

A Week in the Horn

15th July 2016

News in Brief:

- Africa and the African Union
- Ethiopia
- Djibouti
- Eritrea
- Kenya
- Somalia
- South Sudan
- Sudan

Articles (from page 4):

- Ethiopia's National Tourism Brand: From 13 Months of Sunshine to Land of Origins
- The 40th Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee meeting held in Istanbul
- International shock and dismay over South Sudan's renewed fighting
- US Trafficking in Persons Report 2016 gives devastating criticism of Eritrea
- ...while Ethiopia is making "significant efforts" to eliminate trafficking
- Ethiopia's election to the United Nations Security Council
- An AU pre-election assessment team in Mogadishu
- Guiyang Eco-Forum Conference: Ethiopia's Green Economy Path

News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

The 29th Ordinary Session of the [African Union] Executive Council kicked off this week on Wednesday (July 13) at the Kigali Convention Centre (KCC), Rwanda. The official opening of the Council sturdily denounced the conflict in South Sudan.

A delegation from the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa arrived in Mogadishu on Monday (July 11) on a pre-election assessment mission, ahead of the elections, scheduled for August and September. The four-member delegation was there to look at election preparedness and identify areas for further support. (See article)

IGAD, with support from UNOCHA and the UNDP, held a health ministerial level meeting to discuss Regional Preparedness and Response for Outbreaks and Epidemics on Wednesday (July 13) in Nairobi. Discussions covered immediate, mid-term and long-term measures to prevent the spread of cholera in the Mandera triangle, in the border areas of Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia and to develop a contingency plan with specific strategies to respond, prevent and control any further outbreaks as well as strengthen the overall integrated outbreak surveillance and response system in the IGAD region.

Ethiopia

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn proclaimed the official launch of the new national tourism brand - **Ethiopia: Land of Origins** - on Thursday (July 14) at the 3rd General Assembly of the Ethiopian Tourism Transformation Council. (See article)

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn on Wednesday (July 13) inaugurated the Hawassa industrial park, an eco-friendly park, which has already started to court 15 leading global apparel and textile companies.

Ethiopia's Prime Minister and IGAD Chairperson, Hailemariam Dessalegn on Sunday (July 10) warned that both the Government and the opposition in South Sudan were "duty bound to exercise restraint and avoid any measures that are likely to escalate the situation." Any extension of the current crisis, and a return to open conflict, he said, "could result in a return to the previous widespread violence against civilians."

The World Heritage Committee at the 40th Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee meeting, held in Istanbul, Turkey from July 10 to July 20 unanimously concluded that Ethiopia's Kuraz Sugar Development Project neither endangered the Lower Omo Valley World Heritage Site nor compromised any environmental issues. This was reiterated in the presence of a high-level Ethiopian delegation led by State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Taye Atseke-Selassie. (See article)

Ethiopia's Minister of Finance and Economic Cooperation, Abdulaziz Mohammed met with [Finance Minister] Badr-Eddin Mahmoud in Khartoum on Wednesday (July 13, 2016) where the two sides reiterated the importance of expanding economic cooperation.

Ethiopia participated in the "Eco-Forum Global Annual Conference 2016" held in the city of Guiyang, in Guizhou Province of China, last weekend (July 8 - 10.) The conference, under the theme "Embracing New Era of Eco-Civilization: Advancing Green Development, Unifying Knowledge and Action", attracted over a thousand delegates from 72 countries, and Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin headed Ethiopia's delegation. (See article)

The US State Department's 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report classifies Ethiopia as a Tier 2 country and says it was "making significant efforts" to fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. The report noted the **comprehensive anti-trafficking law** passed last year and the **revised overseas employment proclamation** improving oversight of overseas recruitment agencies and extending greater protections to potential victims. (See article)

The Metal and Engineering Corporation (METEC) signed a **Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Somalia** on Saturday (July 9) to build up Somalia's industrial capacity. The agreement covers job creation and poverty reduction as well as constructing manufacturing sites, rehabilitating industrial places and building up human capacity.

Djibouti

Djibouti has approved a \$75 million financing agreement with the Saudi Arabia-based Islamic Development Bank to help Djibouti to buy refined petroleum products. Energy Minister Yacin Houssein Bouh said the deal would allow Djibouti to reduce fuel prices and ensure a regular supply of petroleum products for vehicles, power plants and fuel to households for cooking.

Eritrea

The US Department of State's **2016 Trafficking in Persons Report** is yet another damning and highly critical report on Eritrea, which it classifies at the lowest level of Tier 3. It says firmly: "The government continues to be complicit in trafficking through the implementation of national policies and mandatory programs amounting to forced labor within the country, which cause many citizens to flee the country and subsequently increases their vulnerability to trafficking abroad." (See article)

Addressing the UN General Assembly during the High-Level Dialogue on Human Rights this week (July 12-13) Ambassador Girma Asmerom, Permanent Representative of Eritrea, accused the UN Human Rights Council of politicization and double standards. He criticized country specific mandates, which he claimed seek to punish and isolate countries rather than engage and assist them to fulfill their human rights obligations. He attacked Ethiopia's "illegal occupation of sovereign Eritrean territories"; and what he called "unjust sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council, for reasons which were fabricated."

Kenya

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held talks with President Uhuru Kenyatta in Nairobi on Monday (July 11) and agreed to further expand investment ties and diversify trade. The Indian Prime Minister was on the last leg of a four-country visit to Africa. India is Kenya's largest trading partner and second largest investor. Mr Modi signed seven deals including the provision of a \$15 million credit for development of small-scale and medium-scale enterprises and \$29.95 million to upgrade the Rift Valley Textiles (Rivatex) factory.

Somalia

A high-level delegation from IGAD arrived in Belet Weyne, the capital of Hiiraan region, at the beginning of the week to try to persuade Hiiraan elders to attend the regional state formation for Hiiraan and Middle Shebelle in Jowhar. Hiiraan elders have demanded that the conference should be held in Belet Weyne and objected to what they called Federal Government interference.

AMISOM started a second phase of training for local police recruits in Kismayo last weekend to boost the ability to maintain security. A statement from AMISOM said AMISOM police trainers would conduct the three-month training for 203 Jubaland police recruits until October. The course would focus on human rights observance and community policing as well as other areas.

Somali Special Forces have dismantled "at least three al-Shabaab hotbeds" in the central Hiiraan region along its border with Middle Shabelle, the Somali Presidency said in statement on Sunday (July 12). Using helicopters, the special force units hit al-Shabaab hideouts in the latest string of pre-planned anti-terror assaults jointly coordinated by the Somali government, AMISOM and the US.

South Sudan

Ethiopia's Prime Minister and IGAD Chairperson, Hailemariam Dessalegn on Sunday (July 10) warned that both the Government and the opposition in South Sudan were "duty bound to exercise restraint and avoid any measures that are likely to escalate the situation." Any extension of the current crisis, and a return to open conflict, he said, "could result in a return to the previous widespread violence against civilians."

[The official opening of the 29th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, which kicked off this week on Wednesday (July 13) at the Kigali Convention Centre (KCC), Rwanda, sturdily denounced the conflict in South Sudan.]

The IGAD Council of Ministers, in an Extraordinary Summit on Monday (July 11) in Nairobi, under the chairmanship of Dr Tedros Adhanom, Ethiopia's Foreign Minister and Chairperson of the IGAD Council of Ministers, condemned in the strongest terms the eruption of fighting in South Sudan.

South Sudanese President, Salva Kiir, has dismissed the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation after the minister attended a regional body meeting that resolved to send extra troops to South Sudan in aftermath of renewed conflict last week.

South Sudan rejected the deployment of extra troops in Juba. President Salva Kiir on Thursday (July 14) said his government "will not accept a single soldier" to back peacekeepers as demanded by regional leaders and the United Nations.

United Nations peacekeepers in South Sudan are demanding unrestricted access to all corners of the capital, Juba, following four days of deadly clashes between rival forces that forced thousands of civilians out of their homes.

The U.S. Africa Command said on Wednesday (July 13) that it had deployed about 40 soldiers to Juba following days of clashes that left hundreds dead. It said the troops were sent to Juba to safeguard the U.S. Embassy and help carry out a State Department order for non-essential personnel to leave the country.

Sudan

New Arab League Secretary General on Thursday (July 13) reaffirmed the support of the regional body for a Sudanese initiative for Arab food security to be discussed during the upcoming summit.

Chair of the energy committee at the Sudanese parliament Hayat al-Mahi on Monday (July 11) expressed concern over the impact of the armed conflict in South Sudan on Sudan especially with regard to oil pumping.

The Sudanese Interior Ministry revealed on Wednesday (July 13) that radical groups have been working to recruit citizens in some Darfur states.

Head of Sudan's parliamentary committee on defence and security Ahmed Imam al-Tuhami on Tuesday (July 12) demanded that concerned government organs take the necessary measures to receive a new wave of refugees expected to flee fighting in South Sudan.

Ethiopia's National Tourism Brand: From 13 Months of Sunshine to Land of Origins

A new national tourism brand was officially launched this week in Addis Ababa heralding a distilled narrative and story of Ethiopia - **Ethiopia: Land of Origins** - to capture the attention of the international audience on the world stage. This launch of the new brand, heralding a break from Ethiopia's previous tourism imagery - "Ethiopia - Land of 13 Months of Sunshine" - represents the fact that public diplomacy, in its broadest sense, is emerging to occupy a greater niche in the country's diplomatic sphere with a view to harnessing the full spectrum of Ethiopia's aesthetic, civilizational, historic, spiritual, representational, reputational, cultural, institutional and artistic capital in the context of globalization.

Branding, in particular, is emerging as a new technique of statecraft sending a new signal that it will create a fresh story and narrative about Ethiopia on the international stage.

The launch of this new brand came at the 3rd General Assembly of the Ethiopian Tourism Transformation Council. Premier Hailemariam Dessalegn, who was in attendance, announced the official launch of the new brand. According to the Ethiopian Tourism Organization (ETO), the new brand; 'Ethiopia: Land of Origins' is based on Ethiopia's 'Spirit of Originality'. The ETO noted its confidence that the new brand would position Ethiopia by positively differentiating it from competitors in a way that authentically resonates with all stakeholders. It was also noted that the Ethiopian Tourism Organization developed the new brand by conducting extensive research in consultation with Ethiopian stakeholders, tour operators and potential tourists in source markets. The national tourism brand contains, according to the organization, the summary promise of "Ethiopia invites you on an adventure in which you will discover the origin of so much: history that is a mysterious mix of myth, legend and fact; culture that is vibrant, creative, alive and shared; and a landscape that is warm, dramatic, primal and teeming with life".

The ten experiences stipulated in the new brand by ETO fully capture the essence of Ethiopia as a land of origins. These include: the hominoid skeleton of 'Lucy'; the mystical churches of Lalibela, hand-hewn from rock to create the Jerusalem of Africa; the biblical Ark of the Covenant kept in Aksum; the castles of Gondar; the astonishing mix of ethnic groups in Southern Ethiopia; colourful Harar, the old walled city of a hundred mosques, and the fourth most holy site in Islam; the Simien Mountains, the Roof of Africa; and endless vistas in Gheralta to experience the spirituality of centuries old churches dotted among steep pink cliffs, ETO said.

Ethiopia's new definition in the sphere of tourism indicates who the public diplomats are, recognizing the urgency of public engagement on the basis of knowledge and innovative ideas. That means Ethiopia's brand sets [a benchmark] for the various sections of society to become involved in the management of Ethiopia's international relations, with their knowledge, creativity and ideas based on a common language, shared vision and purpose. Bringing more people including business people, artists, think tanks, among others, into the diplomatic sphere will nurture and maximize Ethiopia's reputational capital, project its image, and advocate its policies and values on the world stage. This acknowledges [current] trends including the civilian surge in international policy development and implementation. The new brand demands the creation of shared awareness to develop and convert the shared national resources, of branding in particular and public diplomacy in general, into desired outcomes.

Crafting a new national brand limited to one element of branding is not enough, since the practice and theory of branding encompasses various aspects ranging from tourism, exports, and policies to commerce, culture, people, history and heritage. A 21st public diplomacy approach towards this new brand initiative is needed in order to comprehensively develop and apply the country's soft power resources with the objective of providing security, property and identity to contemporary Ethiopia. The public diplomacy approach, emphasizing collaboration, cooperation and partnership, has become a critical dimension of statecraft trekking the interwoven landscape of the soul of the nation, including the cultural and civilizational identity; soft power as well as creative economy.

Put in other words, public diplomacy touches the roots of the country's national policy, ranging from social and political to the economic arts of statecraft. A deep recognition is needed of the role of the magic effect of

public diplomacy [and how it] is supportive of the country's brand beyond the realm of tourism. It becomes a framework for a holistic and shared response to a common problem facing the nation. Placing public diplomacy high on the agenda of any branding strategy helps the country to succinctly exhibit its legitimacy, build lasting relationships with partners, and build networks. Again, this will help Ethiopia become a good convener, campaigner, director and broker for preferred solutions to the vexing global developmental and security problems facing humanity.

The World Heritage Committee concludes Ethiopia's sugar project has no impact on the Lower Omo Valley World Heritage Site

The World Heritage Committee, at the 40th Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee meeting, held in Istanbul, Turkey from July 10 to July 20 unanimously concluded that Ethiopia's Kuraz Sugar Development Project neither endangered the Lower Omo Valley World Heritage Site nor compromised any environmental issues.

This was reiterated in the presence of a high-level delegation led by the State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Taye Atseke-Selassie and Director General for Authority on Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage, Ato Yonas Desta, who have been to Istanbul, Turkey over this week.

It was to be recalled that the Committee had adopted a decision at its 38th session criticizing Ethiopia over the Kuraz Sugar projects, suggesting it was negatively affecting the World Heritage site of Lower Omo Valley. It had, therefore, called on Ethiopia to halt further developments. One of the main items on the agenda of this 40th session of the Committee was whether there had been a negative impact on the Heritage and/or should it be included in the list of Heritage Sites in danger. Ethiopia attended the meeting to provide evidence for the Committee that its development efforts did not endanger the World Heritage sites nor did they compromise on any environmental issues.

The World Heritage Committee, composed of 21 countries, welcomed all the efforts exerted by the State Party of Ethiopia to sustainably conserve and develop the Lower Omo World Heritage Site. The Committee also appreciated Ethiopia for its successful coordination of the UNESCO-ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) Joint Reactive Monitoring Mission. Members of the Committee further welcomed the additional documents submitted by the State Party, such as a map showing the geographic extent of the Kuraz Sugar Development Project vis-à-vis the Lower Omo Valley World Heritage Site.

The Committee also recognized the ongoing efforts by the State Party to review the Environmental Impact Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment based on the new realities on ground.

Accordingly, the World Heritage Committee acknowledged that the Kuraz Sugar Development Projects has currently no impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site of the Lower Omo Valley.

At the end, an amended decision, which clearly states that Kuraz Sugar Development Project neither endangers the World Heritage site nor compromises any environmental issues, has been put forward by members of the committee and adopted unanimously. Members of the Ethiopian high-level delegation also included Ambassador of Ethiopia to France and UNESCO, Ambassador Nega Tsegaye and Ethiopian Ambassador to Turkey, Ambassador Ayalew Gobeze.

International shock and dismay over South Sudan's renewed fighting

When Dr Riek Machar returned to Juba in April, taking up the post of vice-president, it was seen as an important step towards securing the peace to end the last two years of long misery that the people of South Sudan had been suffering. Now, only four months later, another outbreak of fighting erupted in Juba, the capital of South Sudan, a major setback in implementation of the IGAD-mediated Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, signed by the two sides in August last year. While the ceasefire in Juba, after five days of heavy fighting that started on Friday (July 7), appeared to be holding at the end of this week, the situation in Juba and outside remained of great concern. After five days of fighting, more than 300 people, including scores of civilians, were killed in the violence in which heavy artillery and helicopter gunships were used. According to the United Nations about 36,000 people were also displaced. There were even attacks on UN compounds in an apparent attempt to prevent civilians from taking refuge there and getting protection.

Food stocks were running low and [there was] considerable expectation of further fighting either in Juba or elsewhere.

The UN, IGAD, the US and the international community were quick to respond to the outbreak of violence, and immediately put pressure on the two warring factions, demanding cessation of hostilities as the first priority. In a statement issued on July 10, the Chairperson of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn, warned that both the Government and the opposition were “duty bound to exercise restraint and avoid any measures that are likely to escalate the situation.” Any extension of the current crisis, and a return to open conflict, he said, “could result in a return to the previous widespread violence against civilians.” The same day, UN’s Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on President Salva Kiir and First Vice-President Riek Machar to do everything within their power to immediately de-escalate the hostilities.

The IGAD Council of Ministers, in an Extraordinary Summit on Monday (July 11) in Nairobi, under chairmanship of Dr Tedros Adhanom, Ethiopia’s Foreign Minister and Chairperson of the IGAD Council of Ministers, condemned in the strongest terms the eruption of fighting in South Sudan. The meeting was attended by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda, and the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Sudan (since reportedly dismissed by President Kiir), Djibouti’s Ambassador to Kenya, the Executive Secretary of IGAD and representatives of the Troika (US, UK and Norway), the EU, and Italy as Representative of the IGAD Partner Forum. Festus Mogae, Chairperson of Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, responsible for overseeing the implementation of last August’s Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS), briefed the IGAD Council.

In its communiqué, the IGAD Council urged President Salva Kiir and First Vice President Dr Riek Machar to assume their responsibility and take immediate measures to prevail upon their respective military leaders to stop the fighting. The Council demanded an immediate ceasefire; the re-opening of the Juba International Airport to be protected by UNMISS; the immediate return of all armed forces and weapons to their barracks; the opening of humanitarian corridors; urgent revision of the UN Mission to South Sudan mandate to establish an intervention brigade and increase numbers of troops from the region to *inter alia* secure Juba; accountability of those responsible for the breakdown of law and order; and immediate implementation of the security arrangements as enshrined in the ARCSS.

The next day, the African Union Peace and Security Council meeting in Kigali, fully endorsed the IGAD Council of Ministers’ communiqué. The PSC strongly condemned the recent ceasefire violations, which caused the fighting in Juba; and deplored the loss of lives “at the time when South Sudanese parties, with the support of the IGAD, the AU and the larger international community, should be scrupulously implementing the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS)”. It called for an immediate ceasefire, without any pre-conditions and warned those who commit any further violations of the ceasefire that they will be subjected to stern measures, including targeted sanctions. The PSC called on “the Transitional Government of National Unity to take urgent measures to establish conditions conducive for the return of all displaced persons and to establish a corridor for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the affected civilians”, and urged “the parties to desist from any actions that may escalate the security situation and [called] for the immediate start of the process of national reconciliation and healing in South Sudan.” It endorsed the IGAD communiqué and the “the recommendations in it for revision of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) mandate, in order to enable the establishment of an African-led Intervention Brigade and for increasing the number of troops to, *inter-alia*, provide protection to civilians, security in Juba and in the whole country”. In conclusion, the AU PSC called urgently on the parties to the ARCSS to embrace mutual trust, put the interest of their country and its people above everything else and to scrupulously implement the Agreement, and reiterated its own [intention] to undertake a field mission to South Sudan to engage with the stakeholders and consider what more Africa can do to speed up the implementation of the ARCSS with a view to finding lasting peace in the country.

On July 10, President Salva Kiir announced a ceasefire. This was welcomed by the JMEC Chairperson, Festus Mogae, who called on the President and First Vice President to ensure that the cessation of hostilities was strictly observed by the armed forces of the two sides. The failure to implement the ceasefire fully has raised concern that neither side is in full control of their forces. In his briefing to the IGAD Council of Ministers, Mr Mogae reiterated what he had said to the AU Peace and Security Council two weeks earlier on June 30 concerning the ineffectiveness of the Joint Military Ceasefire Commission. The JMCC had been operating effectively in facilitating the deployment to Juba of SPLM-IO troops prior to Dr Riek Machar’s return in April.

However, after that, he said, the JMCC had failed to meet and work as a team and this had seriously impeded the integration of the forces of the two sides. According to the JMEC Chairperson, "The JMCC has increasingly been unable to secure access for CTSAMM's monitoring and verification teams whose work is critical to the implementation of the Transitional Security Arrangements." He stressed that it would be absolutely necessary that the JMCC functioned properly if a repeat of violence was to be avoided. He underlined that the prolonged initial delay by the political leaders, coupled with the lack of implementation of the transitional security arrangements, provided fertile ground for mutual suspicion. This, he said, had indeed triggered the current armed conflict. "However", the JMEC Chairperson added, "we should not lose hope or be discouraged. We must redouble our efforts to engage the authorities to ensure the return to full implementation of the Peace Agreement."

The UN Security Council also issued a press statement at the beginning of the week, encouraging "states in the region to prepare to provide additional troops in the event the Council so decides. In the interim, [the Council] stressed the need for the UN Mission to South Sudan UNMISS to make full use of its authority to use all necessary means to protect civilians." The statement condemned in the strongest terms the escalation of fighting in Juba and "expressed particular shock and outrage" at the attacks on UN compounds and protection of civilian sites. The members of the Security Council urged an immediate end to the fighting by all concerned and demanded that President Kiir and First Vice President Machar do their utmost to control their respective forces, urgently end the fighting and prevent the spread of violence, and genuinely commit themselves to the full and immediate implementation of the peace agreement, including the permanent ceasefire and redeployment of military forces from Juba. The members of the Security Council stressed that attacks against civilians and UN premises and personnel may constitute war crimes, and they emphasized the importance of transparent investigations into these crimes and that those involved must be held accountable and could be potentially subject to sanctions, as authorized under the resolution for actions that threaten the peace, security or stability of South Sudan. The members of the Security Council expressed their readiness to consider enhancing UNMISS to better ensure that UNMISS and the international community could prevent and respond to violence in South Sudan.

On Wednesday (July 13), the UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, briefed the Security Council on the activities of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). UNMISS' mandate runs out on July 31. He proposed this should be extended until the end of August to allow a rapid assessment on the need for a stronger mandate. This would allow the UN Secretariat time to do a quick assessment, consult the region and the African Union and make recommendations to the Council. Mr Ladsous told the Council that at least 36,000 civilians had been displaced by the fighting. He said a ceasefire endorsed by both leaders on July 10 appeared to be holding in Juba, which, he said, appeared to be under full control of the SPLA. However, "further clashes, therefore, cannot be ruled out." Juba airport had been reopened and was under the control of the SPLA. Mr Ladsous said some fighting had taken place outside Juba, and the UN remained extremely worried about the potential for the resumption of widespread violence. Mr Ladsous warned "only a strong political and coordinated approach can salvage the peace process now," and urged the Security Council to urgently reconsider an arms embargo, and immediately enact additional targeted sanctions on leaders and commanders blocking the implementation of the peace accord. He said the Council had been "cautiously optimistic about the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity back in April, [but] it is unclear now what further progress can be made under current conditions."

Even before this latest violence in Juba, implementation of the peace agreement had been slow and it had even stagnated recently due to the apparent lack of political will. There were concerns about the demilitarization of the opposing armies. Encampment sites for Dr Machar's forces in Greater Eatoria and Greater Bhar El Ghazal had still to be identified. There were issues over drafting a new constitution, and over President Kiir's determination to create additional states, strongly opposed by Dr Machar, and by the international community. The legislature and judiciary have yet to be reconstituted. With the lack of progress on implementation of the peace agreement, the economy continued to deteriorate, with inflation soaring to over 300%. There were earlier outbreaks of violence. In February, more than 18 people died when SPLA soldiers broke into the UN compound for Protection of Civilians in Malakal. In Wau, last month, hundreds died, and homes were burnt. Some 120,000 people fled their homes, with 25,000 taking refuge at the UN camp and others fleeing into the bush; the International Committee of the Red Cross said it had managed to reach 70,000 with food aid in the last two weeks.

Some observers claimed that the leaders of the two sides were showing little or no interest in solving any of the problems that remained, despite the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity. There

were even suggestions that it was time to make urgent alternative arrangements so the country could hold elections within a year to regain a degree of legitimacy and look for a new leadership. This would require effective regional and international community involvement.

Widespread renewed conflict would be devastating for South Sudan. It would also threaten regional stability. The earlier mediation efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development had to put enormous pressure on Kiir and Machar to sign the peace agreement and establish the transitional government. The collapse of the agreement could have serious implications for the regional stability that IGAD's Heads of State and Government have worked hard to create.

Similarly, Dr Dlamini Zuma, in her opening remarks at the 29th ordinary Session of the Executive Council in Kigali, Rwanda on Wednesday (July 13) said, "It is with grave concern that we start this Council, as over the past few days we see the resurgence of the conflict in South Sudan, after more than two years of talks. Hardly two months after the formation of the Government of National Unity, the belligerents seem to [be] back in the trenches, and the people of South Sudan, instead of celebrating five years of independence, once again are barricaded in their homes or must flee like sheep before the wolves."

US Trafficking in Persons Report 2016 gives devastating criticism of Eritrea

Despite all the efforts and spin by its supporters, official or otherwise, the Eritrean government has been hit by yet another damning report, released this week. This is the official report from the US Department of State's 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report. The section on Eritrea, which is classified at the lowest level of Tier 3, is part of the wider Report covering numerous other relevant countries, including Ethiopia (Tier 2) as well as other states in the Horn of Africa.

The State Department's Report is particularly relevant to Eritrea's attempts to defend itself against the recent shocking conclusions of the UN Commission of Inquiry into human rights abuses in Eritrea and the referral of the Commission's Report and all its recommendations "to the United Nations and its relevant organs for consideration and urgent action. These include the UN General Assembly, the UN Security Council and the UN Secretary-General." The Commission's Report was also referred to the African Union.

One of the main points raised by Eritrean officials, and by Eritrea's international supporters, in trying to defend its record and respond to the UN Commission of Inquiry, has been the claim that Eritrea's national service conscription, despite its unlimited duration, often appalling conditions and minimal pay, is really devoted to national development. Another has been the claim that Eritrea has been active in trying to participate in efforts to end human trafficking. They have also referred to Eritrea's involvement in the EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative, the Khartoum Process, established in 2014. This State Department Report makes it very clear that these arguments have no relevance to the situation on the ground or the behavior of Eritrean officials. It states firmly: "The government continues to be complicit in trafficking through the implementation of national policies and mandatory programs amounting to forced labor within the country, which cause many citizens to flee the country and subsequently increases their vulnerability to trafficking abroad." It goes on: "Some Eritrean military and police officers are complicit in trafficking crimes along the border with Sudan," adding that "reports allege Eritrean diplomats, particularly those posted in Sudan, provide travel documents and legal services to Eritrean nationals in exchange for bribes or inflated fees, potentially facilitating their subjection to trafficking."

The State Department's Report is uncompromising. It begins: "Eritrea is a source country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor. To a lesser extent, Eritrean adults and children are subjected to sex and labor trafficking abroad." It points out that the 18-month timeframe for compulsory national service is "arbitrary and unenforced; many individuals are not demobilized from government work units after their mandatory period of service but rather forced to serve indefinitely under threats of detention, torture, or familial reprisal. In 2012, the government instituted a compulsory citizen militia, requiring medically fit adults up to age 70 not currently in the military to carry firearms and attend military training or participate in national development programs, such as soil and water conservation projects. Working conditions are often harsh and sometimes involve physical abuse.

The Report also details the requirement of all 12th-grade students, including some younger than age 18, to complete their final year of secondary education at the Sawa military and educational camp. This, it points out, is effectively also compulsory as those who refuse "cannot receive high school graduation certificates, attain

higher education, or be offered some types of jobs.” It notes that although government policy officially bans persons younger than 18 from military conscription, nevertheless there is clear evidence that children younger than 18 have been sent to Sawa where “male and female recruits at Sawa were beaten, and female recruits sexually abused and raped in previous years.” It also notes the government operates “*Maetot*”, a national service program in which secondary-school children are assigned to work in public works projects, usually within the agricultural sector, during their summer holidays. Some Eritrean children are subjected to forced labor, including forced begging, and some women and girls are subjected to sex trafficking within the country.”

It is in order to avoid all this, the report notes: “thousands of Eritreans flee the country overland to Sudan, Ethiopia, and, to a lesser extent Djibouti, to escape forced labor or government persecution, as well as to seek better economic opportunities”. It points out quite correctly, “Unaccompanied minors are increasingly at risk of being subjected to violence and exploitation.” The report notes that because the government’s strict exit control procedures and limited issuance of passports and departure visas prevent most Eritreans from travelling abroad legally, more and more resort to efforts that increase vulnerability to trafficking. “Children who attempt to leave Eritrea are sometimes detained or forced to undergo military training despite being younger than the minimum service age of 18. Some Eritrean women and girls travel to Gulf States for domestic work but are subjected to sex trafficking upon arrival. Smaller numbers of Eritrean women and girls are subjected to sex trafficking in South Sudan, Sudan, and Israel; reportedly, some Eritrean men are vulnerable to sex trafficking in Israel. International criminal groups kidnap vulnerable Eritreans living inside or in proximity to refugee camps, particularly in Sudan, and transport them primarily to Libya, where they are subjected to human trafficking and other abuses, including extortion for ransom.”

The report says that the Government of Eritrea “does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so.” It emphasizes that the government continues “to subject its nationals to forced labor in its citizen militia and compulsory national service, often for periods of indefinite duration.” It also fails to investigate or prosecute trafficking offenses or identify or protect victims. It did carry out some attempts to warn people of the dangers of people smuggling and human trafficking but its efforts were less effective because it conflated transnational migration and human trafficking.

It notes the government did not investigate, prosecute, or convict trafficking offenders during the reporting year, despite the fact that articles of the Eritrean Transitional Criminal Code prohibit trafficking in women and young persons for sexual exploitation, and enslavement and prohibits forced labor. Equally, the Report emphasizes that Eritrea’s 2001 Labor Proclamation specifically excludes national and military service or other civic obligations from the definition of forced labor; and it also notes that existing labor protections “were not applicable to persons engaged in compulsory national service,” a category that includes most of the workforce today. It notes that the government did not investigate, prosecute, or convict anyone, including complicit officials, for trafficking offenses during the last year. It also adds that the government demonstrated “negligible efforts” to identify and protect trafficking victims and provided “limited assistance to female victims subjected to sex trafficking in Gulf States”. It did not assist any other potential trafficking victims or develop procedures to identify trafficking victims among vulnerable groups; it noted Eritreans fleeing the country and those deported from abroad, including some possible trafficking victims, were vulnerable to being arrested, detained, harassed, or recalled into national service upon return. Overall, its conclusion was that the government made minimal efforts to prevent trafficking.

The report makes a series of recommendations, calling on the Government of Eritrea to “Develop, enact, and enforce an anti-trafficking statute that criminalizes all forms of trafficking,” as well as “limit the length of active national service to 18 months and cease the use of threats and physical punishment for non-compliance”. It wants to see investigation of allegations of conscripts being forced to perform duties beyond the scope of the national service program, and for the government to ensure children younger than 18 do not participate in activities that amount to military service and are not exploited in forced labor. It calls for the government to put an end to punishment for crimes committed as a result of being subjected to trafficking or for fleeing government-sponsored forced labor, provide training to all levels of government and in partnership with NGOs, ensure the provision of short-term protective services to trafficking victims.

...while Ethiopia is making “significant efforts” to eliminate trafficking

The State Department’s 2016 Trafficking in Persons 2016 Report also covers Djibouti, South Sudan and Sudan, all classified as Tier 3, Somalia identified as a Special Case. Kenya and Ethiopia are marked as Tier 2. On

Ethiopia, the report says that, although the government did not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, it was “making significant efforts to do so.” It enacted a comprehensive anti-trafficking law last year and passed a revised overseas employment proclamation improving oversight of overseas recruitment agencies and extending greater protections to potential victims. During the year, it identified more than 3,000 trafficking victims and convicted 69 traffickers. Income generating plans to support victim reintegration did not make progress but the government provided in-kind support for the efforts of NGOs and international organizations to provide assistance.

It notes the August 2015 **Proclamation to Provide for the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants**, whose penalties are, the report suggests, “sufficiently stringent and commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes”. The government also passed amendments to the **Employment Exchange Services Proclamation** No. 632/2009, which controls licensed labor recruitment agencies, but didn’t fully implement it during the year.

It notes that in August 2015, officials approved and endorsed a five-year national action plan to combat trafficking that incorporated feedback from civil society stakeholders. The government has now established a **National Committee**, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, to coordinate anti-trafficking efforts. The national committee, advised by international organizations, convened seminars to guide local officials and citizens in the establishment of anti-trafficking units and disseminated the 2015 anti-trafficking proclamation. Local government officials hosted and facilitated hundreds of community conversation sessions throughout the country, and government media carried out broadcast awareness campaigns.

The report says that up to 1,500 Ethiopians depart daily as part of the legal migration process in search of better economic opportunities and while the government has maintained its 2013 ban on the recruitment of low-skilled domestic workers to the Middle East, irregular labor migration to the Gulf has, however, increased. This will continue until bilateral work agreements with recipient countries are agreed and a revised employment exchange proclamation is issued to allow for greater oversight of private employment agencies. There has, however, been some progress on negotiating new agreements with Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, South Sudan and the United Arab Emirates, providing for governments to commit to ethical recruitment, legal remedies against those who violate the law, and equal protection of Ethiopian workers, including equal wages for equal work, reasonable working hours, and leave.

The report also notes that government has continued to assist Ethiopians deported from Saudi Arabia since 2013, though it notes the capacity and budget constraints that limit its options. It has also been providing anti-trafficking training to diplomatic personnel. Troops going on international peacekeeping missions are also being provided with anti-trafficking training prior to deployment. The report concludes by calling for the government to increase efforts to convict traffickers, extend training for law enforcement and judicial officials, fully implement the overseas employment proclamation, improve screening procedures in the distribution of national identification cards and passports, and allocate funding for the deployment of labor attaches to overseas diplomatic missions.

Ethiopia’s election to the United Nations Security Council

Since its inception in 1945, the United Nations has entrusted questions of international peace and security maintenance duties to the Security Council. The Security Council is also mandated to recommend to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary-General and the admission of new members to the United Nations. With the General Assembly, it elects the judges of the International Court of Justice. The Security Council is, in fact, the major instrument to ensure peace and stability in any part of the world, and wherever conflicts and instability flare up, it is the pertinent organ of the United Nations. Being a member of the Council is, therefore, a highly significant achievement. While five of the Council’s 15 seats are held by the permanent members of the Council (China, France, Russia, the UK and the US), the remaining ten seats are reserved for countries serving two-year terms. The competition for these rotating seats can be intense. The desire to participate more meaningfully in world affairs is one reason to motivate countries to fight for a spot on the Security Council. Another is that that rotating members can enhance their diplomatic credentials by membership.

The most recent election of five non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council was held on June 28, 2016 at the 106th plenary meeting of the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly. On this occasion, the General Assembly elected Ethiopia to serve as a non-permanent member on the Security Council

for a two-year term commencing in January 2017. Ethiopia was elected in the first round of voting with the support of 185 member countries of the 190-member states, far in excess of the required two-thirds of the members. In addition to Ethiopia's election, Bolivia and Sweden obtained 183 and 134 votes respectively, while Netherlands and Italy garnered 125 and 113 respectively in a second-round vote for a shared seat, and Kazakhstan took the Asia-Pacific seat with 138 votes in the second round.

Ethiopian's Foreign Minister, Dr Tedros Adhanom, described the victory as a tribute to Ethiopia's global standing and extended his deepest gratitude to all United Nation member countries. He said, "We thank all those countries that supported us. We had strong friends and advocates in every region in the world—in Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, the Middle East, the Pacific and Asia and Eastern and Western Europe." Throughout this campaign Ethiopia has gained a new level of profile on the international stage and strengthened the country's reputation as [one of] active global citizens. Ethiopia's membership to the United Nations Security Council is a significant achievement and provides the opportunity for Ethiopia to continue to demonstrate its unreserved efforts in support of international peace and security, along with discharging the main duties and responsibilities of the membership of the United Nations Security Council. Ethiopia will use this opportunity to increase its engagement in peacekeeping operations and contribute further to world peace and tranquility.

The United Nations Security Council is also the body that can decide on enforcement measures, economic sanctions (such as trade embargoes) or collective military action in order to ensure peaceful solutions to conflict. It is, in this sense, the most powerful organ of the United Nations. Countries like Ethiopia that have contributed significantly to United Nations operations in the past will always welcome the opportunity to more effectively influence decisions. On another level, Ethiopia also welcomes the opportunity to advance cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations, including the African Union or IGAD, on pressing issues such as terrorism and climate change. Dealing with terrorist groups like al-Shabaab requires extensive international cooperation, especially in intelligence-sharing and the prevention of terrorist fund raising activities. Ethiopia, as a member of the United Nation Security Council as a non-permanent member, allows the country, and the continent it represents, to voice its own concerns and those of Africa in the United Nations and its institutions. This is of particular importance as Africa deserves, and needs, to be heard more prominently. Ethiopia's membership of the Security Council, in fact, will provide an opportunity for the country to serve all members of the United Nations in discharging the charter-mandated responsibilities bestowed upon it in a true spirit of partnership and transparency.

Ethiopia's election allows it to underline its renewed commitment to middle-level diplomacy and support its ambition to actively develop its regional and global policy agenda. It offers the opportunity to have a voice in shaping global agendas and respond to global issues, to engage and negotiate with the major international powers on a regular basis, and raise its own international profile and standing. This is particularly important for developing countries in such areas as climate change and green economic development, areas in which Ethiopia is deeply concerned and involved both on its own behalf and on behalf of Africa. It similarly regards its involvement in peace keeping and peace-building operations as a major contribution to the promotion of regional, and continental, peace and security, one of the most important elements of its foreign policy aims. It has consistently demonstrated the importance of regional peace and security as a necessity for regional development over the last two decades and this is one of the major pillars of its foreign policy. Ethiopia has also made it clear there are a number of areas in which reform is required in the United Nations, in order to deliver effective UN activity in world security, climate change and the global economic problems. The voice of Africa deserves to be heard fully in the UN and its institutions. Membership of the Security Council offers the opportunity to encourage the establishment of a **permanent seat for Africa** in the Security Council, and allow for Africa to address the challenges more effectively in the future. This is something Ethiopia will work to provide.

An AU pre-election assessment team in Mogadishu

An African Union pre-election mission has pledged support for the political process in Somalia in advance of next month's election for a parliament and for the presidential election due in September. The four-member pre-election assessment team from the AU Commission arrived in Mogadishu on a two-day fact-finding mission on Monday (July 11) and pledged more support from the African Union to the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to help stabilize Somalia. The leader of the delegation, Olabisi Dare, the Head of the AU Humanitarian Division in the Political Department of the African Union Commission, said "The situation in Somalia requires that we engage fully and in a more robust manner to be able to support AMISOM. We are

aware of the fact that as AMISOM gains ground, the requisite stability to support the security situation is sometimes lacking and this sometimes leads to reversal. For overall security in Somalia, there is need to have the political element to support and give more permanent nature the security that is created by AMISOM.” Mr Dare reaffirmed the African Union’s support to Somalia, beyond the forthcoming elections. He said the 54-member continental body was keen to support the growth of the country’s institutional structures and federalization process. “We want to support this particular electoral process, but then beyond that, we need to develop institutional capacity, that then gives the state the capability to be able to run itself.” Mr Dare said.

During their visit, the delegation met with the AU Special Representative for Somalia Ambassador Francisco Caetano Madeira and other senior officials at AMISOM, including the Deputy SRCC Lydia Wanyoto, and the AMISOM Acting Force Commander, Major General Nakibus Lakara. The delegation also met with the Somali Deputy Prime Minister, Mohamed Omar Arte and other senior officials of the Federal Government of Somalia, including representatives of political organizations, civil society, the Federal Indirect Elections Implementation Team, the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) Mr Raisedon Zenenga, and the UNSOM technical election team.

Mr Arte commended the African Union for its continued support to Somalia and told the mission that the Federal Indirect Elections Implementation Team (FIEIT) was now working towards finalizing the election schedule and laying down more definitive timelines for the electoral process. Mr Zenenga told the delegation that “Without the achievements made by AMISOM in creating the space for the political process to make progress, we would not be where we are today.” He said that failure to achieve anything on the political front wasn’t due to a shortage of security space: “The security space to achieve what was set for 2016 is there,” he told the AU delegation.

The four-member delegation was there to gauge elections preparedness and identify areas for further support. Mr Dare said, “We are here to actually listen to all stakeholders, including colleagues in AMISOM and partners, particularly the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia. In this regard, we want to look at what is needed, then go back and look at how best the rest of the Commission can support the work of AMISOM, particularly with regards to the electoral process that is forthcoming.”

The pre-election assessment team will now make recommendations to the African Union Commission, which will inform its continued support to AMISOM and guide the decisions of the African Union on the scope of the election observer mission it plans to deploy in the country during the August-September electoral process. Mr Dare said “It is expected that once we scope the electoral landscape as it stands, we will know exactly what it needed and suffice to say that AMISOM has put in place an elaborate security system that will support the electoral process. This elaborate security system gives us confidence that indeed we could physically deploy in all the seven states in the Federation of Somalia.” A statement issued by AMISOM on Wednesday said the four-member pre-election assessment team believed there was need to back security with political support to ensure stability. Mr Dare noted that “For overall security in Somalia, there is need to have the political element to support and give a more permanent nature to the security that is created by AMISOM.”

Meanwhile a high-level delegation from IGAD also arrived this week in Belet Weyne in Hiiraan region. Headed by IGAD’s Special envoy for Somalia Mohamed Abdi Afey, it is holding meetings with local elders and politicians on the way to form a federal state for Hiiraan and Middle Shabelle regions. The delegation is trying to end the standoff between the Federal Government and traditional elders of Hiiraan province over the regional state formation process taking place in Hiiraan and Middle Shebelle regions. The delegation is trying to persuade the elders from Hiiraan to attend the inter-regional state formation conference expected to re-open in Jowhar. Hiiraan elders have been demanding that the conference should be held in Belet Weyne and that there should be a comprehensive and real reconciliation between Hiiraan clans. They have said that they will not attend the conference until their conditions are met. Hiiraan and Middle Shebelle will be the last of the federal states to be formed to join Puntland, Jubaland, South West and Galmudug, as part of the new constitutional process.

Guiyang Eco-Forum Conference: Ethiopia’s Green Economy Path

Ethiopia participated in the “Eco-Forum Global Annual Conference 2016” held in the city of Guiyang, in Guizhou Province of China, between July 8 and 10. Guiyang was chosen as the site of the conference as the city has been closely associated with efforts to provide eco-friendly sustainable development in the last few years. The conference, under the theme of “Embracing the New Era of Eco-Civilization: Advancing Green

Development, Unifying Knowledge and Action”, attracted over a thousand delegates from 72 countries, including ministers, senior officials, ambassadors, UN officials, experts, entrepreneurs and international [organisations] to share opinions and expertise on climate and ecological issues. The conference provided a platform for dialogue and strategic cooperation between China and the rest of the world and showcased many explicit practices on ecological civilization construction.

The Eco-Global Forum is playing a vital role in providing an interactive platform and pulling together the successes and experiences of actual players relating to climate resilient green economy strategies. It offers a robust platform to respond to the ongoing dynamic and evolving green development issues across the globe and a green vehicle to facilitate the interaction of both public and private actors in green development and international cooperation to tackle climate change. The conference promotes the values embracing economic and social development in a manner that protects the natural environment, relating in fact to the Chinese traditional philosophy of harmony between human beings and nature.

Yu Zhengsheng, Chairman of CPPCC National Committee, made a keynote speech at the opening ceremony, reiterating China’s determination to work with other countries to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. He said, "China will always [consider] ecological environmental protection as an important area of opening up to the outside world, and will fulfil international environmental conventions, as well as taking [in] international obligations. It will continue to participate in global cooperation in combating climate change, and make important contributions to global ecological security." Christa Markwalder, President of National Council of Switzerland noted that: "China can really make a difference in protecting our climate since China is so large, so fast growing. If Swiss technologies can be used in China to better protect our climate, this can really make the difference." Peter Bakker, President and CEO of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development said: "In order to achieve the Paris Agreement, we need radical reductions of emissions around the world, China has a key role to play. I’m very happy to have noted that the 13th five-year-plan takes that responsibility serious."

Ethiopia’s Ambassador to China, Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin, speaking in a session on “South-South Cooperation to Tackle Climate Change” emphasized that “Africa could easily be said to contribute the least of any continent to global warming. Equally, it was home to the most developing countries, and with a population of about 1.1 billion people, had become the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. He acknowledged that tackling climate change in Africa was no easy task, given the multiple limiting factors and daunting challenges but, he added, Africans were exerting major efforts and using all the resources at their disposal to overcome the challenges of climate change. They had demonstrated leadership throughout the negotiations, which culminated in adoption of goals to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity as part of the New Sustainable Agenda and the signing of the Paris Agreement. The Sustainable Development Goals, of course, not only aim to end extreme poverty and reduce inequality, but to do so in way that is ecologically sustainable.

Ambassador Seyoum said Ethiopia had long embraced the conviction that green growth is a necessity as well as an opportunity. It had embarked upon the development of a Climate-Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy, addressing both climate change adaptation and mitigation. The goal was to quickly improve the living conditions for its people reaching middle-income status by 2025 on the basis of carbon-neutral growth, and achieve a zero-emission goal by 2030. This, he emphasized, was a solemn commitment of the Government and people of Ethiopia: sustained rapid economic growth and structural transformation to ensure growth and economic development, while also tackling climate change. Ambassador Seyoum said: “We are committed to effectively transforming Ethiopia into an early adopter of a low-carbon growth path, and our initiatives are already being translated into realities in key sectors.”

The first aspect of this was the drive to produce green energy for itself and its neighbors. Hydropower plants under construction will provide a total additional capacity of 8,000 megawatts and be commissioned within two to three years. Among these, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is the largest dam in Africa and will have installed power of 6,000 MW. However, Ethiopia has the potential to generate 45-50 thousand MW from hydropower as well as 7,000 MW, 1 million MW and 5.5 kilowatt hours per square meter, from geothermal, wind and solar sources respectively. The Government of Ethiopia, said Ambassador Seyoum, was seriously engaged in harvesting this renewable energy for green growth and sustainable development. Currently, some 97% of Ethiopia’s energy supply is generated from renewable sources, and it is taking the initiative to provide energy trading with neighboring countries. The interconnections between Ethiopia and Djibouti and Ethiopia and Sudan have become functional and the project to link with Kenya is progressing well.

Ambassador Seyoum said Ethiopia envisaged greening the transport sector to actively support its concerted efforts to address climate change. It is 'de-carbonizing' the transport sector, shifting freight transport from road to an electric-powered rail network to link Ethiopia internally as well as to different economic outlets. It is looking for new strategies to reduce tailpipe emissions while helping to increase mobility. It has built sub-Saharan Africa's first modern light rail transit (LRT) system.

It is concentrating on the greening of industrialization through developing eco-industrial parks as a key strategy to facilitate and support foreign and domestic private-sector partnerships, and enhance exports. Low-carbon eco-industrial intent is present throughout the planning, design and site construction of the industrial zone developments with industrial structures to be powered by renewable energy and to adopt cleaner production techniques. He also noted that Ethiopia was already achieving good results in reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, looking to conservation and sustainable forest management. It has increased its forest coverage to 15.5% from only 3%, 25 years ago, and is working to increase it to 20% by 2020. The aim is to restore forest on 15 million hectares of land and increase the coverage by 7 million hectares by 2030. Nearly 4 billion tree seedlings are transplanted every year to help re-green the country. Overall its Climate-Resilient Green Economy makes Ethiopia a frontrunner in green economic development, but African countries are showing a growing commitment to making development processes climate resilient and avoiding environmental degradation.

Ambassador Seyoum noted that countries from the South, such as China, were successfully tackling climate change and setting an exemplary standard. Africa, he said, could learn a great deal from China's successful initiatives. He said capitalizing on South-South Cooperation initiatives would be decisive to combat climate change, drought and desertification. It also offered an indispensable means to end poverty and eliminate regional disparities. Enhancing sustainable development entailed joint efforts by governments, society, and enterprises, with fair and consistent responsibility-sharing especially in implementing relevant international environmental agreements. He said, "It is time for action. It is time to implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and the Paris Agreement by all State Parties in good faith." Ambassador Seyoum added: "The theme of the Global Forum Guiyang combined eco-civilization with knowledge and action. With the knowledge we have accumulated, it is the time to go to action."

2015 provided important milestones for sustainable development and cooperation. There was the adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in July 2015 in Addis Ababa, affirming strong political commitment to addressing the challenge of financing an enabling environment for sustainable development, as well as a commitment to develop an economic platform to coordinate investment in resilient infrastructures and technology facilitation mechanisms. It stressed the importance of inclusive and sustainable industrialization for developing countries, as a critical source of economic growth, economic diversification, and value addition. The United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals, in September; and in October, in Paris, the Conference of the Parties reached an historic agreement to combat climate change and to accelerate and intensify actions and investments needed for a sustainable low carbon future. This requires all Parties to put forward their best efforts through "nationally determined contributions" and strengthen these efforts in the future.

The Johannesburg Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in December also highlighted that climate change was exacerbating existing challenges in Africa and is placing additional burdens on national budgets and efforts to achieve sustainable development. African leaders have been loud in projecting their voices in various global fora, calling for the strengthening of the international framework to hold down increases in temperatures and assist developing and vulnerable countries to manage impact. They have been re-examining development through the lens of social, economic and environmental sustainability. It was against this background that the Guiyang Eco-Forum Global underlined the growing recognition that enhanced cooperation between China and Africa is mutually beneficial. The actions of Guizhou province's actions to: "make the mountains and the fields green, make the waters and the sky blue, and the air good and fresh emphasize that the Eco-Forum can also play a catalytic and transformational role to encourage the improvement of the natural environment.