

A Week in the Horn **27th January 2012**

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Preliminary meetings for the weekend's African Union Summit

This week, the preliminary meetings for the 18th Ordinary Session of the African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government have been taking place. The actual Summit will be held on Sunday and Monday, 29th and 30th January, under the theme "Boosting Intra-Africa Trade". Thirty-eight Heads of State and Government and twenty First Ladies are expected for the Summit; a total of fifty foreign ministers attended the Executive Council meeting.

This week's meetings have included the 23rd Ordinary Session of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) which considered the reports of sub-committees and the reports of NEPAD and the Special Emergency Assistance Fund for Drought and Famine in Africa as well as the draft decisions presented to the 20th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, the Foreign Ministers, who have been meeting yesterday and today to consider reports of ministerial meetings organized by the AU Commission, the Commission's report, the recommendations of the Permanent Representatives, reports of other AU bodies, items proposed by Member States, and the report of the ministerial committee on candidatures for the AU Commission. The Heads of State and Government will be electing the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, while the Executive Council elects Commissioners of the African Union, ten members of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and one judge for the AU Ad-hoc Administrative Tribunal. There are two candidates for the position of Chairperson of the Commission. Dr. Jean Ping, the current Chairperson is eligible for a second four-year term of office. He is being challenged by Madam Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, South Africa's Minister of Home Affairs.

Tomorrow [28th Jan], the new African Union Convention Centre is going to be inaugurated in the presence of the Heads of State and Government and a Chinese delegation led by the Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative

Conference, Jia Qinglin. The US\$200 million building is the gift of the Chinese Government to Africa and the African Union and is indicative of the close partnership between Africa and China. The complex has a 2,500 seat conference centre, a helicopter landing pad, as well as numerous other facilities and will greatly improve the AU's institutional capacity. Besides inaugurating the AU Convention Centre, Jia Qinglin is also paying an official visit to Ethiopia and will be meeting with President Girma Woldegiorgis and holding bilateral talks with Prime Minister Meles. He will also be meeting with President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea, the current AU Chairman, and AU Commission Chairperson, Dr Jean Ping.

As usual during the African Union Summits, leaders have been holding a series of additional meetings. IGAD's Council of Ministers met yesterday (see following story). IGAD Heads of State and Government are holding an extra-ordinary Summit today [27th] to consider the recommendations of yesterday's IGAD ministerial meeting on Somalia and Sudan. IGAD leaders have been trying to persuade the Presidents of Sudan and South Sudan to resolve the problems that have arisen between the two states and encourage them to accept the proposals put forward by the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel. The IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government subsequently issued a communiqué following their extraordinary Summit, attended by the Presidents of Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan, Uganda's acting foreign minister and Prime Minister Meles.

The Summit adopted the Report on IGAD's Minimum Integration Plan and commended the IGAD Secretariat for its efforts to establish a Free Trade Area. It called on IGAD to fast track the plan and develop a mechanism in line with the Road Map adopted by the Council emphasising infrastructural development as a basis for integration.

On Somalia, the Heads of State and Government paid tribute to the troop contributing countries; adopted the report of the Chiefs of Staff on the military situation, welcomed renewed international momentum and interest, calling on the Security Council to expeditiously enhance AMISOM's mandate in line with the Strategic Concept. It endorsed the Grand Stabilization Strategy to provide an inclusive process for administration of liberated areas; reaffirmed IGAD support for the TFG; and urged the TFG to consolidate inclusive political participation in line with the Djibouti Peace Process, the Kampala Accord and the Road Map. It expressed its concern over the controversies in Parliament and called on the TFIs to respect the principle of separation of power and an orderly transition as guided by these matters and the Garowe Principles. It endorsed IGAD's Somalia Inland Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Counter Piracy and directed the Secretariat to prepare a background paper for the London Conference (23rd February). The Summit welcomed UN Resolution 2023 (2011) on additional sanctions against Eritrea for its continued destabilization in the region and called for their expeditious implementation; and also welcomed the communiqué of the 309th session of the PSC which called for African member states to fully implement this and other relevant resolutions. It condemned the terrorist attacks, the killing and kidnapping of tourists in Northern Ethiopia "which have been linked to the state of Eritrea" and reiterated IGAD's previous position in condemning "the acts of the Eritrean Government for continuously providing support to armed opposition groups including Al-Shabaab."

On Sudan, the Summit noted with concern the deteriorating relations between Sudan and South Sudan and urged both parties to refrain from unilateral action. It requested that the AUHIP file its reports on implementation of outstanding CPA issues and post-referendum arrangements to the AU Assembly, commended the AUHIP for its efforts, and welcomed the willingness of the two parties to continue negotiations on the AUHIP proposals and resolve the current crisis and all outstanding issues. In addition, the meeting also commended Ethiopia for its role in deploying the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei, and called on the parties to implement all remaining commitments in the 20th June Abyei Agreement.

IGAD's Council of Ministers discusses Sudan and Somalia

On Thursday [26th Jan], on the sidelines of the AU Executive Council meeting this week, the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) Council of Ministers held an extraordinary meeting to consider the situation in Sudan and Somalia and in particular the issue of piracy. On the agenda was also the implementation of the regional integration plan. In addition to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of IGAD, the meeting was also attended by Defence Ministers and Chiefs of Staff, Dr. Jean Ping, the Chairperson of the AU Commission and Engineer Mahboub Maalim, Executive Secretary of IGAD.

The meeting which was chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Hailemariam, the chairperson of the Council, was briefed by Ambassador Lamamra, the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security. Ambassador Lamamra stressed that the meeting was taking place at a critical time for Somalia and for Sudan and South Sudan. In Somalia he noted the significant progress being made and the advance of AMISOM and TFG forces against Al-Shabaab forces at Daynille, just outside Mogadishu. Mogadishu was now under full and effective control of the government. In southern and central areas, forces allied with the able assistance of Ethiopian and Kenyan operations had made important gains. He noted that the Strategic Concept for Future AMISOM Operations in Somalia had now been finalized, and at their last meeting on 17th January, the Defence Ministers of the troop contributing countries had articulated arrangements for command and control, liaison and co-ordination for this. These have been communicated to the UN Secretary-General to take them into account in his recommendations to the Security Council for an expanded logistic support package for both AMISOM and the TFG.

Ambassador Lamamra noted that the AU's High Representative for Somalia, former President Rawlings, was currently in Mogadishu, at the invitation of President Sheikh Sharif, to try to resolve the problems of the parliamentary speaker. He also said that adoption of the Garowe Principles provide firm guidance for progress in finalizing the draft constitution. This was taking place against the backdrop of preparations for the London Conference. A ministerial meeting of IGAD, other African countries and international development partners will be held on 28th January here in Addis Ababa and will be given an update on preparations and expected outcomes by the UK Secretary for Development, Andrew Mitchell. Ambassador Lamamra also spoke on the outstanding issues that remained unresolved between Sudan and South Sudan within the context of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and post-referendum arrangements. The parties were at that very moment, with the facilitation of the AU High Level Implementation Panel, negotiating the issue of oil and transitional financial arrangements. He hoped they would react positively to

a compromise proposal. He also said it was extremely urgent that the two parties found mutually acceptable and lasting solutions to all the outstanding issues and provide for the ultimate goal of having “two viable states living side by side, sharing security, prosperity and values.”

In his address to the session, Deputy Prime Minister Hailemariam emphasized the need to address the issues in Somalia and act collectively. He reiterated Ethiopia’s support for the Garowe Principles and welcomed the move by the UN Political Office for Somalia to Mogadishu on Tuesday this week [24th Jan]. He said it was appropriate for IGAD states to harmonize their anti-piracy activities and programmes with other regional strategies, international law and Security Council resolutions. He stressed, however, military intervention alone was not enough. A multi-sectoral approach should be adopted to resolve the root cause of the problem and support a strong central democratic government. This would be able to deny pirates their hideouts and supplies. It was important to create awareness particularly among Somali youth to curb their interest in joining pirates, to create jobs, open schools and training facilities for business skills.

Deputy Prime Minister Hailemariam also noted that the accusations and counteraccusations and the unilateral measures adopted by Sudan and South Sudan were seriously damaging the prospects for their peaceful co-existence. Last week South Sudan announced it was stopping oil production in response to Sudan seizing oil passing through its territory to cover unpaid bills. It is asking for US\$36 per barrel in transit fees; South Sudan has said 70 cents a barrel would be reasonable and that Sudan must immediately pay for the “stolen” oil. This, according to South Sudan President Salva Kiir, amounts to US\$815 million. As the row escalated and following aerial bombardments along the border inside South Sudan, South Sudan put its army on full alert. On Tuesday [24th], South Sudan signed an accord with Kenya to build a pipeline to Lamu. It also says it is planning to approach Ethiopia to build a pipeline to Djibouti. Both parties claim to be working to reach a deal but each has accused the other of failing to engage in honest and meaningful negotiations.

The Deputy Prime Minister pointed out that instability in any member state in the region had an immediate effect on all. It was, he said, very disappointing to see the deterioration of the situation. He expressed his appreciation of the efforts of the AUHIP, and called on both countries to “avoid confrontation and to engage in dialogue with good spirit, to establish a firm basis for cooperation towards resolving the outstanding issues of the CPA.” All IGAD members and partners in the Peace Agreement should work to support a negotiated resolution to the remaining issues. **It was imperative for the international community to deliver on its commitments of support to the people of the two states.**

Ato Hailemariam noted that the IGAD Secretariat had prepared a Minimum Integration Plan as directed by the 12th IGAD Summit. This envisages the development of infrastructure, free trade and free movement of people, and will allow optimum utilization of resources. The basis for any realistic integration process was infrastructure, and this together with reforms in the ICT sector and adopting a regional approach to the exploitation and development of energy resources, he said, were the priority programmes for the success of the plan. Ethiopia, he underlined, was fully committed to the full implementation of the Minimum Integration Plan.

Ato Hailemariam detailed the latest destabilization effort by Eritrea which had resulted in the death of five tourists, and others wounded and kidnapped, on 16th January. Ethiopia, he said, believed this was intended to coincide with the AU Summit as the foiled bombing plot a year earlier had been intended to disrupt the AU Summit. He said this clearly showed Asmara's contempt for international law. The Government of Ethiopia felt the time was overdue for the international community to become serious about Eritrea's activities.

Ethio-Djibouti's Joint Ministerial Commission meets in Djibouti

The 11th Ethio-Djibouti Joint Ministerial Commission Meeting was held from 17th to 19th January in Djibouti last week. The Ethiopian delegation, led by Ato Hailemariam Desalegn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, included Ato Kebede Chane, Minister of Trade, Ato Diriba Kuma, Minister of Transport, Ato Abdulfetah Abdullahi, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs as well as officials from the Revenue and Custom Authority, the Civil Aviation Authority, the Ethiopian Maritime Authority, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and other government institutions. The Djiboutian delegation was led by Mr. Mahmoud Ali Youssef, Djibouti's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

Opening the meeting, Mr. Mahmoud Ali Youssef underlined the close co-operation existing between two sisterly countries, underscoring the special relationship that they had established over the years. He emphasized the importance of having the vision of a strategic partnership to boost relations, and highlighted their common interest in regional peace and security as well as in infrastructural and economic integration, and appreciated the levels of consultation and cooperation that existed. Ato Hailemariam underlined the excellent bilateral relations existing between the two countries as well as articulating the need to further strengthen and cement relations based on mutual benefits and understanding between the two countries, politically, economically and socially. He affirmed that Ethiopia attributed particular importance to these long-standing ties of brotherhood, understanding and cooperation with Djibouti.

Political cooperation between Ethiopia and Djibouti, and the close co-operation and consultation between them on regional matters within the IGAD framework and in bilateral forums can be taken as a model to the region. At the 11th Ethio- Djibouti Joint Commission Ministerial Meeting the two countries agreed to further strengthen ties through continuous consultation on matters of common interest, discussing in detail the common long term strategic vision for development and integration initiated by Djibouti at the last Joint Experts meeting in Addis Ababa in November. Agreement was reached on finalizing and endorsing details of the strategic plan in an extraordinary ministerial meeting to be held in the near future. This Strategic Integration Plan aims to facilitate the economic integration not just of Ethiopia and Djibouti but is intended to provide a model for the integration of the region as a whole.

Over the years, Ethiopia and Djibouti have signed over seventy Agreements, Memoranda of Understanding and Protocols covering different political, economic and social fields. Recent meetings between Ethiopia and Djibouti have included the Joint Commission Border

Administrators and Commissioners' Committee held at Dekil in Djibouti, 27th to 29th October last year and the Ethio-Djibouti Joint Commission Experts Committee which had its 11th meeting in Addis Ababa from 1st to 2nd November. Joint Technical Committees have been established in different social sectors such as culture and tourism, women's, youth and children's affairs, health and education.

During this meeting further agreements were signed covering information, communication and media, illegal migration and human trafficking, and power exchange. There was agreement on the seriousness of illegal immigration and the tragic consequences of human trafficking. The two parties will work jointly to resolve the problem, exchanging information and working to halt trafficking. As part of the agreement on communication and the media, **they agreed to inaugurate the fibre optic connection on 20th February**. Discussions also evaluated, assessed and reviewed existing agreements and looked at future cooperation in the judicial sector. The two sides have agreed to meet in Addis Ababa next month to work out a programme schedule of future cooperation. They have agreed to finalize and sign the Ethio-Djibouti General Trade Agreement and Border Trade Protocol shortly as well as finalize the Bilateral Air Service Agreement and the Avoidance of Double Taxation Agreement within the next two months. The 12th Ethio-Djibouti Joint Ministerial Meeting is to be held in Addis Ababa in January next year.

During last week's meeting, which both sides categorized as highly successful expressing their total satisfaction at the usefulness of both the experts and the ministerial meetings, Ato Hailemariam also inspected a fibre optic connection between Ethiopia and Djibouti, visited the Port of Djibouti and had an audience with the President of Djibouti.

The International Criminal Court's ruling on Kenya

On Monday this week [23rd Jan] the International Criminal Court at The Hague accepted Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo's request to confirm charges against four Kenyan suspects accused of orchestrating and directing crimes against humanity during the post-election violence in Kenya in December 2007 and January 2008. Those identified in the ruling were Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, Uhuru Kenyatta, son of Kenya's independence leader, Jomo Kenyatta; Former Cabinet Minister and MP William Ruto, radio broadcaster Joshua Arap Sang, and the Head of the Civil Service and Cabinet Secretary, Francis Muthaura. Charges against two other men, former Police Chief, Mohammed Hussein Ali, and former Minister for

Industrialization, Henry Kosgey, were dropped because of insufficient evidence. Among the charges leveled against the six suspects were: crimes against humanity including murder, deportation, causing forcible injury, rape and persecution based on political affiliation. During the violence more than 1,200 people were killed and some 600,000 people were forced to flee their homes.

In a ruling read by Judge Ekaterina Trendafilova of the Pre-Trial Chamber II, the court said the three-person Chamber by a majority vote had decided to confirm charges against four of six suspects. Judge Trendafilova added that the Prosecutor had established "substantial grounds" to believe "crimes against humanity" were committed, and said the Chamber also found that the crimes committed were "targeted to specific groups". She also pointed out

that Judge Hans- Peter Kaul gave a “dissenting opinion” arguing that the crimes were “common crimes that could be handled by the Kenyan law.”

Judge Trendafilova stressed that the decisions did not mean guilty verdicts against the suspects, only that there was sufficient evidence to send them to trial. "We are not passing judgment on the guilt or innocence of the individuals," she said. The confirmation of charges is a long way from proving them beyond a reasonable doubt. No date has been set for the trials. Under ICC rules, the accused can challenge the judges’ decision on the court’s jurisdiction over the cases. They can also apply to the pre-trial chamber to allow them to appeal the confirmation decision. If the accused do appeal, it may be months before the trials begin. All four of the accused deny any role in the post-election violence of 2007-2008 and said they would appeal against the decision.

Mr. Kenyatta and Mr. Ruto have both stated they intend to run for President in the next presidential election which is due to be held before the end of March next year, though there have been reports that President Kibaki wishes the election to be held by the end of this year. It is not clear if the laws of Kenya will allow the two accused to stand. Kenya's new constitution, agreed in August 2010, says holders of public office should be beyond reproach as far as ethics are concerned. Human rights groups are said to be planning to go to court to get a legal interpretation on whether this includes those accused and facing trial rather than those convicted. Kenya’s Attorney General Githu Muigai said the suspects were appearing in their

“individual capacity” and the government cannot speak on their behalf on what to do and what not to do. President Mwai Kibaki said subsequently he had directed Attorney General Githu Muigai to form a legal team to study the ruling and advise the government on the next steps to take. The Attorney-General said the Kenyan government would make a decision later on whether the Deputy Prime Minister and Mr. Muthaura should resign under these circumstances.

Mr Kenyatta wrote on his Facebook page that “my conscience is clear, has been clear and will always remain clear that I am innocent of all the accusations that have been leveled against me.” Last week, Mr Kenyatta made it clear he intended to pursue his political ambitions irrespective of whether the International Criminal Court trial went ahead. Mr Ruto said that his legal team would be analyzing the judges’ decision before determining the next steps to take but he added “Let me state, and categorically so, that these allegations against me have been, are and will forever be strange to me.....I am clear in my mind that it doesn’t matter how long it takes, the truth will prevail...the devil will be put to shame.” He re-affirmed that he still planned to run for president: “I am firmly still in the presidential race, the charges confirmed against me will not affect it.”

President Kibaki appealed for people to stay calm after the news. He said in a statement that under the provisions of the new constitution, the country’s judiciary was undergoing radical transformation, the police were facing fundamental reform, and the country now had an independent prosecutor. “It is now the collective responsibility of all those institutions to ensure justice for all, at all times. In the meantime I appeal to everyone to

remain calm and peaceful,” the President said. President Kibaki added that it was his “personal commitment to bequeath present and future generations a secure, united, prosperous, and peaceful country.”

In the aftermath of the violence in 2007-2008, a government-appointed commission released a report calling for the establishment of an independent tribunal. The Kenyan Parliament approved the report, but it proved impossible to establish a viable local mechanism to investigate the accountability of those allegedly responsible. As a result, the ICC began investigating the highest-profile cases in mid-2009 and the ICC prosecutor issued indictments in December 2010. This, however, had a significant impact at a critical time as Kenya was preparing to return to the ballot box for nationwide presidential and parliamentary polls, to take place before March 2013.

The government has therefore been lobbying for the cases to be dropped, a position endorsed last year by the African Union. The African Union said the ICC cases on Kenya resulted from an AU-appointed and mediated process through which former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, achieved a power-sharing agreement in April 2008. The African Union would therefore support the request to the ICC by Kenya to drop or defer the cases. In November last year, IGAD under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Meles, also endorsed the AU’s position over Kenya’s request for an ICC deferral. The Prime Minister stressed that Ethiopia would not hesitate to support the position presented by Kenya, not only because Ethiopia must always come to the aid of its neighbour, but also because it believed that the deferral course that Kenya requested would be the best “under the circumstances”. Kenya’s request to the ICC has also been bilaterally supported by a number of other African countries including, Burundi, Djibouti, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

The growing China-Africa partnership

Africa is the youngest continent on the world economic horizon, but with proper utilization of its abundant human and material resources it is heading firmly towards economic and human development. It is effectively establishing strong partnerships with other regions to help meet its huge needs of infrastructure, technology transfer and capital, and consumer goods. It has established exemplary partnerships with the booming economies of Asia, notably China, which continue to grow at the strongest pace. China is one of the closest partners for Africa. It

maintains very close cooperation with Africa; it pays and continues to pay significant attention to the continent in order to keep it as a close development partner. The China-Africa strategic partnership is continuing to develop rapidly in this second decade of the new century with frequent high-level visits and successful expansion of political, economic, and cultural cooperation. The broadened economic cooperation and trade relations between China and Africa in recent years have pushed the economic development of both to provide tangible benefits to their respective peoples. It has provided the means to help African countries plan for economic diversification, and adapted and shared technologies for developing economies in Africa.

China's non-financial direct investment in Africa is now growing at a rate of 87%, year-on-year. China-Africa cooperation projects can be seen in almost every African country, and these projects, covering agriculture, mining, manufacturing, infrastructure, trade flows and similar areas, **typically fit the priority needs of Africans**. During 2011, Sino-Africa cooperation has also been gradually broadening with development in such areas as financial institutions, telecommunications, tourism, shipping and other industries. Another major focus of China-Africa

cooperation has been infrastructure. Currently such projects as roads, railways, bridges, ports, hospitals, communications, dams and electric power generation plants are being constructed by Chinese enterprises in many African countries. Others have been completed and are already operative. These have not only improved living standards and quality of life significantly; they have helped local employment opportunities, improved skills of local professionals and promoted the progress of related industries.

China has become the largest trading partner of Africa, and the continent is now China's fourth largest investment destination. The latest data indicate that China-Africa trade has reached a year-on-year growth rate of 30%. The total trade volume between China and Africa is now believed to have reached between US\$150 and 160 billion in 2011, up from US\$126.9 billion in 2010. It is expected to exceed US\$300 billion a year within the next three to five years. Chinese goods, which cover a wide range of options to meet different consumption levels in African markets and needs, have helped to boost production capacity and development needs in Africa. Equally, significant amounts of African products are increasingly favoured by Chinese consumers.

While deepening political trust and expanding its economic and trade cooperation with Africa, China has also continued to share the effects of its own changes and reforms and its experiences with the countries of Africa. It's setting up six economic and trade cooperation zones in different African countries including **Ethiopia**, Egypt, Mauritius, Nigeria and Zambia. These have helped to improve the investment environment, attract foreign direct investment and create jobs. Such zones will play a vital role in changing Africa's economic structure, optimizing the export structure of African goods, and promoting local manufacturing and industrialization. Several China-Africa Summits have been convened to expand the levels of partnership both in quality and scope. The most recent of these was convened in November 2009 at Sharm-el-Sheikh in Egypt. Previous summits were held in October 2000 in Beijing, December 2003 in Addis Ababa, and November 2006 in Beijing. During the 2006 Beijing Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), Chinese President Hu Jintao pledged eight measures China would implement to further consolidate its partnership with Africa. The eight measures included China's pledge to double its 2006 level of assistance by 2009, the provision of US\$3 billion of preferential loans and US\$2 billion of preferential buyer's credits to Africa, and the establishment of a development fund of US\$5 billion to encourage Chinese firms to invest in Africa. Debt cancellation was another major measure.

Reports during the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) indicated that these eight measures for China-Africa cooperation had been implemented and achieved. The provision of the loans had been fully implemented by the

end of 2009, and debt cancellation procedures for 154 debt payments with 33 countries have been completed so far. This marks the beginning of a new historic phase of China-Africa's strategic partnership, and since then China's aid to Africa has steadily been expanding.

The newly built US\$200 million AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, financed by the Government of China, is another significant manifestation of the growing China-Africa partnership. The construction of a new conference centre for the AU was another of eight measures President Hu pledged in 2006, with a view to forging a new level of China-Africa strategic partnership and strengthening bilateral cooperation in more areas and at a higher level. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, who visited the new AU headquarters on 11th January, said the building is indicative of

the close and growing partnership between Africa and China, and of China's keen interest to work together with Africa in the years to come. Ethiopia also made a significant contribution to the construction of the new building, granting 130,000 sq metres of land for the building and exempting materials imported for the construction of the building from taxes. Ethiopia also worked with the AU to lobby the Chinese government to build the new headquarters. The 20-storey complex will be inaugurated tomorrow, 28th January, a day before the opening of the AU Summit of Heads of State and Government. It contains a 2,500 person-capacity conference centre, briefing and smaller conference rooms, media centre, shops and libraries and 350 offices. As the gift of China to the African people it has taken full consideration of African culture and African opinions into account. It will be widely welcomed, accepted and enjoyed by the people of Africa.

Missing the point - Eritrea's response to criticism

On Monday this week [23rd Jan], the Eritrean Ministry of Foreign Affairs addressed a letter to the United Nations Security Council. It was its usual attempt to deny any report of its activities in continuing its repeated efforts at destabilization in the region. It is after all only a few days ago that tourists in the Afar Regional State of Ethiopia were killed, injured, and kidnapped with the direct involvement of the Eritrean regime. It was an unambiguous example of the way the regime encourages and advocates chaos to disturb the peace and stability of its neighbours.

Eritrea has attempted to play the innocent by declaring the killing of the tourists "deplorable". This is no more than the old trick it has been employing for years. It is now quite obvious to everybody that the regime in Eritrea always pretends to know nothing after having committed itself to carry out horrendous acts against civilians and public property. The attack on tourists was deliberately targeted to disrupt peace and development endeavours in Ethiopia. It is no surprise to hear that the regime in Asmara has again denied responsibility. Indeed, we expect nothing but complete denial from the perpetrator. The Ethiopian Government has made it clear in the statement issued last week that the recent attack can only be seen as part of an attempt by the Eritrean regime to disturb the African Union Summit just as it tried to do a year ago. The only difference is that this time Eritrea picked on the Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Party (ARDUF) as its surrogate for destabilization in Ethiopia.

For the regime in Eritrea, the right of Ethiopia to defend its peace and stability “carries the potential seeds of grave regional destabilization”. Eritrea gives itself the right to destabilize and create instability in Ethiopia in particular, as well as region as a whole. It cannot then claim to have the moral and political ground to reject the right of others to defend themselves. It is, as usual, trying to steal the complaints of its own victims, to bite back at those it has already bitten. The letter to the Security Council also raises, once again, the issue of the border dispute. The Eritrean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ignoring the facts of the matter, makes its usual complaint that Ethiopia is occupying Eritrean territories, refusing to accept the decisions of the Ethio-Eritrea Boundary Commission. This is no more than a now threadbare attempt to shift attention away from Eritrea’s own destabilizing activities. Ethiopia has made it known on numerous occasions since 2004 that it fully accepted the decisions of the Commission and that it was ready to engage in dialogue to implement demarcation as the basis for a peaceful settlement and a lasting solution on the border. It has also repeatedly expressed its readiness to talk on normalization of relations. The international community by now is fully aware of the reasons for the stalemate of the border dispute – the lack of willingness by Eritrea to engage in dialogue for demarcation and for normalization of relations.

The regime’s letter also tries to make a point that the accusations against it by Ethiopia last week, and by Kenya two months ago, were aimed at “entrapping Eritrea”. This, of course, totally ignores the fact that accusations of this kind do not come solely from this and that country, but also from the United Nations Monitoring Group that provided so much of the evidence that identified Eritrea as a destabilizing factor in the region and led to the imposition of sanctions. The Monitoring Group in its July report last year identified Eritrea’s responsibility for the continued and widespread attempts to destabilize the region through “operations using proxy forces that fall under direct Eritrean command and control, falsely flagged as democratic opposition groups, in violation of resolution 1907”. The recent attack on tourists, as explained above, is a case in point. It clearly shows that the regime has made no attempt to change its ways despite the imposition of sanctions. This refusal by the regime in Asmara underlines the need for more and firmer measures by the international community to bring about genuine regional peace and stability.

News and Views

Prime Minister Meles attends the Davos World Economic Forum

This week's annual meeting of the World Economic Forum at Davos in Switzerland opened on Wednesday this week [25th Jan]. The meeting, attended by over 2,500 leading politicians, monetary policymakers and senior business executives, started with a warning that the global economy will have to reform or die. There was talk of the need for a radical rethink and concern that the Western model of capitalism had failed, with suggestions that state capitalism on the Chinese model was in the ascendant. Discussions would cover everything from the eurozone crisis to Iran's nuclear programme as well as trends in science and the arts. The overall theme is "The Great Transformation: Shaping new models", being explored through severe income disparity, fiscal imbalances and greenhouse-gas emissions and covering new models of growth and employment, leadership and innovation, sustainability and resources, and society and technology.

A session on Africa was chaired by former UK Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, who was joined by the Presidents of South Africa, Guinea and Tanzania, Prime Minister Meles of Ethiopia and the Prime Minister of Kenya. **Prime Minister Meles expressed confidence that Africa would be the next "growth pole" of the global economy.** It needed, he said three things: higher investment in infrastructure; better skills; and the ability to attract low-cost manufacturing plants which are looking to re-locate from Asia. It was already being priced out of access to fossil fuel by rising oil costs and had no option but to turn to alternative energy. This might, he added, ultimately benefit the developing world by forcing the pace of change. "It is crucial (to have) access to bio-fuels, solar power.... in Africa we think fossil fuels already are being rationed... Maybe it's a blessing in disguise, forcing us to look for alternative supplies." He quoted the example of a new hydro-electric rail project in Ethiopia as the kind of idea that would prevail in future. **Sustainable development was the only viable model. "In my view", he said "Africa has no option but to go through the green path to development: we have to adjust no matter what happens with the climate change negotiations."**

The International Maritime Bureau's annual report on piracy

The International Maritime Bureau (IMB)'s latest report on piracy in 2011 says that pirate attacks against vessels in East and West Africa account for the majority of piratical assaults in the last year. In its report, published on 19th January, IMB which runs the only 24-hour manned centre to receive and disseminate reports of piracy and armed robbery at sea, noted that there had been 439 attacks reported to it last year. Of these, 275 attacks took place off Somalia on the east coast and in the Gulf of Guinea on the west coast of Africa. This was a slight drop in the total number of recorded incidents (from 445 to 439) but it still showed the high threat in East and West Africa. Somali pirates continued to account for the majority of attacks, just over 50%, and the report emphasized that the overall figures for Somali piracy would have been much higher if it had not been the continued efforts and pre-emptive attacks made by international naval forces. In fact, the overall number of

Somali incidents increased from 219 in 2010 to 237 in 2011, but the number of successful hijackings had fallen from 49 to 28.

The Director of the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre, Captain Mukundan, said the pre-emptive naval strikes, the hardening of vessels in line with the Best Management Practices and the deterrent effect of Privately Contracted Armed Security Personnel on ships, had all contributed to the slight decrease. The IMB report indicated that Somali pirate attacks were predominantly concentrated at the crossroad of the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden. At the same time, last year saw the first hijacking by Somali pirates of an anchored vessel in the territorial waters of Oman, highlighting the need for continued vigilance in ports and by vessels at anchor. Elsewhere, the report noted that Nigeria and Benin continued to provide pirate hotspots around the coast of Africa.

Preparatory meetings for the London Conference on Somalia

Kenya has given more details of its planned international conference on piracy, to be held on 9th February, in conjunction with the United Nations and other development partners. A press statement from the Kenyan Foreign Ministry noted that the government was holding preparatory meetings for the conference. It also said that Heads of State from the region, including both the East African Community and the Inter-governmental Authority on Development are being invited to attend. It is expected that the region, for the first time, will set up institutions to fight the root causes of piracy including the issue of poverty inside Somalia. Its overall aim is to formulate a strategy to fight the issue of piracy that has contributed to escalating lawlessness in Somalia. The conference resolutions will then be forwarded to the broader UK Conference on Somalia which is being held on 23rd February in London.

The aim of the UK conference is to bring together leaders of the key partner countries of Somalia and relevant organisations, both in Africa and beyond, to help galvanise a common approach to address the problems and challenges of Somalia that affect all, including piracy, extremism and the underlying causes of instability and conflict in the country. The conference is expected to set clear targets on the elimination of these issues as well as come up with a **financing mechanism** to fight the root causes of piracy. There have been two other successful pre-London preparatory conferences recently, in Abu Dhabi and in London, to share views and ideas on recent developments in Somalia and the way forward. These will be helpful in coming up with consolidated problem-solving mechanisms at the London Conference in February. Ethiopia has attended these preparatory meetings and shares the widely accepted strategy underscoring the importance of fighting the root causes of piracy. Its view is that although air and naval strikes have some value, the most effective low cost method of managing the problem would be a coordinated effort on the ground by the TFG of Somalia, together with IGAD countries and the international community, to clear up the few areas that remain safe-havens for pirates. This should be followed by the establishment of strong local administrations in liberated areas which could manage the threat of piracy and any related problems relatively easily and effectively.

International Calls for the release of Eritrea's Orthodox Patriarch

The Holy Synod of the OEcumenical Canonical Orthodox Church Worldwide (OECOCW) has issued a statement demanding religious freedom for the exiled Patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church, His Holiness Abune Antonios who was forcibly removed from his patriarchal residence and throne and detained by the government in 2007. The Patriarch had been concerned over the growing interference of government in religious affairs, and his detention followed his refusal to excommunicate three thousand members of the Medhane Alem Sunday School movement as well as his demands that the government should release imprisoned Christians accused of treason, the OECOCW said. Since 2007, the 85-year-old Patriarch is reported to have been illegally detained by government officials at an undisclosed location. The Eritrean government has claimed Patriarch Antonios voluntarily retired to an isolated monastery in the countryside and is very active in prayer. They have, however, failed to provide any evidence of his state of health or of the conditions under which he is held.

In a report to the Synod, the Secretary of the Orthodoxy Cognate Media Network, George Alexander, said a significant number of the Christian population in Eritrea were being severely persecuted for their religious faith. Two to three thousand Orthodox Christians were detained in Eritrean prisons in addition to the Evangelical and Pentecostal Christians who were being brutally attacked for their faith. The Holy Synod said it viewed religious freedom as a universal right that all governments should respect, as well as a human right that was inalienable and proper to the existence of humanity to actualize the greatest human potential and spiritual energies for the betterment of both society and government within their own "rightful spheres of operation". It called on all Christian Churches, leaders and the faithful of all religions to petition the World Court to intervene on behalf of Patriarch Antonios and all peoples and religious communities being denied their rightful international religious freedom.

The International Oriental Orthodox Churches, which still consider Abune Antonios as the legitimate patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Church, have also denounced the Eritrean regime's detention of Abune Antonios and several thousands of other Christians. Last December, the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church established a diocese to cover the eleven churches in Europe. Like the North American Diocese of the Diaspora, this maintains its loyalty to Patriarch Antonios as the legitimate patriarch of the church. Church members in both areas have repeatedly called for the regime in Asmara to free the Patriarch and the several thousand other detained Christians in Eritrea.

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