

A Week in the Horn

30th December 2016

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News in Brief

Ethiopia

President Mulatu Teshome held talks with a Turkish Business delegation, led by Economy Minister Nihat Zeybekci on Wednesday, December 28 at the National Palace. The discussions focused on issues concerning the bilateral ties and economic cooperation between Ethiopia and Turkey.

Foreign Minister of Ethiopia, Dr Workneh Gebeyehu, held talks with the Turkish Minister of the Economy, Mr Nihat Zeybekci on the sidelines of the Ethio-Turkey Joint Economic Commission. They discussed ways to further expedite bilateral economic ties and cooperation. **(See article)**

Foreign Minister Dr Workneh paid his first official visit to the Republic of Sudan on Sunday, December 25. He held talks with Sudan's Foreign Minister Professor Ibrahim Ghandour on a wide range of regional and global issues of mutual interest. They agreed to consolidate their economic cooperation through the implementation of joint projects and to further strengthen investment and trade ties. **(See article)**

The State of Emergency Command Post disclosed over the weekend that a total of 9,800 suspects are being released, with the first round of 4,035 individuals freed on Wednesday (December 21). **(See article)**

In its regular session held on Tuesday (Dec 27) the House of People's Representatives (HPR) approved the second national human rights action plan, which allows the government to prepare new legal frameworks and amend existing laws to ensure constitutionally-guaranteed human rights.

The 7th Ethio-Turkey Joint Economic Commission and Business Forum, organized by the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and the Turkey-Ethiopia Business Council in partnership with the Embassy of Turkey in Addis Ababa and Business Diplomacy Directorate General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, was held at the Sheraton Addis this week on Wednesday (December 28). **(See article)**

The 23rd Ethio-Djibouti Border Commissioners/Administrators Meeting was held between 26 and 28 December 2016 in Dikhil City in Djibouti. Meles Alem, Director for Neighboring Countries at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia led the Ethiopian Delegation. **(See article)**

Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin, Ethiopia's Ambassador to the People's Republic of China and Ambassador Liu Guijin, China's Former Special Envoy for African Affairs were the keynote speakers at the Ambassadors' Forum on China-Africa Cooperation held in the College of Defense Studies at the National Defense University of the Chinese People's Liberation Army in Beijing last week on December 21. **(See article)**

The World Bank offered 100 million US dollars support to Ethiopia for the implementation of "Development Response to Displacement Impact Project (DRDIP) in the Horn of Africa."

Djibouti

President Ismail Omar Guelleh was in Cairo at the beginning of the week where he signed seven Memoranda of Understanding, covering exports and imports, agriculture, technical education, trade cooperation, international cooperation, health and maritime ports with Egyptian President El-Sisi; [they] also discussed the situation in the Horn of Africa and Yemen as well as preparations for the upcoming African Union Summit.

Kenya

The government has extended the dusk to dawn curfew in Mandera County by three months starting Wednesday (December 28). Interior Cabinet Secretary, Joseph Nkaissery, said the order was aimed at boosting the efforts to tame terrorist activities in the entire region.

The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics said last week that growth in the third quarter of 2016 had slowed with the economy expanding by 5.7% year-on-year in the third quarter compared with 6.0% in the same period in 2015. Agriculture, forestry and fishing grew 3.9% as against 5.5% in the previous year. Growth in the finance sector slowed to 6.1% during the quarter. The Finance Ministry forecasts 6% growth in 2016 and 7% a year in the medium term.

Somalia

The National Leadership Forum meeting, which ended on December 24, postponed the Presidential election until January 24, and also increased the number of Senate seats by 18. However a statement from the Forum on Thursday (December 29) said any change in the number of Senate seats would only take place after the presidential election. **(See article)**

The National Leadership Forum meeting also set up a Technical Committee for drought relief and prevention, with representatives from the Offices of the President and Prime Minister, the Ministry of Interior and Federal Affairs, the Office of Disaster Prevention and Management and all the Federal States.

The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General, Michael Keating, expressed concern on Saturday (December 24) at the outbreak of renewed violence in Galkayo and called on all parties to honor the ceasefire agreement. Despite the agreement, trucks carrying relief supplies for people affected by drought have been blocked for the past three weeks by roadblocks; despite the efforts of the Joint Committee of local authorities and elders to negotiate; negotiations to remove the roadblocks have stalled, putting the ceasefire in jeopardy.

Representatives of the Somaliland government and of the Khatumo state secession movement in the eastern areas of Somaliland, in Sool, Sanaag and Cayn or Buhodle reached an initial 11-point agreement in talks hosted by the Ethiopian government in Addis Ababa last week. They agreed *inter alia* to resolve disputes peacefully, stop negative propaganda, reject external intervention, work to establish sustainable peace, stop recruitment of clan-based militias, work to get development funding and encourage drought relief aid in previously contested areas.

South Sudan

The UN Security Council on Friday (December 23) rejected a US-drafted resolution on imposing an arms embargo and more sanctions on South Sudan, with seven votes in favor and 8 abstentions. Nine votes and no veto are required for resolutions to be adopted by the Security Council. A joint statement issued by seven advocacy NGOs condemned the failure to adopt the resolution. **(See article)**

Sudan

The UNAMID Joint Special Representative and Joint Chief Mediator for Darfur, Martin Uhomoibhi, said on Wednesday (December 28) that 2016 hadn't been an easy year for the people of Darfur or for UNAMID but the Mission would continue to promote reconciliation and peace initiatives, though he stressed there was no military solution to the conflict. Last year, the UN Security Council extended the mandate of UNAMID until 30 June 2017.

The current session of the Sudanese parliament was extended for a further three weeks on Wednesday (December 28). This will allow more time to pass additional bills and the constitutional reforms endorsed by the National Dialogue Congress last October. On Wednesday, the parliament formally adopted several constitutional reforms, creating the position of the prime minister, his areas of competences and increasing the numbers in parliament to represent all political forces during the transitional period.

The Sudan and Saudi Arabia Chiefs of General Staff held discussions on Monday (December 26) on various aspects of military and security cooperation and coordination. Saudi Arabia's Lt. General Abdul Rehman Bin Saleh Al-Bunyan was in Khartoum at the invitation of Sudan's Lt. General Emad al-Din Adawi. Discussions covered military and security cooperation and coordination to enhance joint cooperation and enhance the readiness to respond to threats against Arab and Islamic worlds.

May we offer all our readers, in Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa and across the world, our Best Wishes for a Quiet, Peaceful and Prosperous New Year!

Dr Workneh addresses the annual conference of Djiboutian Ambassadors

Ethiopia's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Workneh Gebeyehu, addressed the Annual Conference of Djiboutian Ambassadors last week on December 21. The Foreign Minister, who was invited by his Djiboutian counterpart Mahmoud Ali Youssuf, highlighted Ethiopia's foreign policy, its vision for regional integration, development and security and its international priorities. He also emphasized that his presence at the meeting reflected the fact that Ethiopia was firmly committed to the vision of elevating the already existing Ethio-Djiboutian strategic partnership to new and higher levels.

Dr Workneh noted that the focus of Ethiopia's Foreign and National Security Policy was now based on national domestic needs and underlined that the shift in orientation of the country's foreign relations had injected fresh vitality into the overall development and democratization of the country over the last two decades. He also noted that the Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy document, guided as it is by the constitution, identified the major threats and vulnerabilities facing the very existence and sovereignty of the country. He stressed that the policy document mapped out the future of the country, making the wellbeing, peace and security of the people the core mission of the country's foreign relations.

The Foreign Minister said Ethiopia's foreign policy identified poverty, backwardness, the absence of democracy, a lack of good governance and the rule of law as the major threats to national security. The Foreign and National Security Policy was devised with the aim of fast-tracking the fight against poverty and underdevelopment; and creating space for the promotion of democracy, good governance and the rule of law. The application of this Foreign and National Security Policy was also towards neighborhood diplomacy, to give full play to the promotion of regional integration. This underlined the fact that Ethiopia shaped and directed its neighborhood diplomacy in the interests of regional development and security.

Dr Workneh highlighted the point that Ethiopia now mainstreamed the importance of its national interest in perfect synchronization with the cause of regional integration. It placed sustainability at the heart of its

development and security blueprint. It also made a shared future and common benefits central to its aims of upholding regional platforms, including IGAD and the AU, as mechanisms to promote regional peace and stability along with massive infrastructure development and regional integration.

The Foreign Minister explained that Ethiopia was guided by the vision and spirit of Pan-Africanism. It had made steady progress in deepening and strengthening its ties with other African countries and the African Union in addition to championing the cause of Africa and Africans in international fora and platforms. The country's policies also embodied common interests and shared benefits that constantly enriched relations with the countries of the Middle East, providing for various fields of cooperative partnership with the objective of renewing its historic inter-civilizational connectivity with the region.

He also noted that the promotion of common benefits and shared interests was a key element guiding Ethiopia's foreign relations with other countries in Asia, Europe and the Americas. Relations with those countries, he said, showcased concrete and practical steps in various fields of cooperation, resulting in noteworthy achievements ranging from generating foreign direct investment and trade inflows to gaining support in Ethiopia's efforts to build a democratic developmental state.

Dr Workneh said that strategic application of Ethiopia's foreign policy in relation to ties with Djibouti had made steady advance. The comprehensive strategic partnership between Ethiopia and Djibouti now set an example for other countries to follow. Both Ethiopia and Djibouti now used their Joint Ministerial Commission to provide full spectrum diplomatic operations and take practical steps for the benefit of all, laying the foundation to forge ahead for greater progress. Connectivity through the Ethio-Djibouti railway, dubbed Africa's first modern electric railway, would, he added, help both countries to industrialize their economies.

Djibouti's Foreign Minister Mohammed Ali Yusuf responded to Dr Workneh, pledging that Djibouti would work in concert with Ethiopia to speed up economic integration. Taking note of the various initiatives underway to fast track the agenda of economic integration, he also underlined that their policies offered a model for other African countries.

Ethio-Djibouti Border Commissioners/Administrators Meeting in Dikhil City

The 23rd Ethio-Djibouti Border Commissioners/Administrators Meeting was held between 26 and 28 December 2016 in Dikhil City in the Republic of Djibouti. Mr Sirag Omar Abdoukader, Secretary General of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Djibouti, led the Djiboutian delegation, and Mr Meles Alem, Director for Neighboring Countries at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia led the Ethiopian Delegation.

The Guest of Honor of the meeting, Mr Abdorahman Yonis, the President of the Regional Council, extended a warm welcome to the Ethiopian Delegation to their second home, the City of Dikhil. He expressed his happiness to be hosting the 23rd Ethiopia-Djibouti Joint Border Administrators'/Commissioners' Meeting. The President of the Regional Council underlined the warm relations between the two peoples and the cordial relations between the two governments. The two countries, he said, had enjoyed 40 years of fruitful cooperation in areas of cross-border trade and power links and over a century with the establishment of a railway connecting the two capitals. This, of course, had now been replaced and renewed.

The Prefect of Dikhil and host of the meeting, Mohamed Sheikho, assured the Ethiopian delegation of the readiness of the Djiboutian delegation to have candid and fruitful deliberations for the mutual benefit of the two countries. He wished the Ethiopian side an enjoyable stay in Dikhil. The Prefect also underlined that the meetings of the Border Commissioners and Administrators had proved itself time and again as an important forum to further strengthen the cordial relations between the two countries. He also stressed that the two countries shared common history and heritage.

In his opening remarks, the Head of the Ethiopian delegation, Mr Meles Alem expressed his gratitude to the people and government of Djibouti in general, and Dikhil City Administration in particular, for the warm welcome accorded to his delegation. He said that the meeting was between two peoples of the same family, and borrowed a quote from the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi to describe the nature of the engagement: "Whenever Ethiopia benefits, Djibouti benefits and whenever Djibouti benefits, Ethiopia benefits". Ambassador Shamebo Fitamo, Ambassador, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ethiopia to the Republic of Djibouti also attended the session.

The meeting underscored the longstanding and exemplary relations between the two countries, true brotherly ties and an all-rounded relationship that have withstood the test of time and circumstances. The two countries have been working together in many bilateral and multilateral fora advancing the mutual interests of both peoples. As members of the African Union, IGAD, United Nations and other international fora, they have been working together with vigor and commitment to the preservation of peace, stability, and the prosperity of their region and the continent in general. Equally, the discussions underlined the unique relationship between the two communities living along the common borders. These communities interact on a daily basis; they trade with each other; their cattle graze on the same fields; and they share common basic facilities including health centers in the border areas.

The Border Administrators/Commissioners meeting is, in fact, recognized as a platform for the communities on each side of the border to exchange ideas on how to build upon the positive achievements so far registered and to tackle common challenges for the betterment of the lives of the people who will live together for years to come. These achievements have included many real successes: the significant reduction in clashes and cattle rustling, as well as smooth border trade. Notwithstanding the necessity of further engagement, this has encouraged the different committees and institutions to meet regularly and work together in further engagement in their bid to address issues of common interest.

The two sides at the meeting acknowledged that there were still significant challenges facing their communities. They identified illegal migration, human trafficking, contraband trade, smuggling of small arms as major challenges and with broader regional impact. Criminals and terrorist groups could take advantage of such illegalities to make their way into both countries and spoil the tranquility of the people. The two sides, therefore, reiterated their unflinching determination and commitment to strengthen coordination between their institutions and security establishments to contain such menaces effectively. The meeting considered critically the challenges encountered and put forward ways to tackle all issues of mutual concern amicably in order to enhance their cross-border relations.

The meeting also reviewed the decisions of the 22nd Joint Border Administrators and Commissioners meeting, held in Dire Dawa last year. After discussing political, security, economic and social matters thoroughly, the two sides reaffirmed their commitment to taking the countries' relationship to even greater heights, and working to bring about more success stories by the time of their next meeting which will be held in Ethiopia next year.

Earlier in the month, the 14th Joint Ministerial Commission follow up Experts' Meeting was also held in Djibouti City between December 12 and 14. Mr Yacin Houssein Douale, Director for Bilateral Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Djibouti led the Djiboutian delegation and Ambassador Girma Temesgen, Director General of Neighboring Countries and IGAD Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, the Ethiopian delegation.

Mr Douale warmly welcomed the Ethiopian delegation to Djibouti City. He underlined the strong ties existing between the two countries and their peoples. He emphasized his hopes for a successful session before he declared the meeting open. Ambassador Girma Temesgen extended his thanks and heartfelt appreciation to the Government of Djibouti and its leadership for the warm reception and hospitality accorded to his delegation. He said the meeting enabled the two sides to show their unwavering commitment to the bolstering of their social, economic and political relations but also allowed them to identify the limitations on the implementation of the already agreed plans of action. The meeting, he said, helped reinvigorate their friendship and demonstrated that their relations were a matter of priority.

The two sides recalled the remarkable achievements registered in infrastructural development. The recently inaugurated railway, commissioned last month, connecting the two capitals, Addis Ababa and Djibouti, was mentioned as a case in point. Both sides made it clear that they were convinced that the infrastructural development, of roads, railways and electric power, should also be complemented by people-to-people connectivity such as culture, sport, and tourism. These were less contentious to manage but could be very productive in cementing the historic relations between the two countries.

Overall, the Experts meeting addressed political, security, economic, social, port-related and financial issues. It was adjourned in a spirit of cooperation, with the two sides showing their commitment to further deepen their relations. The next Experts meeting will be hosted in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia and Sudan agree to boost their relationship

The historic links between Ethiopia and Sudan people goes back to the ancient civilizations of Axum and Merowe in the third century of the Christian era. The peoples of the two countries have had strong and longstanding economic, social and political interaction through exchanges of trade, cultural interactions and their ways of life, sharing a long boundary and, above all, drinking from the same waters, from the Blue Nile and Tekezze Rivers. These two countries are once and for all linked by nature and not to be separated: “you can choose your friend but you can’t choose your neighbor”.

Today, the relations between Ethiopia and Sudan are not limited to historic connections but are rather being steadily diversified into a whole range of issues, from strengthening economic interaction to continuous political consultations and indeed reaching a common stance over the importance of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam for regional integration. The ties between Ethiopia and Sudan are continuing to gather momentum within a framework of mutual benefit and trust. And it was within this framework that Foreign Minister Dr Workneh Gebeyehu paid his first official visit to the Republic of Sudan last Sunday, December 25.

Dr Workneh Gebeyehu was warmly welcomed on his arrival at Khartoum Airport by his Sudanese counterpart, Foreign Minister Professor Ibrahim Ghandour. During their subsequent bilateral discussions, Dr Workneh emphasized that Ethiopia greatly valued its close relations with the government and the brotherly people of Sudan. He also underlined Ethiopia’s appreciation of Sudan’s support for Ethiopia’s position on the importance of the Grand Renaissance Dam. Dr Workneh added that he now hoped that the existing relations between the two countries would be strengthened through expanding economic and investment ties.

In their talks, the two ministers covered a wide range of regional and global issues of mutual interest. After evaluating the progress achieved in the relationship during recent years, they agreed to further continue and expand the activities of the existing Joint Economic Committee to reinforce the intended economic integration between the two countries. They agreed to consolidate their economic cooperation through the implementation of joint projects and to further strengthen investment and trade ties.

During his official visit, Dr Workneh briefed the Sudanese media, stressing the “existing strong bilateral ties among the two brotherly countries.” The Minister said Sudan was a strategic partner for Ethiopia and Ethiopia has a firm position on its determination to keep this partnership active for all aspects of the relations between the two countries. He welcomed the continuing and growing efforts of the Sudanese media to strengthen people-to-people relations between Ethiopia and the Sudan and said further effort was needed to work together with the Ethiopian media to achieve their common development goals.

During his visit, Dr Workneh also held discussions with Engineer Ibrahim Mahmoud Hamid, Assistant of the President of Sudan and the Deputy Chairman of the National Congress Party for Party Affairs. Dr Workneh briefed Engineer Hamid on current developments in Ethiopia. Engineer Hamid re-affirmed Sudan’s support to Ethiopia’s efforts for regional integration and the ruling party’s commitment to realizing security and stability in Ethiopia and in the region. Minister Dr Workneh and his delegation also held discussions with the staff of the Ethiopian Embassy in Khartoum on ways to increase efforts to strengthen Ethio-Sudanese relations, and the Minister gave directions on ways to improve the successful achievements of the Embassy’s goals. Ethiopia will be hosting the 4th Ethio-Sudan Higher Level Commission meeting and 18th Ethio-Sudan Joint Border Development Commission meeting during the coming year.

The 7th Ethio-Turkey Joint Economic Forum held in Addis Ababa this week

The 7th Ethio-Turkey Joint Economic Commission and Business Forum was held at the Sheraton Addis this week on Wednesday (December 28). Organized by the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and the Turkey-Ethiopia Business Council in partnership with the Embassy of Turkey in Addis Ababa and Business Diplomacy Directorate General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, the Forum saw the convening of a number of distinguished guests from both countries including the Foreign Minister of Ethiopia, Dr Workneh Gebeyehu; the Economy Minister of Turkey, Mr Nihat Zeybekci; as well as Members of Parliament and businessmen and government officials.

Dr Workneh also held discussions with the Turkish Minister of the Economy Mr Zeybekci on the side-lines of the Forum. The two ministers discussed ways to further expedite bilateral economic ties between the two countries, and they underlined that bilateral cooperation was moving in a steep and upward trajectory.

Ethiopia's Foreign Minister noted that Turkish investment, which was now worth some two billion dollars, had created employment opportunities for thousands of Ethiopians. He said that bilateral trade had increased from only US\$27 million in 2000 to \$450 million in the last year. He said, "We strongly value our relations. These are strategic not only in the economic sphere but also in various other areas." The Minister added: "Turkey is part of our development journey." He particularly emphasized that the Awash - Kombolcha - Hara Gebeya railway project, which is being built by a Turkish company, was laying the platform to allow for further advancement of their bilateral relations.

The Turkish Minister of the Economy, Mr Zeybekci stressed Turkish investors were employing Ethiopians and "helping to increase the country's exports as well as develop its economy". Expressing his country's stance to bridge the gaps in the Ethio-Turkey trade balance, the Minister said, "With more investment, we intend to enhance Ethiopia's production capacity and advance the country's market share globally."

Opening the Joint Economic Forum, Dr Workneh said Ethiopia and Turkey had enjoyed a long-standing and historic relationship. He said, "We are very much delighted and encouraged by the dynamic relation we have." The Minister also commended Turkey's financial and technical assistance towards Ethiopia's infrastructure development and Turkey's role in Ethiopia's efforts to realize its vision of middle-income economic status by 2025. He invited more Turkish investment especially in Ethiopia's priority areas, including agro-processing.

Mr Nihat Zeybekci said the Forum would lay down a new milestone and open an "enthusiastic period for the two countries". He said the bilateral Business Council should make sector matching for enhanced business ties. He added: "We want Ethiopia to win first and come to the level where we can forge a balanced economic cooperation." He went on to say: "In coming decades, the new engine of development on the globe is going to be Africa and as one of its rising stars, Ethiopia is going to be a land of opportunity."

Ethiopia's Minister of Industry, Ahmed Abtew, told the Forum: "Ethiopia has already dedicated desks for Turkey in the Ministry of Trade and the Investment Commission to enhance information exchange and deliver better service for Turkish Investors". He commended Turkish investors for the great role they were playing in increasing Ethiopian exports and in the flow of FDI during GTP I. He called for Turkish investors to further enhance their role in GTP II. The Minister said: "We have to embark on high-quality investments for high value added production". He called for increased technical and development cooperation and noted that both sides were satisfied by the Forum's results and the prospects laid down out for the future.

The Chairman of Ethio-Turkey Business Council (DEIK), Mr Emre Aykar told the Forum that Ethiopia was one of the Council's most important business partners in Africa. Welcoming the increase in trade between the two countries, he called on the Forum to think of ways to implement strategic methods of development. He suggested assignment of Turkish desk officers to pertinent Ethiopian authorities, the preparation of necessary legal arrangements in banks to ease transactions in trade relations between the two countries, easing visa and immigration procedures for business personnel, further incentives for Turkish investors in tax exemption, and the introduction of a large Turkish Airline carrier to encourage an increased numbers of tourists and a greater flow of cargo.

Mr Solomon Afework, President of the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Association stressed that the Forum was "a way to further deepen the bilateral trade relation between the two countries". Noting the important role played by the mutual investment protection agreement in increasing Turkish investment, the President of the Chamber of Commerce said, "There are 115 Turkish companies with the highest number of employees in the private sector in Ethiopia," adding "the private sector is an engine of the economy and we invite more investors from Turkey."

The Vice-President of the Foreign Economic Relations Board and President of the Turkish Exporters Assembly, Mr Mehmet Buyukeksi, pointed out to the Forum that the official state visit by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey, in 2007, had laid the foundation for fruitful economic fora between the two countries. The current 7th Forum was an example of this. He said, "We have our 2023 national objectives and Africa has its 2063 objectives. We should align these and work to achieve those objectives."

After useful discussions and valuable networking, the 7th Ethio-Turkish Joint Economic Forum concluded with the signing of a series of agreements and Memoranda of Understand, covering developments for small and medium-scale manufacturing industry, cooperation in the mining sector, in particular in the area of hydrocarbon resources, and standardization of bilateral business links.

Ethiopia's term in the UN Security Council begins on January 1

Ethiopia will start its two-year term as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council on January 1, 2017. It joins this important organ of the United Nations at a time when the world is facing unprecedented peace and security challenges and the atmosphere in the Council has not been tense as it is now for several years, not perhaps indeed since the end of the Cold War.

Ethiopia will exert every possible effort to make a meaningful and constructive contribution to the work of the Council, in close cooperation and collaboration with other members, particularly the African states on the Council. In terms of its priorities, Ethiopia will naturally focus on its own region and Africa, for obvious reasons. In fact, the Council spends most of its time and energy dealing with conflicts and crisis situations in Africa. As the incoming chair of the Ad-Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, Ethiopia will try to contribute to these efforts.

The United Nations cannot handle today's peace and security challenges alone and in the spirit of chapter III of the UN Charter, Ethiopia will continue to advocate for greater strategic coherence between regional mechanisms, the African Union and the United Nations in addressing the peace and security challenges on the continent. Ethiopia is one of the leading contributors to UN peacekeeping. This remains one of the most important tools in the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security. The security terrain under which the 'Blue Helmets' operate has, however, significantly changed over the years. There is now need for UN peacekeeping to be strengthened to make it fit for today's purposes. Ethiopia will work with other like-minded countries to achieve this objective by pushing for the implementation of the recommendations of the Peace Operations Review.

Ethiopia is also a member of the Peace Building Commission. The adoption of two concurrent resolutions by both the Security Council and the General Assembly on the outcome of the Peace Building Review have put the "Sustaining Peace" agenda at the center of the United Nations. Since most of the countries under consideration by the Peace Building Commission are African countries, Ethiopia supports enhanced cooperation and collaboration between the Peace Building Architecture of both the UN and the African Union.

Terrorism and violent extremism is one of the biggest threats of our time. Ethiopia has had to face this menace long before the issue attracted international attention. Countering terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations through practical cooperation at national, regional and international levels, without any double standard, is what Ethiopia has been advocating. It will continue to do so during its membership of the Security Council.

State of Emergency paving the way for more understanding and reform

The State of Emergency Command Post disclosed over the weekend that a total of 9,800 suspects are being released, with the first round of 4,035 individuals freed on Wednesday December 21. The Command Post, established to oversee the implementation of the six-month State of Emergency, had earlier disclosed that the people had been arrested because they were engaged in activities prohibited under the State of Emergency. These included inciting or contributing to violence, denying provision of public services, threatening the public, disrupting movement of vehicles, and causing damage to private and public property. Attacking security forces, using firearms, killing civilians and members of the security forces, as well as providing shelter to people who committed illegal activities or leading violence were also among activities leading to arrests. The total of first-round detainees was 11,607, and Siraj Fegessa, the Minister of Defense and Secretariat of the Command Post, said that 2,449 detainees would face justice.

Speaking to a group of released prisoners at Tolay, Oromia Regional State, Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn emphasized that people were free to protest, but not to resort to violence. He said: "You might have disagreements, be it with the government or government administration, and that is your right. No one can deprive you of this right. It is a right enshrined in the constitution. So," he continued, "if tomorrow you have questions, you have the right to ask in a peaceful and civilized way." However, the Prime Minister emphasized, if there was anything that was prohibited, it was looking for answers using force, creating chaos and rebellion, and, he stressed, "you will pay a price for that." At the same time, speaking of the self-examination process the government is undergoing, the Prime Minister said: "We also have to go through deep rehabilitation similar to what you've gone through." He said, "We need to expand democracy. We have come to the conclusion that

we have to allow discussions among the people, especially the youth, listen to their problems and provide solutions.”

Although human rights advocacy groups and some critics have claimed that the State of Emergency was intended to legalize a government crackdown on opposition, it has in fact brought about a tremendous improvement in restoring peace and security. The country has now returned to the state that it was in before the violence broke out in some parts of Oromia and Amhara Regional States. The Government has carefully carried out all necessary efforts to ensure detainees will reintegrate with their communities. The Deputy Minister of the Government Communication Affairs Office Zadig Abraha explained: “The detainees have been given lots of training that are meant to give them lessons so that they won't be part of the destructive trend that we have seen in the past.” The Government said released detainees had expressed remorse and promised not only to abide by the Constitution but also to safeguard it by teaching others about the lessons learned during this training.

The Government disclosed in November that it has already begun to start working on a process of ‘deep reform’ which will include shared and equitable economic growth, expansion of the democratic space and economic restructuring. A month ago, Prime Minister Hailemariam also noted that among those who had been engaged in the recent violent activities, youth accounted for some 99%. He also pointed out that those aged between 15 and 30 made up 50% of the population. The Government was, therefore, he said, working ‘aggressively’ to provide more and more job opportunities with the creation of a fund of billions of birr to provide jobs.

UN Security Council fails to agree on an arms embargo for South Sudan

The Security Council voted against imposing an arms embargo on South Sudan or designating targeted sanctions against three key Government and opposition figures on Friday last week (December 23). The resolution was defeated by a vote of 7 in favor, with none against, but with 8 abstentions it failed to get sufficient support. The draft resolution called for a ban on arms sales to South Sudan and for the designation of three people to be subject to an asset freeze and travel ban. The three were: General Paul Malong, Chief of Staff of the Government’s Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA); Michael Makuei Lueth, the Government Minister for Information; and the former First Vice-President Riek Machar, leader of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-In Opposition (SPLM-IO).

The representatives of France, New Zealand, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States and Uruguay supported the draft resolution. China, Russian Federation, Angola, Egypt, Japan, Malaysia, Senegal and Venezuela all abstained.

Ambassador Samantha Power of the United States said the resolution was meant to reduce the rampant violence in South Sudan. She said its sponsors had demonstrated great flexibility during the discussions and that the international community was now “treading water” in the face of unfolding tragedy. She said the Government and opposition had been intransigent in their failure to cooperate with UNMISS and in their incitement of violence through the media. She recalled the many warnings, including from the Secretary-General, of a worsening situation, and said this was underlined by the fact that 3,000 people were fleeing South Sudan every day. The measures proposed in the draft resolution would not have resolved the situation they would have meant Member states had to stop selling the arms fuelling the violence. History, she said, would be a harsh judge of those who had not voted in favor of the draft. She wondered what should now be done to halt some of the horrific violence, including systematic sexual violence.

France also expressed regret over the draft resolution’s failure and noted the warnings of a worsening of the situation in South Sudan. An arms embargo could have reduced the risks and promoted an environment conducive to political dialogue, the only path to peace in the country. Then United Kingdom also underlined that atrocities continued, despite repeated promises, and the fragile peace agreement had soured. It warned that if genocide occurred, everyone would have to examine their conscience. The Council, the UK said, had done nothing to prevent the commission of unspeakable acts, and UNMISS continued to face restrictions as the humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate. Words were not good enough, he said, stressing the need for concrete actions. Ukraine emphasized that the proposed arms embargo and additional targeted sanctions would have reduced the ability of the parties to continue fuelling the conflict, help to silence the military equipment and stop the expenditure of desperately needed financial resources on new weaponry.

China said it was committed to restoring peace and stability in South Sudan as soon as possible. The announcement of an inclusive national dialogue and allowing deployment of the Regional Protection Force were positive steps. The international community should support implementation of the Peace Agreement as well as the efforts of IGAD. It said the Government had demonstrated the political will to implement Council resolutions and Council actions should be conducive to political solutions.

The Russian Federation said it abstained because of concerns over the draft resolution's content. It described sanctions as a short-sighted policy. It was also concerned by the decision of the sponsors of the resolution to ignore the IGAD communiqué stating that sanctions should not be imposed, as well as the reservations of troop-contributing countries. It said practical steps had been taken to establish an inclusive national dialogue and it doubted imposing sanctions on South Sudan's leaders would build a more inclusive society. Rather, it warned, it would exacerbate the animosity between ethnic groups.

Japan noted that some progress had been made, including the decision by the Transitional Government's Council of Ministers consent for the immediate deployment of the Regional Protection Force and President Kiir's speech to Parliament on an inclusive national dialogue. However, it said, the Government must swiftly translate those commitments into concrete actions, and stressed that introducing additional sanctions at a time when the Government was making positive moves would be counter-productive. It said the Council must continue to engage with the Government in order to urge further steps forward, adding that all parties and actors could play a significant role, individually or collectively.

Egypt expressed regret over the absence of consensus on the draft. It noted that IGAD and other regional actors were not in favor of sanctions, and pointed out that such measures had not been effective in other situations. It was important to address the causes of the South Sudan conflict. It called on all parties in the country to fulfil their responsibilities and end the peoples' suffering. Venezuela said it had abstained because South Sudan needed urgent action to resolve the crisis and commence socioeconomic development. Sanctions, it said, should be linked to a clearly defined political strategy, including dialogue on the implementation of agreements reached. It was counter-productive to impose sanctions while working with the parties to implement agreements.

Angola also argued that the Government had recently demonstrated its commitment to implement the communiqué between the Government and the Security Council on deployment of the Regional Protection Force, and launch a national inclusive dialogue. The Council should continue to encourage the Government to continue moving on that path. Sanctions should not be the priority of United Nations engagement, which should instead be more focused on dialogue, in line with the IGAD communiqué. That document stressed that sanctions would not provide a solution, and the African Union had taken the same position; that should also be the Council's position.

South Sudan's representative noted he had addressed the Council several times on the positive actions that the Government had taken to address the challenges facing the country, and in implementation of Council resolutions. He said the tabling of the draft resolution was indeed "unfortunate", in the light of the formation of the National Dialogue Steering Committee a few days earlier. He had hoped the Council would engage constructively with the Government. He said an arms embargo would only weaken the Government and strengthen the numerous militia and armed groups. Noting that the civil war had left weapons in the hands of civilians and porous borders made it difficult to control illegal arms flows, he reiterated South Sudan's commitment to implementation of the Peace Agreement and to work with all stakeholders in restoring peace and stability to the country.

Parliament sworn in but further delays for the Presidential election

The former Speaker of the previous parliament, Mohamed Sheikh Osman 'Jawari', officiated at an inauguration ceremony for members of Somalia's new Parliament, the tenth in the country's history, on Tuesday this week (December 27) at the General Kahiye Police Academy. Security was tight throughout Mogadishu as 242 members of the House of the People and 43 members of the new Upper House, the Senate, took the oath of allegiance. This left 32 members of the House of the People to be sworn in either because their elections have yet to take place or because they were disputed. Once all the remaining seats are filled, the parliament will have a total complement of 347 legislators, though those already sworn-in are enough to elect a president. The new date for the presidential election announced early this week is January 24, 2017.

Senior government officials including Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, and Deputy Prime Minister Mohamed Omar Arte attended the ceremony. Former Speaker 'Jawari' called the occasion "a milestone in the history of Somalia." He said: "We are witnessing a new set of parliamentarians taking over from others. I want to take this opportunity to salute parliamentarians who have been re-elected. This is a huge responsibility bestowed on you by your constituents, and it is a vote of confidence." The AU Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (SRCC) for Somalia, Ambassador Francisco Caetano Madeira, congratulated the Federal Government of Somalia, the regional states and the people of Somalia, upon the key milestone of the inauguration of the 10th Somalia Federal Parliament. He said: "The inauguration of the new Parliament today is not only symbolic of the progress that Somalia is making but also attests to what is achievable when people choose unity in diversity, agree to compromise for the common good and with determination agree to pull together to fight the enemies of peace and stability in Somalia."

A statement from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Wednesday (December 28) also welcomed the inauguration of a new federal parliament of Somalia, while urging the parliament to maintain the momentum to complete the electoral process. In a statement, Mr Ban asked the parliament to tackle urgent legislative priorities, including establishing a permanent Constitution of Somalia. He also called on the authorities to quickly fill all remaining vacant seats in the parliament and ensure that women filled the seats reserved for women. "Any irregularity, abuse, or malpractice reported by the federal and state electoral bodies should be fully addressed to preserve the credibility of the process," he added.

Earlier, after the National Leadership Forum issued a communiqué at the end of its latest ten-day meeting (December 15-24), international community representatives in Somalia issued a joint statement on Monday (December 27). This said they were "gravely" concerned about the course of the elections, specifically about some of the most recent decisions of the Forum. The statement said: "International partners strongly believe that elections must be re-run for seats where the voting outcomes were clearly distorted by violence, corruption, intimidation, the unauthorized substitution of electoral college delegates and a failure to set aside one of every three seats for exclusively female candidates." It went on: "If these candidates are allowed to take their seats in Somalia's tenth parliament, it will bring into question the NLF's expressed commitment to the principles of accountability and credibility that underpin the entire process. It will also undermine the electoral code of conduct signed by all parliamentary candidates in the spirit of leveling the playing field and ensuring the delivery of a credible process."

The National Leadership Forum meeting, chaired by President Mohamud, included former Parliamentary Speaker, Mohamed Sheikh Osman 'Jawari', Prime Minister Sharmarke and Deputy Prime Minister Muhamed Omar Arte, and the Presidents of Puntland, Jubaland, South West, Galmadug and Hir-Shabelle as well as the Electoral Dispute Resolution Mechanism. Its communiqué on December 24 announced a new date for the presidential election - January 24, 2017. Assuming there is no further delay, the members of the new parliament will select the new president from the twenty or so candidates. However, the communiqué introduced some new elements into the process, including 18 more seats for the Senate. After listening to the complaints from some Federal Member States and clans, which did not get representation in the Senate, the Forum increased the number of seats, three for each of the states. These will be nominated by the Presidents of the Regional States, and approved through a Federal Presidential Decree. The provisional constitution only allows for 54 Senators, and the addition requires parliamentary amendment. There has been considerable criticism of this including a statement from six of the candidates for the presidency. On Thursday this week the Forum announced any change in the number of Senate seats would only take place after the presidential election.

Another major area of discussion for the Forum was over disputed results. The Forum held several meetings with the Federal Indirect Electoral Implementation Team and the Electoral Dispute Resolution Mechanism. The Mechanism had earlier announced that it had received over 1,200 complaints over the electoral processes. It originally wanted to nullify 24 results, but then reduced the number to eleven. After further examination of the complaints and consideration of additional information, the Forum decided that "the public interest was in mitigating disputes and further squabbles that could potentially arise from revising the electoral results", and that the Mechanism's results should be reviewed and that all candidates whose political rights to participate in the elections were suspended should participate in the electoral contests.

The international community representatives had warned last week that if the seats that were viewed as most contentious were not included in the list of seats to be re-contested, this could undermine the credibility of the electoral process and of the future government. In a joint statement on Wednesday (December 21), the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development

(IGAD), Ethiopia, Italy, Sweden, Britain and the United States called on the National Leadership Forum to work with the Independent Electoral Dispute Resolution Mechanism to ensure accountability for electoral abuse. The statement emphasized that the IEDRM had a responsibility to make public the criteria used to exclude some seats and include others on the list of those that should be re-run. It emphasized to the National Leadership Forum and the IEDRM that the gravity of the irregularities uncovered should be the basis for determining whether electoral results should be nullified and re-contested. It said that failure to take action against serious electoral abuses would have implications for the legitimacy of the government that emerged from the electoral process and, consequently, for its relationship with the international community. Michael Keating, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Somalia said: "Any attempt to gloss over the irregularities that plagued some of the voting will not only affect the acceptability of the outcome of the electoral process and compromise the legitimacy of the anticipated new government, but also play into the hands of spoilers and violent extremists bent on discrediting a process that has already achieved greater inclusiveness and more women's representation in Somali politics."

In fact, observers point out that despite all the problems, the process has been an improvement over previous 'elections'. In 2012, a parliament of a single house voted for the president; this time it will be a vote of two houses of parliament and a considerably larger electorate. In 2009 the election had to be held in Djibouti for security reasons, and in 2012 the lower house voting only took place in Mogadishu. This time, the electoral processes have taken place in the federal state capitals. While the efforts of the Federal Interim Electoral Implementation Team and the IEDRM to nullify some contests have met with opposition, their actions showed the ability of federal institutions to respond to misconduct. Equally, while it is true that the quota for women of 30% has not been fully achieved (the final figure is more likely to be 25% or so), there is no doubt that most of the states have made a real effort to increase the representation of women in Parliament. So far, parliament includes 73 women lawmakers.

Ambassadors' Forum on China-Africa Cooperation held in Beijing

The Ambassadors' Forum on China-Africa Cooperation was held in the College of Defense Studies at National Defense University of the Chinese People's Liberation Army in Beijing on December 21. The Forum aimed at creating understanding of China's Policy towards Africa and China-Africa Cooperation from the perspective of "China-Africa Cooperation-An African Perspective". The Forum attracted more than 100 high-level military officers from 53 countries, 18, including Ethiopia, from Africa, and it helped to create further understanding about China's policies towards Africa and the importance of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), set up to provide for a win-win partnership between China and Africa.

The Forum was co-chaired by Senior Colonel Xu Hui, Commandant of the College of Defense Studies of China and among the speakers were Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the People's Republic of China and Ambassador Liu Guijin, China's Former Special Envoy for African Affairs.

Ambassador Seyoum in his presentation strongly underlined the importance of the FOCAC Summit that had been held in Johannesburg, in December 2015. He commended the commitments made there and the pledge made by President Xi Jinping at the Summit that China would offer a US\$60 billion package, a combination of grants, interest free loans, concessional lines of credit, debt relief and skills training for hundreds of thousands of Africa's young professionals along with three-year, 10-point plans anchored under the proposed five-pillar themes.

He stressed the unparalleled commitment of the Chinese leadership to this new type of partnership and strategic friendship with African countries offered an historic opportunity to pursue Africa's dream for growth and prosperity, and for transforming and integrating Africa's economy into the rest of the world to ensure a safer world for all to live in. The cooperation between China and Africa, he emphasized, was anchored in principles of equality, mutual respect, common interest, shared goals and values.

Ambassador Seyoum noted that Ethiopia's rapid GDP growth rates, averaging 10.9% per annum for more than a decade allowed the country to be considered a model for South-South cooperation. Ethiopia's achievement ranking among the top performing economies in the world and the remarkable reductions in poverty that it had achieved, underlined its march towards becoming a middle income economy by 2025. Equally, the construction of major projects such as the eco-friendly Addis Ababa-Djibouti Electrified Railway, the Addis Ababa Light Rail Transit (LRT), the Addis Ababa-Adama Expressway, the Adama Wind Power project and its

telecommunication infrastructure expansion could be cited as showcase examples for win-win partnership and cooperation between Ethiopia and China, anchored within the framework of FOCAC. A short video was shown highlighting the economic development of Ethiopia in infrastructure, health, education, and industrialization, demonstrating the effects of real partnership between Ethiopia and China.

Ambassador Seyoum strongly underlined the indispensable role that China has been playing as one of Ethiopia's trusted development partners. He pointed out China was the biggest investor and the largest trading and development partner of Ethiopia.

He has also underlined the necessity for African countries to move faster and submit feasible project proposals to utilize the multibillion dollar fund announced by the Government of China to support Africa in the areas of industrialization and development of industrial parks, agriculture modernization, infrastructure, public health, education and human resources development, culture and tourism and military as well as security cooperation.

Regarding connectivity, and the "One Belt One Road" Initiative, Ambassador Seyoum mentioned the contribution of Ethiopian Airlines, one of the longest serving flag carriers in Africa. This has been providing consistent services for the last 70 years for the movement of people, ideas, cultures and business into and out of the African continent, and since 1973 between Africa and China. Ethiopian Airlines, with state of the art technology and the latest aircraft fleet, flies from its hub in Addis Ababa to 93 international cities in four continents. With its motto "The New Spirit of Africa" it offers the best links from 48 African cities to four gateways in China (Beijing, Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Shanghai). Ambassador Seyoum highlighted the indispensable role of the Airline in promoting investment, trade, tourism and culture between Africa and China through its 31 flights weekly.

Ambassador Seyoum also referred to peace and security, emphasizing the commitment of Africa and China to discharge their international responsibilities to contribute to the common endeavors of world peace and stability. In this connection, he urged China to strengthen its support to the African Union, and to the continent's Regional Economic Communities and other African sub-regional institutions. This would help them to play a leading role in coordinating and solving issues of peace and security in Africa and support Africa's peaceful and stable development and integration. He also underlined the importance of collaboration and cooperation among all countries in the world to bring peace and stability. One country, however, strong and however much of a superpower it might be, could not bring peace alone. Recalling what had happened during the Cold War, he spoke out strongly against Africa becoming an arena of conflict between China and countries in the West. He emphasized the importance of Africa being a region of cooperation and investment and of becoming one of the growth poles highlighting tripartite cooperation between China, Africa and the developed countries in the West.

Following his contribution, Ambassador Seyoum responded to various questions and concerns raised by participants on issues relating to China's engagement in the peace and stability of Africa, the challenges surrounding the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Actions, Ethiopia's role in regional stabilization and the state of good governance on the African continent.

Ambassador Liu Guijin, China's Former Special Envoy for African Affairs, detailed recent developments in the implementation of the Johannesburg Action Plan. He mentioned that the use of multidimensional approaches such as official development assistance, soft loans, and concessional and commercial loans were mostly channeled to private investment and this had enhanced manufacturing and export earnings. He emphasized that China's partnership with Africa had focused on bottlenecks such as the infrastructure deficit, financing limitations and capacity deficiencies. He also indicated that there has been a shift from contractual projects towards joint ventures, investments and industrial park development. In his analysis, he also emphasized that the ten cooperation plans drawn up by FOCAC focused on industrial capacity cooperation, poverty reduction and increasing agriculture production. Ambassador Liu Guijin elaborated on the necessity of building industrial parks and special economic zones in Africa to enhance the flow of foreign direct investment for labor intensive and export oriented light-manufacturing industries. He mentioned the Eastern Industry Zone (EIZ) in Ethiopia, constructed by a Chinese company, as an encouraging showcase example of what could be done. He also discussed the impact of world economic slowdown and the effect of the reduction of oil prices and precious minerals on African countries such as Nigeria, Angola, Sudan and South Africa, looking at the relevant economic indicators.

Ethiopia bids to become the wind-power capital of Africa

Ethiopia has made its aim to reach middle-income status through a climate-resilient green-growth path by 2025 very clear. Welcoming collaboration with domestic and international partners in different sectors, it has noted the fact that a conventional development path would, among other adverse effects, result in a sharp increase in greenhouse gas emissions and unsustainable use of natural resources. It has, therefore, put in place a Climate-Resilient Green Economy strategy.

This has enabled the country to register some sound and impressive development figures. In the last few years, a number of institutions have assessed the country's substantial developments and forecast advances in the years to come. The African Development Bank (AfDB) has estimated that real gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 10.2% in the fiscal year 2014/15. In its 'African Economic Outlook Report 2016' the Bank also stated this growth can be expected to continue in 2016 and 2017. The World Bank in October 2016 noted that two of the major contributors to growth, the services and agricultural sectors, accounted for most of this, while the manufacturing sector performance still remained relatively modest. It said private consumption and public investment explained demand side-growth with the latter assuming an increasingly important role in recent years. Ethiopia also aims to continue improvements in physical infrastructure in the implementation of the second phase of the Growth and Transformation Plan, which runs from 2015/16 to 2019/20. This will be done through public investment projects and, among other effects, will transform the country into a manufacturing hub. The World Bank was firm: Ethiopia has proven to be resilient and it has achieved impressive economic growth. It also stressed, that in the overarching goals of achieving development and climate resilience, as underlined in the country's Climate-Resilient Green Economy strategy, Ethiopia set four focus areas of priority: agriculture, forestry, power, transport, and industrial sectors and buildings.

Last week, the US news agency, CNN, reported that 'Ethiopia bids to become the wind capital of Africa'. It said that Ethiopia, often called an "African Lion" by economists, was now a home of "booming industry, new infrastructure, and showpiece summits". Mentioning Ethiopia's effort to preserve its development trajectory, CNN reported: "to maintain this golden age, the East African state is pressing ahead with ambitious development plans, and renewable energy is core to the mission." Ethiopia utilizes diverse forms of renewable energy, though the major one is hydropower energy. The government has ploughed billions of dollars into hydropower megaprojects such as the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Nile River, which will be the largest dam in Africa, and the just inaugurated Gilgel Gibe III Dam on the Omo River. The recently launched Gilgel Gibe III dam which will increase the country's total installed capacity to 4,260MW is part of a series of dams including the existing Gibe I (184MW) and Gibe II (420MW), and the planned Gibe IV and Gibe V, which will add another 1472MW and 560 MW respectively.

The national strategy makes clear that to support economic development at the proposed annual growth rate of more than 10% to which the government aspires, it will be necessary to expand renewable power supplies at a rate of more than 14% per year. It's a substantial figure, but Ethiopia is on the move to meet this demand. This will be done primarily by exploiting its diverse and vast potential for hydro, geothermal, solar and wind power, all of which can deliver power with virtually zero greenhouse gas emissions. Given the recent devastating droughts, possibly offering a threat to hydropower energy, the falling cost of wind power technology and growing evidence that Ethiopia is blessed with ideal sites for harvesting wind have become more important. Three years ago, in 2013, Ethiopia inaugurated one of the continent's largest wind farms at a cost of the \$290 million, 120-megawatt (MW), Ashedoga plant. This was followed last year by the even larger 153 MW Adama II facility. This is set to expand significantly during the government's second "Growth and Transformation Plan." The Plan allows for total energy output to reach 17,000 MW by 2020, and, of this, wind farms will provide a vastly increased share. In fact, the government has plans for at least five further wind farms, and potentially many more, aiming to deliver up to 5,200 megawatts from wind power within four years. Communications Head for the Ethiopian Electric Power company, Misikir Negash, underlining the aims for the expansion of electricity said: "We have a program to provide 90% of people with access to electricity within five years."

Wind power will play a significant element in this. It also expects to deliver wider benefits for struggling communities through training and job opportunities around the potential new sites. Similarly, underlining a target of increasing wind output by more than 1,000% within four years, the Danish Energy Agency (DEA), one of Ethiopia's partner Agencies, underlined the country's vast potential. The Danish Government Agency serves as a one-stop shop for large-scale wind projects across the world, and Special Adviser, Henrik Breum, stressed capacity should enable it to be "a dominant wind nation in the region." He added: Ethiopia "has very

good winds in the dry season which is normally when you would like to top up electricity production...From a wind perspective this is one of the most promising countries on the continent.” Mr Breum said: “Hopefully this can show neighboring countries that low carbon development of the power sector is possible,” adding, “I think Ethiopia can be a very good showcase for renewables”. CNN noted, in considering the benefits to the Horn of Africa, that increased wind-power plants would be likely to strengthen Ethiopia’s position in the region through trade. The country is already an exporter of energy to neighbors such as Djibouti, and Sudan, and wind power will offer new options.