

A Week in the Horn

25th July 2014

News in Brief:

- **African Union**
- **Ethiopia**
- **Eritrea**
- **Somalia**
- **South Sudan**
- **Sudan**

Articles from page 3:

- **Addis Ababa University awards Honorary Doctorate to Bill Gates....**
 - **Prime Minister Hailemariam meets the press**
 - **A delegation from the Communist Party of China in Addis Ababa**
 - **The London Girls Summit and Ethiopia's commitments to end FGM and CEFM**
 - **A High-Level seminar on the Tourism Industry**
 - **The true objectives of Ethiopia's resettlement programs**
-

News in Brief

African Union

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) announced on Tuesday (July 22) that a Regional Transport Infrastructure Forum will be held (July 24-26) in Addis Ababa on the theme of "Boosting Market Integration and Intra-African Trade through Effective Management of Regional Transport Infrastructure and Services."

Ethiopia

Addis Ababa University on Thursday (July 24) conferred an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters on Mr William Henry Gates. Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn awarded the degree. Also present were Foreign Minister Tedros Adhanom, the Speaker of the House of Federation, Kassa Tekleberhan. Dr Admasu Tsegaye, President of Addis Ababa University, read the citation. (See article)

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Tedros Adhanom, met Bill Gates, the co-founder of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, on Thursday (July 24). He thanked the Foundation for the significant support it has given to the health sector in Ethiopia and said partnership with the Foundation was highly valuable for the country. (See Article)

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, meeting the local media last Friday (July 18) pledged that the Government of Ethiopia would continue its efforts to put an end to any terrorist network, part of its aim of advancing the cause of peace, stability and prosperity for the country. He also answered questions on relations with Egypt, the GERD, next year's elections and other issues. (See article)

Deputy Prime Minister, Demeke Mekonnen, speaking at a global Summit on child marriage and female genital mutilation in London, hosted by the UK and UNICEF on Tuesday (July 22), announced a package of measures by the Ethiopian government to eliminate these issues by 2025. The Minister of Women, Children and Youth Affairs, Zenebu Tadesse, also attended the summit. (See article)

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Tedros Adhanom, on Friday (July 18) held discussions with IGAD's Executive Secretary, Ambassador Mahboub Maalim and IGAD's Special Envoy to Somalia, Ambassador Mohammed Affey on regularizing the IGAD Partners Forum (IPF), a group of 26 countries and organizations interested in supporting the initiatives of IGAD.

State Minister Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos held talks with the newly appointed Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Ethiopia, Ambassador Joachim Schmidt, on Wednesday (July 23) and received a copy of his credentials.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dewano Kedir, held discussions with a delegation from the Middle East Development LLC (MED LLC), led by its CEO, Mr Tarek Fawad Malik, on Tuesday (July 22). Talks centred on ways to capitalize on selected investment fields including agriculture and agro-processing.

The Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy, Alemayehu Tegen, addressing a two-day symposium at Bishoftu, which concluded on Tuesday (July 22) said that scientific knowledge and research meant Ethiopia was in a better position to sustainably and equitably utilize the Nile.

Dr Taleb Raifi, Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), announced on Sunday (July 20) that UNWTO would continue to promote Ethiopia's rich and extensive historical, cultural and natural tourist sites. He was here to participate in the High level Tourism Seminar held last week (See article)

Dr Fasil Nahum, Special advisor to the Prime Minister with the rank of Minister, held talks with Mr Frank Belfrage, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Sweden on Thursday last week (July 17) in Stockholm.

GPB Global Resources, a Russian petroleum company, signed a deal with the Ministry of Mines to undertake petroleum and natural gas exploration in the Afar Regional State in eastern Ethiopia on Thursday last week (July 17). The Ministry currently administers 15 petroleum production and sharing agreements with nine companies in Ethiopia.

Ethiopian Airlines has named its eighth 787 Dreamliner after the Taj Mahal, India's most famous monument. It is the first time that the airline has named an aircraft of its Dreamliner fleet after a historical or heritage site outside Africa, the previous 787s have been called Africa First, Lucy, Queen of Sheba, Lake Tana, Walia Ibex and Serengeti.

Eritrea

Eritrea released 135 Yemeni fishermen in January this year and 154 in May, but according to the General Secretary of Yemen's Fishery Cooperative Union Eritrea has arrested a total of 420 in the last two years. He also claims that Eritrea has confiscated 836 Yemeni fishing boats since 2006 and has kept them all.

Somalia

A famous Somali singer, renowned for her protest songs against Siad Barre, and Member of Parliament, Saado Ali Warsame, was assassinated by Al-Shabaab in Mogadishu on Wednesday (July 23). President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed sent condolences to her family, [the assassination] was widely condemned.

Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed in an interview with Al Jazeera said the government was working hard to accomplish "Vision 2016", and its three milestones: formation of federal states; the federal constitution reviewed and accepted; and preparation for elections. He called on donors to deliver on their promises, and to trust the government and empower it to manage donor resources in cooperation with the donors.

Aid agencies operating in Somalia issued a warning on Sunday (July 20) that there were more than 300,000 malnourished children in Somalia and a total of 2.9 million people in need of life-saving help. The Somali Government last week declared a drought in six regions, Gedo, Bakool, Galgadud, Hiran and Lower and Middle Shabelle, and announced the setting up of a US\$500,000 drought relief fund.

AMISOM forces on Thursday (July 24) captured a strategic Al-Shabaab militant training and planning camp in Gedo region, and an offensive operation in Jilib in Middle Juba region destroying an Al-Shabaab logistical base on Wednesday.

The European Union Foreign Affairs Council on Tuesday (July 22) extended the mandate of the European bloc's civilian mission on regional maritime capacity building in the Horn of Africa (EUCAP Nestor) until

December 12, 2016. The mission is part of the EU's campaign to fight piracy in the Horn of Africa, alongside the EU Naval Force Somalia and the EU training mission for Somalia.

South Sudan

IGAD has announced that the Fourth Session of the IGAD-led South Sudan Peace Process in Addis Ababa, adjourned on June 23, will resume on July 30, following consultations by the IGAD Special Envoys with various actors and organizations. The session is tentatively scheduled to last until August 10, with an agenda covering signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Matrix and negotiations on details of a Transitional Government of National Unity.

Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin, Chairperson of the IGAD Special Envoys to the South Sudan peace process, said the attack on Nassir by forces of the SPLM/A–In Opposition violated the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed by both parties on January 23 and reiterated in May. UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, expressed his concern over the attack.

United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, on Wednesday (July 23) announced the appointment of Ellen Margrethe Loj as the new head of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Ms Loj from Denmark replaces Ms Hilde Johnson whose term expired this month.

The US Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan, Ambassador Donald Booth, speaking in Juba on Wednesday (July 23) said rival South Sudanese leaders must engage in meaningful negotiations to avert an imminent famine as “3.8 million, almost 4 million, people are already experiencing severe food insecurity.”

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission of Inquiry into crimes in South Sudan, former Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo, said his team will visit all relevant areas to carry out its mandate for “healing, reconciliation and accountability.” The Commission was established by the AU Commission in March this year to investigate human rights violations and other abuses committed since last December.

Sudan

Sudan’s National Elections Committee (NEC) said on Tuesday (July 22) it had received assurances from the information and justice ministries that the necessary measures would be taken to ensure the 2015 elections are conducted on time.

Addis Ababa University awards Honorary Doctorate to Bill Gates....

Addis Ababa University awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters to William Henry Gates, co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, in recognition of his contribution to Ethiopia and Africa’s fight against poverty on Thursday (July 24). Dr Admasu Tsegaye, President of Addis Ababa University, read the citation for the degree which was handed to William Henry Gates at the ceremony at Nelson Mandela Hall by Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn. Also present were Dr Tedros Adhanom, Ethiopia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ato Kassa Tekleberhan, Speaker of the House of Federation and Chairperson of the Governing Board of Addis Ababa University (AAU), Ministers, Ambassadors, Members of the University Senate, and students.

In his welcoming remarks, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn congratulated William Henry Gates on receiving an Honorary Doctorate from Addis Ababa University. He thanked the University for recognizing the honorand’s exemplary activities in the areas of health and agriculture. He applauded the extraordinary combination of his brilliance and generosity in helping to save the lives of millions in the fields of health and agriculture. He also extended his profound appreciation to William Henry Gates and his spouse, Melinda Gates, co-chairs of the Foundation, for their contribution to transforming Ethiopia’s agricultural productivity and health. He lauded the Foundation’s support of Ethiopia’s development agenda in food security and quality health service delivery. He added that the Foundation’s genuine partnership with Ethiopia was a critical element in the transformation of the agriculture and health sectors.

Dr Admasu Tsegaye, who read the citation for the Doctorate of Humane Letters, noted that the conferring of the honorary degree upon William Henry Gates confirmed the University's commitment to standing for the poor, the sick and victims of poverty. He emphasized it wanted to deepen further cooperation with the Foundation to help support the lives of the needy in Ethiopia and Africa, adding that it was ready to collaborate with the Foundation in the spheres of industrial biotechnology, agricultural biodiversity, environmental biotechnology and medical biotechnology. He said the people of Ethiopia regarded William Henry Gates as a "champion of the poor and advocate of the afflicted", and they greatly appreciated the Foundation's work in reducing poverty, enhancing health services and increasing the economic opportunities both in Ethiopia and Africa.

The citation noted that William Henry Gates had been guided from an early age by a belief in the power of software and personal computers to improve people's lives, co-founding Microsoft and helping foster a technological revolution. He was a pioneer in corporate philanthropy and in 2000, he and his wife Melinda set up the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Today this is the world's largest philanthropic organization focusing on reducing poverty and improving health and economic opportunity in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia as well as giving young people in the United States access to a good education. It said that what he was doing in Africa "makes you a special friend and advocate of the afflicted. It noted that the Foundation had "wide ranging investments to support key program areas such as agricultural development, financial services for the poor, primary healthcare, water and sanitation, HIV, malaria, polio and vaccines delivery." It leveraged Africa's aspirations for the best information, tools and services. This enabled more people on the continent, especially women and young people, to benefit from economic opportunities, "Your generous support for the continent is making a difference in the lives of many people in South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Senegal, Malawi, Tanzania, Nigeria and Zambia, and Ethiopia."

Bill Gates expressed his gratitude to the University. Reiterating the remarkable achievements made across Africa, he said that he was optimistic about the future of the continent. He noted that Ethiopia's practical achievements manifested the promising future of the peoples of Africa. He said Ethiopia offered a model of improvement in investments in health and agricultural productivity as well as empowerment of the poor. He said Ethiopia was an impressive example in charting the way forward for pro-poor development through the formulation of well-designed programs and building of long-term systems in its development projects. He detailed the initiatives taken by the Government of Ethiopia in association with international development partners and the path charted to ensure the health and survival of mothers and babies; eradicating malaria, Tuberculosis, HIV and polio, as well as providing financial services and safe water and sanitation for the poor. He said well-functioning healthcare services had a catalytic effect for other factors of economic development, and that Ethiopia's progress in the health sector had brought about a wide impact on social and economic development, adding that investments in health, agriculture, education, infrastructure and good governance were enabling factors to accelerate economic growth and social development. He also noted that the Foundation's support to Ethiopia's Agricultural Transformation Agency had helped smallholder farmers increase their production. Mr Gates stressed the need to learn best practices from other African countries in the areas of health, agriculture, education and infrastructure, and said Ethiopia's maternal and child health practices should be emulated by other African countries. Referring to the effects of climate change on the economies of African countries, he stressed the need to focus on innovations and participate in the green revolution and he promised the Foundation would remain committed to work in the green revolution to help smallholder farmers.

..... and a moderated conversation between Dr Tedros and Mr Gates

Dr Tedros Adhanom, Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, and William Henry Gates, co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, held a conversation and responded to questions from the audience following the award ceremony for his Honorary Doctorate on Thursday (July 24). This centred on development programs in the areas of agriculture, education, infrastructure, health, science and technology. Dr Tedros said that Bill Gates' generosity was an exemplary demonstration of serving humanity. Responding to a question raised by the moderator, Dr Tedros explained that country ownership of development programs was of great importance to enhance countries' commitment and the domestic capacity for self-development and national renewal. He said ownership, from planning to resourcing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, could lay the foundation for the development of capacity building in numerous institutions and encourage the aspirations of nations for a better future for their citizens. Country ownership had enriched Ethiopia's efforts in bringing fruitful outcomes in health, agriculture, infrastructure and other development spheres over the last two decades, he said. He explained that the substantial progress made so far in child

and maternal deaths and the overall improvement of health services was indicative of the political ownership and the commitment of the country, underlining the fact that sound developmental policies and strategies were suited to the country's conditions. He expressed his hope that the development path charted and owned by the Government and people of Ethiopia would achieve their goals in the future.

Dr Tedros underlined that there was an unbreakable bond between development and democracy in Ethiopia's march towards the realization of its renaissance. He emphasized that Ethiopia's economic and political ascendance was a reflection of the complementary nature of democracy and development. He added that Ethiopia's experience had also mirrored the celebration of diversity and parity of communal representation in all fronts together with impressive economic growth over the last two decades. He pointed out that Ethiopia was committed to the maturing of development and democracy to accommodate diverse interests and wipe out poverty. Bill Gates made it clear that countries should be ready to exchange and share best experiences so as to innovate and elevate systems of agricultural productivity and health services as well as accelerate the fight against poverty. He stressed the need to give support to health education with the view to addressing the needs of various communities across Africa.

Later in the day, Mr Gates met with Dr Tedros Adhanom, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Kesete-Berhan Admasu, Minister of Health, and Tefera Deribew, Minister of Agriculture, at the Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Discussions covered issues related to the opportunities and challenges encountered as well as the results gained so far in areas of agricultural productivity, quality healthcare services and reduction of poverty, and Ministers explained the results of the Foundation's support. Dr Tedros indicated that the pro-poor development path taken by the Government in health and agriculture enabled communities to demand further services in order to benefit from and build on the successes gained and make progress in the fight against poverty. He noted that an integrated transformation agenda in health and agriculture would help rural communities shape and own their future.

Dr Kesete-Berhan Admasu commended the support given by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to Ethiopia's maternal and child health programs, to provide access to childhood vaccines and safe water and sanitation. He reiterated that Ethiopia regarded institutional development as an important instrument to provide quality health services. Beyond the coverage of healthcare services delivery, he noted, it remained committed to internal and external quality assurance mechanisms, and national accreditation of health services and facilities as well as licensing of health professionals. These, he stressed, were instrumental in improving the health sector and empowering the lives of rural and pastoral communities.

Ato Tefera Deribew expressed thanks for the role played by the Foundation in the development of Ethiopia's agriculture sector in supporting smallholder farmers increase food production. He said Ethiopia attached special importance to the integrated agricultural development path with the view to achieving a comprehensive structural transformation, as well as the empowerment, of the lives of millions of farmers and pastoral communities. The Government was devoted to building up the capacity of farmers and pastoral communities through the provision of basic services and innovative tools to increase agricultural productivity and lift their living standards to a higher level.

Prime Minister Hailemariam meets the press

Last Friday (July 18), at his latest press conference, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn briefed local and foreign journalists on a variety of topics ranging from domestic to international issues.

Responding to questions on the detention and extradition of Andargachew Tsige, the Secretary-General of Ginbot 7, an organization designated as a terrorist organization by the House of People's Representatives in June 2011, Prime Minister Hailemariam said that terrorists are not individuals or groups that should be taken lightly as they are supported by governments which want Ethiopia to be in chaos. He said dismantling such networks was the duty of the Ethiopian Government. He also pointed out that terrorism is an international crime and everyone engaged in terrorism, even if he or she changes citizenship or is a citizen of another country, must therefore be held accountable. The Ethiopian government's objective, he said, was always to deal with any terrorist network that "starts from Asmara and extends to Somalia and South Sudan, sometimes even going to Kenya," in order to ensure a peaceful, secure and prosperous country. In respect to Andargachew, he noted that he had been extradited after involvement in terrorist activities and suggested that there was nothing untoward about this. In response to a question on the death penalty handed down on Andargachew in absentia at the trials of Ginbot 7 members in 2009 and again in 2012, the Prime Minister said a death penalty in Ethiopia is carried out only if the President of the Republic approves it.

Asked what the public might expect from the election due next year, the Prime Minister said the necessary preparations were underway to make the election peaceful, democratic, free and fair as well as credible in the eyes of the Ethiopian people. He said the Government was keen to work to achieve this. The Prime Minister also pointed out that the crackdown on terrorists has nothing to do with the election due next year. He added that the Government did not categorize journalists as a particular threat. The profession had nothing to do with terrorism, he said. "Journalists were also there to fight against global terrorism because it is a threat even to themselves," he said.

Asked whether IGAD was going to use a new strategy in its mediation in the crisis in South Sudan in view of the lack of progress, the Prime Minister said "we don't need a new strategy we only need a political commitment," adding that "what we need is the political commitment of the two parties." Without it, it was impossible to succeed. He said the problem was a political problem and it had to be settled politically. This meant the engagement of all stakeholders including the political parties, faith based organizations and civil society groups. He said he hoped the negotiations would soon resume, but added that the results were always unpredictable.

He said: "it is better to push [the warring parties] to come to the negotiation table as soon as possible so that the killings will end. It is their own people suffering. The parties should be committed to agree. If failure comes, it is not the failure of IGAD."

He said that IGAD has spelt out that if things did go wrong then it would take punitive measures, but he added that these have yet to be defined. The international community is ready to take sanctions but they are waiting for IGAD, but there should be no rush to sanctions: "As good neighbors and Africans it is necessary to exhaust all possibilities." The Prime Minister hinted that IGAD's patience was running out, suggesting that this will be the last attempt to get talks moving forward and agreement implemented and "that is why we are urging them to come to an agreement." With respect to South Sudan refugee influx into Ethiopia and neighboring countries, the Prime Minister called upon the international community to join Ethiopia in supporting the refugees as it was beyond the country's capacity to handle the crises: "We need humanitarian support as quickly as possible. If not, then there will be a huge catastrophe," he said.

Regarding the Nile, Prime Minister Hailemariam underlined Ethiopia's consistent commitment to an equitable use and sharing of water resources, and no appreciable harm to downstream countries as well as a win-win approach that would help all countries in the region. He said the Ethiopian government believed there should be equitable utilization of resources and that construction of the Grand Renaissance Dam would not cause any appreciable harm to downstream countries. Prime Minister Hailemariam said "we have to grow and prosper together". He explained that a stronger Ethiopia, a stronger Egypt and a stronger Sudan were beneficial for Africa, and added that "we now have a new strong spirit of negotiation launched by the discussions with the new Egyptian President." With this new spirit, our countries can come to a solution, he said.

The Prime Minister also addressed financial issues. Responding to a question about the availability of credit for the private sector, the Prime Minister said there was adequate credit in government financial sectors for the private sector and the amount available had not yet been exhausted. Referring to the recently announced salary adjustment for civil servants, he said the adjustment had focused on those with lower incomes who were most affected by previous inflation levels. He said the adjustment had been made after inflation had calmed down. It was now in single figures. In fact, the Government had been careful to ensure that this salary adjustment would be non-inflationary. Prime Minister Hailemariam took the opportunity to warn "greedy businessmen" who were looking to benefit from the occasion that his administration was ready to take stringent measures to prevent any such action.

[A delegation from the Communist Party of China in Addis Ababa](#)

Last week, we reported on President Dr Mulatu Teshome's seven day state visit to the People's Republic of China (July 7-13) during which he held discussions with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Vice President Li Yuanchao and Premier Li Keqiang. At the same time a delegation from the Communist Party of China (CPC), led by Guo Jinlong was in Ethiopia. Mr Jinlong is Beijing Municipality Party Secretary and was elected to the Politburo of the Communist party of China (CPC) at the 18th National Congress in November 2012. During his visit, he met with Prime Minister Hailemariam (on July 10) and Deputy Prime Minister Demeke

Mekonnen. Mr Jinlong signed a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation between the CPC and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front on capacity building with the Deputy Prime Minister who is EPRDF Vice-Chairman. Mr Jinlong who is a former Mayor of Beijing, also met with the Mayor of Addis Ababa, Ato Diriba Kuma to discuss cooperation between the two cities.

Prime Minister Hailemariam in his talks with Mr Guo Jinlong expressed Ethiopia's strong desire to further strengthen and deepen its relations with the People's Republic of China in a number of different areas, particularly in the development of a manufacturing sector. During their talks, the Prime Minister also noted that Ethiopia has learnt from the Chinese experience in regard to building a strong political party and in ways to manage replacement and retirement of party and government leaders. The Prime Minister emphasized that the agreement signed between Ethiopia and China during the visit of Chinese Premier Li Keqiang to Ethiopia earlier this year was a landmark in cooperation between the two countries. He pointed out that Ethiopia was striving hard to implement the rapid structural transformation of its economy. He stressed Ethiopia's urgent need for China's support in development of a manufacturing sector, especially in light industry, and underlined the importance of the support of the Chinese Government in encouraging Chinese companies looking for opportunities to relocate to come to Ethiopia where labor was low-cost and plentiful.

Mr Guo Jinlong said that with Prime Minister Hailemariam's visit to China last year the direction of cooperation between the two countries had been set, and the mission in hand now was to implement the agreements. He said he saw vibrant development in Addis Ababa and this, he added, was testimony to the pace of development in Ethiopia as a whole. He said Ethiopia had set a high bar for development in Africa. He noted that the relationship between China and Ethiopia was longstanding and there were many things they shared in common. He underlined that China would continue to support Ethiopia in its efforts to transform its economy. He expressed his wish to establish cooperation between Addis Ababa and Beijing in culture, education and other areas. He also noted that party-to-party relations were important to bolster cooperation between the two countries.

Mr Guo Jinlong also briefed the Prime Minister regarding the ongoing changes in China after the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of China, in November 2012. He said China was now building a deep and comprehensive reform framework that touched all aspects of society, and a series of policies were being implemented to realize rapid and stable development to improve the living conditions of the poor. Prime Minister Hailemariam expressed his appreciation for the Chinese response to the global economic crisis and for the extensive reform going on in China. He underlined the determination of the EPDRF to stamp out corruption and rent-seeking attitudes in Ethiopia, and indicated that Addis Ababa could learn a lot from Beijing in land administration, transportation, waste management and other areas.

Mr Jinlong's delegation was accompanied by a Chinese cultural troupe which gave a performance at the National Theatre attended by Mr Guo Jinlong, the Speaker of the House of Federation, Ato Kassa Tekleberhan, and the Mayor of Addis Ababa, Ato Diriba Kuma.

The London Girls Summit and Ethiopia's commitments to end FGM and CEFM

A delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister, Demeke Mekonnen and the Women's, Children and Youth Affairs Minister, Zenebu Tadesse, took part in the first ever London Girl Summit 2014 on Tuesday (July 22). Co-hosted by the UK government and UNICEF, the Summit aimed at mobilizing domestic and international efforts to end Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM) within a generation. It brought together women, girls and community leaders from all over the world, together with governments, international organizations and the private sector. British Prime Minister, David Cameron described the existence of FGM as a "standing rebuke to the world." He said what "we are trying to achieve, is such a simple but noble and good ambition and that is to outlaw the practices of FGM and early forced marriage, to outlaw them everywhere for everyone within this generation." Mr Cameron said they were total violations of girls' rights and they were a preventable evil. It was possible to eradicate them with the "right combination of effort, political will and hard work."

Success stories and good practice in tackling FGM and child marriage were shared during the summit which heard from victims and activists against these practices. UNICEF said its research had identified more than 130 million girls and women who had experienced some form of FGM in 29 countries in Africa and the Middle East. UNICEF also claimed that around 250 million women and girls today were forced into

marriage before they reached the age of fifteen. The Executive Director of UNICEF, Anthony Lake, who identified Somalia as one of the areas where FGM was most prevalent, said “the numbers tell us we must accelerate our efforts. Somalia’s Health Minister, Ahmed Adnam Ahmed, one of the delegates from Somalia, said eradicating FGM was a key priority of his government and they hoped to achieve this by 2016 through legislation and education. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, said her Government was committed to eradicating early marriage by 2021.

The Ethiopian delegation to the Summit was led by Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen who also participated in a high-level panel discussion hosted by UNICEF’s Executive Director, Anthony Lake, together with Princess Mabel Van Orange of the Netherlands, the AU Commissioner for Social Affairs, Dr Mustapha Sidiki Kaloko and Hina Jilani from the NGO, The Elders.

The Deputy Prime Minister said Ethiopia was committed to looking at sustainable measures to tackle FGM and child marriage. He highlighted the importance of formulating appropriate policies and strategies and putting in place institutions and human resources for their implementation. He stressed the importance of education in empowering girls and women, pointing out that more than 10 million girls have been enrolled in school in Ethiopia. This, he said, was the surest way of protecting girls and women from such harmful practices. He emphasized the role of effective decentralization which, he said, ensured the participation of all stakeholders in contributing to the national effort. He also noted that an important factor positively contributing to the fight against FGM and child marriage in Ethiopia had been deployment of more than 38,000 health extension workers at grassroots and community levels.

Deputy Prime Minister Demeke also underlined the need to scale up the practices that have produced the best results in the fight against FGM and CEFM. He dealt in detail with Ethiopia’s experience and concluded by emphasizing the need to allocate an appropriate budget in a sustainable fashion for programs and strategy to succeed. On the fringes of the summit the Deputy Prime Minister met the UK Secretary of State for International Development, Justine Greening, the Home Secretary, Theresa May and Alice Albright of Global Partnership for Education. He discussed the challenges facing countries like Ethiopia in the fight against these practices and on ways to enhance efforts to find a lasting solution to them.

The Minister of Women's, Children and Youth Affairs, Zenebu Tadesse also took part in a panel discussion outlining efforts and success stories in addressing FGM and CEFM. She spoke of the experience of an Ethiopian girl, Yeshalem from the Amhara region, who was a victim of FGM in her early childhood and how she stood up to protect her rights by joining a girls’ club, which empowers young girls to involve teachers and the police when they hear about threats of child marriage. The Minister stressed the need to support fully such efforts. These, she said were instrumental in fighting these crimes and helping to bring about lasting solutions. Mrs Zenebu highlighted the results that Ethiopia has registered in fighting these harmful traditional practices. She said the national rate of FGM has decreased by half among girls aged 14 and under, from 52% in 2000, to 23% in 2011; the national prevalence of child marriage decreased from 33.1% in 1997 to 21.4% in 2009/10. The Minister highlighted the three core elements of Ethiopia’s approach to end harmful practices: the political will of the Government; educating public opinion and attitudes to change social norms; and partnerships with development partners, institutions and NGOs. She called on the international community to stand united against these practices and thanked partners for their support in creating a positive, enabling environment for Ethiopian girls. She hoped this would continue till these harmful traditional practices were abolished.

Ethiopia has taken steps to tackle FGM and child marriage and these are enshrined in the Constitution which outlaws such harmful customs: “Laws, customs and practices that oppress or cause bodily or mental harm to women are prohibited.” The Constitution states: “Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses,” and “Women have equal rights with men in marriage.” The Constitution notes that women, in order to right the historic legacy of inequality and discrimination are entitled to affirmative measures. Legislation has been passed to strengthen the efforts to overcome both FGM and CEFM.

Ethiopia is committed to achieving the total elimination of FGM and CEFM by 2025 through a strategic, multi-sectoral approach. This is in line with Ethiopia’s objective to reach middle-income country status by 2025; overall development is closely linked to greater opportunities for women and girls. The approach puts girls at the heart of the commitment, working closely with them, their families and their communities, to end these practices for good and break the cycle of harmful traditional customs. It is to be achieved

through a four-pronged approach: incorporating relevant indicators in the National Plan and the National Data Collection Mechanisms, including the 2015 Demographic and Health Survey, to measure the levels of FGM and CEFM and establish clear bench-marks; enhancing the coordination and effectiveness of the Alliance to End Child Marriage and the National Network to End FGM by engaging different actors with key expertise; establishing strong and accountable mechanisms for effective law enforcement; and fourthly, by significantly increasing financial resources to eliminate FGM and CEFM.

A High-Level seminar on the Tourism Industry

A High-Level Seminar on Tourism was held in Bishoftu, near Addis Ababa, on Wednesday last week (July 16), and over the previous two days, participants were able to hold bilateral meetings and there were visits to several of Ethiopia's World Heritage sites at Lalibela and Axum and the Al Nejashi Mosque. Participants also visited some of the hotels in Bishoftu town, a popular tourist center with a number of resorts around its crater lakes. During the Seminar, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and UNWTO, the United Nations World Tourist Organization, was signed.

The aim of the seminar was to assess performance, create a joint platform for all actors in the sector where ideas could be exchanged, discuss partnerships and consider the way forward for promotion of the country's tourism industry. Discussion centred on the current state of the industry and on the creation of capacity building schemes with UNWTO. It also assessed practical performance and gaps in the industry as well as the immense possibilities available and considered tourism value chain opportunities and challenges in connection with development of destinations, marketing and management. The Seminar, hosted by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in collaboration with UNWTO, was chaired by Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn. Among those attending were Mr Taleb Raifi, Secretary General of UNWTO; Foreign Minister, Dr Tedros Adhanom, and Regional State Presidents, religious leaders and other stakeholders.

In a keynote speech, Prime Minister Hailemariam underlined the importance of identifying the opportunities and problems of the tourism industry. Stressing Ethiopia's abundant natural, historical and cultural resources and other tourism assets, the Prime Minister said "no other country in Africa can compete with such multi-faceted tourism assets." He reminded his listeners that Ethiopia was "the origin of mankind and the hub of paleontological and paleo-anthropological research that had produced the extraordinary discoveries of Lucy, Selam and Ardi." It had never been colonized and was a symbol of independence for black peoples throughout the world. He said it was "the home of more than 80 different Nations, Nationalities and Peoples with their own distinct culture and traditions" all of whom managed to live peacefully together. He mentioned its place as the roof of Africa, with its high mountain ranges in the south east, central and northern parts of the country, in which some of the rarest endemic animals live. He also spoke of Dallol, more than 110 meters below sea level, and the more than 20 national parks, the Rift Valley Lakes and the country's numerous rivers, including the Abay (Blue Nile) and its Tisissat Falls - all emblematic assets of the country.

The Prime Minister also detailed the measures taken recently by the Government in establishing a unique strategic national forum, the Tourism Transformation Council. This has been given the responsibility of transforming the country's tourism industry, to develop the industry to the level of global competition and to maximize possible revenues from the sector. He is leading the council, he said, and there are similar bodies in every regional state, chaired by the respective Regional Presidents. The Prime Minister also elucidated related developments in other sectors, and underlined the Government's commitment to work with multinational organizations like UNWTO in order, he said, to access the rich global experiences in successfully managing Ethiopia's tourist potential. As a founding member of UNWTO, Ethiopia will use the expertise and capacity of the organization to improve its tourist industry.

Mr Taleb Raifi, Secretary General of UNWTO, who was most impressed by his visits to some of the World Heritage sites, emphasized the immense potential for cultural tourism that he had noticed at Lalibela and Axum. He noted that "out of the 89 World Heritage sites in Africa, Ethiopia holds the first position in the continent with 9 sites, 8 of which are cultural sites", adding that "Ethiopia is thus the true paradigm of the immense linkages existing between tourism and culture." Mr Raifi said that global tourism was increasing rapidly and "cultural tourism, the movement of travelers motivated by the mosaic of art forms, heritage sites, festivals, traditions and pilgrimages" was growing at an unprecedented rate, and Ethiopia could use this to its advantage. The UNWTO Secretary General said the "nexus between tourism and culture thus

offers an immense opportunity to contribute to inclusive economic growth, social development and heritage preservation”, and these were topics central to the seminar. World Tourism Day is celebrated on September 27, and this year will be celebrated with the theme of “Tourism and Community development”.

Mr Raifi listed three major challenges to building a competitive and sustainable tourism sector in Africa. He stressed the challenge of air connectivity, noting that Ethiopian Airlines, a pioneer and leading African carrier, would remain a key driving force for sustainable development of tourism in Ethiopia and Africa. In this context, he pointed out that UNWTO and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) would be organizing the first ever ministerial conference on tourism and air transport in Africa in the Seychelles, October 14-15. Another challenge was visa facilitation. There had been significant progress in this area but 64% of the world’s population still needed to acquire a traditional visa prior to their departure for Africa. This, he emphasized, was an area that needed work to ensure visas were not a barrier to sector growth. The challenge, he said was sustainability and the importance of controlling poaching and hunting of wild life in Africa.

Considering the importance of cultural sites for tourism value chains and Ethiopia’s leading position, Mr Raifi recommended three key areas for particular consideration: fostering cultural promotion and preservation; engaging fully with local communities; and building new public-private and public-to-public partnerships for development.

The High Level Seminar included a number of presentations by industry specialists by renowned individuals on the industry and by the Minister of Culture and Tourism, Amin Abdulkadir, who outlined some of the progress made in job creation and other areas. He said in the previous year 681,248 inbound tourists had visited Ethiopia and the country had earned US\$1.9 billion from the sector. The Ethiopian Tourism Industry has gone through many ups and downs since its beginning in 1964. In the past two decades, it has enjoyed the continued support of the government and has registered commendable results. However, the number of visiting tourists and tourism receipts are still below what can be expected as another presenter, Dr Theodros Atlabachew, said.

Tourism has emerged as one of the few leading sectors for economic growth in many countries. It is increasingly seen as a fundamental area for the creation of jobs, to foster investment and generate foreign exchange, despite lingering challenges of uncertainty in the global financial sector and changes in international geopolitics. Certainly, on a global level, the tourism sector has continued to make unmatched progress. According to UNWTO “in 2013 the number of international tourists continued to grow by a surprising 5%”, and more than a billion people visited another country either for business or pleasure. In fact, the tourism sector is crucial for development and has also proved to have an enduring impact in solving issues related to poverty alleviation as well as showcasing cultural and historical heritage sites. Tourism sector development, in fact, underlines the socio-economic and overall development of a country and its people.

The true objectives of Ethiopia’s resettlement programs

A British court’s decision that the support of the UK’s Department for International Development to Ethiopia should be scrutinized for compliance with the organization’s human rights policy was reported recently in The Guardian. In a case brought to a court under the name of “Mr O”, it was claimed that the person in question was evicted from his farmland in the Gambella Regional State in 2011. The allegations included claims that he himself had been beaten and witnessed rape and assaults committed by government soldiers. The court decided “Mr O’s case deserved a full hearing” which apparently implies a full judicial review of DFID’s assistance to Ethiopia.

Ethiopia’s resettlement programs are among subjects that international human rights and advocacy groups have frequently claimed are responsible for extensive human right violations. The evidence for these accusations has consistently been fabrications by people living outside the country, often for many years. It has been accepted without regard for any possible political affiliations of informants. The allegations have been almost universally contradicted by all independent investigations on the ground, by donors and by NGOs working in these and related projects in the region. One reason for these distorted views clearly lies in the failure to understand the objectives of the resettlement program or indeed to make any effort to do so. This has been further compounded by what can only be described as shoddy analysis of the programs on the basis of flimsy, politically-motivated or even non-existent evidence.

The resettlement program, which critics repeatedly refer to with the politically loaded term “villagization”, is a program that has impacted the lives of millions, most positively, in the regions in which it has been undertaken since its launch in 2003. Its primary objective, as has been said repeatedly, is all about easing the provision of basic services to rural populations. To anyone acquainted with these areas, it is clear that the pattern of settlement, particularly in the lowlands, is widely scattered, often involving no more than a dozen or even fewer houses scattered widely across the countryside. These small groups of houses, barely even villages, in almost every case are devoid of medical facilities, educational services and other social benefits as well as being disconnected from any main or even feeder roads to connect them to large villages or towns. It has been difficult to provide administrative, judicial or social services of any kind to these disconnected groups of houses, which barely qualify even as hamlets. Indeed, given such a pattern of settlement, it is impossible to carry out any meaningful development activity. The objective of the resettlement program is therefore to bring the people living in such scattered groups into more sizeable units of population and make it possible to provide health, education and social services, and improve child and maternal death rates. In other words, the overall objective of the program is to create a situation which will allow positive change in the livelihood of rural populations and improve overall social developments.

This was the aim of the program launched in 2003 for these scattered settlement patterns in the areas in the Afar, Gambella, Benishangul Gumuz, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, Somali, Amhara and Tigray Regional States. The program had four important elements which have largely contributed to the success of the program and the wellbeing of the beneficiaries. The first dictated firmly that all resettlements must be made on a voluntary basis after conducting consultations with the people to be relocated through the resettlement program and the people in the areas to which they moved. This, it might be noted, was a fundamental departure from earlier forced resettlement carried out during the military dictatorship of the Derg, which was carried out without consultation, and which was, as a result, a total failure. One of the legacies of that failure has been that some external critics haven’t bothered to try and evaluate the current resettlement programs but merely responded with a knee-jerk reaction based on their memories of the previous Derg-era disaster. The current resettlement program is done entirely on a voluntary basis by conducting lengthy consultations with those involved well before any relocation begins. It also includes the provision that people can move back again if they are dissatisfied with the area to which they move, and can also continue to farm on their previous land if they wish.

The second underlying principle is that all resettlement is only carried out within the same regional state with people moving from one woreda to another woreda. This is to prevent any inter-ethnic problem, something that occurred during the Derg resettlement efforts. The third principle underlining the program relates to new settlements. These are set up and implemented in places where there is unutilized land and no prior settlement. Finally, the last principle, and one of the most important, is that all resettlement must be preceded by the provision of an adequate supply of basic public services including schools, roads, water and sanitation and health clinics as well as the provision of agricultural implements and agricultural services.

On the basis of these principles, Ethiopia has gone a long way towards extensive practical changes to the lives of millions. People who had no access to health posts, schools or other social services have become beneficiaries of the program and this has, in turn, brought about a real change in their livelihood.

The resettlement program in Gambella Region, for example, conducted in 71 development centers in 11 woredas, has provided resettlements with potable water, full health services and educational facilities for all those of school age for the first time. According to a report last year, the whole program in Gambella was based on detailed assessments in advance and “thoroughly discussed at woreda level and by local steering committees.” The original studies were followed by consultation and agreement with local people to identify settlement villages and their demarcation. The process included ensuring the availability of infrastructure, of water, health, education and other facilities for the incomers and local community inhabitants. All the movement was local, and there had been no movement from one zone to another or from one woreda to another. 25,355 houses were built and in 2010/11, a total of 38,000 hectares of farm land distributed. In the 43 villages involved, a total of 156 water schemes were developed, with 19 additional health institutions to add to the 29 already there. 142,000 people had access to water and health service coverage of the village sites reached 95 %. 54,000 people were provided with anti-malarial treated nets; 3,381 pit latrines had been constructed. 41 primary schools had been constructed and 21,600 students attended class in 2010/11. One hundred and twenty eight kilometers of rural roads had been

constructed. Extra staff were assigned to 27 agricultural centers, and 1,600 household heads given practical training. Seven animal health posts had been constructed, with priority given to village sites known for animal production. The regional government had distributed 4,178 quintals of improved seeds, and water pumps for all the 43 village sites, 126 oxen for ploughing and 59,760 farming hand tools, as well as 400 other pumps. Overall, significant gains were registered in food self-sufficiency and those resettled were seeing higher incomes from increased agricultural productivity as a result of agricultural extension services made possible by the program.

This hasn't, of course, meant that there were no problems. An investigation by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, carried out last year, noted delays in the provision of some facilities, and inadequacy in the provision of medical services and other amenities in some areas. However, it also concluded that far from resettlement being coercive or that the rights of indigenous people were violated, the program had been carried out with the active participation and ownership of the local populations, which in many cases had requested resettlement. They had held discussions on the strategies involved at all levels and selected sites. The choice of people to refuse to move from their native places for cultural reasons has been fully respected.

Despite all the evidence to the contrary, various advocacy groups have continued to attack the program. Their allegations, however, continue to be based on alleged research that has serious problems of data collection, aggregation and analysis. It is hard to consider serious claims made by two or three individuals, usually anonymously, and usually from outside the country, against a program that involves millions of people, most of whom are apparently satisfied and have welcomed the program. The fact that there have been no serious or extensive abuses in the program has been underlined by any number of reports from independent bodies which have carried out investigations. Sir Malcolm Bruce, Chair of the UK Parliament's Committee for International Development, who was on an official visit with a delegation of MPs to Ethiopia, in March last year, for instance, dismissed allegations against the resettlement program as "unsubstantiated". Sir Malcolm said DFID and other agencies had consistently monitored the program, undertaking a dozen visits to the regions: "what these review missions have concluded is that they could not substantiate the claims." Former US Ambassador, Donald Booth, said last August that "We have also looked into villagization program for which Ethiopia has been criticized by many international organizations. We have done our own assessment regarding that program and quite frankly we have no evidence that suggests any violation". The Donors Assistance Group, a consortium of 26 donors made similar points after conducting more extensive studies. Reports issued in February 2011 and June 2012, after visits to the regions involved, squarely dismissed allegations that the resettlement program was being conducted involuntarily.

In addition to the resettlement program, the Protection of Basic Services (PBS) program has also been under attack by human rights and advocacy groups which have claimed it has violated rights of indigenous people particularly in the South Omo area. Again, the facts on the ground are unequivocal and completely different from the horrifying allegations made by these advocacy groups. The primary goal of the Protection of Basic Services program is, of course, to provide basic health, education and clean water and sanitation, rural roads and agricultural extension services. It also has the objective of improving these where they are already available and extending decentralization of public finance and support for local civic organizations in a bid to increase accountability and transparency in government. Since its launch in 2006, the PBS has had an enormous impact on poverty reduction. In conjunction with other poverty reduction policies, it has managed to achieve a sharp fall in the percentage of people living in poverty from 38.7% in 2004/5 to 29.6% in 2011. The PBS has enabled Ethiopia to deploy 38,000 health extension workers, hire 100,000 primary school teachers and 45,000 agricultural extension workers. The achievements in health and education, in particular, have helped to place Ethiopia amongst few countries on track to achieve the MDGs in 2015. Its impressive growth trajectory was recently complimented by the World Bank's \$1.6 billion financial support for the 2014 fiscal year and a record number of approvals for poverty related and other projects.

In fact, it is very clear from all the available evidence on the ground, that none of the repeated, baseless, allegations of human rights and advocacy lobbyists provide a true reflection of the resettlement program and of the PBS or their results. These programs, supported or financed by donors, including DFID, the World Bank and other partners, in collaboration with the Ethiopian government, have had a major impact in reducing poverty and improving the livelihood of millions of Ethiopians. They will continue to do so.