

A Week in the Horn 21st December 2012

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Sudan, South Sudan agree Safe Demilitarized Border Zone implementation

The Chief Mediator of the African Union's High Level Implementation Panel, Thabo Mbeki, said on Tuesday (18th December) that Sudan and South Sudan had agreed to implement the security agreement to establish the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone between the two countries. Delegations of the Sudanese and South Sudanese Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM) agreed on the security arrangements at talks in Addis Ababa. Mr Mbeki said the two sides had agreed "that steps will be taken immediately to ensure the creation of a safe demilitarized border zone. They have agreed on where that border zone is: [this means] that any South Sudanese forces that are north of that zone should move south, 10 kilometres away from the centre line, and the Sudan forces would also move 10 kilometres north of that border line." Mr Mbeki added "Now in the agreement it says within seven days, but in reality it's going to take longer. And the reason it will take longer is because in particular locations where these troops will be [are] positions [where] there is no water. So work will have to be done to make sure that water is provided for the troops that will be located there".

South Sudan's defence minister, John Kong Nyuon, said that an *ad hoc* commission has been established in case there are disagreements on how the accords are implemented. If there are any complaints "the JPSM co-chairs will give the task to the ad hoc committee to verify and investigate the allegations and report to the co-chairs". If necessary the issue can be taken to the two heads of state," Nyuon said. Progress on the new agreements will be discussed at another meeting planned for 13th January. "We will see what the results will be at that time and also discuss any other concerns that may arise," said Sudan's Defence Minister Abdel-Rahim Mohamed Hussein. Discussion of other outstanding issues between the two sides – including the disposition of the Abyei region and disputed border areas - has been postponed until January. President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan and President Salva Kiir of South Sudan are expected to meet on the side-lines of the AU Summit to finalize those issues.

Among these issues remains the future status of Abyei and the African Union has urged the two governments to immediately start negotiations on the Final Status of Abyei. In a communiqué issued after a meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council on Friday (14th December), the Council reiterated that the AU High-level Implementation Panel's Proposal for the Final Status of the Abyei Area was a fair, equitable and workable solution. It noted that the deadline for negotiations on the

issue had been 5th December and it called urgently for these to take place. The Peace and Security Council has repeatedly warned the two countries that if they fail to resolve the Abyei issue it will pass the case back to the UN Security Council. However, in last week's communiqué, the Council said it was referring determination on the issue of the Final Status of Abyei to the meeting of the AU Heads of State and Government to be held in Addis Ababa next month. Peace and Security Commissioner, Ramtane Lamamra said South Sudanese President Salva Kiir and Sudan's President Omar Al-Bashir, had both expressed their willingness to attend a side-line meeting.

Abyei, claimed by both Sudan and South Sudan, is due to be the subject of a referendum over its future but the issue over who should participate remains unresolved. The two main groups are the Ngok Dinka who are settled in the area and consider themselves southerners; and Misseriya nomads who herd their cattle south into Abyei during the dry season. The Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague in 2009 set Abyei's borders around the Ngok Dinka settlements, largely excluding the Misseriya who claim, as regular seasonal inhabitants, they should have a vote. The African Union proposal effectively limits eligibility for the vote to those who reside in the area, essentially excluding the Misseriya. The Sudan government wants further mediation taking into consideration that there is a substantial Misseriya "community living there with Dinka Ngok and they have to be considered." In the meantime, UN Interim Security Forces for Abyei (UNISFA), composed of 4,000 Ethiopian troops, has been deployed in Abyei to keep the peace.

Military progress as India offers defence aid; the AU opens a Mogadishu office

Overnight on Sunday, 16th December, residents of Dinsor town, previously an Al-Shabaab stronghold in the Bay region of Somalia, saw the flight of Al-Shabaab forces from the town in the face of a joint advance of Somali National and Ethiopian forces. Dinsor, held by Al-Shabaab for the last four years, fell to the advancing government and allied forces as part of the government's current initiative to restore peace and security throughout the Gedo, Bay and Bakool regions. Dinsor lies on the road from Baidoa to Bardheere and then down the Juba River valley to Sakow, Buaale, Jilib and to Kismayo. Al-Shabaab was driven out of Kismayo by Somali Government Forces, the allied Ras Kamboni militia and the Kenyan forces of AMISOM at the end of September. The fall of Dinsor adds to a long string of defeats for Al-Shabaab which has recently suffered a whole series of successive military setbacks.

This week, Al-Shabaab went public over a further problem, the rift between the organization and one of its more prominent foreign fighters. It released a statement attacking one of its most prominent former foreign fighters, the American, Omar Hammami, or Abu Mansur al-Amriki. Al-Amriki had released a video in March claiming his life was in danger because of his differences with Al-Shabaab leaders. He later said there were suspicions among the foreign fighters in Al-Shabaab that their Somali allies were responsible for killing some of the more prominent foreign jihadists. He repeated these allegations in a string of tweets which also blamed the leadership for an exodus of foreign fighters from Somalia. Al-Shabaab have now called al-Amriki a "liar and a hunter of fame" claiming he is out of touch with the reality of the fight in Somalia. It says his story has been "feeding the narrative of the Western media that deep ideological differences were beginning to devour the Mujahideen in Somalia", and says "Abu Mansur Al-Amriki does not, in any way, shape or form, represent the views of the Mujahideen in Somalia".

Meanwhile, India has promised defence aid to Somalia. The Indian High Commissioner in Nairobi, Ambassador Sibabrata Tripathi, has expressed the Indian government's readiness to actively support Somalia's effort to rebuild its defence forces with a view to enhance overall regional security. His statement follows an official visit he made to the Somali Ministry of Defence in Mogadishu on Monday (17th December) where he held talks with the Somali Defence Minister, Abdihakim Haji Mohamud Fiqi, on a range of on-going issues. During the discussion, the visiting

High Commissioner praised recent positive developments in Somalia and expressed his country's readiness to provide military aid to help bolster Somalia's security forces. Mr Fiqi, who noted the recent positive gains against Al-Shabaab with the help of AMISOM and other positive forces, said terrorism was still the biggest threat to Somalia. He highlighted the new government's on-going security commitments against terrorism, piracy and other security challenges.

The visit of the Indian High Commissioner was the first visit by an Indian official to Somalia since the collapse of the Somali central government in 1991, but India is reportedly the second country after Turkey to promise direct military assistance to the new Government. IGAD has already launched a Grand Stabilization Plan for Somalia whose objectives include providing coordinated support to the new government to establish a strong national defence force. The plan has wide support from the international community and from the Somalia government. IGAD has repeatedly underlined the importance of providing such support in a coordinated manner and through existing IGAD and UN channels for the best effect. It has expressed concern that proliferation of initiatives will have unintended consequences and minimum effect.

This week the African Union has said it will be opening an office in Mogadishu following the improvements in the security situation since Al-Shabaab was driven out of the city by AMISOM and Somali National forces last year. President Hassan Sheikh Mahmoud welcomed the decision and described the AU's decision as "an important step for the development and improvement of Somalia". He urged other international organizations to follow suit. The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Somalia, Ambassador Mahamat Saleh Annadif, confirmed the AU's plan to relocate its Somalia office from Nairobi to Mogadishu while on a visit to the Somali capital on Tuesday (18th December).

The Special Representative held talks with President Hassan Sheikh Mahmoud and Deputy Prime Minister Fauzia Yusuf Haji Adan, and with senior AMISOM military, police and civilian staff. Ambassador Annadif also met with the UN's special envoy to Somalia, Ambassador Mahiga, with the head of the League of Arab States mission in Somalia, Ambassador Mohamed Abdalla Idris, and with a representative of the Sudanese embassy in Somalia. Following his discussions with President Mahmoud, Ambassador Annadif said that AMISOM has played a crucial role in helping Somalia "overcome decades of strife" and expressed AMISOM's commitment to continue its support to the Somali people "as they move towards a new era of peace and stability". He assured the Somali President of continued support from the AU and AMISOM "for the stabilization efforts of his government". Ambassador Annadif visited the AU's newly built Somali Mission Headquarters, where he himself will be based, as well as the AMISOM Level II Hospital and Out-Patient Department. He said he would be deploying to Mogadishu "on a more permanent basis in the coming weeks". This is the second visit Ambassador Annadif has made to Mogadishu in the last month. The United Nations Political Office for Somalia moved its office and its top-ranking officials, including Special Envoy Mahiga, to Mogadishu in January.

Kenya orders refugees to leave urban areas and move into camps

Kenya has issued a directive ordering all refugees to leave urban areas and report to refugee camps. The UN has estimated that at least 30,000 refugees have been living in Nairobi; the Acting Commissioner for Refugees, Sora Katelo, says there are over 100,000 refugees in urban areas, 60 percent of them in Nairobi. Now, he has ordered all refugees from Somalia to report to the north-eastern Dadaab complex of three camps, Ifo, Dagahaley, and Hagadera, the world's biggest refugee facility that already houses well over 500,000 people. Refugees from other countries have been told to go to Kakuma in the north-west, where over a hundred thousand from Sudan and South Sudan and other countries are living. The directive has also told international aid agencies to stop providing direct services to asylum seekers and refugees in urban areas, and ordered the close-

down of urban registration centres. All asylum seekers can now only be registered in refugee camps.

In fact, Kenya has had a policy for years requiring all people moving into its territory as refugees to live in established camps. Many, however, have been able to avoid the regulations and live in Nairobi and other towns like Garissa in North-Eastern Province in part because of special exceptions which allowed some to leave the camps in order to attend schools, seek medical attention, or join family members already living in cities across Kenya. Now all this is to be tightened up in support of efforts to boost security following the growing number of terrorist attacks inside Kenya in recent months. The attacks have mostly taken place in north-east Kenya and in the Eastleigh district of Nairobi, areas with largely ethnic Somali populations.

There have been over 20 attacks involving grenades, explosive devices or shootings with over 50 people killed and another 200 injured in the last 18 months in Kenya's north eastern Somali inhabited areas as well as in the capital Nairobi, with several explosions in the largely Somali district of Eastleigh. The most recent were in the Pangani area of Nairobi near Al-Amin mosque on Wednesday (18th December). On Sunday (16th), three grenades were thrown from a speeding vehicle on Eastleigh's Muratina road. The same area has been hit more than five times in past months. Among recent incidents were a bomb detonated on a minibus in Nairobi last month with ten people killed; in September, a grenade thrown into a Sunday school killed a 9-year-old boy and injured eight others. Attacks have also targeted North Eastern Province towns. Garissa has also been a target of extremist attacks with a grenade thrown onto the roof of a church at the beginning of November, and two churches attacked at the beginning of July when fifteen people were killed and forty injured. Last night (20th) three people were killed in shooting incidents in Garissa town; and last week six suspected Al-Shabaab terrorists were arrested along the Kenya-Somalia border and arms and grenades seized.

Since Kenyan troops crossed into Somalia in October last year, following a number of Al-Shabaab kidnappings, Kenya has been a target for activities by Al-Shabaab or its sympathizers. Police have arrested hundreds following these incidents including many young men of Somali origin suspected of being connected to the attackers. The government has also put into operation a long-term strategy to help counter the problem, the government has initiated community policing to gain information from districts and enclaves that might harbour Al-Shabaab sympathizers, and offered an informal amnesty to local Al-Shabaab sympathizers who disassociate themselves from the movement. It has also sought to mobilize influential Muslim leaders to publicly condemn the group as well as expand its security response.

In September, President Kibaki appealed to United Nations organizations to start to relocate Somali refugees in Kenya to areas now liberated by AMISOM forces. He suggested that providing humanitarian assistance to the refugees in their home areas inside Somalia was a better option than continuing to support the massive refugee camps in Kenya. Indeed, Kenyan officials have repeatedly expressed their hope that Somalia's improving security situation will allow Somali refugees to begin to return home safely.

Although Al-Shabaab has claimed responsibility for only some attacks, the Kenyan government has made it clear it believes the attacks are being carried out by members or sympathizers of Al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab has repeatedly threatened retaliatory attacks on Kenya unless Kenya stops its intervention in support of the Somali government and AMISOM's fight against Al-Shabaab and extremism in Somalia. Speaking to citizens gathered for the Independence Day celebrations on 12th December the Garissa county commissioner, Maalim Mohammed, claimed that Al-Shabaab was now offering \$8,000 or more as the price of killing any Kenyan security officer on a principle of "the higher the rank, the higher the pay".

Now the government has determined to take further action. Officials have made it clear the new directive is aiming to identify Al-Shabaab members who are using the presence of the thousands of refugees in the urban areas of Kenya as a fertile ground to provide cover for their attacks on civilians. Officials say they are convinced that Somali militants, including some refugees, are involved in the smuggling of the explosives and weapons that are being used to attack security officers, civilians, religious centres, and aid workers. Sora Katelo said the decision over refugees was informed by rising insecurity and the implication of some refugees.

Nairobi's Provincial Commissioner, Njoroge Ndirangu, said this week that intelligence information had revealed some refugees were behind a number of terror-related incidents both in Nairobi and elsewhere. He said this week that "More than 600 people have been arrested some of whom have been arraigned in court. Quite a number of them have been convicted and ordered for repatriation because many have been found to be illegal foreigners." Others were refugees from the Dadaab camps. Commissioner Ndirangu added that the operations were on-going "until we flush out all criminals, not just in Eastleigh, but in all parts of the country." Kenyan security agencies have now been put on high alert following intelligence reports that Al-Shabaab might be planning a series of terrorist attacks during Christmas and the New Year.

Not everyone has agreed. The refugees claim that the majority of those living in Nairobi and other urban areas are genuine refugees, most now involved in legitimate business. They have appealed to the Kenyan government to reconsider its decision. Somalia's ambassador to Kenya, Mohamed Ali Nur, has also expressed hopes that the Kenyan government will review its decision. The majority of Somalis in Nairobi have legal documents issued by Kenya and UNHCR. "Forcing them to go to Dadaab will create a humanitarian situation and overcrowding." said the ambassador. Somalia's Foreign Affairs Minister, Fauzia Yusuf Haji Adan, has gone to Nairobi to discuss the issue. Somalia's president Hassan Sheikh Mohamud also arrived in Nairobi on his first official visit to Kenya since his election in September. He is expected to hold talks with President Mwai Kibaki on bilateral relations, security issues and IGAD's role in stabilizing Somalia.

International organizations working with refugees have also expressed concern over the announcement, and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and NGOs have been meeting with Kenyan officials to discuss the issue. The UNHCR spokesman on refugees, Emmanuel Nyabera, said his office felt "the decision reached by the government was rushed", and his office was "still negotiating with the government to take steps that will both ensure security but also protect the rights of refugees". He said the decision would worsen the already serious overcrowding in Dadaab and Kakuma camps. In the meantime, the UNHCR is continuing registration of refugees in urban areas and provision of healthcare support to dispensaries that serve refugees in urban areas while negotiations with the government continue.

Dr Tedros meets Norway's Foreign Minister, Espen Barth Eide

Dr Tedros Adhanom, Minister of Foreign Affairs, met and discussed various regional and domestic issues of mutual interest with Mr Espen Barth Eide, Foreign Minister of Norway at his office on Monday (17th December). Mr Eide, who expressed his government's appreciation of the rapid and equitable economic development of Ethiopia over the past decade, noted the similarity between the role of the state in Ethiopia's developmental state experimentation and that of the government in Norway's early days of social democracy. Citing the experience of Norway where state monopolies played an important role in its early development, he emphasized the importance of gradual pulling back to smaller state involvement when the private sector was able to play bigger roles. He expressed his government's interest to share Norway's development experience in moving from the one stage to the other. The Foreign Minister reaffirmed Norway's readiness to continue with the

comprehensive development support it is giving to Ethiopia, noting that Ethiopia was one among few countries receiving significant Norwegian development assistance. Dr Tedros, who welcomed Norway's decision to double development assistance to Ethiopia, explained that Ethiopia's development demonstrated equitable growth with commendable figures in the Gini coefficient. Registering rapid economic growth, he said, while also maintaining equitable wealth distribution had always been "the mantra of Ethiopia's development policies".

Regarding the business climate in Ethiopia and on ways to increase Norwegian investment in Ethiopia, the two sides exchanged views on issues pertaining to the investment climate in Ethiopia. The Norwegian Foreign Minister explained that there was growing interest by Norwegian investors for investment in Ethiopia. He noted that investors had raised various queries related to predictability of the business environment, the enforcing of contracts and questions related to rule of law with his Ministry. In reply, Dr Tedros stressed that the investment regime in Ethiopia was highly conducive to businesses but he also noted that a joint committee drawn from relevant ministries has been set up to provide a mechanism to sort out and address any bottlenecks hindering investment flows.

Discussions also covered activities relating to the formulation of 2012 Post Millennium Development Goals. Dr Tedros noted Ethiopia was one of the 50 countries working to formulate these. He said a national consultation has just concluded, adding that a "similar process of selecting best practices and shaping the goals are being undertaken in different countries." He appreciated Norway's assistance to the Global Fund which had helped Ethiopia a great deal in its success in meeting the MDGs.

The two Ministers also discussed the security and political situation of the region. Regarding Somalia, both welcomed the successful formation of the new government and the relative stability of large areas of South and Central Somalia following military defeats of Al-Shabaab. The achievements of the political process that had culminated in the successful formation of the new government was "a milestone". Dr Tedros underlined the point that Al-Shabaab as a political force was rapidly becoming irrelevant for Somalia's future: "Al-Shabaab is losing militarily and more importantly it is losing public support due to the atrocities it committed on the people it claims to liberate". He did, however, caution that dealing with the issue of functioning local administration and provision of public service was a matter of first importance as any vacuum could eventually give way to resurgence of Al-Shabaab. So, he emphasized the importance of increased assistance from the international community to ensure the revival of a stable Somalia administration. He further underlined the importance of making the political process a "Somali owned process" which he said was indispensable for the consolidation of stability in Somalia. Mr Eide explained Norway's efforts to help the new government in Somalia, including its efforts to set up a financial mechanism which will serve as an institutional set-up through which to channel assistance. Norway is also working with the new government through the International Contact Group for Somalia in identifying the priority areas for the government.

On Eritrea, Dr Tedros detailed Eritrea's destabilizing attempts and its behaviour as a spoiler of the region. He noted that Eritrea had launched diplomatic efforts with the aim of re-joining IGAD and getting the UN sanctions lifted. He said Ethiopia's position was very clear: Eritrea should renounce its destabilizing stance before requesting readmission to the regional body or any lifting of sanctions. Unfortunately, however, the regime's practices had shown no abatement of destabilization activity or any change in its policies. In these circumstances, the "UN sanctions regime should to be tightened rather than relaxed." He noted that Eritrea's requests for readmission to IGAD would do little for the consolidation of the regional body. Mr Eide explained Norway's recent decision to close its embassy in Asmara. He emphasized the importance of maintaining stability within the region.

The two Ministers discussed the current situation between the Sudan and South Sudan and underlined the importance of continuing negotiations on Abyei and other unresolved issues. They agreed on the importance of ensuring the implementation of the Addis Ababa agreements as vital to the stability of the two neighbours and the region. Mr Eide expressed Norway's concern over the humanitarian situation in the two countries and underlined the importance of regional efforts to bring the two sides into agreement on the remaining issues. They also exchanged views on the role of regional economic communities and the Africa Union in realizing Africa's transformational development and ensuring the peace and stability of the continent. In his final remarks, Mr Eide congratulated Ethiopia on its election as a member of the UN Human Rights Council: Dr Tedros assured the Minister that Ethiopia would be committed to the success of the objectives of the Council.

During his visit to Ethiopia, the Norwegian Foreign Minister also met with other officials and paid a visit to the African Union where he held talks with the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, on Tuesday (18th December) in his office at AU Headquarters. They discussed the celebrations for the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of the Organization of African Unity to be marked next year, and exchanged views on the AU's perspectives on future peace and security in Africa. The main focus of their talks, however, was the security situation in Somalia and how the international community can help the reconstructions efforts of Somalia, focusing on post-conflict reconstruction, development efforts and peace building. Commissioner Lamamra highlighted the security challenges involved in dealing with Al-Shabaab defections and the issue of piracy. The two officials exchanged views on the need for supporting institution building in Somalia, including the importance of Security Sector Reform. They paid tribute to the Transitional Federal Government forces and to the troops and leadership of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), for their commitment and courage. They further stressed the need for enhanced cooperation between the AU and all stakeholders. The Ambassador of Norway, Odd-Inge Kvalheim, and other senior officials attended the discussion.

UN Under-Secretary General praises Ethiopia's progress on HIV/AIDS

A delegation from the United Nations led by the Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UNAIDS, Mr Michel Sidibé, was in Addis Ababa this week on an official visit to Ethiopia. The Under-Secretary General held discussions with Prime Minister Hailemariam and with Foreign Minister Tedros and other officials as well as the AU Commissioners for Social Affairs and for Peace and Security.

Mr Sidibé who heads up UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDs, began his visit with discussions with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Tedros Adhanom. He congratulated Dr Tedros on his move from the Ministry of Health to his new ministerial portfolio and offered his heartfelt condolences on the untimely passing of the late Prime Minister. Mr Sidibé paid tribute to the legacy of the late Prime Minister and his visionary commitment to the struggle for a better Africa. The Under-Secretary General took the opportunity to highlight the tremendous progress Ethiopia had made in reducing new HIV/AIDS infection rates among adults, by 90% over the last decade. When compared to the continental average of 50% decline over the same period, Mr Sidibé described this achievement as a huge breakthrough. He said this demonstrated to the world that "it is possible to prevent HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa". Dr Tedros explained that the success of national HIV/AIDS campaign was due to the continuing support and assistance of UNAIDS.

Both the Minister and the Under-Secretary General expressed their commitment to the African Union Roadmap on AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. This charts a new course for Africa's responses to AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria and emphasizes the importance of shared responsibility and global solidarity. The Minister acknowledged the new road map's innovative approach and

explained it allowed African leaders to take charge of the process of transforming health responses to diseases around the continent. They also discussed the importance of translating into action the three strategic pillars of the framework: health governance, diversified financing and access to medicines. Mr Sidibé underlined the need for the continent to reduce dependence on foreign medication imports, increase local production of vital medicine and develop the use of health diplomacy as an extension of national foreign policy.

Mr Sidibé followed up his discussions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a meeting with Prime Minister Hailemariam. The Executive Director of UNAIDS congratulated the Prime Minister on his appointment and underlined his confidence that he will build on the foundation laid down by his predecessor, whom Mr Sidibé described as always a dedicated advocate for the improvement of Ethiopia's responses to HIV/AIDS. Prime Minister Hailemariam highlighted the role of the country's development agenda in improving the health status of families using local technologies, community capacity building and education. Mr Sidibé called on the Prime Minister, **as the incoming Chairperson of the African Union** and as the chair of AIDS Watch Africa, to support this as a mechanism for accountability on the African continent. He also urged the Prime Minister to assume a proactive role in translating the African Union Roadmap on AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in action.

In his discussions with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, Mr Sidibé also showed a keen interest in the improving security situation in Somalia, in the progress of negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan, and in the regional efforts at economic integration, and their effects on producing broader peace and stability in the Horn.

During discussions with the new Minister of Health, Dr Kesetebirhan Admassu, Mr Sidibé was briefed on the important progress being made in improving the country's health sector and its continuing response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Dr Kesetebirhan also pointed to the importance of UN support for the country's accelerated plan for eliminating new HIV infections among children and for providing paediatric anti-retroviral treatment to children. According to the UNAIDS' latest World AIDS Day Report only 24% of pregnant women living with HIV receive antiretroviral therapy to reduce HIV transmission. The Minister explained that it was with this in mind that initiatives to prevent new HIV infections among children will be given more focus in the country's health programme.

The Under-Secretary General met with the AU Commissioner for Social Affairs, Mustapha Sidiki Kaloko, at the African Union Commission. During their discussions, Mr Kaloko urged UNAIDS to offer assistance to the African Union in developing a cross-cutting HIV/AIDS programme which could involve all sectors of the Commission. Mr Sidibé also held discussions with the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra. The Under-Secretary General called on the AU and its partners on the continent to push for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1983, adopted in June 2011. This calls for HIV prevention efforts to be aligned with efforts to end sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings.

A Business Delegation from France visits Ethiopia

This week, a French business delegation led by M. Dominique Lafont, head of Mouvement des Entreprises de France (MEDEF), which includes over three hundred member companies, visited Ethiopia. The delegation, which was accompanied by Ambassador Teshome Toga, the Ethiopian Ambassador in Paris, included representatives of more than fifteen French companies involved in such areas as railway operations, power generation systems, international transport, airport engineering, construction, steelworks, and machinery.

The delegation held a meeting with Prime Minister Hailemariam who invited investors to engage in any of the various development sectors in the country, and pledged the government's all-round support. He said the government would offer various incentives to companies and potential French investors. He stressed the investment climate coupled with the stable political situation, the country's favourable economic policies and its immense natural resources would benefit French companies and investors. He also added that investment cooperation would further enhance the age-long relations and strong cooperation of the two countries.

The delegation also met with officials of the Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation (EEPCO), the Ethiopian Railway Corporation as well as with Ato Diriba Kuma, the Minister of Transport, Mohammed Seyed of the Ethiopian Investment Agency, and officials of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, Customs and Revenue, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In discussions, held in the office of Transport Minister, Diriba Kuma, the Minister said the presence of the delegation showed the interest French businessmen had in further strengthening the longstanding business relationship between the two countries. Ethiopia and France, he said, had a relationship that was continuing to evolve. This covered people-to-people, government-to-government and business-to-business relations as well as city-to-city links. The discussion also allowed Ethiopia to re-affirm its commitment to provide necessary and relevant assistance for investors. Minister Diriba noted that Ethiopia was fully engaged in its fight against its arch-foe, poverty, centred on the process of implementing the five-year Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), which gives particular focus on power generation, telecommunication expansion and transport improvement, including road and railway development. He said the participation of foreign investment and foreign investors would help to realize these massive transformational plans. He underlined that their discussions aimed to provide all the information needed about the business and investment opportunities available in Ethiopia.

Following the opening remarks by the Minister, Ato Mohammed Seyed, from the Ethiopian Investment Agency, presented the investment opportunities available in Ethiopia, pointing out the possibilities for investment in agriculture, with the production of food and beverage crops, cotton, horticulture, livestock and fisheries, and in manufacturing including food and beverage processing, tanning and leather products, textiles, glass and ceramics, chemicals and paper products as well as in mining, tourism, infrastructure and services. He added details of Ethiopia's value for investment: its stability; its over 80 million population, the second largest population in Sub-Saharan Africa after Nigeria and its huge domestic market potential; its social harmony and the government's zero tolerance of corruption; one of the fastest economic growths in the world, with nearly a decade of double digit growth; its membership of the COMESA regional block with an over 400 million population; and its relative proximity to Asian, Middle East and European markets.

M. Dominique Lafont said that Ethiopia is on the right track to achieve its plans and projects and the companies which the delegation represented were keen to be involved in the transformational projects. He noted that Ethiopia's policy **to integrate the region through electricity and transportation was an excellent strategy**. He said the companies on the delegation were well experienced in Africa, including Ethiopia as well as other parts of the world in the logistics, management and engineering of developing infrastructure. He noted the companies would like to engage with Ethiopia in various infrastructural areas, particularly in railway and airport development, which was often a bottle neck for development in many developing countries. He explained that some of the companies were already engaged in projects in Ethiopia. M. Lafont emphasized that these were French companies which were ready and showing genuine interest in being involved in Ethiopia.

Minister Diriba concluded by pointing out that the Ethiopian government was ready and committed to assist investors in Ethiopia. He noted that economic, legal and social factors as well as political stability allowed investors to run their business smoothly. Ethiopia is now attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from all corners of the world due to its conducive and workable policies and strategies, its political and economic stability, its easily trainable and relatively cheap labour force and, importantly, its security for investment. The government is fully committed to providing the necessary support for investment. Ethiopia welcomes investment. It is a land of investment from which investors can gain profit.

News and Views:

World Bank launches US\$4bn new Country Partnership Strategy for Ethiopia

The World Bank on Wednesday (19th December) launched its new Country Partnership Strategy for Ethiopia. Covering the period 2013 to 2016, the new strategy launched in Addis Ababa plans to offer US\$4 billion to enhance competitiveness and employment generation. It aims to help Ethiopia address on-going challenges and assist in the implementation of its development efforts. The money will be used to build on the progress achieved by Ethiopia over the past five years. The Country Partnership Strategy framework includes two main pillars with governance as the foundation says a document released at the launching ceremony. It aims to support Ethiopia in improving the delivery of social services and develop a comprehensive approach to social protection and risk management. This support will include "fostering competitiveness and employment" in the country while "enhancing resilience and reducing vulnerabilities". Ethiopia's Minister of Finance and Economics, Sufian Ahmed, who welcomed the new strategy and the World Bank's efforts to support Ethiopia, said "the World Bank has been at the forefront in support of Ethiopia's revival and transformation". He said the strategy would be crucial to maintain the country's 11 per cent economic growth rate and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals set out in the five-year plan. The World Bank's Country Director, Guang Chen, said the World Bank's four-year plan "is a result-based strategy anchored in Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan", which envisions Ethiopia extricating itself **"from poverty to reach the level of a middle-income economy between 2020 and 2023"**. He said that the strategy, "coinciding with the World Development Report 2013 on jobs, puts particular emphasis on supporting Ethiopia's agenda in enhancing competitiveness and employment generation as one of the key pillars of the Country Partnership Strategy".

UNDP signs MoU with Ethiopia supporting the green economy

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development to support Ethiopia's effort to build a resilient green economy. The agreement was signed between Ahmed Shide, State Minister of Finance and Economic Development and Eugene Owusu, UNDP Director for Ethiopia on Wednesday (19th December). Under the MoU, the Ministry will have a role in coordinating finance donated by development partners to different government offices in connection with projects aimed at building a resilient green economy. In addition, the Ministry of Finance will have responsibility to lead and administer the efforts of building the green economy. The UNDP will have the responsibility of administering finances from international donors for facilitation works. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development will now establish a facilitating national committee in which the Federal Environment Authority and other ministries will participate. This National Facilitating Committee to coordinate ministerial activities will be headed by the office of the Minister. Under

the agreement, technical committees tasked with drawing up green investment plans will also be established by the Federal Environment Authority.

State Minister Berhane signs agreement with CARE USA

The State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Berhane Gebrechristos, signed a legal framework agreement for international institutional cooperation with Mrs Abby Maxman, Vice-President of International Programmes and Operations, CARE USA, on 17th December. The agreement enables CARE USA to set up an International Programme and Operations Office in Ethiopia, and creates favourable conditions and an appropriate environment for the activities of the office. The Office will be responsible for facilitating, monitoring and supporting the country offices of CARE in various regions of Africa. During the signing programme at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Berhane said that Ethiopia valued the role that CARE USA played, particularly during such times as the famine emergency in Ethiopia in 1984. He expressed Ethiopia's belief that civil societies can make significant contributions in filling possible gaps in development. The Government fully recognized the considerable role of NGOs in supporting the country's efforts in development and democracy, and Ambassador Berhane expressed the Government's readiness to engage with civil society organizations on a project basis in these areas. Such an approach enables Ethiopians to own these issues and ensure effective delivery of operations in a mutually acceptable manner. NGOs provided a third line of action along with government and the private sector. In this regard, Ambassador Berhane noted, the Civil Societies law enables effective engagement despite fears of a few organizations that the law was detrimental to their operations. He expressed his hope of greater convergence between different actors and government interests as this would enable greater and more effective mutual cooperation. Vice-President Maxman said she is delighted at the opportunity to open CARE's new office in Addis Ababa. She said her office recognized the important role Ethiopia played in development, and expressed its readiness, in consultation with donor countries, to provide support for the country's development efforts.

Somaliland ready to resume talks with Somalia

President Ahmed Mohamed Silanyo of Somaliland has said that he and President Hassan Sheikh Mahmoud of Somalia have agreed on the importance of "the suspended talks between our two countries", though they had not fixed any time or place for their resumption. The two met for the first time in Djibouti where they were both attending the week-long celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Somali Speaking Pen, an organization which has over the years taken charge of promoting the proper usage of Somali language, evaluating the trends in the Somali language, both oral and written. Somalia decided to use the Roman alphabet for the written form of the Somali language in 1973. The Conference was attended by President Ismail Omar Guelleh, dignitaries and officials, academics and Somali language experts, linguists and poets from all Somali speaking areas. According to President Silanyo, he and President Hassan both hope that once talks are resumed they will be concluded "to the satisfaction of the citizens of our two neighbouring countries". The two leaders issued a statement after the meeting which said that "Both parties agreed to the continuation of this dialogue and agreed to allow the two committees, formed by the presidents, to continue the talks to clarify the relationship between the two sides." The first formal talks between Somalia and Somaliland, between the then President of Somalia, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, and President Silanyo, took place in Dubai in June this year following talks at the London Conference on Somalia in February, where their representatives met. The meeting in Dubai, encouraged by Britain, Norway and the European Union, was the first formal direct contact in 21 years since Somaliland unilaterally declared its independence from Somalia.

EU to support Djibouti's desalination water plant project

The European Union's Development Commissioner, Andris Piebalgs, on Wednesday (19th December) said the European Union will support Djibouti's project to build a desalination plant. The plant will use renewable energy to provide water to 200,000 people, a quarter of the country's population. The EU will provide €40.5 million of the estimated cost of €46 million for the plant. The remaining €5.5 million will be financed from Djibouti. The announcement was made following a visit to Brussels by Djibouti's Prime Minister, Mr Dileita Mohamed Dileita. Announcing the funding, the Development Commissioner said "access to water is a human right and it's unacceptable that insufficient water supply can be a source of conflict, as Djibouti recently experienced". He said that with the new project the EU is "not only increasing access to water for the people" but also helping "to bring security and stability for all Djiboutians". Djibouti suffers from an acute water shortage and recently endured a prolonged drought. Only half the water needed for the city can come from the local aquifer, which has now reached its physical limit. The only viable alternative is desalination. The PEPER (Producing Safe Drinking Water with Renewable Energy) project will set up a desalination plant in the capital to directly respond to the need to provide affordable and clean drinking water. The project is one of the components of the EU's Sustainable Energy for All initiative, which President Barroso announced in April. The project is in line with commitments made at the Rio +20 summit and marks the first step towards Djibouti's goal of moving towards 100% renewable energy by 2020.

Lifan Motors to open additional assembly plant in Ethiopia

China's Lifan Industry Group Company, one of China's largest private manufacturers of motorcycles and passenger cars, has announced plans to launch a new assembly plant in Ethiopia next year with an annual capacity of 1,500-2,000 vehicles at a cost of up to US\$5 million. The company already operates an assembly operation in Addis Ababa, and the new plant would double capacity. The deputy general manager of Lifan in Ethiopia, Roger Tian, said demand for Lifan cars had been growing at an average of 30% for the past three years, and the company anticipated a 40% to 50% rise in demand next year. He said Lifan accounted for 70% of car-assembly in Ethiopia, and had sold 1,200 units in the last financial year. Mr Tian said that the vast majority of Lifan parts were currently imported from China but noted that the company planned to use locally produced engines, seats and other components in the future. Lifan was the first company to assemble vehicles in Ethiopia in 2007 in partnership with Holland Cars, but has been operating independently since 2009. Ethiopia now has nine vehicle assembly companies and the government wants it to become an important car-production hub in future. It currently assembles passenger vehicles and pick-up trucks with engine capacities of up to 2.8 litres as well as buses, tractors and trailers, with a growing volume of parts also being manufactured here for all vehicle types. The Growth and Transformation Plan calls for 85% of car content to be produced locally by 2015, and **plans are in place for full car production in Ethiopia within the next three years**. The Government is actively encouraging development of local companies and further investment by overseas auto makers to exploit Ethiopia's advantages which include the value of low-cost labour, a growing market and the country's peaceful and secure environment. Another future focus will also be on producing eco-friendly cars as Ethiopia, developing its green economy, embarks on plans to export vehicles to neighbouring countries.