

## **A Week in the Horn** **25<sup>th</sup> May 2012**

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### **Consultative meeting of Somalia Roadmap Signatories agree to changes**

The signatories to the Somali Roadmap, meeting in Addis Ababa this week, decided to amend a number of the provisions of the Roadmap to try and iron out disagreements which have been hindering progress and led to failure to implement some of the required timelines. The meeting discussed changes to the draft constitution, clarifications of committee mandates and looked at the overall progress of the Roadmap.

The meeting was attended by the signatories of the process for ending the transition, including Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, President of the Transitional Federal Government; Sharif Hassan, Speaker of the Transitional Federal Parliament; Prime Minister Dr. Abdiweli Mohamed Ali; President Abdirahman Mohamed Mohamud (Farole) of Puntland; President Mohamed Ahmed Aalim of Galmudug State; the Representative of Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama'a, Khalif Abdulkadir Moallim Noor; and Ambassador Augustine Mahiga, the UN Special Representative for Somalia and Head of the UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS).

Since the Transitional Federal Parliament is currently unable to pass the necessary legislation to end the transition and allow the constitutional process to proceed, the Signatories agreed to recommend that the President issues a presidential decree to provide the legal basis for the adoption of the constitutional process and end the transition. They agreed to convene the National Constituent Assembly as soon as practicable, and to that end agreed that the selection of delegates shall be finalized no later than 20th June, and the New Federal Parliament members chosen no later than 15th July.

They agreed to three additional protocols to speed up the process. One is a Protocol Establishing the Constituent Assembly and the New Federal Parliament; secondly a Protocol Establishing the Technical Selection Committee, and thirdly a Protocol Authorizing the Finalization of the Provisional Constitution with the Incorporation of the Harmonized Submissions of the Signatories to constitute the final draft for presentation to the National Constituent Assembly. The protocols are a guideline to the power and limitations of both the constituent assembly and parliament whose mandates were imprecise in previous agreements and in the draft constitution.

During the meeting the Signatories received final copies of the Draft Constitution which had been subject to a constitutional review by a technical committee which harmonized and incorporated written submissions of the signatories and others into the final draft.

The Draft Provisional Constitution will be presented to the National Constituent Assembly, and although it will still be a temporary document, the Assembly will vote on it after discussing the articles. The Provisional Constitution will then remain provisional until all federal states across Somalia are established.

The Technical Selection Committee will assist the Traditional Elders (Duubab) to ensure that nominees for the Constituent Assembly and the New Federal Parliament comply with the criteria set out by the Garowe II Conference. The Committee will also support the Assembly in resolution of disputes. It is now agreed this will be made up of 27 Somalis together with two members from UNPOS and seven International Observers. The Somali members are to be chosen by the Signatories on the basis of the 4.5 formula. The nomination process for the New Federal Parliament is also amended. The Traditional Elders will now nominate one candidate for each seat not two. To avoid any more disagreements among clan elders or with politicians, an Arbitration Board of Traditional Elders is to be set by this weekend (May 26th) to resolve any disputes over the validation of the Traditional Elders. This will be made up of 25 Traditional Elders, 5 from each Clan to resolve any issues or disputes arising from their respective Clans.

The Signatories have also agreed to establish a Roadmap Coordination Office in Mogadishu to ensure effective communication and information sharing among the Signatories. They have also agreed to updated timelines. These are:

26<sup>th</sup> May: Establishment of the Arbitration Board of Traditional Elders

1<sup>st</sup> June: Technical Selection Committee established

20<sup>th</sup> June: Technical Selection Committee to publish finalized (and fully vetted) list of National Constituent Assembly delegates.

30<sup>th</sup> June: Selected National Constituent Assembly members to be present in Mogadishu; copies of draft constitution to be received by the NCA delegates

2<sup>nd</sup> July: Opening ceremony of the National Constituent Assembly

10<sup>th</sup> July: Adoption of the Provisional Constitution

15<sup>th</sup> July: Technical Selection Committee to publish finalized and fully vetted list of New Federal Parliament members

20<sup>th</sup> July: New Federal Parliament members sworn in

4<sup>th</sup> August: Election of Speaker and Deputy Speakers by the Parliament

20<sup>th</sup> August: Election of President by the Parliament

The meeting also agreed on a number of other points. They recommended that the President approve the National Security and Stabilization Plan (2011 – 2014) by decree as Parliament is currently unable to table a motion. They urged the TFG and the International Community to provide support to Puntland and Galmudug and to Ahlu Sunna-controlled areas to help deal with the urgent security needs arising from Al-Shabaab's moves into the Golis Mountains and from piracy. The meeting also called on the International Community to provide appropriate and timely support for the process to end the transition and to that end, lift the arms embargo. One of the problems that the process has faced has been delays in the financing promised by the international community for the Roadmap process. Both Prime Minister Abdiweli and Ambassador Mahiga requested that the promised funds be provided urgently. The meeting also underlined that no delay or obstruction would be accepted by either the Somali people or the International Community. Some TFG officials have been accused of meddling with the traditional elders who have been meeting in Mogadishu. They have been firmly warned by the Signatories and by the international community to stop this or face repercussions. "Spoilers" will be identified and named, and appropriate joint action by Somali and International Stakeholders taken.

### **Deputy Prime Minister Hailemariam meets UK's Minister for Africa**

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hailemariam met a UK delegation led by the UK's Minister for Africa, Henry Bellingham, on Wednesday this week. The two sides discussed bilateral and regional issues with the current situation in both Somalia and the Sudan dominating the agenda.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister welcomed the delegation and commended the excellent relations between the two countries in economic development and security issues. He expressed Ethiopia's satisfaction for the generous support that the United Kingdom has provided to assist Ethiopia's development. He also commended the Government of the United Kingdom for hosting the London Conference in February, which he noted had already demonstrated its value in promoting peace and stability in Somalia.

On bilateral issues the Deputy Prime Minister emphasized the government's undertaking to promote trade and investment between Ethiopia and the UK. He also detailed the conducive environment that Ethiopia had created in order to stimulate investment. He underlined Ethiopia's strong desire to diversify production and to boost trade. Ethiopia's priority at this crucial time in its development was 'economic diplomacy', the need to engage Ethiopia's partners in the country's economic transformation. Ato Hailemariam emphasized the importance of re-organizing the London Investment Forum to enhance the promotion of investment in Ethiopia.

On the situation in Somalia, the Deputy Prime Minister expressed his overall satisfaction over the transitional process despite some delays. He stressed the relevance of the upcoming Istanbul conference on Somalia, in June, to speed up the transitional process. He also detailed the importance of building functional grassroots political institutions and such elements as the police force and a conventional army for Somalia to enable the government to operate effectively. On the situation in the Sudan, Ato Hailemariam expressed concern over the dimensions of the conflict and emphasized the importance of implementation of the political roadmap to provide a lasting solution to the conflict.

Mr. Henry Bellingham expressed his gratitude for the welcome he and his delegation had received. He also warmly welcomed the excellent bilateral relations between the two countries. Ethiopia is first among UK development aid partners, and the UK appreciated the partnership. Mr. Bellingham said he was convinced that this relationship would grow to extend from development aid to trade. In this connection he emphasized the need to boost trade between the two countries and to improve the balance of trade gap, currently much in favor of the UK. He underscored the investment potential in Ethiopia and the great importance of the London Investment Forum.

On Somalia, Mr. Bellingham commended the role of Ethiopia in the attempts to bring peace in the country, and he also made it clear he appreciated the contribution of the Ethiopian armed forces in clearing terrorist elements from Somalia. He expressed his hope that the successful completion of the transitional process in Somalia would meet the date line of August 20th. On Sudan, he noted the importance of the two parties showing full compliance with the political roadmap, and welcomed the efforts made by Ethiopia, the AU and IGAD to bring about acceptable negotiated solutions in the country.

### **Africa Day, May 25<sup>th</sup>**

The celebration dates back to 1963 when the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was founded in Ethiopia on that day. Previously 15th April, marking the first Conference of Independent African States held in Ghana in 1958, was upheld as African Freedom Day. The significance of African Freedom Day was a reflection of the aspirations of people to break free from the chains of colonial bondage through the efforts of collective will. It was also intended to help raise political awareness around the world about the state of affairs in Africa and the necessity for the self-determination of its peoples.

Within five years, African Freedom Day was renamed African Liberation Day and the date changed from 15th April to 25th May following the establishment of the OAU. By that time the number of independent African countries had risen from 8 to just over 30 in 1963. When the African Union succeeded the OAU in July 2002, African Liberation Day was renamed Africa Day and has since become a statutory holiday in many African countries.

Significantly, Africa Day provides the occasion for reflection on the continent and the value of Africa Day lies above all in the sense of unity it evokes. Africa has all too often been seen as a stereotyped continent that evokes images of extreme poverty, desperate scenes of famine, blighted tales of corruption, tragic narratives of civil conflict and a damning prognosis that dismisses its future out of hand. This is, of course, an outdated image. The recent stories underline the new image under the banner of "Africa Rising" and an Africa which outperforms the rest of the world in economic development and democracy.

Yesterday, the Governance and Public Administration Division of the UN Economic Commission for Africa organized a High Level Colloquium under the theme: Democracy, Governance and Pan-African Idea: Whither Africa? to mark Africa day. Held at the UN Conference Centre it was intended to “stimulate open and frank discussion and debate on Africa’s democratic trajectory and current political developments, against the backdrop of the ideas and ideals of Pan-Africanism espoused by Africa’s founding fathers towards the realization of a democratic, prosperous and politically stable continent.” The aims included fostering greater awareness, sensitization and knowledge as well as providing policy direction on governance in Africa. The event also honoured a committed and notable pan-Africanist, Tajudeen Abdul Raheem, former Secretary General of the Pan-African Movement who died three years ago. The Colloquium aimed to consider whether Africa had kept faith with the Pan-African ideals of democracy and governance, and how Africa might achieve a democratic, prosperous and developed society which ranked with other regions of the world. Pan-Africanism remains relevant to Africa’s development project today as it was some fifty years ago, when many African countries emerged from colonisation to independence. The Pan-African ideals as espoused by Marcus Garvey, W.E. Du Bois, Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Toure and others were based on the concept of promoting the dignity of Africa through a culture of self-reliance, economic progress and democratic stability, encapsulated in the struggle for political independence and economic emancipation.

The 16<sup>th</sup> ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held from 30<sup>th</sup> -31<sup>st</sup> January last year, decided that the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the OAU/AU should be celebrated in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2013. The 18<sup>th</sup> ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held from 29<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> January this year also declared 2013 as the Year of Pan-Africanism and of African Renaissance, adding to the significance of the anniversary.

As host to the headquarters of the then OAU and now of the African Union, the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary has a special importance for Ethiopia. The Ethiopian government has established a National Organizing Committee tasked with the responsibility of organizing the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. The Committee is made up of all the relevant parties, including representatives of sectoral ministries, state-owned enterprises, Chambers of Commerce, the Labor Union and a number of other professional associations. The Committee has set up seven sub-committees to take charge of coordinating the major tasks being undertaken to celebrate the event colourfully and impressively.

Africa Day deserves to be celebrated and celebrated properly. It honours African unity in diversity its different cultures and identities, its histories and heritages, its achievements and its excellence as well as its potential and promise. Its celebration is not confined to Africa. Africa Day has become a global phenomenon. The African Diaspora and those who share our vision of a peaceful and prosperous Africa have made it so. It will be celebrated across the world this year as a constant reminder of a common history of slavery and colonialism, the sign of a shared heritage and culture, the symbol of fraternity in the struggle for progress in peace and development, and as a rallying call to mobilize opinion and effort to provide for the process of acceleration of African integration and unity.

## The African Union Border Program Conference in Niamey

The third Conference of African Ministers in charge of Border Issues was held in Niamey, Niger, on 17th May. The Conference was preceded by the meeting of government experts convened 14th – 16th May. Ethiopia's delegation was led by Ambassador Fisseha Yimer, Special Advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. The Conference deliberations focused on three major aspects of the African Union Border Program (AUBP): Delimitation and Demarcation of African Boundaries; Cross-Border Cooperation; and Capacity Building. The AU Border Program was set up in June 2007 following a Declaration adopted by the 1st Conference of Ministers in charge of Border Issues.

The Niamey Conference began by assessing the status of the AU Border Program, with the African Union Commission presenting a progress report on the implementation of the program. The Commission noted that since its inception the Border Program had made significant progress in supporting the delimitation and demarcation of borders, promoting cross-border cooperation and building up the capacity of member states and other relevant stakeholders.

Regarding delimitation and demarcation, the data collected from 32 member states of the African Union showed that only about 35% of African borders had been delimited and demarcated. However, in order to have a complete picture of African boundaries and with the view to mobilizing the necessary resources for the task, the Conference urged member states which had not yet done so to submit an account of the status of the delimitation and demarcation of their boundaries to the Commission as soon as possible. The Conference called on member states to complete the process of delimiting and demarcating their boundaries in compliance with the new deadline of 2017 set by the Assembly of the African Union.

Another important aspect considered by the Conference was Cross Border Cooperation, and the Conference reviewed and adopted the draft Convention of the African Union on Cross-Border Cooperation. The convention is meant to provide a legal framework for member states to enhance cross-border cooperation so that their common boundaries can be areas of cooperation and integration rather than of conflict and division. The draft Convention is expected to be approved by the upcoming Assembly of the African Union scheduled to take place in Lilongwe, Malawi in July. The Conference, while taking note of the efforts of the African Union Commission in support of cross-border cooperation, also underscored the need to finalize guidance on cooperation in order to facilitate this between African countries in the areas of experience sharing, the prevention of and the fight against terrorism and other forms of cross-border crimes, facilitation of cross-border trade and the movement of peoples, and joint management of cross-border resources.

The Conference stressed the need for adequate human and material resources to effectively implement the different components of the AU Border program. It therefore called, inter alia, for an inventory and a data base of experts on border issues, for training and research on border programs, and for the establishment of National Boundary Commissions by member states which have yet to do this. While commending the achievements of the AU Commission in implementation of the AU Border Program, the Conference also encouraged the Commission to put extra effort into overcoming the challenges facing complete realization of the Program.

## First Annual Counter-terrorism Convention for Eastern Africa and the Horn

The First Annual Convention of Counter-terrorism Practitioners in Eastern Africa and the Horn of Africa, organized by IGAD's Security Sector Program with the support of the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation and the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs was held in Addis Ababa, on Tuesday and Wednesday this week, May 22nd – 23rd. Those attending included Ato Birhan Hailu, Minister of Justice, Netsanet Asfaw, Director of IGAD's Peace and Security Division, Mr. Francisco Caetano, the AU's Special Representative in Charge of Counter Terrorism Cooperation, and a number of experts from security institutions, financial intelligence units and research institutions as well as human rights activists, members of civil society organizations, independent analysts, and representatives of government and non-governmental organizations.

In his remarks to the convention, Minister Birhan emphasized that "Ethiopia has zero tolerance for acts of terrorism". He noted that Ethiopia and Djibouti had ratified the IGAD Mutual Legal Assistance and Extradition Convention and called on other IGAD member states to follow suit. Netsanet Asfaw, IGAD's Peace and Security Director underlined Somalia's need for support to fight the "down but not yet totally out" terrorist organization, Al-Shabaab. She stressed the links between poverty and terrorism, and suggested that support to Somalia would be most fitting in the form of partnerships with Somali communities to rebuild and strengthen the livelihoods of such communities and restore traditional value systems. Commander Abebe Muluneh, head of IGAD's Security Sector Programme explained the role the program was playing in supporting the efforts of member countries to counter terrorism through capacity building, how it was effectively dealing with maritime security threats, and its role in containing the intensity and impact of organized crime on IGAD member states.

Topics of discussion at the Convention included "The Threat of Terrorism in Eastern Africa: Trends and Outlook", "Strengthening Legal Cooperation Against Terrorism", "Building Partnerships Against Terrorism", "Strengthening Regional Financial Structures", "New Approaches to Tackling Terrorism in Somalia" and "Human Rights as a Necessary Condition for Effective Counter-terrorism".

Three research reports by the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation were presented for discussion during the Convention and gave rise to a number of recommendations. National and regional legal arrangements for legal cooperation against terrorism throughout the IGAD region were discussed. Country representatives gave details of their respective mechanisms for control of money-laundering and described their efforts to counter this. The panellists extensively deliberated on the situation in Somalia including the role and activities of Al-Shabaab and the future of combatants after its defeat. There was agreement of the importance of engaging with Somali youth and that serious consideration should be given to creating livelihood opportunities for the country's youth and former fighters.

The Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation is a non-profit, nonpartisan policy institute dedicated to strengthening international counter-terrorism cooperation. It has offices in New York, Washington DC and Brussels. In March, it was also involved with IGAD's Security Sector Program in convening a Task Force on Legal Cooperation Against Terrorism in the IGAD Sub-region. The aim was to explore ways to scale up legal cooperation against

terrorism and related transnational crimes. The task force, composed of senior security and criminal justice officials from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda, made a study tour of the IGAD and East African States to identify challenges IGAD member states faced in implementing IGAD's Mutual Legal Assistance and Extradition Convention, and produced a report on their observations.

### **Ethiopia and Sudan's Extradition Treaty**

The Ministry of Justice of Ethiopia and the Republic of the Sudan's Minister of Justice signed an Extradition Treaty and an Agreed Minute on their Joint Legal Affairs on May 16th in Addis Ababa. The extradition agreement between the two countries will be another instrument to expand the already existing cordial relations between the two bodies. The Republic of the Sudan has also agreed to ratify the Mutual Legal Assistance and Extradition Convention which other IGAD countries, including Djibouti and Ethiopia, have already signed and ratified, to help combat crime and cross-border criminal acts in the region.

The Extradition Treaty that has now been signed between Ethiopia and the Sudan will assist both countries fight crime and cross-border criminal activity as well as allow them to work together to maximize levels of investigation by sharing information and to encourage judicial cooperation by speeding up exchanges of criminal procedures. The two sides have now agreed to carry out extradition procedures across the border in accordance with their national laws and the provisions of the treaty. For the purposes of the treaty, extraditable offences are classified as offences which, at the time of the request, are punishable under the laws of both states, provided that the minimum penalty for such offences is at least one year's imprisonment. It is agreed that if the offence for which extradition is required is regarded by the requesting party as an offence of a political nature that this will be grounds for a refusal. However, this only applies if drug trafficking, terrorism or international crimes are not regarded as political offences. The treaty also allows for one or other party to apply for a provisional arrest as a matter of urgency before a request for extradition. Any application for a provisional arrest would either be transmitted through diplomatic channels or directly through each other's Ministry of Justice.

The Ethio-Sudan Joint Legal Affairs Committee that has been established has now agreed to develop an action plan to follow up and evaluate the implementation of the Extradition Treaty. Last December, Ethiopia and Sudan signed a Memorandum of Understanding to cover legal training and experience-sharing. During their talks in Addis Ababa, the two Ministers of Justice emphasized the importance of continuing these activities and encouraged continuation of exchanging experiences and the training of experts in various judicial areas. The Joint Legal Affairs Committee has also developed and signed an Agreed Minute to encourage the speeding up of the ratification process and to pursue implementation. The Committee has agreed to convene its next meeting in three months time in the Sudan.

### **Eritrea at 21: still in President Isaias' unyielding grip**

Eritrea celebrated its 21st independence day yesterday with President Isaias making his address to the nation in a manner that befitted his penchant for conspiracy theories. There had been a number of recent rumours suggesting he was seriously ill after he failed to appear in public for a month. The stories reached a point where the regime had to go to

absurd lengths to prove he was alive and well, concocting a truly bizarre itinerary of supposed activity to dispel the rumours. Yesterday's celebrations were another opportunity for the Eritrean President to show that he is firmly in charge of the country he has ruled with an iron fist for 21 years now. His address yesterday was certainly clear proof that he is indeed alive and more importantly apparently healthy.

Whatever the state of his health which will continue to be a subject of speculation, it was quite clear from his speech that his old habits and beliefs were unchanged. His sense of paranoia remains intact. He still thinks he, and he alone, has all the answers to the world's problems. His government is continuing to make unequalled progress in all areas. America is still out to get him personally, and wars of all sorts, both military and psychological, are constantly being waged against Eritrea.

In his speech, President Isaias stated his country has lived in an undeclared state of emergency for the past twenty one years. He appears not to have been referring to the totalitarian manner by which he has led his nation into its current state of despondency as he quickly turned to others to explain the suffering of the Eritrean people. Certainly none of it was his fault. According to the President, his country's most pressing problem is not poverty nor a lack of good governance nor even his health. The most important problem his country is facing is the fact that, despite a binding international decision "confirming" Eritrea's sovereignty, it's "sovereign territory is still under occupation due to the complicity of the US administration through its surrogate, the TPLF". The President still refuses to consider that Ethiopia is a match for his overactive adventurism; in his make-believe world, it is only a super-power than can be responsible for Eritrea's problems.

In a possible reference to his health, excellent or otherwise, he tells his audience that psychological warfare is being waged against Eritrea and its people "under different guises" in order to disrupt the harmony of the people of Eritrea. This 'harmony', which is characterized by thousands of Eritrean youth pouring across the border to escape the conditions inside the country, is apparently perceived by the likes of America as a dangerous threat. As a result, the US is now making all sorts of effort to try to destroy Eritrea including invention of rumours of his health. It is not entirely clear why these should be sufficient to destabilize the country unless that person is considered, if only by he himself, to be the only representation of that country. Why would an otherwise vibrant nation and its people face such an existential threat because of the deteriorating health, real or perceived, of just one man? The answer is clear enough: Eritrea today has been largely reduced to becoming the sum total of President Isaias' whims and capricious decisions.

According to the President, the campaign against him and against Eritrea is not confined to this psychological warfare. There are also economic conspiracies" to clip" the national economy and "diplomatic encirclement" to encourage aggression. The UN sanctions regime is part of the "desperate campaign" of the US and its allies. This is born out of their realization that despite all their efforts Eritrea's successful efforts to defend itself is gaining momentum by the day. He thanked the people's steadfastness for the far stronger position in which he claimed Eritrea finds itself today!

President Isaias reassured his audience that his country's march towards progress is not just the mining boom but is rather the result of the integrated development efforts of his government. Even the "recent aggression" against Eritrea by the US and its surrogate could

not prevent Eritrea from marching ahead. The fact that he had chosen not to escalate the conflict after the recent attack across the border was actually in consideration of this “miraculous” progress Eritrea was making.

In conclusion, he told his audience, which included President Al-Bashir of Sudan, that Eritrea had no responsibility for instigating conflicts with all its neighbors or any shred of responsibility for the countless destabilizing activities against Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen, that he has underwritten over the years. Everything is blamed on the United States which he accused of meddling in the affairs of the region in order to hold the people of Eritrea and of Ethiopia as hostage. “The past 20 years witnessed a wave of illegal and illicit acts of conspiracies weaved by the Administration in Washington and its cohorts to bring about disintegration of the independence and unity of Somalia, as well as manage the chaos spawned, to plunge Eritrea and Djibouti into a fabricated conflict situation, keeping hostage the peoples of Eritrea and Ethiopia through exposing them to a state of permanent tension, thrusting the people of both Sudans into perennial crisis....”.

All this might be classified as a considerable insult if it had come from any normal politician, but it can be shrugged off as nonsense coming as it does from a leader whose capacity for failing to make sense is unequaled in the region if not more widely. At the same time, his capacity for blaming others for everything he has done does make one additional point. Indeed, President Isaias is underlining with distressing clarity that the people of Eritrea should not expect any voluntary changes in Eritrea while he is alive.

## News and Views

### Egyptians voted this week in the country's first free presidential election

Egyptians voted on Wednesday and Thursday for their first free presidential elections. Voting was largely calm though the turnout was lower than the earlier parliamentary vote when Islamists groups won most seats. Predictions are that an outright winner from the two day poll is unlikely and a run-off is scheduled for June 16-17 between the two leading candidates with the winner to be announced on June 21. The ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces has promised to hand over to civilian rule by the end of June. There were thirteen candidates in the election and the leading contenders include former foreign minister and Arab League Secretary-General, Amr Moussa; the last prime minister under President Mubarek, Ahmed Shafiq; the candidate of the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party, Mohamed Mursi; a former member of the Brotherhood, now running as an independent, Abdel Moneim Abul Fotouh, and an independent leftist candidate, Hamdeen Sabahi. According to officials of the Muslim Brotherhood today, its candidate, Mohamed Mursi, would be entering a run-off vote next month with the former Premier, Ahmed Shafiq. A Brotherhood official claimed that with votes counted from about 12,800 of the 13,100 or so polling stations, Mohamed Mursi had 25%, of the vote; Ahmed Shafiq 23%; Abdel Moneim Abul Fotouh had 20% ; Hamdeen Sabahi 19%, but other had different estimates

### All Africa Parliamentary Conference on the MDGs

An All Africa Parliamentary Conference on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) opened in Addis Ababa on Wednesday. Formally sponsored by the African Inter-Parliamentary Union and organized by the United Nations, the three-day conference brings together members of parliament from across the African continent. Those attending include selected groups of civil society representatives and academics as well as parliamentarians. The conference is aiming to review the progress on MDGs made so far in the context of the changing global political and economic environment; to identify gaps and constraints, and to suggest ways to accelerate progress; to foster multi-stakeholder engagement; and to develop strategies for strengthening parliament-civil society relationships and parliamentary engagement as well as help accelerate progress towards the MDGs and formulate a post-2015 development agenda. Speaking ahead of the opening, the United Nations Millennium Campaign Regional Coordinator for West and Central Africa, Nelson Muffuh, and Deputy Chairman of IPU's Foreign Defense and Security Standing Committee, Ato Tekle Tesema, in a joint press statement said the conference would be the first body to discuss the post-2015 development agenda that would follow from and substitute for the existing Millennium Development Goals. Mr. Muffuh noted that Ethiopia was one of the few countries expected to achieve all of the MDG goals. He said the conference would be a good opportunity to exchange details of best practices.

### A Global African Diaspora Summit in Johannesburg

The first ever Global African Diaspora Summit under the theme: "Towards the Realization of a United and Prosperous Africa and its Diaspora" is taking place today in Johannesburg. Organized by the African Union Commission in collaboration with the South African government, the Summit has been preceded this week by a ministerial meeting and it is

bringing together leaders from over 60 countries as well as diplomats and stakeholders from various organizations that work with the African Diaspora. South Africa's Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane said the Global African Diaspora Summit aims to create sustainable partnerships between Africa and the African Diaspora through a realizable program of action; to create sustainable dialogue, partnerships; and to strengthen pan-African solidarity for a better Africa and its Diaspora. She said the event is taking place in a year that is historically significant to Africa as the Continent is celebrating the 10th anniversary of the launch of the African Union. It is hoped to make the Summit an annual occasion. The Ministerial meeting has drawn up a draft declaration which is expected to be adopted by the Heads of State. It includes a Program of Action, implementation and follow-up mechanisms, and various priority projects. The Ministers underscored the need for continuous consultation between Africa and the Diaspora, for the building of regional networks in other parts of the world, for monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess progress and accelerate the pace of achievements in different areas. They also emphasized the need to establish political structures and criteria that will facilitate the desire to ensure effective participation of the Diaspora in the African Union. The aim is to create a sustainable partnership between African Diaspora and the African continent through a realizable programme of action. The Summit is expected to consider the possible inclusion of the Diaspora as a sixth region of the AU and create an AU Diaspora Volunteer Programme which will associate the Diaspora directly with development efforts in Africa. The Summit is expected to endorse the creation of an African Diaspora Development Fund and various Remittance and Financial Instruments, support the development of a skills database of Diaspora professionals and adopt and promote the Development Market Place for an African Diaspora model as a framework to facilitate innovation and to develop entrepreneurship to empower youths in Africa and within the Diaspora.

### **Yemen Marks the 22nd anniversary of its unification**

On Tuesday, Yemen marked the 22nd anniversary of its unification. The day was marked by a military parade and various festivities attended by Yemeni President, Abed Robbo Mansour Hadi, and other senior officials. The celebrations were overshadowed however by the death of at least 96 members of the military and the wounding of more than 200 others by a suicide bomber during a rehearsal for the unification day parade the previous day. The fear of further attacks by the Al Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) kept the ceremonies in a low key. In a statement issued after the tragedy on Monday, President Obama said Washington was very worried about Al-Qaeda terrorism and extremism in Yemen. The US President said Yemen's poverty and instability attracted extremists. However, he made it clear that the U.S. would continue to work with the government in Sana'a to identify Al-Qaeda "leadership and [assist in] operations to try to thwart them." President Hadi, who took office in February, responded to the bombing by promising to press on with the fight against Al-Qaeda and its violence.

### **Ethiopia's implementation of the Green Wall Project**

Ethiopia is preparing to implement the Great Green Wall for Sahara and Sahel (GGWSS) Project designed to operate in arid areas with a view to containing desertification. Many of the countries involved in the project including Ethiopia have already designed

implementation strategies. Ethiopia has produced an action plan which has been reviewed. Professor Tekalign Mamo, Advisor to the Minister of Agriculture, said that Ethiopia is already pursuing a 'green growth' strategy and under this substantial "natural resource conservation activities have been carried out to boost agricultural productivity." This was particularly the case in the current Ethiopian year. The GGWSS project, he said, would provide further reinforcement of Ethiopia's 'green growth' strategy which is driven by the effort to enable the country to mitigate the adverse impact of climate change. The Great Green Wall for Sahara and Sahel (GGWSS), Project was launched in Addis Ababa last September with the overall aim of addressing the problems of desertification, land degradation and drought across the Sahara and the Sahel belt of Africa.

### **Joint IGAD/UN Agencies meeting on Drought Resilience**

A joint IGAD Ministerial and high level UN Agencies' meeting was held on Thursday last week to chart the way forward for the region's resilience initiative. Organized by the Executive Secretary of IGAD, Engineer Mahboub Maalim, in conjunction with UN officials, the objectives of the meeting were to share information on the initiative – its origins, vision, issues and challenges and potential areas of short-and long-term intervention as well as current and potential available resources; explore how the UN can work with IGAD Member States to elaborate and implement their national action plans to achieve drought resilience, food security and sustainable development; identify and determine UN support for developing and strengthening national level structures and coordination mechanisms, including drought management authorities (in line with the IGAD Summit Directive of September 9th last year) and link up with regional processes, particularly the regional resilience platform; and determine how the UN can support the development and strengthen the capacity of IGAD as an institution to deliver on the drought resilience agenda. The outcome of the meeting provided a shared understanding of the initiative, institutional arrangements, coordination and programming frameworks as well as indications of expected contributions of UN Agencies to the initiative, and UN support for cross-border issues involving IGAD member states.