

A Week in the Horn 23rd March 2012

- **A single, limited attack on terrorist training camps in Eritrea.....**
- **.....and the media's need to look at the actual facts**
- **.....while Eritrea is condemned at the 19th Session of the UN Human Rights Council**
- **The need for local administrations in liberated areas in Somalia.....**
- **.....and further military advances**
- **...while U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Africa agrees there is progress**
- **Egypt's Coptic Patriarch, Pope Shenouda III, dies**
- **An EU conference for an 'anti-disaster programme' in the Horn of Africa**
- **"Light Manufacturing" could transform Ethiopia's economic structure**

News and Views (Page 12):

- **Al- Shabaab's Abu Mansour Al-Amriki appears to be in trouble**
- **Puntland Anti-Piracy Conference.....**
- **....and NATO extends its anti-piracy mission off Somalia**
- **An African Development Bank delegation visits Somaliland**
- **Mogadishu's National Theatre re-opens after two decades**
- **Ethiopia's Consul in Lebanon files a suit over the death of Alem Dechassa**

A single, limited attack on terrorist training camps in Eritrea.....

On Thursday 15th March, as we noted in A Week in the Horn last week, units of the Ethiopian Defence Forces attacked three military targets inside Eritrea. These were camps where the Eritrean government had been training and arming terrorist and subversive groups, including the one which recently attacked, killed and abducted European tourists in the Afar Regional State. The operation was a limited military measure, a carefully calculated and proportional response to the recent attack against innocent tourists in the Afar region and to continued destabilizing activities being carried out by Eritrea.

This week, the Minister of State in the Foreign Ministry, Ambassador Berhane Gebrechristos, has been briefing the representatives of the international community on last week's operation, European and American ambassadors on Wednesday [21st March], African and Asian representatives on Thursday and Friday. Ambassador Berhane pointed out that Ethiopia has been the target of Eritrean incursions and destabilizing activities in the region for a long time. Eritrea's support for terrorist groups is, of course, public knowledge, and the UN Monitoring Group's findings have clearly showed the extent of Eritrea's involvement in efforts to destabilize the entire Horn of Africa. Ethiopia, together with IGAD member countries and the AU, has

consistently called on the international community to take action against Eritrea. They supported sanctions against Eritrea in the hope that these would encourage Eritrea to mend its ways. The imposition of sanctions has certainly had some impact, but it has still failed to persuade the Eritrean government to stop its activities completely as the killing of the tourists in January demonstrated.

The attack on Thursday last week [15th March] was on three military camps at Gimbi, Galahbe and Ramid where the Eritrean government has been training terrorist and subversive groups. Ethiopia was fully aware of the existence of these camps and of the fact that the regime in Asmara was amassing hundreds of terrorists to launch further attacks on civilian targets in Ethiopia. The camps are run by Eritrean regular army units who also carry out the training operations. This has been going on for a long time, and amounts to all intents and purposes to an act of war. Indeed, Ethiopia has in the past unequivocally warned the Eritrean Government that it will take proportional measures in self-defence if necessary.

The operation was in no way aimed to provoke any full-scale retaliatory measures, nor was it intended to do anything other than convey the message that Eritrea's destabilizing activities had led to these consequences. **The message is that none of Eritrea's aggressive activities will remain unanswered.** This should provide a very clear statement that violation of Ethiopia's borders cannot continue indefinitely. Escalation of the situation is unlikely. Ambassador Berhane made it very clear this week that **there had been no subsequent operations by Ethiopian forces across the border.** Ethiopia, he said, was only concerned to take the proportional measures to stop Eritrea's destabilizing activities.

The regime in Asmara continues to try to hide behind a non-issue, that is the Ethiopia-Eritrea border issue which the prevarication of the Eritrean leadership has in fact made impossible to resolve. If, indeed, the real problem between Eritrea and Ethiopia is the unresolved border dispute then the obvious way out of the dilemma is to talk, not to attempt to destabilize Ethiopia. Ethiopia firmly believes that disputes between two neighbouring countries can and should be solved by peaceful means. On the basis of its acceptance of the Boundary Commission's decisions, Ethiopia has repeatedly expressed its willingness to engage in dialogue and negotiations with the Eritrean government, at any place, at any level and without preconditions to work out the necessary details of implementation.

The Eritrean government has persistently chosen to continue its attacks on civilians and infrastructural targets through surrogate terrorist groups. This is why the international community should once again take a hard, serious look at the track-record of the Eritrean regime. This makes it clear that the Eritrean government only responds to serious pressure. The United Nations Security Council should now take action and tighten the sanctions already imposed on the regime. **Last week's operation was a restrained and careful response by Ethiopia but it underlines the dangers if the international community fails to take meaningful and serious measures to prevent further Eritrea's efforts to destabilize the region.** Indeed, in the absence of effective measures by the international community, there is always the possibility that individual countries might find themselves forced to taking unilateral measures. Ethiopia would certainly prefer this not to happen.

In response to questions, Ambassador Berhane said it was quite clear from the letters sent by Ethiopia to both the UN and the Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission that Ethiopia had accepted the Boundary Commission's decision unconditionally, and that it was ready to have dialogue on the implementation of the decision based on international practice. This, the Eritrean regime had persistently refused to do. Many partners had tried to mediate. None would suggest Ethiopia had refused to cooperate or negotiate at any point. It was Eritrea which had consistently refused to do so, refusing to accept the appointment of negotiators or denying their entry into Eritrea. Allegations that Ethiopia was preventing Eritrea's readmission to IGAD were equally groundless. Reference to IGAD procedures showed that it was up to a Heads of States summit to decide on whether Eritrea should be allowed to re-join IGAD. It was not up to Ethiopia. All member states had an equal say. Ambassador Berhane added that the regime in Eritrea had a track record of invasion of Yemen, Sudan, Djibouti (twice) and Ethiopia which clearly demonstrated its use of violence and destabilization as a means to try to achieve its aims throughout the region.

.....and the media's need to look at the actual facts

Ethiopia's response may have been careful, limited, precise and proportional, and indeed legitimate but there have still been some commentators who have indulged in exercises in imagination, attributing different intentions to Ethiopia. While some of these are certainly the result of journalists lazily settling for easy assumptions, there are some more serious misconceptions in several of these analyses, including false perceptions and inaccurate historical interpretations.

A number of issues in the last decade still apparently cause confusion even when it should be clear Ethiopia has consistently pursued a principled position based on mutual interest and respect, going to great lengths to try to resolve differences peacefully. The 1998 invasion of Ethiopia by Eritrea was a case in point. Ethiopia was the victim, not the aggressor, though many in the international community at the time thought Ethiopia might perhaps be entertaining hegemonic ambitions towards Eritrea.

Simon Allison of the Daily Maverick is the latest commentator to repeat this. According to him, the 1998-2000 Ethiopia-Eritrea war was instigated by Ethiopia. This assertion flies full in the face of the findings of the Claims Commission which squarely identified Eritrea's full responsibility for the aggression. Mr Allison even goes as far as to claim that the recent limited action by the Ethiopian Government was an attempt to annex Eritrea, or at least to have access to a coastline. This, he claims could be "the initial stages of a grander plan to bring Eritrea back into the Ethiopian fold, and give Ethiopia port access that its economy so desperately needs."

The regime in Asmara, of course, makes this allegation repeatedly but with equal lack of any reality, even though some in the international community still appear to accept this implausible allegation. They ignore the facts, that it was the government of Ethiopia that extended recognition to Eritrea's independence on day one, and without Ethiopia's acceptance no other states would have recognized Eritrea. Despite the protestations of the Ethiopian government, and the continued evidence of Ethiopia's full acceptance of Eritrea's independence, some still believe that Ethiopia will stop at nothing to annex

Eritrea through force. No amount of goodwill on Ethiopia's part can apparently reassure the doubters that Ethiopia does not have any such ambitions.

In fact, this is a claim persistently used by Eritrea's leaders as a trump card against internal dissent. President Isaias frequently raises this unsupported claim to try to rally support. Even those who otherwise take issue with the autocratic nature of the Eritrean leader frequently hold onto the idea of 'the-hostile-enemy-to-the-south.' It is a perception that even permeates the thinking of otherwise well-meaning partners from the international community and gets repeated in diplomatic thinking.

The fact is that Eritrea's independence has never been an issue as far as the Government of Ethiopia is concerned. Equally, Ethiopia, and its peoples, have always been much closer friends to the peoples of Eritrea than many pundits, Eritrean and non-Eritrean alike, care to admit. This reality is something that could be utilized in further enhancing people-to-people relations, but it does require an understanding based on fact rather than selective and inaccurate reading of history and wrong perceptions that have been frozen in time. A bit of research, however tiresome, might benefit commentators and prevent them leaping to inaccurate conclusions.

.....while Eritrea is condemned at the 19th Session of the UN Human Rights Council

A Joint Declaration of 44 countries from across the world has condemned the dismal human rights record of Eritrea. The Joint Declaration made at the on-going United Nations Human Rights Council Session expressed deep concern that the Government of Eritrea has never held national elections, that there are no political parties except the ruling party, that all independent media is forbidden, that no international NGOs are allowed to operate and that freedom of religion and of belief is severely restricted, including through the use of arbitrary detention and physical abuse. The countries signing the declaration emphasized that they were especially troubled by reports of inhumane prison conditions, disappearances, arbitrary detention, and extrajudicial killings.

The Declaration notes that many people continue to flee the country to avoid forceful conscription into mandatory national service which requires men and women to serve for an indefinite period of time, with no clear criteria for completion of service. The government detains family members of persons thought to have evaded national service and operates a shoot to kill policy on its borders to try to prevent people leaving. The Declaration recalls that the Security Council in UN Security Council Resolution 2023 condemned the use of the "Diaspora Tax" extracted from the Eritrean Diaspora by the Eritrean Government to destabilise the Horn of Africa. The Resolution called on Eritrea to cease using extortion, threats of violence, fraud and other illicit means to collect the tax. The Government of Eritrea has failed to comply with Resolution 2023. Equally, the Eritrean Government has failed to address two decisions by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights which, *inter alia*, criticized the detention of 21 prominent political prisoners and journalists in 2001 and called for their release.

The signatories of the Joint Declaration:

- Called on the Government of Eritrea to end its use of arbitrary detention and torture of its citizens, and to release all prisoners of conscience;
- Called on the Government of Eritrea to provide all relevant information on the safety, well-being and whereabouts of all detained persons, including persons missing in action, including *inter alia* information pertaining to Djiboutian combatants;
- Strongly urged the Government of Eritrea to grant UN special procedures as well as international human rights and humanitarian organisations and NGOs access to the country and to permit them to operate without hindrance;
- Called on the Government of Eritrea to fulfil its international obligations and honour its commitments and abide by the terms of all relevant Security Council resolutions, including UNSCR 1907 (2009) and UNSCR 2023 (2011);
- And invited the High Commissioner for Human Rights to brief the Human Rights Council on the on-going Human Rights violations in Eritrea at the forthcoming 20th Human Rights Council Session.

In addition to the Joint Declaration, Eritrea was also censored for its human rights record in a number of separate statements from, among others, the United States, the Czech Republic and Switzerland.

The need for local administrations in liberated areas in Somalia....

5

On Tuesday this week [20th March], a meeting of the Technical Committee on Implementation of the Roadmap took place in Mogadishu. Co-chaired by the TFG and UNPOS as well as the AU and IGAD it was attended by Somali and international stakeholders. The Committee presented its second progress report on what has so far been achieved in moving towards the end of the Transition on 20th August and spelt out the major tasks still to be completed. These included continued emphasis on improving security in Mogadishu and elsewhere in the country; the finalization and adoption of the draft constitution; parliamentary reform and elections; national reconciliation and the promotion of good governance and accountability. The meeting urged Somali stakeholders, and the international community, to fulfil their commitments and obligations.

Prime Minister Meles emphasized to President Sheikh Sharif when they met here in Addis Ababa last week that that it was particularly necessary to push the process according to the schedule. The TFG must take the leadership and show it can deliver. The TFG must build credible and acceptable local government institutions as well as security and financial structures. This coupled with continuation of the Garowe process and the liberation of large areas from Al-Shabaab would let the international community think in terms of lifting arms sanctions and enabling Somalia's army to replace foreign troops. Prime Minister Meles said it was important to have an answer to Al-Shabaab's current tactics of melting into the community when they are unable to stand and fight. There they can only be defeated by involving local communities, by establishing administrations at the grassroots that can be trusted and which can organize effective local militias. Prime Minister Meles emphasized that administrations established from outside will not work. Ethiopia, he said, is encouraged by what is

happening in Hiiraan region where the clans are coming together and there is a consensus to establish an effective local administration through community participation. The government should now help with finance to build on this positive achievement.

President Sheikh Sharif noted that in Hiiraan, consultations have been taking place with clan elders, parliamentarians and all stakeholders. Any administration established now will only be for a short time until the elections, but it will be a civilian administration representing all clans. Positions will be negotiated among the stakeholders. As Prime Minister Meles pointed out, at every stage it is important to have open consultations to avoid any suggestion that an administration is being imposed. It should command the respect of the community even if it is only for three months. The processes should show that they are truly representative. Grassroots' participation is what makes the Road Map different from previous processes.

...and further military advances

On the military front, Ethiopian and TFG forces this week on Thursday [22nd March] took control of another major Al-Shabaab stronghold, Hudur the capital of Bakool region, north of Baidoa. The allied forces advanced towards the city the previous day and there were reports that Al-Shabaab was preparing to defend it strongly. However, after heavy fighting some kilometres away from the city, Al-Shabaab hurriedly withdrew its forces as the troops advanced from two directions on Thursday morning. Hudur was taken over from TFG forces by Al-Shabaab in February 2009 and had been in Al-Shabaab hands since then.

There was also fighting at Baidoa again this week when Al-Shabaab fighters launched a surprise attack on Tuesday night [20th] against the military base in Isha village to the east of the city. The next morning, Ethiopian and TFG forces carried out large-scale security operations in villages on the edge of the city. The attack on Tuesday came while the Speaker of the Parliament, Sharif Hassan, four assistant ministers and over 40 MPs were in the city to look at Baidoa's security. The objectives of the visit were to improve security in the town, help organize elimination of Al-Shabaab from the Bay and Bakool regions, encourage Baidoa residents to work with the TFG forces and report any Al-Shabaab supporters and explosives. Most of the members of the delegation were from the two regions. Sharif Hassan held a meeting with the Ethiopian commander in Baidoa, General Yohannes Gebregiorghis, and other officers and thanked Ethiopian troops for their efforts in removing the suffering of the civilians in those areas which had been occupied by Al-Shabaab. This week, a delegation of AMISOM officers also arrived in the city to look into the forthcoming deployment of AMISOM troops when the Ethiopian forces withdraw, and to investigate places to set up military strongpoints and bases to ensure security in the city. Last week, the Joint Security Committee in Mogadishu agreed to deploy AMISOM units to Baidoa to replace the Ethiopian forces there. According to AMISOM spokesman, Colonel Ankunda, they will include at least 2,500 Ugandan and Burundi troops and they will make Baidoa the centre of operations to ensure security for Bay and Bakool regions. They are expected to arrive there by the end of April.

In central Somalia, a surprise Al-Shabaab attack on Dhusamareb forced the Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a militia holding the town to abandon it for a few hours on Tuesday [20th].

According to Al-Shabaab they killed five Ahlu Sunna fighters and captured four vehicles. They hunted down a number of people they accused of links to Ahlu Sunna. They apparently also had time to loot a number of businesses and offices of local organizations before reinforced Ahlu Sunna forces launched a counter-attack and rapidly retook the town. According to Ahlu Sunna they killed 48 Al-Shabaab fighters in their retaking of the town and seized their military vehicles with a loss of eight fighters.

...while U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Africa agrees there is progress

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, Johnnie Carson, recently told AllAfrica media that the US administration recognized that a substantial amount of progress had been made in Somalia, helping to generate greater security and stability in and around Mogadishu. He was giving an assessment of recent developments in Africa and detailing current U.S. efforts to encourage and strengthen democratic practices. In Somalia, he noted the progress made in both on the military and the security side. However, he also emphasized that progress on the political side over the last three years had not been as expected or indeed as it has to be.

On the security front it is well recognized that AMISOM, since its deployment in Somalia in 2007, has made huge progress, and the Mission provides a wide range of services to the country. Firstly, at the broad strategic level, it provides the Transitional Federal Government with favourable ground to function as an emerging administration, a key process on the road back to normalcy for Somalia. AMISOM also created a secure environment by providing training support for a new Somali military army that will eventually hold the key to security and provide the foundation for future stability and development in Somalia.

Aware of this reality, Mr Carson underlined that the African Union Mission in Somalia had 'outperformed' by effectively expelling Al-Shabaab from Mogadishu and pushing it further north away from the city. He depicted the re-hatting of Kenyan troops as an effective way of putting continued pressure on Al-Shabaab from the south. He also noted that the activities of both Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a, a pro-government militia, and of Ethiopian troops were putting pressure on Al-Shabaab and denying it the space for renewal.

The military measures had been enormously effective, he noted, and Al-Shabaab has been dispersed, weakened, and significantly pushed back in a number of areas. While it cannot be said that Al-Shabaab is no longer a threat, it has been effectively pushed out of Mogadishu as a fighting force. It is now being pressured from three different directions and this, Mr Carson said, was an effective way of dealing with the extremist group.

Above all, however, he emphasized that this military and security progress had to be complimented by sound political progress. The Assistant Secretary of State indicated that the Transitional Federal Government had not performed as well in delivering services as AMISOM has in delivering security. Certainly the international community was encouraging and supporting the TFG in its efforts to provide more service delivery in those areas which they control. These include starting micro-finance programmes for

women and unemployed youth, creating jobs for young men, restocking clinics and opening new ones, trying to re-open schools and deliver government services.

At the same time, as Mr Carson indicated, the international community was telling the TFG quite firmly that now it was time to fulfil its obligations under the political roadmap to which it has agreed. As the TFG's tenure would be completed in August 2012 when its official mandate ends, and there could not be any more extensions, Mr Carson said it was to be hoped they would come up with a new constitution, putting in place more permanent democratic institutions, elect a new president, a new speaker, a new but much smaller parliament and provide a new set of permanent institutions that would help shape the future of Somalia.

Egypt's Coptic Patriarch, Pope Shenouda III, dies

The Patriarch of the Egyptian Coptic Church, Pope Shenouda III died on Saturday 17th March after a long battle against prostate cancer, affecting liver and lungs. He was 88 and had been Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church for 40 years. The Egyptian Patriarch is the senior prelate of the six Coptic churches – of Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Armenia, Syria and the Syrian Church of South India. Tens of thousands of Egyptian Coptic Christians joined a funeral mass for the Patriarch at St Mark's cathedral in Cairo on Sunday, and the funeral service was held there on Tuesday. The Patriarch's body was then taken to a monastery to the north-west of the capital where he was buried on Tuesday. The monastery, which dates back to the 4th century, was a favourite of the Patriarch's and it was where he spent three years of internal exile.

Pope Shenouda, the spiritual leader of Egypt's 10 million strong Coptic Christian minority, was a strong supporter of religious harmony and had considerable respect among Egypt's Muslim majority. He was the author of many books and for over three decades has kept up the practice of giving a Wednesday lecture on religious themes. He was regarded by his followers as an important religious thinker and a charismatic leader who struck a largely acceptable balance between the Muslim and Christian communities. There have been a number of violent incidents between Muslims and Christians in the last few years and increasing concerns in the Coptic community over the rising power of Muslim conservatives since the overthrow of President Mubarek. In an unprecedented move, Pope Shenouda, presiding over Orthodox Christian services at Christmas in January this year, was joined by leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood and senior military generals. The Patriarch told the gathering that "for the first time in the history of this cathedral, it is packed with all types of Islamic leaders in Egypt. They all agree ...on the stability of this country and in loving it and working for it and to work with the Copts for the sake of Egypt."

Religious leaders from across the world, including a delegation of senior Catholics from the Vatican in Rome, attended the funeral as did leaders of other Coptic churches. "Because he is resting, does not mean we have lost him," said the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Abune Paulos, who flew in from Ethiopia for the funeral. Tuesday was declared a day of national mourning and flags were flown at half-mast around the country. Many Muslims attended the funeral, paying tribute to the Coptic pope describing him as "decent and very wise". Others who attended the funeral included a delegation from the ruling military council and several candidates for Egypt's

forthcoming presidential elections. The prayers were led by Bishop Bakhomious who will temporarily hold the post of pope for two months until a new leader is elected. Board members of the Church's city councils will vote to choose three candidates to replace Shenouda, and a young child will make the final choice by picking one of those three names out of a hat.

Pope Shenouda's relations with the Egyptian government were not always good. His criticism of Egypt's 1979 peace treaty with Israel landed him in trouble with then-president Anwar Sadat. Sadat banished him to the Wadi el Natrun monastery north west of Cairo and stripped him of his temporal powers. Shenouda was brought back after three years by President Mubarek and subsequently kept on good terms with the government. Under more than a quarter century of Mubarak's rule, relations between the government and the Coptic Church were generally smooth, with the Pope portrayed in state media as a symbol of religious harmony, despite occasional outbreaks of sectarian violence. Shenouda endorsed Mubarak when he ran for his fifth term in 2005, reflecting the views of many Copts, who saw Mubarak as a bulwark against Islamists.

An EU conference for an 'anti-disaster programme' in the Horn of Africa

On Friday last week [16th March], at a high-level conference in Copenhagen, the European Union announced that it will launch a Euro 250 million (US\$329 million) 'anti-disaster programme' initiative for the Horn of Africa. Attending discussions on the proposed programme were member countries and other partners including the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the World Food Programme, and the UNHCR.

9

The initiative has been given the name of "Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience", or SHARE, and it is expected to be endorsed by EU member countries by May when it can be launched with the aims of supporting recovery from the recent drought, improving food security and strengthening future disaster preparedness and resistance in the sub-region. The first projects under SHARE are planned for Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, and they will be implemented in 2012-13 together with the national governments of the countries involved. As "proof of the Commission's long-term commitment to the Horn of Africa", SHARE is intended to run until 2020.

Announcing the initiative were Kristalina Georgieva, EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid, and Andris Piebalgs, the EU Commissioner for Development. The two EU Commissioners said SHARE was designed with the aim of breaking the "vicious cycle" of humanitarian crises in East Africa and ensuring that people would be able to cope better with future droughts as well as helping the victims of the recent crisis to return to their homes and jobs, and improving public services such as access to clean water and sanitation facilities. SHARE will also provide support for livestock rearing, as an essential source of livelihood for the majority of the population in some of the most drought-prone areas, and help to build stronger links between humanitarian and development projects.

Kristalina Georgieva said that despite the increased share of disaster risk reduction projects in EU's humanitarian assistance programmes in recent years, the EU still faced a major challenge in bridging the gap between relief and development cooperation. She

added that SHARE was a joint programme of the humanitarian and development arms of the EU Commission and that it was intended to bring projects together and reduce the risks of drought turning into hunger in the future. Europe, she said, had done its best to alleviate the suffering caused by hunger to millions of people in the region, but humanitarian assistance was like putting a dressing on a deep wound. It could offer relief but could not cure the problem. What the EU intended to do through SHARE was to combine the short-term humanitarian response with long-term support for resilience against future droughts and to prevent future famines. Denmark currently holds the six-month rotating presidency of the 27-member EU bloc, and will be contributing some US\$40 million to the programme.

Although the UN has said that Somali regions are no longer suffering from famine, last month's report from the UN mission in Somalia noted that "2.34 million people, nearly a third of the population, remain in crisis, unable to meet essential food and non-food needs". At the same time, IGAD's Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC) has predicted below average rainfall for the March-May rainy season in the Horn of Africa region. The recent Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum in Kigali, which considered how to mitigate the prospect of recurring uncertainty in rainfall, also warned of the threat of delayed and/or poor rains. Although some countries, including Ethiopia, have become better placed to manage their food crises and have begun to see a significant decline in the numbers of people needing food aid, the UN again warned that there could be serious results for food security in the region if the forecasts of below average rainfall this year are accurate. The launch of the EU's SHARE initiative is certainly appropriately timed.

"Light Manufacturing" could transform Ethiopia's economic structure

Last weekend [17th and 18th March], the World Bank launched a report on "Light Manufacturing in Africa: targeted policies to enhance private investment and create jobs". It covers a number of African countries, including Ethiopia along with Tanzania, and Zambia, and makes comparisons with China and Vietnam. At the launch, the World Bank's chief economist and senior Vice-President for Development Economics, Justine Yifu Lin, remarked that "light manufacturing can offer a viable path for Ethiopia and other sub-Saharan African countries as they transform their economic structure and strive for productive job creation."

The report indicates that Sub-Saharan Africa's potential competitiveness in light manufacturing is based on two advantages. The first is a labour cost advantage. In Ethiopia, for instance, labour productivity in some well-managed firms can approach the levels of China and Vietnam. At the same time, Ethiopia's wages are only a quarter of those in China and a half of Vietnam, and its overall labour costs are lower still. Sub-Saharan Africa's second advantage is an abundance of available natural resources that can supply raw materials such as skins for the footwear industry, hard and soft timber for the furniture industry, and land for agribusiness industries.

Concerning Ethiopia, the report details the way that the country navigated the global economic crisis in 2008–09 better than many developing countries had. It encountered only modest declines in exports, remittances, and foreign investments, and these have all since recovered beyond their pre-crisis levels. The report also commended the

Ethiopian government's commitment to achieving continued growth within a stable macroeconomic framework in the context of the five-year Growth and Transformation Plan (2010-2015). The plan's strategic pillars include sustaining rapid economic growth by promoting industrialization, enhancing social development, investing in agriculture and infrastructure, and strengthening governance and the role of youth and women.

The report places Ethiopia among those nations in Sub-Saharan Africa that have achieved success in two areas: in improving macroeconomic conditions and in providing opportunities for private entrepreneurs during the past decade. It details the advantages that Ethiopia has, including ample low-cost labour, giving it a comparative advantage in less-skilled, labour-intensive sectors, and abundant natural resources that can provide valuable inputs for light manufacturing industries serving both domestic and export markets. The country's resources include cattle for leather, forests for wood, cotton for textiles, and farmland and lakes as inputs for agro-processing industries.

According to Justine Yifu Lin this study of light manufacturing could be a guide to transforming an industrial structure and to creating productive jobs in the sectors in which Ethiopia could have a real and substantial comparative advantage. The study identifies various factors to help open new markets for sub-Saharan Africa's light manufacturing firms. Prominent among these is enhancing regional integration, and Ethiopia is commended for its participation in regional trade agreements to open up new markets. It is, of course, a founding member of both IGAD and COMESA.

News and Views

Al- Shabaab's Abu Mansour Al-Amriki appears to be in trouble

A prominent American fighter for Al Shabaab has claimed his life is under threat from fellow guerrillas due to internal disputes within the group. Omar Hammami, an American citizen from Alabama, and the only foreigner who holds a public position in Al Shabaab, joined in 2006, under the nom de guerre Abu Mansour al-Amriki. Last week he posted a video saying he felt his life might be endangered by other members of the Harakat Shabaab al-Mujahideen “due to some differences that occurred between us regarding matters of Sharia and matters of strategy”. There were reports that Hammami had been arrested near Merca following the posting of his comments on YouTube but Al-Shabaab quickly denied the allegation and promised an investigation to verify the authenticity of the video and motivations behind it. It said that it could assure “our Muslim brothers that al-Amriki is not endangered by the Mujahideen” and “still enjoys all the privileges of brotherhood.” There have been frequent reports of long-standing divisions between Al-Shabaab Somali commanders more interested in Somali affairs and those who concentrate on a more global jihad and the links to Al Qaeda. There have been claims that the former were implicated in the deaths of at least two figures closely linked to Al-Qaeda, Fazul Mohamed and Bilal al-Barjawi. The factions have accused each other of giving information to the Americans. Hammami’s video suggests that disputes over ideology and strategy are having a serious effect on the organization, and it has been described as a significant public relations setback. The indication of more divisions near the top of the organization is likely to have a further demoralizing effect on Al-Shabaab's foreign fighters. There are believed to be several hundred of these though there were unconfirmed reports a few weeks ago that 300 of them had left Kismayo and retreated to Yemen.

12

Puntland Anti-Piracy Conference.....

A three-day anti-piracy conference began last Sunday [18th March] in the port of Eyl in the semi-autonomous region of Puntland. The conference was attended by Puntland’s Minister for Sea Transport and Ports, Said Mohamed Raage, and officials from relevant ministries as well as representatives from the various UN agencies including the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, the UN Development Programme and the UN Department of Safety and Security. Puntland officials said the discussions were successful in developing a strategy for fighting piracy. The aim was to discuss dealing with the increase of piracy in the region, and how the pirates could be eliminated. Pirates had “undermined the reputation of the region and created insecurity” and they should surrender or face the consequences”. Eyl used to be a major pirate base, but the Puntland authorities have now established a Puntland Marine Police Force (PMPF), and one of its units is now to be based in Eyl itself where headquarters are currently under construction. The conference delegates visited the site as well as a police station and a local hospital. International groups have offered support to Puntland’s counter-piracy operations on land. Earlier this month the Puntland administration welcomed a 33-person delegation from Europe looking into its counter-piracy efforts. The delegation also discussed United Nations Security Council Resolution 2015 which proposed a system under which pirates jailed abroad could be transferred to Puntland’s prisons.

Through the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, the EU has donated \$10 million to help Puntland's efforts to build and modernize prisons as currently prison conditions are assessed as below acceptable EU standards.

...and NATO extends its anti-piracy mission off Somalia

On Monday this week [19th March] NATO agreed to extend its naval anti-piracy mission off the coast of Somalia until the end of 2014. It emphasized that the activities of foreign navies were helping to reduce the number of hijackings and attacks on ships off the coast of Somalia. Since 2008, under Operation Ocean Shield, which currently has four warships at sea, NATO has patrolled the waters off the Horn of Africa, acting to disrupt pirate attacks and escorting UN ships bringing aid to Mogadishu. NATO's Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, wrote on Twitter that the international efforts were "making a difference, with the number of successful pirate hijackings down significantly in 2012." In his announcement that NATO's decision-making body, the North Atlantic Council, had extended the mission he added that "Our message to the pirates is clear, your ability to threaten shipping is diminishing and NATO's resolve is not going away. In January last year there were 29 attacks and 6 ships seized. This year there only 4 attacks, all unsuccessful and 80 suspected pirates were captured, 59 of them by NATO ships. NATO, however, has decided to continue limiting its mission in the region to sea operations and not to get involved in any land activities. However, it now appears that the EU's foreign ministers may approve plans to widen the scope of the EU naval mission, Operation Atalanta, to allow for artillery strikes at pirate equipment including trucks, fuel and boats on beaches. There are currently nine EU naval vessels operating off the Horn of Africa.

13

An African Development Bank delegation visits Somaliland

A high-level delegation from the African Development Bank headed by Dr Abdirahman Beile arrived in Hargeisa last week. It's the first time a delegation from the Bank has visited Somaliland since its unrecognized declaration of independence in 1991 and the nine-member delegation was received on arrival by the Somaliland Minister of Energy, Mineral and Water Resources, Hussein Abdi Duale, and the Minister of Agriculture, Mohammud Farah Elmi. The Minister of Energy and Water Resources hailed the Bank's decision to engage with Somaliland as a move that would certainly enhance effective development in Somaliland. The delegation held discussions with Somaliland President Ahmed Mahmoud Silanyo and Dr Beile told the President that the Bank has decided to include the country in its development plan for countries in the Horn of Africa region as a result of the progress it had made in the areas of security and private sector development essentially unaided. Dr Beile also noted that "groundwork for cooperation with the country will be laid after meetings with the administration, parliament and other related stakeholders", and he said the purpose of his visit was to look at the possibilities for future cooperation between the Bank and Somaliland. He added that the Bank was interested to work with Somaliland on issues related to development including water, agriculture and capacity building and it would work closely with the relevant departments and other institutions.

Mogadishu's National Theatre re-opens after two decades

Somalia's National Theatre was formally re-opened on Monday this week [19th March] vividly underlining the recent impressive improvements in security and other developments in the city. The occasion, cited as a sign of peace and stability in the country, was marked with the showing of a local play, traditional music and a comedy performance and was attended by President Sheikh Sharif, government officials and around 1,000 people. It was preceded by registration and auditions to search for performers, looking for young and vital artists to inject life into the crippled entertainment industry. Al-Shabaab, of course, bans all forms of public entertainment, including the theatre. Now, there is an opportunity once again for performers to showcase their talents in drama and music and poetry. On Monday, they took full advantage in a colourful presentation. President Sheikh Sharif who congratulated the performers said that "artists have the power to reflect and convey the feelings of their people in words, in pictures and in performance, as we have witnessed today." The President said the concert "talked about love and politics. It told us about our past days, the good and the bad...[now] we have to concentrate on peace, education and progress – let's forget the bad events we experienced." Somali artists and performers essentially lost everything after the collapse of the central government in 1991 and the subsequent violent civil and clan wars. Now their hopes and expectations are reviving as part of a development and stability initiative. The Centre for Research and Dialogue (CRD) is the lead implementing agency for a National Performing Theatre and Arts project. This is also part of a larger programme, a multifaceted and inclusive initiative involving the local Banadir Administration, the TFG, civil society and the private sector. These are key stakeholders collaborating to implement various projects to encourage stability in Somalia. In his welcome for the re-opened National Theatre, the President underlined the recent security gains in Mogadishu as TFG/AMISOM forces pushed Al-Shabaab fighters out of the city. The recent successes haven't however brought an end to all attacks. Only a few hours before the theatre opening, Al-Shabaab fired several mortar rounds which landed near the presidential palace.

14

Ethiopia's Consul in Lebanon files a suit over the death of Alem Dechassa

On 14th March, Alem Dechassa, aged 33, an Ethiopian migrant worker in Lebanon allegedly committed suicide after being admitted to a psychiatric hospital. Her death followed pictures on Lebanon TV of her being beaten, taunted and dragged away by her employer Ali Mahfouz from outside the Ethiopian Consulate in Beirut. Asaminew Debele Bonsa, Consul General of the Ethiopian Consulate in Beirut has now filed a suit against Ali Mahfouz and is demanding an autopsy of Alem's death. The Consul declined to specify details of the charges on grounds that the case is now pending. He did however tell the press that on the day that Alem Dechassa was viciously assaulted by Ali Mahfouz and another person, the consulate had called the police. It was this that led to the arrest of Ali Mahfouz. The Consul General also said that because there had been similar cases of such attacks outside the Consulate that he had asked for security personnel to be assigned to the Consulate. Unfortunately the Lebanese authorities had failed to react to his request. Following a number of cases of ill-treatment, Ethiopia has officially banned recruitment of Ethiopian workers in Lebanon; unfortunately this hasn't prevented some workers, like Alem Dechassa, getting there illegally. Ethiopian

consular officials in Lebanon and elsewhere and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, are working with officials in various Middle East countries to stop all illegal trafficking of women and migrant workers and to put an end to the repeated abuses committed against such workers. A ministerial task force is working to conclude agreements that will afford protection to migrant domestic workers under the laws of the countries to which the workers go. The agreement reached between the Governments of Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia on the employment of domestic workers in Saudi Arabia is one such example.