

## **A Week in the Horn** **17<sup>th</sup> February 2012**

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### **Somalia: Preparations for the London Conference**

The London Conference on Somalia is being held on Thursday next week, 23<sup>rd</sup> February. Chaired by UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, over fifty delegations are expected. In addition to members of the international community and frontline states, there will be representatives from the TFIs, of the Puntland and Galmudug administrations, of Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a, and from Somaliland. Last week, the UK Foreign Secretary, William Hague, following his own visit to Mogadishu, laid out the UK's aims for the Conference including the need for a better international strategy to address Somalia's problems and help its people. He described a more stable Somalia as vital to the UK's national security, essential for the stability for the Horn of Africa and long overdue. He mentioned terrorism and piracy and the importance of trying "to change the dynamic from one of inexorable decline to an upwards trajectory of gradually increasing stability and security." He outlined why he felt the time was ripe for a major effort. One reason was the improved security situation in Mogadishu; another was the need to intensify the pressure on Al-Shabaab and also build on the progress made in diminishing pirate activity; and thirdly with the expiry of the TFG mandate in August there was an opportunity to create a broader and more representative political arrangement.

Mr Hague has made it clear he hopes the Conference will agree practical measures in a number of different areas. These include an expanded political process; regular and sustainable funding for AMISOM forces; a coordinated international package of support for Somali regions to complement peace and stability at the national level; concerted efforts to break the piracy business cycle; agree the areas to develop to disrupt terrorism across the region including stopping movement of terrorists and disrupting their finances as well as delivering effective intelligence gathering; and highlight the need for generous humanitarian responses. He also stressed that he wanted the Conference to be the start of a process not the end and to agree on how to handle Somali

issues in the future with a revitalized International Contract group and more countries deploying diplomats and staff into Somalia. Somalia's Prime Minister Abdiweli said in an interview with AFP earlier this week that Somalia hoped for a lot from this conference: "We expect the establishment of a trust fund for Somalia. We expect a complete reconstruction plan for Somalia. We expect a Marshall Plan for Somalia."

The second consultative meeting of the core group for the Conference met last Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> February, at Lancaster House in London. Representatives from the African Union, Ethiopia, the European Union, France, Italy, Kenya, Norway, Qatar, Sweden, Turkey, Uganda, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, the United Nations and the United States considered the proposed draft communiqué. It contains several sections, in addition to an introduction and a conclusion, covering the humanitarian situation, the political process, security and justice, piracy, counter-terrorism, stability and recovery, the diaspora and international coordination.

Delegates discussed the draft communiqué paragraph-by-paragraph with particular emphasis on the political process during the post-transition period after August. Among the points raised were the need to create united international support; for accountability and transparency in the administration of funds; for Somalis to assume a central role in the peace process; enhanced international efforts to assist the speedy implementation of the political process; a call for the Istanbul Conference in June to come up with concrete proposals on the humanitarian situation; the need to deal with corruption and to take strong action against individuals and institutions bent on derailing the political process.

**Participants at the consultative meeting also stressed the Conference was about crystallizing the existing Djibouti process, not creating a new initiative.** They took note of the importance of providing access to print and electronic media to allow moderate elements to reach out to the Somali public. They emphasised the pivotal role of IGAD and the frontline states on political and security consolidation in Somalia as well as the importance of longer term development programmes with regional impact. They stressed the need to address the genesis of piracy and take a comprehensive course of action on land and at sea. They raised the importance of tailor-made training and capacity building programmes to enhance the TFIs. They emphasised the need to understand clearly the impact of terrorism and all its manifestations in Somalia, in the region and for the international community at large. They expressed their view on affirming the territorial integrity of Somalia and on the system of government and the constitution of Somalia after the TFG. The meeting also discussed the expected conclusions of the conference and what the conference might deliver. It considered possible annexes and identified countries and organisations to make keynote speeches.

The Ethiopian delegation, led by Ethiopia's Ambassador to the UK, Ambassador Berhanu Kebede, reflected the position of IGAD as well as Ethiopia at the meeting. It underlined the need to take strong concerted action against Al-Shabaab, now openly affiliated to Al Qaeda and stressed the key role to be played by frontline states, IGAD and the AU in the political and security process. It emphasised the need to support the authorization of additional AMISOM troops and the expeditious delivery of all required equipment, force enablers and multipliers, as well as give due credit to forces of local administrations, Ahlu Sunna and neighbouring countries. It suggested putting in place an incentive

package for those who accept the Djibouti Agreement, the Kampala Accord, the Roadmap and the Garowe Principles, and taking strong measures against those trying to derail the peace effort and called on the Istanbul Conference in June to produce strong proposals in this regard.

The Ethiopian delegation also underlined the need to enhance international efforts to stop illegal inflows of small arms and light weapons into Somalia, calling on the UN Security Council to take concrete action against those involved. It emphasized the importance of supporting Somalia to build and develop strong institutions of governance and human rights accountable to the Somali parliament. It underlined the need to make training coherent and well-coordinated and for it to be demand driven and provided inside Somalia so it can respond to the reality on the ground. It noted the problems faced by neighbouring countries in hosting refugees from Somalia, and stressed that winning the hearts and minds of the people of Somalia was critical for the fight against terrorism.

#### **.....moves for a UN Security Council vote to enlarge AMISOM**

The sponsors of a UN Security Council Resolution to increase the numbers of AMISOM to 17,731 troops and increase support for equipment and logistics are trying to prepare a vote-ready text by the end of the week with the aim of getting a vote for an authorization of the increase by Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup>, the day before the London Conference. Increasing military pressure on Al-Shabaab is a key element of the overall political strategy likely to be endorsed by the London Conference. Authorization of an increase in the size of AMISOM will also involve the transfer of the Kenyan forces, 'rehatting' them, as part of AMISOM. It will also cover additional units from Djibouti and Sierra Leone.

Last weekend, AMISOM announced that it intended to move out of Mogadishu and expand its control to Afgoye, 30 kilometres west of the capital and a strategic centre for Al-Shabaab where the roads from Kismayo and Baidoa to Mogadishu meet. It is also an area which provides much of the fruit and vegetables for the capital. At the beginning of the week, TFG commander, General Abdikarim Yusuf Aden called on inhabitants of Afgoye to leave the town to avoid civilian casualties. Since then, AMISOM and TFG forces have successfully begun to advance towards Afgoye, setting up new army bases on the outskirts of Mogadishu, taking over an Al-Shabaab checkpoint at Ex-control Afgoye and defeating attempts to retake it. According to Somalia's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, Hussein Arab Isse, this is the start of massive operations against Al-Shabaab and "from now we are ready to liberate the rest of the regions of the country from the enemy."

On Monday [13<sup>th</sup> Feb], TFG officials again called on the UN Security Council to lift the arms embargo on Somalia. Hussein Arab Isse said the government had requested the immediate removal of the embargo following the announcement that Al-Shabaab and Al Qaeda had joined forces. "We want to fight Al-Shabaab and wipe them out of the region". The Defence Minister added that the TFG "wants to buy our own tanks and modern weapons to crush Al-Shabaab...to facilitate our security and rebuilds our ability to fight the insurgent group."

### **... ICG report on Kenya's intervention**

On Wednesday [15<sup>th</sup> Feb], the Brussels-based International Crisis Group released a report on Kenya's military intervention in Somalia in October last year which it calls "the biggest security gamble Kenya has taken since independence". It emphasizes that Kenya must act cautiously and avoid a prolonged "occupation" in case it turns local opinion against it and galvanizes opposition which Al-Shabaab could exploit. The report questions whether the operation was given the go-ahead with adequate political, diplomatic and military preparation. The report looks at the background to the decision including the pressures from the Somali refugee problem in Kenya, Kenya's "Jubaland project" and the threat to tourism. It also lists the challenges that the intervention faces: Al-Shabaab's tactics and operations, the need to protect its supply lines and to win hearts and minds, the possible problems of urban conflict in Kismayo and other towns, and the terrorist threat to Kenya. It notes that Kenya's move was motivated in part to inoculate Kenya's North Eastern province from the situation across the border, to ease the huge refugee problem and to curtail the activities and influence of Al-Shabaab. However, it warns that there might be unintended consequences, and the operation could reopen old wounds, cause new inter-clan discord, radicalize some elements in Kenya and undermine recent economic and political developments.

The report suggests Al-Shabaab intends to try and destabilise North Eastern province and wage a low intensity guerrilla campaign. Kenya will therefore need to ensure there is a settlement in southern Somalia in order to provide stability for its own border areas. This means not only defeating Al-Shabaab but for Kenya and its partners to develop a political plan that provides incentives for local clans to work together in the region. It will need careful planning and support and continued international involvement in development and capacity-building, and a body to control the resources of Kismayo, a perennial source of conflict, equitably. "Unless this occurs, there is little chance for long-term peace in the Juba Valley". For Kismayo, the ICG suggests a transparent mechanism to assume responsibility for revenue collection for 5-10 years with an oversight board of mixed international and Somali membership but controlled by the former and supported by experts and international customs officers, to ensure revenues are used to develop all of Lower and Middle Juba and Gedo. More plausibly, the ICG also suggests that the Kenyan Government should articulate its aims and goals and outline its exit strategy clearly, and ensure that any offensive operations, either independent or as part of AMISOM, are accompanied by a political strategy to win local clan support.

### **...and the UN's Garowe constitutional conference, part II**

On Wednesday [15<sup>th</sup> Feb], the second phase of the UN organized Constitutional Conference opened in Garowe, Puntland, to continue discussions on issues relating to the principles of the Roadmap, particularly Somalia's future constitution and federalism. More than 180 delegates attended the opening session, including President Sheikh Sharif, Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Ambassador Mahiga. Representatives of the UN, the AU, IGAD and of Djibouti and international aid agencies were also present as well as ministers, representatives of the TFIs and of other administrations and organizations including Galmudug and Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a. Also present were President Abdirahman

Muhammed 'Farole' and Vice-President Abdisamad Ali Shire of Puntland. Garowe is, of course, the capital of Puntland. Also present is Sharif Hassan, still recognized as the Speaker of the Transitional Federal Parliament by the UN Political Office and by the international community, despite his 'replacement' in December by Madobe Nunow Mohamed. Despite appeals to settle the dispute, the dissident parliamentarians also held a meeting on Wednesday in Mogadishu. 268 MPs made clear their opposition to the Garowe Conference, claiming that it was only designed to benefit the interests of a few individuals, particularly Sharif Hassan rather than Somalia, and was not in accordance with the law. A major element in the discussion over the constitution revolves around proposals to sharply limit the number of MPs, at the moment numbering 550. Sharif Hassan himself said during the opening ceremonies of the conference that everyone had come "to agree on the constitution which will be used to govern the country". He urged conflicting sides to think about how to reduce arguments and misunderstandings and resolve issues through reconciliation. Prime Minister Abdiweli said there was need to move from the reconciliation period to a fair government to reach across the country. A federal administration was, he said, a very important element in reaching the TFG's goals.

### **Sudan and South Sudan's MOU on Non-Aggression and Cooperation**

On Friday last week [10<sup>th</sup> Feb] the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM) Committee met in Addis Ababa to sign a Memorandum of Understanding on Non-Aggression and Cooperation under which Sudan and South Sudan agreed to respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, accept the principle of non-interference in each other's internal affairs and reject the use of force. They also committed themselves to the principles of equality and mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence and recalled their previously agreed commitment to the principle of promoting the mutual viability of the two states and the maintenance of a secure Sudan and a secure South Sudan. The two parties also agreed not to support political parties, political actors or opposition armed groups and movements within the other state. Each promised to refrain from carrying out military acts and espionage activities against the other. In rejecting force, both parties agreed to resolve their differences through peaceful means and refrain from any bombardment of each other's territory or conduct over-flights into the airspace of the other. Neither would they allow their territory to be used by any other state, armed group or movement to conduct any act of aggression or to undertake any military activity against the territory of the other. They further agreed to conduct their relations and to cooperate on the bases of equality and the promotion of mutual benefit as well as maintain diplomatic relations to ensure peace, stability and security and joint mechanisms to foster cooperation in various areas.

UN Secretary-General, Ban ki-Moon, welcomed the agreement and urged both countries to maintain the positive spirit the agreement demonstrated and to abide by its provisions. However within a couple of days, South Sudan was accusing Sudan of bombing a border town; Sudan claimed the operation involved an attack on rebels inside Sudan not in South Sudan.

In his statement, the UN Secretary-General also expressed concern over the lack of progress to resolve post-independence issues including oil. While the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC) has agreed on several areas such as the return of IDPs and

movement of nomads as well as support for UNISFA to continue its engagement with the various communities and follow up the implementation of the AJOC decisions on the ground, many other issues remain to be discussed between the two sides. These include the matter of the displaced population in Abyei and the continued escalation of tension. The two parties also need further negotiations on other security related issues including the question of a “soft border”, nationality and legal matters.

Most immediately at issue is the still unresolved matter of oil over which tension continues to rise after South Sudan’s shutdown of production last month, and Sudan’s continued insistence on high transit fees. No progress was made in this despite the MOU on Non Aggression and Cooperation, and South Sudan accused Sudan of seizing an additional 2.4 million barrels of oil shipments at the beginning of the week. Last month, it accused Sudan of stealing \$815 million worth of oil. Sudan said it had confiscated some oil to recover unpaid transit fees. The two sides remain far apart in their offers and over whether South Sudan should pay transport, processing and terminal fees which South Sudan says are already paid to contractors. The effects of the impasse will certainly have major ramifications on the economies of both states especially South Sudan where oil revenues account for over ninety five percent of the budget.

Other economic aspects including currency, banking relations and regulations, trade and the division of assets and liabilities including water still have to be addressed in the economic negotiations between the two parties. Another major concern where time is running out is the 8<sup>th</sup> April deadline for the half a million South Sudanese in Sudan to choose to return to South Sudan or decide to stay in Sudan where they will have to regularize their status. One hundred and twenty thousand South Sudanese have registered with the UNHCR to leave Sudan but the International Organization for Migration fears the logistics of moving these numbers in the time available, let alone half a million, is impossible.

President Obama’s Special Envoy to Sudan, Ambassador Princeton Lyman joined the talks on Monday [20<sup>th</sup>]. China has also been trying to help bridge the differences. On Wednesday, the AU Peace and Security Council appealed to both sides to remain committed to the negotiations on oil with a view to reaching a “fair agreement”. The Council stressed the AU’s “deep concern at the unilateral actions taken by both states in regard to the issue of oil and petroleum matters”, and it appealed to the international community and the UN Security Council for support to facilitate resolution of the outstanding matters of post-secession issues between the two states. Indeed, the role of IGAD, AUHIP and the International Community must be to exert maximum efforts to try to moderate the tensions between the two sides and alleviate the outstanding post-independence issues.

The talks ended on Wednesday this week with no progress on oil, but both sides have agreed to further discussions next week. It will be imperative that they then actually talk to each other rather than merely continue to talk at one another as they did this week.

## Clashes in northern Kenya displace thousands across the border

Towards the end of last year, several weeks of fighting between the Gabra and Borana pastoralist communities living in northern Kenya led to the death of at least 15 people, the displacement of several thousand more, and the disruption of transport in the area around the town of Moyale. The fighting was apparently triggered by attempts to seize a grazing area. Police reservists in the area were also accused of using their weapons in support of their communities and over 170 of them were subsequently disarmed after Internal Security Minister, George Saitoti, said some had been behaving in a partisan manner. Extra police were drafted into the area in December but there was another wave of fighting at the beginning of the year after clashes broke out between youths attending a peace meeting. Several people were killed and dozens of houses burnt in several villages near Moyale. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Nairobi at least 46 people had died by the end of the first week in January. There was a brief pause in the fighting and then further clashes broke out in mid January. The continuing insecurity has meant that it has been impossible to collect accurate figures but by early February the Kenyan Red Cross estimated that some 9,500 families, nearly 60,000 people had been displaced, with over 60 killed and more than a thousand houses burnt, with crops and livestock as well as property being destroyed. The worst affected areas were the settlements of Heilu, Kinisa, Buthye, Bori, Mansile, Illadu, Manyatta and Odda. Education was also badly affected in Moyale with over half of the area's 31 schools failing to reopen after the holidays.

Thousands of those affected by the clashes fled across the border into Ethiopia, and the numbers are now estimated at just under 30,000. Half of these people originally fled to Ethiopia earlier but had returned when the fighting had died down in January. Now they are back again, and according to a verification exercise conducted by the Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector and local authorities with assistance from the International Organization for Migration there are approximately 17,000 in Moyale woreda, Borena zone in the Oromia Regional State and another 11,000 in the Somali Regional State in Moyale woreda, Liben zone. Many of these are living with host families, but food, plastic sheets and household items have been sent to the area and are being distributed to the refugees.

While it appeared the main motivation for the violence was competition over land for grazing and livestock following last year's drought in which the pastoralist communities lost large numbers of livestock due to lack of pasture and the drying up of water sources, the conflicts have also been linked to politics and to the upcoming general election in Kenya, expected later in the year. Kenya's National Cohesion and Integration Commission said the conflicts "must be treated as electoral related and not dismissed as conflict over water, pasture and cattle rustling". The Kenyan Red Cross also claimed the "trigger of the current conflict is allegedly competition over positions in the county government structures as designated in the new constitution and land-related issues." This has apparently been the cause of similar inter-community violence in the neighboring region of Isiolo where there was an outbreak of violence in December between the Turkana and Somali communities. Several people died and several thousand more were displaced in three days of clashes. This week there was another series of clashes with reports claiming that "dozens" had died. One official was quoted as calling Isiolo "a war zone".

This fighting between the Borana and Gabra is the first since the peace reached between the two communities in Ethiopia and in Kenya at the long series of meetings between elders held between 2004 and 2009 and finalized at Dukana, Maikona and Walda in mid-2009. Now, together with increased security in the area, the elders from both communities are making renewed efforts to re-establish peace. The Chairman of the Borana Council of Elders has said that the government should spearhead peace initiatives but these must allow the crafting of home grown solutions: “local mechanisms need to be employed to solve the problems and local leaders must be involved in the process.” Local administrations and elders on both sides of the border are making renewed efforts to bring about peace between the two communities which straddle the border.

### **International Partnerships in Higher Education Conference**

A three-day International Partnership in Higher Education Conference was convened in Addis Ababa this week under the theme of “Higher Education for Development”. The Conference organized by USAID and HED, and co-sponsored by Addis Ababa University and the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, was held to help to enable the higher learning institutions of Africa and America to work in partnership for education development. Participants included representatives of universities together with African, U.S and European higher education associations, the African Capacity Building Foundation, the World Bank, UNESCO, RUFORUM and the African Union Commission. Also attending were Dr. Gebissa Ejeta, President Obama's Science Envoy, and US Ambassador to Ethiopia, Donald Booth.

The Conference was opened by the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, who noted that the number and diversity of institutions and development partners present demonstrated both the desire and the commitment of governments and the international community, particularly the higher education communities of the U.S and Africa, to solve the societal, national and regional challenges of development. The Deputy Prime Minister acknowledged the US government's continued interest in Africa and its support of development. He said that the globalized and knowledge-based world of today necessitated the need for greater cooperation and collaboration to alleviate poverty, build national institutional and human capacity, ensure peace and stability, improve governance and establish democratic institutions.

The Deputy Prime Minister said Ethiopia was committed to working with the U.S. government and universities to build up its institutional capacities through such efforts as the Feed the Future Initiative, the Global Health and Climate Change and Adaptation programmes, the US-India-Africa trilateral higher education capacity development programme, the recently launched USAID Higher Education Engagement programme and similar initiatives. He believed such initiatives and programmes would have a far-reaching contribution for Africa's transformation and development. However, collaboration between U.S. and African higher education institutions would have meaningful impact only if they were focused on addressing the challenges and problems that had been prioritized by national governments and local people; that were based on mutual agreements and benefits; that were owned and led by Africans; and were designed for long term and sustainable engagement. He noted that Africa-U.S. Higher Education Initiative partnerships had detailed five-year and ten-year perspectives, and

said investing in such plans would help institutions transcend the boundaries between research, education, community services and development policies. He also underlined the critical role the African Diaspora could play in any partnership and engagement and in the implementation of these programmes.

Deputy Prime Minister Hailemariam said Africans were striving to make the 21st century the “century of Africa's renaissance”. The first decade of the century had demonstrated that Africa could achieve significant development in improving its economy, the livelihood of its populations and its competitiveness. The role of higher education in realizing the continent’s vision of progress was critical. The current higher education enrolment rate for Sub-Saharan Africa was estimated to be around 6%, compared to the global average of 26%. With increased graduation from primary and secondary levels, there was a need to expand vocational and tertiary education. Other problems facing African higher education institutions included developing and retaining faculty, ensuring attractive work environments and support for research through post-graduate level programmes. Institutional good governance and management were also crucial and there was a real need of more capacity development in these areas.

Many African governments had put higher education development and reform at the forefront of their development priorities. The Government of Ethiopia currently invested about 18% of its education budget in higher education expansion and reform. The Deputy Prime Minister said it had increased the number of universities in the country from 2 in 1996 to over 30 today, and the student population had increased from around 40,000 to over half a million. There had been a focus on improving the quality and relevance of learning and research. Ethiopia recognized that nothing could explain more clearly its commitment to democracy than these efforts to expand education throughout the country. The thirty-two higher learning institutions and the dozens more training institutes in Ethiopia today were microcosms of a democratic society in the making. Ethiopia's renaissance could not be achieved without the expansion of education. Education was an instrument to put in place a democratic political order which could accommodate diversity and allow peoples of all backgrounds, whether religious or ethnic, to exercise the fullest measure of democratic and self-government rights.

Deputy Prime Minister Hailemariam noted that despite the progress in expanding higher education the Government still needed to forge viable partnerships to enhance the competitiveness of the country’s higher learning institutions, build the capacity of its academic personnel, and of its graduates. The Government believed it could and should learn from the experience of other institutions in the world and Ethiopia’s higher learning institutions were therefore keen to have partnerships with institutions elsewhere. These would allow them to tap into the wealth of knowledge and scientific expertise that more developed universities had achieved. The Government was keen to create viable potential for centres of excellence in the country: for basic and applied sciences and technology at Addis Ababa University; in agriculture, food security and environment at Haramaya, Hawasa and Mekelle universities; in medicine and community-based health sciences at Jimma and Gonder; and in water resources development and engineering at Bahr Dar and Arba Minch universities. He noted that Haramaya and Jimma Universities had been established through collaborative partnerships and support from the U.S government over many years.

This was not just the case for Ethiopia. The Deputy Premier expressed his belief that these partnerships could work closely with national governments and regional entities like the Association of African Universities and African Union Commission, as well as with private sector foundations and local and international stakeholders. Regional centres of excellence could also serve as springboards for regional cooperation, elevating Africa's competitiveness. He quoted the examples of environment and engineering at ZiE in Burkina Faso; of solar power at the University of Cape Town; of veterinary and trans-boundary diseases at Makerere University; of dryland agriculture at the University of Nairobi; and of water resources management and engineering at Addis Ababa University. These, he added, could also be used as stepping stones by the African Union in its recently launched Pan African University initiative. These and other complementary partnerships, with U.S. institutions as well as with other countries including India, China, Brazil, Japan, the U.K., France and other European would assist Africa to develop the next generation of leaders and professionals, entrepreneurs, teachers and researchers and truly make the 21st century the century of Africa's Renaissance.

## **News and Views**

### **A change of UK policy towards Eritrea?**

Eritrea's Foreign Minister, Osman Saleh, and special political advisor to the President, Yemane Ghebreab, visited the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office for the first time last week at the invitation of the UK Government. Analysts in the UK described the visit as a possible shift in UK policy. Eritrea is currently under UN sanctions for its role in destabilization in the Horn of Africa, its support for Al-Shabaab and for its refusal to respond to UN Security Council resolutions 1844 and 1907. Yemane Ghebreab, of course, was described as an "extraordinary threat" to US national security in a presidential order signed by President Obama in April 2010. The Eritrean officials met with the UK's Minister of State for Africa, Henry Bellingham, and other senior officials of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and with the Secretary of State for International Development, Andrew Mitchell. A range of bilateral and regional issues were discussed including regional security and stability, and migration and piracy. Mr. Bellingham underlined the importance that the UK attaches to improvements to human rights including religious and press freedom in Eritrea and the case of the G-11 ministers and officials arrested in September 2001 and held incommunicado without charge or trial ever since. Several are believed to have died in detention. Last month, Eritrea was ranked last for the fifth year running in the Reporters Without Borders press freedom index with at least 34 journalists in prison, including some held in solitary confinement since September 2001. A number of rights groups including Reporters Without Borders have continued to campaign for them. Those detained include the Swedish journalist, Dawit Isaac the subject of a Habeas Corpus petition sent to the Supreme Court in Asmara in July 2011 requesting Dawit's immediate appearance in court under Eritrea's constitutional and criminal code provisions and international obligations. Eritrea, of course, does not have a constitution. The court has so far refused to acknowledge receipt of the petition. Efforts were also made in the UK by the London-based human rights NGO, Redress, by Reporters Without Borders and by the Eritrean human rights campaigner, Elsa Chyrum, to bring Naizghi Kiflu, a former head of security and

information minister at the time of the September 2001 crackdown, to trial for his responsibility for torture of detainees. Naizghi, subsequently an adviser to President Isaias, died in the UK on February 6th after a long illness.

### **Women's Leadership for Peace and Security in the Horn**

Women from eight African countries have held a five day meeting in Hargeisa, the capital of Somaliland, on the theme of "Women's Leadership for Peace and Security in the Greater Horn of Africa". The Conference brought together forty leaders, the G40, from Sudan and South Sudan, Djibouti, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Somaliland. Their objective is the adoption of an action plan to enhance the status and role of women in the region. Supported by the Club of Madrid, an independent non-profit organization of leaders from more than fifty countries, the G40 discussed crisis prevention, democracy, security, development and leadership. Opening the conference, Somaliland's First Lady, Amina Sheikh Mohamed Waris called for concrete action against all forms of discrimination against women. In her keynote speech, she noted that Somaliland was a stable, peaceful and democratic nation that provided opportunities for women despite two decades of non-recognition. It had three women in Parliament, two in key ministerial positions, one deputy minister, and one mayor. The number of women in decision making positions might seem minor compared to other countries but it was a significant achievement for Somaliland's women, and the current Somaliland government was determined to make women's rights, as enshrined in the constitution, a reality. The Hargeisa meeting follows earlier G40 group meetings in Addis Ababa, Nairobi, Kampala and Djibouti also funded by the Club of Madrid, whose leadership includes Kjell Magne Bondevik from Norway, Mary Robinson from Ireland, Valdis Birkavs (Latvia) and Kim Campbell (Canada). Members of the G40 have been involved in participation in Sudan's 2010 parliamentary elections, assessment of the Somali's Constitutional Committee during the drafting process and in the preparation of Somaliland's last elections. Discussing women's issues and increasing women's participation in society "from the grassroots up" is the main agenda of the G40.

### **About 9.5 million people still face famine in the Horn of Africa says Jerry Rawlings**

The African Union's High Representative for Somalia, former President Jerry Rawlings, said a total of 9.5 million people still face the threat of famine in the Horn of Africa with 2.3 million of them in Somalia alone. Although the United Nations has downgraded the status of Somalia from famine to crisis, the country is still at risk of renewed famine if humanitarian aid is cut. He said humanitarian assistance amounting to \$1.5 billion was required to ensure that Somalia would not return to a state of famine. Speaking on the topic of "Somalia, the Horn of Africa and Food Security" in Abu Dhabi last weekend, the AU High Representative said conflict had impacted negatively on food security in Somalia. However, he also expressed confidence that recent successes by AMISOM and the TFG in liberating Mogadishu and other areas would help put in place measures to enhance food security. His warning comes at a time when there is a possible threat of the climatic conditions linked to the drought last year persisting. According to the latest report of the Famine Early Warning Systems Network, the western Pacific is currently exhibiting a sea temperature and rainfall pattern similar to patterns experienced during the drought years of 1984, 2000, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2011. The analysis suggests that if these conditions persist, eastern Kenya, southern Somalia, and

southeastern Ethiopia may experience dry conditions again this year. Early warning officials note that various local factors would come in to play when looking for a detailed and more accurate effect regionally, and stress that the Indian Ocean has the most determinant impact on rainfall patterns in the Horn. The Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum, which monitors local conditions, will be meeting February 27th–29th in Rwanda and its findings should provide greater forecast clarity.

### **Puntland moves against piracy**

According to reports from Puntland, pirates who have been waiting for the monsoon waves and winds of the ‘Wajiilo’ season to die down expect to start operations again in the next week or so. Although pirate activity has not been halted during the last three months, it has been curtailed and pirates expect to intensify activities as soon as the maritime conditions moderate. Preparations are said to be being made in the small ports all along the coast from Harfun to Harardhere and the “investors” who finance these operations are expected back in the next few weeks. In the meantime, Puntland authorities have been increasing their efforts to clamp down on piratical activity. The Puntland Minister of Security, General Khalif Issa Mudan, announced on Monday [13<sup>th</sup> Feb] that 11 pirates had been arrested near Eyl and a speedboat burnt. The Puntland government is planning to set up bases for its maritime police force at a number of ports from which pirates are said to operate including Eyl, Garacad, Bayla and Bargal.