process of law as stipulated in the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights (ICCPR) to which Eritrea became a party in 2002. Detention conditions are frequently appalling, with detainees more often than not kept in metal containers in harsh climatic conditions, and torture, and sexual abuse in cases of female detainees, is commonplace. Detainees are held without any alternative for legal recourse about the mistreatments they might receive from the hands of officials. The report also draws attention to the frequent practice of incommunicado detention without trial or charge. It notes the case of the commonly known G-15 (11 former EPLF officials detained in 2001) and the 10 members of the private press detained [at the] same time.” It also says “over 50 people, including public figures were arrested and detained, with no information as to their whereabouts, nor have they appeared before any court of law” following the mutiny known as the “Forto incident” in January 2013.

The Special Rapporteur emphasizes that the recommendations to Eritrea made in her first report still stand “as the Government of Eritrea has not demonstrated its willingness to take them into consideration and to act upon them.” She makes numerous recommendations in this report, calling among other things for a cessation of the indefinite National Service and demobilization of those who finished the 18 months service, the harmonization of the proclamation for National Service and the “Warsai Yikeallo Development Program” with international human rights instruments, for investigation of extrajudicial killings and other human rights abuses. She also calls for conscientious objection to be allowed by law, for the immediate release or trial of the G-15 detainees held without charge or trial since 2001, for a cessation of abuse of human rights of citizens, an end to restrictions of freedom of movement and for the authorities to allow access to international human rights bodies to investigate the human rights situation in the country more effectively.

Recommendations for the international community include respect for businesses investing in Eritrea to take into consideration the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. This relates to the reports of companies, including international mining enterprises, allowing forced labor in collaboration with the Government of Eritrea for the sake of guaranteeing profits. The report calls for bilateral and multilateral advocacy, including action by the UN, to work for the release of political prisoners and those detained incommunicado on religious grounds and for the government to allow access to international human rights monitors. The Special Rapporteur recommended strengthening efforts to

ensure the protection of those fleeing Eritrea, in particular unaccompanied children, by respecting the principle of non-refoulement and by granting them at least temporary refuge or protection. She also called for the promotion of legitimate channels of migration from Eritrea and inter-country cooperation in order to reduce clandestine escape channels and counter human smuggling and trafficking and reduce the numbers dying in these efforts.

Meanwhile, four Eritrean Catholic bishops, the Bishops of Asmara, Barentu, Keren and Segeneiti, issued a 38-page pastoral letter to the people of Eritrea on the occasion of the 23rd anniversary of the independence of Eritrea celebrated on May 25. The letter entitled "Where Is Your Brother?" cites the Lampedusa drowning tragedy of October 3, 2013 in which hundreds of Eritreans drowned off the coast of Italy, and the fear and terror that this created among Eritreans: "Since the environment we are in aggravates the situation, instead of finding solutions to prevent similar incidents from being repeated, those of us who made the disaster facing our children a matter limited to conversation and news are facing a disturbing question that is making us sleepless." The Bishops said "instead of finding solutions to prevent such tragedies from happening again, the situation has worsened".

The letter addresses all major issues facing Eritreans, including the moral and psychological damage inflicted upon the people; the poor educational status of the country; lack of rule of law; weakness of spirituality; economic hardships, and disasters befalling the youth in their attempt to flee the situation at home, and facing great risks on their journey in the deserts and seas. It raises a multitude of social, spiritual, economic, and legal issues, including the lack of freedom of speech in Eritrea. It says because of these the youth are fleeing to, "peaceful countries, to countries of justice, of work, where one expresses himself loudly, a country where one works and earns." It says "there is no reason to search for a country of honey if you are in one," adding that family units are becoming broken "because members are scattered in [national] service, army, rehabilitation centers, prisons, whereas the aged parents are left with no one to care for them and have been spiritually damaged. And all that combined is making the country desolate." The Bishops appealed for humane treatment of prisoners and said, "All those who are arrested should first be handled humanely and sympathetically, and then, based on the accusations against them, they should be presented to a court and to resolve their cases, and since any entity that stands for fairness and justice, for true liberation, mainly aspires to be led by a constitutional law, they should pay serious attention to this issue."

Footwear industry booms in Ethiopia

Ethiopia has recently become an increasingly important destination for international buyers looking for high-end shoes, because of its fine leather products and a strong commitment to quality. The footwear industry in Ethiopia is thriving. There have been a growing number of new and innovative enterprises, as well as expansion of existing companies, improving the quality of their products and developing new marketing systems. In the face of fierce competition Ethiopian entrepreneurs have been introducing new ideas for product design, production methods, labor management, procurement, and marketing.

Ethiopia's footwear industry and the leather sector in general enjoy significant comparative advantages in the international arena. It has abundant, available raw material, a highly disciplined and competent workforce and low prices. Ethiopia possesses the largest livestock herd in Africa, and the 10th largest in the world. It annually produces 2.7 million hides, 8.1 million sheepskins and 7.5 million goatskins. The leather and leather product sector produces products ranging from semi-processed leather in various forms to processed leathers including shoe uppers, leather garments, stitched upholstery, backpacks, purses, industrial gloves and finished leather. Government policies also make it an attractive option for Foreign Direct Investment. Besides, the excise breaks, tax holidays and cheap land rental offered to investors in certain preferred sectors make Ethiopia attractive. Ethiopia has the added advantage of a competitive and youthful workforce.

Ethiopia is also eligible for assistance under schemes like the US's African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the EU's Everything but Arms (EBA) treaty, which allows exporters from many African countries duty- and quota-free access to America and Europe. Ethiopian leather products have been exported to markets in Europe, especially Italy and the UK, America, Canada, China, Japan and other Far Eastern countries, the Middle East and other African countries including Nigeria and Uganda. In just one year, Ethiopia's shoe exports under AGOA rose from US \$630,000 in 2011 to nearly US \$7 million in 2012. Ethiopia is indeed making a name for itself in the world of mass-produced footwear. Production of leather

shoes in Ethiopia dates back to the 1930s, but it is only now that the industry is expanding and finding its way onto the international market, producing shoes exportable to the markets in the developed countries.

In the five-year Growth and Transformation Plan (2011-2015), the Government has made the footwear industry one of its focus areas, since it is one of the most labor-intensive industries, providing ample employment opportunities, a key to successful industrial development. The Government envisages earning US\$500 million annually from the leather sector by the end of the GTP. Industrial Zones have been established in Bole Lemi, and Kilinto (Addis Ababa), and the Government has plans to construct similar complexes in other cities. These zones are to provide the space and infrastructure needed for light manufacturing.

International retailers have been showing interest in opening new factories in Ethiopia or exporting footwear from Ethiopian leather factories such as Tikur Abay, Peacock, Anbessa and Ramsey. Huajian, a Chinese shoe maker, opened a factory in 2012 in Ethiopia employing over 3,000 people and currently produces shoes for Guess, Tommy Hilfiger, Naturalizer, and other Western brands at its Dukem factory. Huajian has committed to invest \$2 billion over the next ten years to create a “Shoe city”, an economic zone on 320-hectare in Lebu, Addis Ababa creating employment for 30,000 to 50,000 Ethiopians. The aim is to provide accommodation for as many as 200,000 people, as well as factory space for other footwear, handbags, accessories and components producers. Ms Helen Hai, vice-president of the Group, said that within a decade she wanted Ethiopia to be a global hub for the shoe industry, supplying the African, European and American markets. Another shoe factory established in Bole Lemi Industrial Zone, the George Shoe Corporation, is now offering its first 10,000 pairs of shoes for the international market.

One local innovative footwear manufacturer, SoleRebels, is also selling its wares globally, making great strides in creating employment and developing artisanal skills centering on eco-sensibility and community empowerment. SoleRebels’ meteoric rise from a small-scale Addis Ababa shoe shop to Africa’s fastest-growing footwear brand is a unique tale of success. Its impressive sales growth has propelled it towards global-brand recognition. The company currently sells its shoes through numerous retail outlets, including 13 stand-alone stores across five countries: Canada, Italy, Japan, Spain and Taiwan, along with a robust e-commerce operation. The company’s yearly sales have reached US\$2 million and it is expecting to generate over US\$15-20 million in revenue by 2015.

SoleRebels expanded by developing its “green by heritage” ethos, capitalizing on environmentally sustainable practices that already existed in Ethiopia, such as the recycling of car tires to make sandals, focusing on integral elements of Ethiopia’s cultural fabric which are sustainable and low impact. The commitment of SoleRebels to sustainability extends beyond its products to its workers and its entire production process, making the company the world’s first footwear brand to be fair-trade certified by the World Fair Trade Organization. Its shoes, a combination of Ethiopian heritage crafts and modern design, are exported to 55 countries and sold in more than 65 stores.

The company’s founder and owner, Ms Bethlehem Alemu, has become one of Africa’s most celebrated businesswomen, featuring on the front cover of Forbes magazine in January 2012, and being selected as a “Young Global Leader” by the World Economic Forum 2011. In June 2012, she won the award for “Most Outstanding Businesswoman” at the annual African Business Awards, organized by African Business magazine. Her success at SoleRebels can be seen as a clear sign that Ethiopia is ready to transition from over-reliance on foreign aid to being able to direct its economic future by exploiting home grown skills, resources and business opportunities. Not surprisingly, the company is held up as inspiration for Ethiopia’s newly-emerging private sector and as an impressive example of an export oriented success story.