

## A Week in the Horn of Africa 13<sup>th</sup> November 2015

### Contents :

- **The Valletta EU-Africa Summit on Migration and Mobility**
- **Eritrea: “no legitimate partner for the European Union”**
- **The UN Security Council sets up a new UN Support Office in Somalia**
- **USAID provision of nearly 100 million dollars for drought relief in Ethiopia**
- **The first Ethio-Netherlands Business and Investment Forum**
- **Further consideration of the Good Governance Study and responses**
- **UN Human Rights Council election for 2016-2018**
- **Remembrance Day Service in Addis Ababa at the Gulele War Cemetery**

### News in brief

#### **Africa and the Africa Union**

The Valletta EU-Africa Summit on Migration and Mobility was held in Valletta, Malta, this week (November 11 -12) with Heads of State and Government from Africa and EU countries attending. AU Chairperson, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, attended. She spoke on the way Africa and Europe can partner and work collaboratively to reap the benefits of labor migration as well as on way to overcome the challenges around irregular migration. She also underlined African concerns about the deaths of so many people in the Mediterranean and the need to agree on measures to prevent tragedies resulting from irregular migration and human trafficking. **(See article)**

#### **Ethiopia**

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn led an Ethiopian delegation to the EU Africa High-Level Summit on Migration and Mobility in Valletta, Malta this week. **(See article)**

In an interview broadcast on the BBC World Service, Prime Minister Hailemariam told the BBC’s Africa Editor, Mary Harper, that a “Free media is very essential for the democratic process and development.” He added, “We are ready to be criticized by any journalists because we know we are not perfect.

Queen Mathilde of Belgium visited Ethiopia this week (November 9-12) with representatives from UNICEF. She began her visit on Monday, 9 November. During her visit she saw UNICEF-supported projects in Oromia and Harar Regional States as well as in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. The focus of her visit was the Sustainable Development Goals established by the UN.

Foreign Minister Dr Tedros Adhanom met with the President of the Chinese CGCOC Group, Mr Ji Weimin, on Thursday (November 12). Dr Tedros said Ethiopia wanted to see greater Chinese involvement in the country’s industrial parks and the manufacturing sector. Mr Weimin said the CGCOC Group was interested to further deepen industrial and knowledge transfer cooperation with Ethiopia.

Foreign Minister Dr Tedros met China’s Vice Minister of Commerce, Mr Qian Keming, on Wednesday (November 11). Discussions included the further strengthening of aspects of bilateral relations and economic co-operation as well as partnership for the industrialization,

infrastructure and investment sectors. Mr Keming said the partnership between the two countries provided a convenient environment for investment, trade and business. China, he said, was ready to provide assistance to help respond to the drought.

Industry State Minister Tadesse Haile said this week that studies have been finalized to enable the launch of four more parks in the eastern town of Dire Dawa, in Kombolcha and Mekelle in the northern part of the country and at Adama to the south of Addis Ababa. Another 270-hectare park site is at Awassa, some 300 kilometers south of Addis Ababa, is due to be completed within three months. The parks will help Ethiopia become a leader for light manufacturing in Africa.

The ninth meeting of the technical committee of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam ended in Cairo Sunday with an agreement to hold another meeting for ministers of water resources and foreign affairs in Cairo on November 21-23 in Khartoum. Representatives of the two consultancy firms that are carrying out the technical studies will also participate.

The State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie met a delegation from the Republic of Fiji on Thursday (November 12) which was on a visit to Ethiopia to discuss the possibilities of establishing bilateral diplomatic relations and the opening of a mission in Ethiopia.

The first Ethio-Netherlands Business and Investment Forum was held in the Netherlands on Thursday and Friday last week (November 5-6) under the title of “A Growing Investment Opportunity” (See **article**)

The United Nation’s Ethiopian Humanitarian Country Team issued a press release commending Ethiopia’s response to the impact of the El-Nino phenomenon on food security in affected areas Tuesday (November 10). It noted that the Government had already allocated more than US\$200 million to procure relief items and conduct emergency livestock and water interventions in affected areas.

The Ethiopian Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Committee said on Wednesday that the Government was distributing rations of wheat and oil, 15 kilos of wheat and a half liter of cooking oil per adult, to people facing hunger in the north and northeast of the country. The Committee said there was enough food available to feed those in need through December but after that more would be needed.

Ethiopia’s Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) has launched an urgent appeal for food aid to assist hundreds of thousands of refugees, particularly those from South Sudan. The ARRA’s Director-General Ayalew Awoke said on Wednesday (November 11) that the food aid in stock will be totally consumed by the end of December.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) announced on Wednesday (November 11) that it was providing a further US\$97 million in additional food assistance to assist vulnerable populations in Ethiopia, including those severely affected by the impacts of the El Niño weather phenomenon. (See **article**)

Addis Ababa University and Sweden’s Skövde University, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Monday (November 9) to promote cooperation to develop

collaboration in promotion of educational opportunities and doctoral level education in the bioscience, business, health, engineering and information thematic areas.

On Sunday (November 8), at 11.0 am, a trumpeter of the Ethiopian National Defense Force, sounded the Last Post at the Gulele War Cemetery in Addis Ababa. Ambassadors of countries accredited to Ethiopia, and others present, observed the Two Minute Silence in remembrance of all those who have died in war, before the laying of wreaths. **(See article)**

### **Djibouti**

The Chief of Staff of the People's Liberation Army of China, General Fang Fenghui visited the Chinese warship Sanya while it was replenishing supplies in Djibouti, said China's Defense Ministry on Sunday (November 8). General Fang, who was accompanied by the deputy head of the air force, Zhang Jianping, praised the performance of Chinese service personnel involved in the anti-piracy operations off-shore Somalia.

### **Eritrea**

The Food and Agriculture Organization warned on Wednesday (November 11) that unusually heavy and widespread rains in northwest Africa, the Horn of Africa and Yemen could encourage Desert Locust breeding. If the rains continue, FAO said there would be sufficient time for two locust generations to breed in the coastal areas of Sudan, northern Eritrea, southeast Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Yemen this year.

### **Kenya**

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta and Somalia Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke held talks in Nairobi on Saturday (November 7) to discuss bilateral relations. They agreed on the need to fully operationalize the Kenya/Somalia Joint Commission for Cooperation which is intended to develop cross-border security and joint infrastructure development projects as well as cultural exchanges.

### **Somalia**

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud arrived in Riyadh to attend the fourth Arab-South American Summit on Tuesday (November 10). The Summit discussed ways to enhance cooperation in politics, security, and development. Earlier, he visited Djibouti and Uganda, where he met President Ismail Omar Gelleh and President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni for discussions on security, anti-terrorism and co-operation.

The UN Security Council on Monday (November 9) adopted a resolution setting up a UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS), to replace the UN Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA). The UNSOS will provide support for UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and the Somali National Army in addition to UNSOA's previous principal client AMISOM. **(See article)**

The UN Security Council has passed a resolution authorizing regional states to establish jurisdiction in trying pirates caught off the Somali coast. This means Kenya, the Seychelles and other neighbors of Somalia should find ways to prosecute pirates, even if suspects are arrested in Somali waters. The decision calls for special courts or joint regional tribunals to handle Somali piracy cases.

The US State Department announced a US \$27 million bounty for six Al-Shabaab terrorists in Somalia on Tuesday (November 10). The bounty on leader Abu Ubaidah who took over in

September last year is US\$6 million; Mahad Ali, Ma'alim Daud and Hassan Afgooye US\$5 million each; and Maalim Salman and Ahmed Ali, a Kenyan and former chairman of a Muslim Youth Centre in Nairobi, US\$3 million each.

The convoy of the President of the South West Somalia State, Shariif Hassan, travelling between Afgoye and Mogadishu, was twice attacked on Wednesday (November 11), once by an explosive-filled vehicle and then by a landmine attack.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs at the weekend up to 90,000 people have been affected by flooding and 42,000 people have been displaced as a result of the El Nino phenomenon.

### **South Sudan**

The Government of South Sudan has stressed the importance of implementing the IGAD–Mediation Peace Process in order to address the numerous economic challenges the country has been facing following the conflict which erupted in December 2013. A recent UN report has revealed that half of the country's population now needs food assistance and some areas are on the brink of famine.

President Salva Kiir has issued an executive order placing all officers and former militia fighters under the overall command of the Chief Administrator of the Greater Pibor Administrative Area, David Yau Yau, who has now been appointed Lieutenant General in the Sudan People's Liberation Army.

The leadership of the armed opposition, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement–in–Opposition (SPLM–IO) is selecting officials to make up its advance team to go to Juba, as the first stage in the implementation of the peace agreement signed in August. It is planning to send up to 500 people to Juba and other places to inform people about the peace agreement. They will also prepare for the return of Riek Machar to form a coalition government with President Kiir.

### **Sudan**

President Omer Hassan al-Bashir arrived in Riyadh on Tuesday (November 10) to participate in the South American-Arab Summit which opened with a keynote address from King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz, the Custodian of the two Holy Mosques. This is the fourth triennial Arab-South American Summit bringing together top officials from the Arab League's 22 member states and the 12 countries from South America. Previous meetings were held in Brazil (in 2005), Qatar, and Peru.

President Omer Hassan al-Bashir will travel to Juba next Sunday to join in the signing ceremony of the security agreement between the warring factions in South Sudan. The occasion will also mark the launching of the transitional period provided for under the Addis Ababa peace agreement.

The African Union says talks on security arrangements between the Sudanese government and the rebel groups in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states and Darfur region will be held November 18-19. Discussions on cessation of hostilities in Darfur, and the Two Areas will be held separately at the same time.

The Sudan and South Sudan Joint Political and Security Committee will meet at the beginning of next week in Addis Ababa. The delegations will be led by the respective

Ministers of Defense and will be discussing implementation of recommendations of their last meeting in September and of agreement to operationalize the demilitarized zone.

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### **The Valletta EU-Africa Summit on Migration and Mobility**

The EU-Africa High-Level Summit on Migration and Mobility took place in Valletta, Malta, this week (November 11-12) with Heads of State and Government from Africa and EU countries attending. The expressed major aim of the conference was to build on the existing partnership processes between Europe and Africa concerning the dialogue on migration and mobility and to produce solutions for the mutual benefit of Europe, and of Africa, in response to the recent surge in migration into Europe. The conference considered five specific areas related to “the push and pull factors” of the current European concerns of migration and mobility and the protection of migrants and refugees. Those included the creation of a cooperation agreement between the EU and Africa for a common solution, particularly to improve the promotion and organization of legal migration channels; helping to create peace, stability and economic development by addressing the root causes in countries of origin; enhancing the protection of migrants and asylum seekers, particularly vulnerable groups; increasing mechanisms to tackle exploitation and trafficking of migrants; and working more closely to improve cooperation on readmission and return. Overall, the Summit aimed to put in place agreements on an Action Plan and produce a joint final declaration to address the mutual challenges faced by Europe and Africa over migration and mobility.

One of the most controversial aspects of the discussions was the EU’s desire for African states to agree to take back failed asylum seekers, economic migrants and other migrants with no legal right to stay in Europe. The EU President, Donald Tusk, in an opening speech, said it was “essential” to make progress on the issue, even if this meant forced deportations, to allow the EU bloc to “keep the doors open” for genuine refugees and legal migrants. The President of Senegal, Macky Sall, however pointed out that it was difficult to take such a tough approach towards people “who have often braved death, crossing the desert and the Mediterranean, in really horrendous circumstances.” Many of those arriving in Europe were also fleeing repression, even if they were not always able to prove this to the satisfaction of European immigration officers. French President Francois Hollande for example, said that "maximal" political and diplomatic pressure should be applied to the "unscrupulous leaders" of Eritrea, whose citizens have been fleeing in droves for years to Europe. He said Eritrea was becoming empty of its own population. President Hollande said that Europe's dealings with Eritrea required "a job to be done which is political, and which needs a strict and demanding diplomacy."

A high-level Ethiopian delegation, headed by Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn, also participated in the Summit. The Prime Minister told the Summit that the Government of Ethiopia was working to address issues of migration and was making serious efforts to prevent migration by creating jobs for unemployed youth as well as undertaking a considerable number of development programs. He pointed out that the government’s efforts to provide a lasting solution to the challenge of migration included designing a whole series of poverty alleviation policies and the creation of millions of jobs during the last [5-year] Growth and Transformation Plan. He said the Government has created favorable conditions for millions of youths and women to engage in various business sectors, offering support to thousands of Small and Micro Enterprises.

Prime Minister Hailemariam also detailed Ethiopia's specific efforts to prevent illegal migration. Stressing the benefits of legal migration, he said migration that occurs legally and without risk of human rights' abuse provided many opportunities for people. Ethiopia, he said, was working with neighboring countries and the European Union to provide a framework for this. He emphasized Ethiopia's measures to minimize and control migration and mobility as well as maximize the benefits of legal procedures. He said Ethiopia was continuing to work on strengthening legal and administrative measures against human trafficking. It was working closely with continental and global development partners. He expressed his belief that the Malta summit would cement cooperation between Africa and the European Union on the issues of migration and mobility and in treatment of refugees.

Getachew Reda, Head of the Government Communication Affairs' Office with the rank of Minister, said that Ethiopia had made significant contributions to prevent human trafficking and this was reflected at the Malta summit. He mentioned Ethiopia's close partnership with the European Union to address the issue in the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia has taken a firm stand to work with the EU since many people from East African countries were using Ethiopia as a means to migrate illegally to Europe. He welcomed the launching of the EU's trust fund to be utilized to carry out development activities in countries of origin to help to address the root causes of migration.

The EU has, for a long time, been running a broad dialogue with African countries on the subject of migration and mobility at bilateral, regional and continental level, on the basis of its 'Global Approach to Migration and Mobility'. The EU-Africa partnership, in this respect, is based on the key political declaration on migration and mobility which was endorsed by the Heads of State and Government at the EU-Africa Summit in April 2014. At a regional level the EU is working together with African partners using policy dialogues worked out in the Rabat Process for West Africa, and the Khartoum Process for north east Africa. In addition to these there is the Sahel Regional Action Plan, adopted in April this year, providing an overall framework for the implementation of the EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel; and the EU Horn of Africa Regional Action Plan adopted on October 26. This is aimed at implementing the existing EU Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa set out in 2011, taking into account the new challenges which have become more critical over the last few years, including the broader geopolitical framework, flows of migration and refugees and the expansion of violent radicalization. Under the Horn of Africa Action Plan, EU interventions are intended "to resolve and prevent conflict, foster lasting security, stability, development and good governance based on the democratic principles of inclusion, rule of law and respect for human rights." Bilateral level discussions have also been held with key countries, among them Ethiopia, Morocco, Tunisia and Nigeria.

These processes were emphasized at the Valletta Summit by the expected announcement of the creation of a €1.8 billion trust fund for African countries on Thursday (November 11). This has become the central element in the effort to restrain mass migration to Europe. It is hoped that the amount available will increase: Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, said, "For the Africa Trust Fund and our response to be credible, I want to see more member states contributing and matching the €1.8 billion (US\$1.9 billion) that the EU has put forward." The Prime Minister of Malta, Joseph Muscat, said that the EU wanted a "more for more approach", more aid in return for states getting "their act together." He said African countries should "make sure they are not aiding in a complacent manner" migrant smugglers and traffickers. The EU has repeatedly emphasized that while encouraging

and supporting voluntary returns to home countries remains the preferred option where possible, the EU is also prepared to mobilize all relevant efforts to “incentivize” partners to cooperate on readmission. German Chancellor Angela Merkel stressed that Europe wanted “amiable relations with Africa” allowing for the formulation of clear demands and expectations in return for aid. African leaders made it clear they expected easier and safer methods of entry into the EU for certain categories of migrants. The issue of return was also a subject of detailed discussion. According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, nearly 800,000 people, including both refugees and migrants, have arrived in Europe by sea so far in 2015, and some 3,440 have died or gone missing en route.

The EU Council President, Donald Tusk, said that the summit had agreed a long list of very concrete actions to be implemented by the end of 2016, including the setting up a joint European and African team in Niger to tackle people smuggling and increasing the number of visas available to students and researchers. He said: "We are under no illusions that we can improve the situation overnight but we are committed to giving people alternatives to risking their lives." The Trust Fund is intended to “**foster stability and contribute to better migration management**”, it is also aimed at “**promoting economic... opportunities, security and development**” in the 23 African countries named as potential beneficiaries. These include both Eritrea and Libya. The fund will cover economic programs to create jobs, support services like health and education, improve migration management in order to contain and prevent irregular migration, and support conflict prevention. The fund is also supposed to be boosted by contributions from individual member states though little has yet been pledged.

During the Summit, **the EU and Ethiopia have signed a joint Declaration for a Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility (CAMM)**. European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said: “**Ethiopia is the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa, accommodating over 733,000 refugees. Its Government needs and deserves EU support. Ethiopia is also a country of origin and transit for irregular migration to Europe. We need to work together to better manage these flows in full respect of human rights.**” The agreement reflected the importance of Ethiopia as a key country of origin, transit and destination of irregular migrants and refugees from the Horn of Africa on the route to Europe. The EU signed five other joint declarations with partner countries: Cape Verde, Morocco, Tunisia (on Mobility Partnerships) and Nigeria (on a Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility).

### **Eritrea: “no legitimate partner for the European Union”**

As the EU leaders met in Valletta to consider the issue of migration and ways to slow down and limit the numbers of refugees and migrants arriving in Europe, one of the key areas of discussion was Eritrea. Eritrea is the main driver of refugees from the Horn of Africa, indeed one of the main sources of refugees and migrants, after Syria and Afghanistan. It is easily the largest source of illegal refugees from Africa by a long way, responsible for 10% of the total. Somalia, by comparison, is the source of 3.7%; Sudan 2.1%. As a recent comment on the refugee flows points out, the per capita figure is even more striking – if one takes the Eritrea population as 5.1 million, out of every 100,000 Eritreans, 340 fled to the EU in the second quarter of 2015. The comparative figure for Sudan (with a population of 39 million) is 9. In fact, the figure for Eritrea may be rather higher as the Eritrean population was given as less than 3 million by an Eritrean minister a couple of months ago.

This exodus as Martin Plaut, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, notes in an article this week (“Eritrea: no legitimate partner for the European Union”), comes from a country that is “at least on the surface, at peace and is currently not suffering from a natural disaster.” So why the exodus from Eritrea and not from other countries far more seriously affected by conflict and war, or currently, by drought in the region? “The only logical conclusion is that there is something particularly noxious about the Eritrean regime that is driving so many of its citizens to take this difficult and frequently fatal step. The Eritrean situation is not just bad; it is uniquely bad.”

The Eritrean government certainly says it wishes to halt this flow of refugees. It claims to be co-operating with the EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative launched in November 2014 in Khartoum. Eritrea’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Osman Saleh, told the meeting that Eritrea valued its relationship with the European Union and was determined to work with the EU to tackle irregular migration and human trafficking and to address the root causes. Since then the Eritrean regime has taken no steps to end the causes of migration and flight, driven as they are by human rights abuse.

The UN Security Council has concluded that the Eritrean regime remains a serious threat to peace in the Horn of Africa and the region as a whole. In June, the Council re-affirmed its arms embargo against the Eritrean government because of its concern over “ongoing Eritrean support for certain regional armed groups.” This followed the “catalogue of evidence carefully assembled by experts from the UN Monitoring Group”, suggesting that Eritrea was now participating in the Yemeni civil war in return for Saudi and UAE financial support, and the UAE was said to have struck a separate deal to use the Eritrean port of Assab for the next 30 years. Mr Plaut suggests: “It is not hard to imagine what Eritrea might do with the funds from its new Arab allies, since the regime has been keen to purchase weapons.

Equally, serious as these violations are, of far greater concern are the graphic details provided of the regime’s support for rebel movements in Ethiopia and Djibouti. These operations, coordinated by the head of Eritrean intelligence, Brigadier General Abraha Kassa, “a long-time associate of the President”, include a newly formed front of Ethiopian rebel organizations, whose unity was “facilitated” by the Eritrean government, as well as support to Afar rebels in Djibouti. These are exactly the kind of operations the Security Council has repeatedly demanded that Eritrea brings to an end. The Monitoring Group has noted the “lack of financial transparency” in Eritrea and it expressed its concern over reports that the European Union was considering increasing aid to Eritrea. There was, it indicated, every possibility that such funds would be used to fund rebellions across the region and it called for “due diligence, monitoring and full oversight of the dispersal of large amounts of aid to Eritrea.” It concluded that senior officials within the Government and the ruling Peoples’ Front for Democracy and Justice, continue to exert full economic control over revenue through a clandestine network of State-owned companies.

The way Eritrea has responded to previous EU initiatives and its repeated efforts to build a relationship with the Eritrean government has made it impossible to make progress. In 2001 senior government officials (the G15) and journalists (including Dawit Isaak, a Swedish-Eritrean journalist, for whose release the EU has repeatedly called) were arrested and disappeared. The Italian Ambassador to Eritrea, Antonio Bandini, presented a letter of protest and was promptly expelled. Other European ambassadors were withdrawn in response. In theory, their return was supposed to be conditional on evidence of “the willingness of President Isaias to engage on a human rights dialogue.” Despite the lack of evidence of this,

EU ambassadors did return to Eritrea, if in a “non-coordinated way.” Most aid agencies were forced to leave Eritrea after a law was passed in 2005 to control their activities. This required them to pay taxes on all goods imported into the country and prohibited international agencies from engaging in development.

Despite these setbacks the EU has remained determined to try to improve its relationship with Eritrea, even though privately EU governments described Eritrea as governed by a brutal dictator (Italy), that engagement is useless (France), that it was supporting anti-Western groups that threatened security (UK). Despite these views, and US concerns about Eritrean activity, the EU had continued on its course. In May 2007, President Isaias visited Brussels and was warmly welcomed by the Development Commissioner, Louis Michel. This was seen as part of a change in strategy by the European Commission and the initiation of a process of political re-engagement with Eritrea. The Commission did say that “political re-engagement” needed concrete evidence of cooperation and suggested the release of Dawit Isaak might be one such item. Mr Michel re-opened talks with Eritrea and visited Asmara, after receiving assurances that Dawit Isaak would be released. His visit was a fiasco. Far from Dawit being released, Mr Michel was not even allowed to see him.

In 2011, the EU Commission drew up a “Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa” which laid down involvement for the region on the basis of five pillars: development partnership, political dialogue, response and management of crises and trade relationship. These, it said, should be encouraged on the basis of “the development of democratic processes and institutions, promoting respect for constitutional norms, the rule of law, human rights, and gender equality, security sector reform and the establishment of civilian oversight bodies, and implementing the EU human rights policy.” It also referred to involving the Horn Diaspora in Europe in carrying these out; and decided to provide aid to Eritrea worth €122 million between 2009 and 2013.

In fact, since 2011, the situation in Eritrea has only continued to deteriorate, or, indeed “gone from bad to worse”, driving Eritreans into exile in record numbers. The EU has continued to raise the issue of human rights under Article 8 dialogue, “there has been no progress on the release of political prisoners, the implementation of the Constitution or on freedom of expression. The country remains a one-party state, locked into permanent repression.” Indeed, as the United Nations Human Rights Council’s Commission of Inquiry into Human Rights in Eritrea said in its report earlier this year: “The Government of Eritrea is responsible for systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations that have created a climate of fear in which dissent is stifled, a large proportion of the population is subjected to forced labor and imprisonment, and hundreds of thousands of refugees have fled the country. Some of these violations may constitute crimes against humanity.”

The record of the persistent efforts of the EU to build a relationship with the regime in Asmara is clear. There is no evidence that President Isaias and his government has ever had any intention of moving away from current policies. It would be “a grave error to believe the vague promises of powerless ministers and diplomats.” Past promises of reform, made by Eritrean diplomats, carry no weight. The experiences of the EU in 2001 and 2009 make it very clear that any softening of pressure is seen by President Isaias as a sign of weakness. He believed, and still believes, that if the Government remains obdurate, European politicians and civil servants will, in time, give in to its demands. Promises of aid and international assistance have had no result whatever. Engaging with Eritrea without visible, concrete

changes in the regime's policies and practices, means abandoning the EU human rights agenda, an integral part of EU development policy.

The EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative, the Khartoum process, attempting to provide economic support in order to stem migration, has no relevance for Eritrea. The root cause of the Eritrean refugee crisis is "the absence of the rule of law and the repression of its citizens." These are the underlying causes of the flow of refugees from Eritrea, and that is what must be addressed to resolve the issue. Nothing else will work. As the European MP, Baroness Kinnock, said recently: "The regime in Eritrea is, in short, a secretive, reclusive, authoritarian tyranny which is ruthlessly controlled by President Afewerki."

In conclusion, therefore, Martin Plaut emphasizes that the Eritrean government "cannot be regarded as a suitable partner for the EU: its repression is worse than almost any other in Africa, its word cannot be trusted and any concessions will be regarded as signs of weakness." Any proposals for co-operation between the EU and international security forces and their Eritrean counterparts must be resisted. He points out that there is every likelihood that aid would be diverted into the Eritrea's military, thereby threatening further destabilization in the region. Indeed, given the lack of transparency of Eritrean finances, the EU would be in no position to prevent diversion. In these circumstances, Eritrea cannot be regarded as a suitable or legitimate partner for the EU or in implementation of the conclusions for Africa-EU summit in Valletta.

### **The UN Security Council sets up a new UN Support Office in Somalia**

The UN Security Council held a Ministerial-level meeting chaired by the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Philip Hammond, on Monday (November 9). The UK holds this month's presidency of the Security Council. The Council approved the replacement of the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission to Somalia (UNSOA) by the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS). UNSOS will provide support to the African Union Mission (AMISOM) and the UN Assistance Mission, as well as to the Somali National Army, on joint operations with AMISOM. This emphasizes the role and impact of a responsive, effective and field support platform as a "strategic enabler in Somalia," and underlines the role of the new entity to close gaps in the UN's previous ability to deliver and to "consolidate and prioritize its efforts in line with the [Council's] strategic objectives in the country." The council will review UNSOS' mandate and renew or revise it by May 30, 2016.

AMISOM welcomed the change. The Officer in Charge (OIC) of AMISOM, representing the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia, Major General Fidza Dlodlu, said in a press statement that AMISOM looked forward "to an enhanced utilization of resources coupled with added abilities, which will further help AMISOM achieve its objectives, in line with the Mandate, by degrading the enemy further and ensuring that peace and security is ultimately restored in Somalia." UNSOS will now support the 22,126 personnel of AMISOM as well as 10,900 of the Somali National Army personnel participating in joint operations with AMISOM.

In a message to the meeting, the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, welcomed the meeting and commended the successful collaboration of the UN and the African Union, praising the efforts and achievements of UNSOA. He said the stakes remained high in Somalia: "The international community must stand strong with Somalia. Next year can be

momentous. A peaceful, constitutional transition of power would mark an extraordinary milestone on Somalia's path to democracy. The new National Consultative Forum is responsible for agreeing on the modalities for the process. I urge the federal Government to actively engage as many people as possible, including women, youth and minorities."

The Secretary-General urged Somali leaders to complete the process of consolidating its federal system by the end of 2016 and called on them to achieve genuine, inclusive reconciliation in all regions. He said progress on the provisional Constitution in the next few months was essential and welcomed the commitment of Somali leaders "to re-energize the delayed review".

The Secretary-General said the UN would not waver in its commitment to this mission and he called on all partners "to ensure that our military and political strategies are fully aligned", adding that "we must also redouble our efforts to strengthen Somali security forces so they can secure the country for the long term. He stressed that military operations alone would not defeat Al Shabaab and he therefore called for the Security Council "to support a comprehensive approach that addressed the Al Shabaab threat by offering Somalis a better alternative." That, he said, required greater investment in community security, human rights, justice and economic opportunity, especially for youths. In other words, the best way to weaken the pull of extremism was to strengthen people's chances for a better future. So he urged the international community to increase its contributions to the New Deal Somalia Compact before the next review process in Istanbul in February.

The Secretary-General said guaranteeing basic human rights was essential to offering a credible alternative to extremism. He therefore commended the Somali Government for actively participating in the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review. He said it was possible to build on the tangible success of the UN-AU partnership and the achievements of the UN Support Office for AMISOM and strengthen UN-AU collaboration.

He also referred to the fact that some 3.2 million people in Somalia currently needed assistance to survive, most internally displaced, living under the constant threat of forced evictions and abuse. He said "This dire situation is growing worse. We are expecting dangerous flooding and drought", but the Humanitarian Response Plan was only 36 per cent funded, so "we cannot carry out our life-saving programs." Donors, he said, could make the difference between life and death, and that would help move Somalia towards greater stability and peace. He concluded by urging the Security Council to give active support to achieve political progress, boost security, promote human rights and relieve suffering. This was the path to defeat the threat of terrorism and realize the vision of Somalis for a united federal country that serves all of its people.

The UN Somalia Envoy, Nicholas Kay, told the Council that Somalia had transformed itself from a "failed to recovering state" in recent years, but any cutbacks in support for it could spark a new exodus of refugees. He admitted Somalia had to compete for attention and resources in an ever more troubled world, but stressed that "scaling back now will crush the hopes of millions of Somalis, endanger peace and security in the Horn of Africa and East Africa, bolster violent extremism globally and risk a renewed exodus of refugees." "Reducing effort", he said, "should not be an option." Mr Kay said that the overall situation in Somalia had improved considerably in recent years, while cautioning there was "still a long way to go." He hoped a nationwide election planned for next year would be held "on time and be more inclusive than in 2012."

Somalia's Prime Minister Omar Sharmarke told the Security Council Ministerial Meeting that its support was needed more than ever before "to stand with Somalia against this terror network" of Al-Shabaab and he stressed that putting an end to the conflict in Yemen was "crucial" to prevent some Al-Shabaab members from exploiting their recent shift of allegiance to the Islamic State extremists. Last month, the UN envoy for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, said extremist groups including the Islamic State were taking advantage of the conflict in Yemen and becoming a serious threat. Sharmarke said resolving the crisis in Yemen would go a long way to keeping Al-Shabaab from acquiring support from the Islamic State or using Yemen "as a conduit or launching pad.

### **USAID provision of nearly 100 million dollars for drought relief in Ethiopia**

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) announced on Wednesday (November 11) that it was providing a further US\$97 million in additional food assistance to assist vulnerable populations in Ethiopia, including those severely affected by the impacts of the El Niño weather phenomenon. In a press release, USAID said its Office of Food for Peace would be providing more than 154,000 tons of emergency food assistance to address food needs for approximately 3.5 million Ethiopians as well as refugees from Somalia, South Sudan and Eritrea who have fled from conflict in their own countries. USAID said it was contributing US\$58 million to its partner Catholic Relief Services for 105,700 tons of U.S. food; providing US\$19 million to the UN World Food Program for drought relief operations; and US\$20 million for refugee assistance.

The statement said the United States had also pre-positioned relief commodities in Ethiopia to meet anticipated increased needs arising from the impact of the El Niño phenomenon. It stressed that USAID food assistance contributions were being made early and in this quantity thanks to the early warning and careful tracking of the progression of El Niño in the Horn of Africa. The statement noted that the El Niño had significantly impacted weather patterns in Ethiopia this year, limiting agricultural production, affecting livelihoods and exacerbating food insecurity among poor and vulnerable households. The projected level of need for emergency aid in Ethiopia has grown from 2.9 million people in early 2015 to 4.5 million people in August and to 8.2 million people by mid-October. As the El Niño continues into 2016, Ethiopia is likely to experience continued drought and the possibility of intense flooding in some areas.

This would continue to affect food security, the press release said. However, Dina Esposito, Director of USAID's Office of Food for Peace said: "Improved early warning, the establishment of the Productive Safety Net Program, as well as the serious engagement by the Government of Ethiopia to analyze and respond to the ongoing El Niño crisis means that we are not likely to see the kind of famine conditions witnessed in Ethiopia in earlier decades." She said this was "the good news part of the story, [but] it is not cause for complacency. Given that we are witnessing the driest conditions ever recorded in parts of Ethiopia, we know the magnitude of the need will require far more robust support globally than what has currently been pledged." Ms Esposito said that with these early contributions USAID aimed to demonstrate the United States' deep concern over rapidly expanding relief requirements and also to send a signal to other donors of the need to respond generously as well. Since mid 2015, USAID has provided nearly \$246 million in food and nutrition assistance in Ethiopia, she underscored.

Since 2005 USAID and other donors have supported the Government's highly successful Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP). With the help of the United Nations and various nongovernmental organizations, the PSNP has addressed the basic food needs of approximately 8 million food insecure people by providing each year some 4-6 months of timely and predictable transfers of food and cash resources to very poor households. These households have engaged in public work projects. These have provided improved natural resource management, the provision of nutrition and health education as well as the establishment of savings groups. The effect has been to build up the resilience of these communities and help many poor households withstand the worse impact of the drought.

### **The first Ethio-Netherlands Business and Investment Forum**

The Netherlands opened a Legation in Addis Ababa in 1951 and expanded this to a fully functioning embassy in 1960. Since then, the two countries have experienced steadily growing diplomatic and economic relations. Equally, both have believed that they could further strengthen their cooperation in an orderly, scientific and organized way to effectively gain mutual benefit. One result of this has been the first Ethio-Netherlands Business Forum which was held in Rijswijk in the Netherlands on Thursday and Friday last week (November 5-6) The Business and Investment Forum held under the title of "A Growing Investment Opportunity" was attended by a fifty-strong delegation of government officials and private sector representatives, led by Ahmed Shide, State Minister of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation of Ethiopia.

The principal objective of the event was to inform the Dutch private sector about the business and investment opportunities in Ethiopia. Taking the priorities of the Ethiopian government into consideration as well as the Dutch Development Cooperation Program and Dutch expertise, the event concentrated on seven sectors: textiles, logistics and construction, oilseeds, seeds, dairy production, poultry and spices. The Netherlands-African Business Council (NABC) carefully prepared reports in each of these seven sub-sectors under the heading of "Business Opportunity Reports." These were identified as important inputs for the first Ethio-Netherlands Business and Investment Forum as the Ambassador of the Netherlands to Ethiopia, Ambassador Lidi Remmelzwaal, explained in her forward to the Reports. The event, according to Ambassador Teshome Toga, Ambassador of Ethiopia to the BENELUX, Baltic Countries and Permanent Representative to the European Union, was largely a result of the second round of political consultations which took place at the Hague in March this year. One of the main items on the agenda in those discussions revolved around the need to further stimulate economic relations by maintaining and diversifying the foreign direct investment and trade between the two countries.

The first day of the Ethio-Netherlands Business and Investment Forum was marked by a series of bilateral events between the participants, including a general plenary session, sectoral workshops, business networking and a meeting with the Dutch Flying Swans Consortium. The main bilateral meeting was between Ahmed Shide, Ethiopia's State Minister for Finance and Economic Cooperation and Christiaan Rebergen, Vice Minister and Director General for the Netherlands' Ministry of International Cooperation. Ethiopia's double digit growth has been providing the basis for advancing towards the aim of achieving lower-middle income status by 2025, and a central element in this has been the pro-poor policy of Agriculture-led Industrialization. This also involves the effort to involve countries like the Netherlands, a key part of the development effort.

During the discussions, Ato Ahmed, who recalled that there were a significant number of Dutch companies working in Ethiopia, also mentioned that opportunities available in the country were by no means fully exploited. The State Minister said the Government of Ethiopia had a strong desire and commitment to stimulate Dutch private sector investment in Ethiopia. The discussion highlighted the trade opportunities between Ethiopia and the Netherlands and what the two countries could do to put the already strong relations between them on a higher level. The Dutch side confirmed that the Netherlands included Ethiopia in almost all financial instruments available to encourage the private sector to invest in developing countries. This was underlined by the remarkable record of the Netherlands, with more than 212 Dutch companies having secured investment licenses so far. Out of these, 118 are operational, 44 are on an implementation level, and 50 are in a pre-implementation stage.

State Minister Ahmed Shide, in his opening speech at the general plenary session, mentioned the Netherlands support to Ethiopia's developmental activities. This includes providing 120-million-Euros-worth of development finances on a yearly basis, as well as supporting innovative financing schemes including sponsoring consultative groups on mutually agreed areas, and embracing cancellation of a substantial amount of debt. The State Minister mentioned Ethiopia's place as the world's 6<sup>th</sup> largest producer of coffee and the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest producer of Arabica beans; the 4<sup>th</sup> largest non-EU exporter to the EU cut-flower market and the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest flower exporter from Africa. He noted that the Netherlands was the main export destination for Ethiopian flowers, accounting for 80% of the country's total flower exports.

The State Minister also explained the secret of Ethiopia as the increasingly preferred target for countries that want to invest elsewhere. It is, he said, a country with a conducive business environment, political stability, friendly and hospitable people, sound economic policies, macro-economic stability, a reliable airline with significant cargo capacity, abundant natural resources, a trainable work-force, low-cost energy, a sizeable and captive internal market, and a clean business climate. Christiaan Rebergen, Vice Minister and Director General for International Cooperation, added a reference to Ethiopia's achievements in meeting the Millennium Development Goals in the areas of primary education, health, access to clean water and other areas. He also mentioned the transformation of the country in terms of manufacturing, job creation, import substitution and export promotion. Mr Rebergen, noting that the Netherlands was the second largest investor in Ethiopia from the EU, said that the emphasis given by the Ethiopian government in the just launched second [5-year] Growth and Transformation Plan towards light agro-industrial manufacturing would help the Dutch private sector to further diversify areas of investment in Ethiopia. One example of this, for example, is in the beverage sector with the arrival of Heineken.

Later on this first day, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the two countries covering development and economic cooperation. This listed the duties and responsibilities of both countries. The MOU disclosed that the Netherlands would align its development cooperation programs in Ethiopia with and in support of the country's growth and transformation policies; and that it would promote companies that respected the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility and support the Ethiopian private sector in its efforts to do business with and in the Netherlands. Ethiopia would sign up to responsibilities for ensuring the creation of a conducive business environment for private sector Netherlands' companies active in Ethiopia by, inter alia, minimizing administrative burdens, enhancing transparency and guaranteeing predictable tax regulations. The MOU also identifies areas of

cooperation and instruments of cooperation and notes the intention to organize annual consultations between the two countries.

The sectoral workshops covered the seeds, oilseeds, poultry, dairy, spices, textiles and logistics/construction sectors. Companies involved in these areas met in the workshops to discuss aspects of potential investment and cooperation between the private sectors. Some companies working in Ethiopia, including Heineken, Solagrow PLC and Florensis, also shared their experience of doing business in the country.

On November 6, a number of visits to companies involved in the seven priority areas were made by separate groups. The companies visited included the nut-processing company, Intersnack; vegetable seeds' producer, Rijk Zwaan; and the steel profiling company, KS Profiel. All those involved congratulated the Netherlands-Africa Business Council which had so successfully organized this first Ethio-Netherlands Business and Investment Forum, together with the Ethiopian Embassy in Brussels and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Addis Ababa.

### **Further consideration of the Good Governance Study and responses**

Two weeks ago Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn chaired a top-level meeting of senior government officials to consider a study on good governance practices and failures of governance in Ethiopia. The Good Governance Study, a nationwide exploratory scientific study, was conducted by the Policy Study and Research Institute in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Service and Human Resource Development. Its aim was to assess the commitment of the country's leadership to implementing good governance and the scope of the study covered all the regional states as well as selected federal institutes. The study concentrated on assessing good practices and challenges on the basis of the factual activities of everyday practice as well as on theoretical assertions. The study also looked at the issue from all possible angles: government, civil service and the public as well as from the perspectives of stakeholder institutions.

The discussions following the presentation of the report focused on the findings of the study on how far good governance is practiced, the challenges it faced and the way forward. The Prime Minister noted that the study was intended to provide a basis for the implementation of the findings and recommendations in order to ensure the implementation of good governance and civil service reform programs for both rural and urban areas. The Government had strongly underlined its determination to resolve the challenges that have emerged in these areas.

As we noted last week, Ato Fisha Haftetsion, Senior Researcher at the Policy Study and Research Institute, and other members of the research team, presented details of the study which had two main foci: the leadership of the country and the civil service on the one hand, and the effect and reactions of the public on the other. In terms of leadership and of civil servants, the study looked at levels of commitment, attitudes to the provision of services, accountability and competence as well as the challenges and problems. With reference to the impact on the public, the study looked particularly at why people were reluctant to become participants in the efforts to build good governance.

This week we consider further discussions on the findings of the nation-wide study as well as comments, recommendations and views of the way forward.

Ato Bereket Simon from the Policy Study and Research Institute with the rank of Minister, said the researchers had attempted to address sectors and regions as well as government hierarchical structures. He felt the researchers might also have commented on a comparison of the magnitude and similarities of the challenges faced by the different regions and the sectors. He wondered if the problem was systemic and covered all regions. If so, he felt, the response should be equally widespread. One of the research team said that sector-to-sector comparisons showed there was little difference in the magnitude of the rent-seeking to be found or in the challenges to good governance. The researcher explained that the raw data provided as a baseline prior to the study showed that in every region there were one to two cities that showed up relatively better on issues of good governance. However, when it came to the actual reality on the ground, the study found that there were few significant differences between the various cities. There was a lot to be done to improve the situation everywhere. Change to provide improvement should be based upon clear criteria. With regard to rent-seeking, one of the problems was that some sectors were not taxed, and the study recommended strongly that the tax base should be widened and sectors that were not taxed should be incorporated.

Ato Sekoture, Director of the Communication and Information Administration of the Policy Study and Research Institute, focused on the provision of providing solutions to the questions and challenges put forward by the public. He noted that some traders were taxed while others were not and this meant that traders who sold commodities at lower prices could push others out of the market. Another area of concern related to good governance that should be considered was the turnover of employees in government offices. Deputy Prime Minister, Dr Debrezion emphasized that regional governments should work in close collaboration with the Federal Government. At this point, the Prime Minister mentioned that the issue at hand was whether regional administrations were being as responsive as they should be.

Ambassador Mesfin Chernet, a member of the House of People's Representatives, another of those involved in the research for the study, noted another problem not mentioned earlier. This was the matter of land administration in Oromia region and other areas. For instance in Hawassa city, the problem was highlighted by the finding of relationships between land-lease brokers and senior regional government officials. He mentioned the specific areas and kifle ketemas of Dato and Tabor in Hawassa city to support the argument. The root causes of these problems were connections made by government officials and a lack of decision-making by the authorities. On a related level, Ato Alebel Dessie, Deputy Minister at the Policy Study and Research institute, commented on the legal and law enforcement systems that were operating. He said criminals might hire more competent lawyers and win cases over innocent victims through manipulating legal procedures.

Ato Abay Tsehaye, the coordinating Minister of the Policy Study and Research Institute, stressed the relationships that were apparent between brokers and government officials seemed to be deep rooted and it would require a great deal of effort to bring them to an end or even to minimize such links. He emphasized that building trust but still creating proper checks and balances within the system must be strengthened further. This was also necessary to resolve the questions arising from relationships of government officials with various bodies. Abay Tsehaye said: "this is the proper time to question all the assumptions." He added that "little should be left to discretion and trust," underlining the importance of creating a system of accountability and transparency. He noted that reducing matters left to discretion, as much as possible, is the key to streamlining good governance in the nation.

Various other related issues identified by the research were also discussed, before the Prime Minister summarized the exchanges and discussions. He said the study has noted a range of practical challenges and concerns in a scientific, properly representative manner. He strongly felt that the recommendations suggested in the study, as well as others raised in the discussions, should be put in place. Acknowledging the research, the Prime Minister called for the leadership to seriously consider the findings of the study in light of measuring the depth and extent of the problem, and acting accordingly, and of course beyond the usual practices of lip service.

He noted that one of the particular strengths of developmental countries was the way they could easily respond to the questions related to lack of good governance that were raised by public. Among other things, he underlined two ways to address the concerns and questions. One was the critical need to use the facts gained from the study findings and ensure immediate interventions to deal with the concerns raised by the public both at the level of perceptions and in realistic terms. Unless we ensure all the necessary public mobilization to this effect, he said, and in doing so boost the expectation of the public that the problems will be solved in due course, any rhetoric on managing the ills of governance will only remain rhetorical. He also stressed that “we don’t need to reinvent” given the already designed reforms which are up to international standards. What really required is, he added, the will, commitment and conviction to fully implement the already designed reforms. It was also important for the leadership, including people at the top, to avoid all questionable affiliations and ensure that any and all connections were appropriate rather than the opposite. They should ensure that they could stand by themselves and that they were able to work effectively to encourage and implement good governance.

### **UN Human Rights Council election for 2016-2018**

The 70<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly in its 42<sup>nd</sup> ordinary session in New York on October 28 elected 18 countries, including Ethiopia, as members of the UN Human Rights Council. The countries will serve for the coming three years starting from January 1, 2016 so Ethiopia has been re-elected to the Human Rights Council for another three year term, for 2016-2018. Ethiopia’s current membership of the Council expired at the end of 2015. It will now continue its active participation in the council as the holder of one of the five seats allocated to African countries. The other African candidates elected to seats on the Human Rights Council for 2016-2018 were Togo, Cote d’Ivoire, Kenya and Burundi.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Addis Ababa of Ethiopia coordinated the efforts of the Ethiopian missions in Geneva and New York to gain support for the election, which was held under secret ballot. Ethiopia achieved the votes of 186 countries, the second highest total of the entire votes. The only country to get more was Togo with 189 votes out of 192. The total results for the African states were: Togo 189, Ethiopia 186, Cote d’Ivoire 186, Kenya 180 and Burundi 162. The results for the other countries elected to the Human Rights Council for the next session were: Slovenia 179, Georgia 177, Switzerland 176, Germany 174, Belgium 172, Mongolia 172, United Arab Emirates 159, Panama 157, Ecuador 152, Kyrgyzstan 147, South Korea 136, Venezuela 131, Bahamas 113, Philippines 113, Laos 105 and Pakistan 105.

During the last session of the Human Rights Council, Ethiopia was able to contribute a considerable amount to the work of the Council and its mechanisms through its constructive engagement with member and observer states, with civil society groups and other

stakeholders. Ethiopia worked constructively with all the human rights' mechanisms established both at regional and global levels. It contributed effectively to the process of setting standards for the human rights instruments of the African Union and the United Nations. It actively participated, as a coordinator of African Group, with the Council and its member states and others to facilitate consultations on a number of human rights issues.

This effectively confirmed Ethiopia's full implementation of the pledges it made to the Council after its own Universal Periodic Review in 2013, including the undertaking of extensive administrative, policy and legislative reforms at national level to ensure that the country's laws, policies and practices were fully consistent with international human rights standards. The Government also put in place a National Human Rights Action Plan to implement all the accepted recommendations made by the various national, regional and international human rights mechanisms, including those made by the UN Human Rights Council itself.

With its re-election to the Human Rights Council, Ethiopia now pledges to enhance its active contributions to the work of the UN Human Rights Council and its various mechanisms still further. The Government, indeed, has once again underlined its dedication and commitment to work actively in the Human Rights Council, and its intent to fully discharge its responsibility towards the promotion of human rights for all, both in Ethiopia and more generally. It was this commitment, already demonstrated during the last three years, which helped Ethiopia to obtain the necessary and welcome support for its re-election to the UN Human Rights Council by UN member states.

### **Remembrance Day Service in Addis Ababa at the Gulele War Cemetery**

Remembrance Day, originally Armistice Day and sometimes known as Poppy Day, is a memorial day observed in the Commonwealth member states since the end of the First World War, and in many other nations, to remember those of the armed forces who have died in the line of duty. "At the going down of the sun and in the morning. We will remember them." Remembrance Day is observed on 11 November in most countries to recall the end of the hostilities of World War I on that date in 1918. Hostilities formally ended "at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month", when the armistice between Germany and the Entente was signed. The First World War only officially ended, however, with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1919.

The emblem of Remembrance Day is the Red Poppy and this has become familiar around the world. It was chosen because of the red poppies which bloomed across some of the worst battlefields of World War I in Flanders, and their brilliant red color is a symbol of the blood spilled in that war and in all other conflicts. "In Flanders Fields the poppies blow between the crosses row on row."

The present commemoration of Remembrance Day is marked with special services held on the nearest Sunday to November 11 at war memorials and churches in the UK and the Commonwealth and at war cemeteries. Wreaths of poppies are laid on war memorials and a two minute silence is observed at 11am. The first Two Minute Silence in London, on November 11, 1919, was reported in the Manchester Guardian: "The first stroke of eleven produced a magical effect. The train cars glided into stillness, motors ceased to cough and fume and stopped dead, and the mighty-limbed dray-horses hunched back upon their loads and stopped also, seeming to do it of their own volition. Someone took off his hat, and with a

nervous hesitancy the rest of the men bowed their heads also. Here and there an old soldier could be detected slipping unconsciously into the posture of attention. An elderly woman, not far away, wiped her eyes and the man beside her looked white and stern. Everyone stood very still. The hush deepened. It had spread over the whole city and become so pronounced as to impress one with a sense of audibility. It was a silence which was almost pain. And the spirit of memory brooded over it all.”

On Sunday (November 8), at 11am, a trumpeter of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces, sounded the Last Post at the Gulele War Cemetery in Addis Ababa. Ambassadors of countries accredited to Ethiopia, and all those present, observed the Two Minute Silence in remembrance of all those who have died in war. The Ambassadors then laid wreaths on the memorial in the cemetery. The UK Ambassador also laid a special wreath separately to commemorate the Ethiopian Patriots who died in the struggle to restore the independence of Ethiopia after the Fascist invasion. Gulele is one of the many war cemeteries maintained around the world and the UK Ambassador, Greg Dorey, who noted the occasion also commemorated the war dead buried at Dire Dawa, Gambella and Harar, said a similar commemoration would also be held at the Cemetery in Djibouti on Wednesday, November 11.

Ambassador Dorey, in welcoming those attending the service, said that the occasion commemorated in particular those who sacrificed themselves for the independence of Ethiopia in 1941. Buried in the Gulele War Cemetery are 357 Christians, Muslims, Jews and Hindus, from several countries, united in death. 297 graves date from the Second World War”. The Ambassador said he was pleased to note that the grave markers of two Belgians who also fell in the defense of Ethiopia would soon be moved to the Gulele cemetery from their current locations. He said that “in recalling the sacrifice of those buried in this country, most of them so far from home, we link ourselves with many others around the world who are holding Remembrance Services today.”

Ambassador Dorey noted that this was the fourth and last Remembrance Service he would be taking part in at the Gulele Cemetery. He said that the tradition of what *The Times* called “The great awful silence” was a tradition which was as important today as it had always been. He said “happily, today, many of our former enemies are our closest friends and allies,” but, he went on, he hoped that people could use the occasion “to think of those who are still dying throughout Africa in man-made conflicts, and to remember all those who are struggling to bring peace to the continent and “Silence the Guns” by 2020.”