

A Week in the Horn

28th October 2016

News in Brief

- **Africa and the African Union**
- **Ethiopia**
- **Djibouti**
- **Eritrea**
- **Kenya**
- **Somalia**
- **South Sudan**
- **Sudan**

Articles (from page 5)

- **The House of People's Representatives passes the State of Emergency Proclamation**
- **Inter-parliamentary diplomacy: Dutch MPs visit Ethiopia**
- **The Food and Agriculture Organization's Situation Report for October 2016**
- **The first meeting of the Mexico-Ethiopia Consultation Mechanism**
- **Sustainable energy development gathering momentum in Ethiopia**
- **The start of the electoral process for Somalia's Lower House**
- **South Sudan's Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission chairman in Addis Ababa**
- **The California-based Oakland Institute joins in external opposition's destructive abuse**

News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

African leaders on Saturday (October 22), at a summit in Lome, signed a binding agreement to boost security off African coasts, to shore up development by tackling maritime crimes like piracy and smuggling. Congolese President Sassou Nguesso hailed the agreement as "historic", and Kenya's President Kenyatta said it showed Africa's ability to put together a continent-wide strategy. The agreement provides for a special fund for maritime security and for improved information-sharing. It needs to be ratified by at least 15 countries to come into force.

Gambia announced its withdrawal from the International Criminal Court on Tuesday (October 25) accusing the Hague-based tribunal of the "persecution and humiliation of people of color, especially Africans". The announcement followed similar decisions this month by South Africa and Burundi. Sidiki Kaba, President of the Assembly of State Parties to the ICC founding treaty, at the weekend asked South Africa and Burundi to reconsider their decisions to leave.

The EU Commission announced new support to countries in the Horn of Africa to help responses to the El Niño and food security crises. It will go to Ethiopia (€22.5 million), Somalia (€8 million), South Sudan (€28 million) and Sudan (€8 million) to help provide short and long-term solutions for vulnerable groups and combines measures for relief, rehabilitation and development.

Ethiopia

Prime Minister Hailemariam left on Friday (October 28) for a one-day visit to South Sudan where he will be discussing bilateral issues with President Salve Kiir and Vice-President Taban Deng.

Attorney General, Getachew Ambaye, has made it clear that foreign tourists are free to visit any tourist attractions anywhere in Ethiopia. During its third regular session on Thursday last week (October 20), the House of People's Representatives ratified the State of Emergency Proclamation. (See article)

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Taye co-chaired the first meeting of the Mexico and Ethiopia Consultation Mechanism on Matters of Common Interest on Tuesday last week (October 18). The meeting identified new opportunities for collaboration in investment and business and expressed the intention to raise their level of political dialogue as well as discussing bilateral relations in political, cooperation and economic areas and trade links. (See article).

At the end of the 4th Ethio-Sudan Joint Economic Committee Meeting held in Addis Ababa last week, Ethiopia and Sudan signed agreements to cooperate in the areas of livestock, transport, railway and banking services. The Commercial Bank of Ethiopia has now finalized preparations to open a branch in Sudan.

Ethiopian parliamentarians met last weekend (October 22) with a delegation of Dutch MPs at the House of People's Representatives in Addis Ababa. Their discussions focused on possible cooperation to reduce poverty and unemployment. (See article)

The California-based advocacy organization, Oakland Institute, issued a statement on Friday last week (October 21) attacking the State of Emergency as "authorizing oppression." The statement follows an equally inaccurate and exaggerated report "Miracle or Mirage? Manufacturing Hunger and Poverty in Ethiopia", published last month. (See article)

A panel discussion to share experiences on energy development was held in Addis Ababa last Sunday (October 23) co-chaired by the Korean International Cooperation Agency and the Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Electricity. (See article)

The latest situation report of the Food and Agriculture Organization says there are prolonged dry spells predicted for southern pastoral areas and urgent assistance will be required for 2.4 million households until the end of the year. (See article)

A statement released on Monday (October 24) by Fitch Ratings said that Ethiopia's economy had proved resilient to recent shocks such as the severe drought, in part because of a well-managed policy response, and it predicted growth to recover to 8% next year, after dipping to 6.5% this year. It noted the protests but said weak governance indicators were already factored into Ethiopia's 'B'/Stable sovereign rating. It did not believe the protests would escalate to spill over into the economy and potentially affect the country's sovereign credit profile.

Djibouti

President Guelleh paid tribute to the bravery and professionalism of the soldiers who defeated an al-Shabaab attack on their base in Somalia on Tuesday (October 26). He expressed his gratitude to the brave soldiers who fell on the field of battle and reiterated Djibouti's determination to fight terrorism and continue to contribute to the pacification and reconstruction of Somalia.

Eritrea

Sheila B. Keetharuth, Member of the Former Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea and Special Rapporteur, told the UN General Assembly's Third Committee on Thursday (October 27) that there were "reasonable grounds" to believe that its officials had committed crimes against humanity since 1991. The Government had failed to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur and the Commission. She called on the General Assembly to submit the Commission's report to the Security Council for possible referral to the International Criminal Court. The cooperation of all States with UN Special Rapporteurs is a fundamental obligation of United Nations membership.

Kenya

President Kenyatta cancelled an official trip to Angola to attend a local security meeting in solidarity with the families of the Kenyans who lost their lives in the Mandera attack on Tuesday (October 25). The President condemned the attack on a guest house in which 16 people died, in the strongest terms and sent his condolences to the bereaved and wished the injured speedy recovery. Al Shabaab has claimed responsibility for the attack.

The Cabinet Secretary for the Interior, Joseph Nkaissery, said on Wednesday (October 26) the Kenya Defence Forces were setting up a border command unit to counter the infiltration of al-Shabaab militants. This would assist the police in setting up road blocks and check points, boosting security in border towns including Mandera. Mr Nkaissery said more police officers had been deployed to hunt down those behind the Tuesday attack in Mandera.

Seven counties in northern and north eastern Kenya, Marsabit, Mandera, Wajir, Isiolo, Tana River, Lamu and Garissa are preparing to launch an economic bloc aimed at transforming the region economically. Marsabit Governor Ukur Yattani said on Tuesday (October 25) that the Northern Frontier counties had recently come together to form regional economic cooperation, the Frontier Counties Developmental Council. The aim was to jointly address socio-economic challenges, and provide common investment plans, resource mobilization and policy advocacy, in order to benefit from inter-county trade, investment and services.

Somalia

President Mohamud condemned the truck bomb attack on an AMISOM base in Belet Weyne in which two Djiboutian peacekeepers died and several others were injured. He also spoke to Djibouti President Guelleh, offering his condolences to the government and people of Djibouti and the families of the casualties. AMISOM said ten al-Shabaab fighters were killed in the attack.

The electoral process for the Lower House started on Sunday (October 23); it comes to an end on November 10. Last week four of the six states concluded the elections for the Upper House. (See article)

Somalia officially became a member of the **Indian Ocean Rim Association** on Wednesday (October 26) following its signing of the charter during the Council of Ministers meeting in Bali, Indonesia. This formally concluded the country's application process for membership of the 21-member bloc which started two years ago. The IORA promotes trade and cooperation in Maritime Safety and Security, Trade and Investment Facilitation, Fisheries Management and Tourism and Cultural Exchanges.

Following further clashes at the beginning of the week between Galmudug and Puntland forces in Galkayo, Federal Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Sharmarke has called on both sides to respect the terms of the truce signed last year and end the fighting. The UN said on Monday that more than 75,000 people have fled their homes and at least 18 had died in the three weeks of fighting with dozens injured. UNOCHA said the onset of the Dehr rains was likely to affect the displaced, especially those spending nights in the open.

AMISOM Police Coordinator of Training and Development, Francis Aryee, said on Monday (October 24) that AMISOM had deployed more security officers in Adado in Galmudug state and Jowhar, the capital of the newly formed Hir-Shabelle state to help secure the electoral process. They will work with the Somali police in strengthening security during the elections.

Somaliland's Foreign Affairs Minister Sa'ad Ali Shire speaking to journalists in Hargeisa on Monday (October 24) underlined that Somaliland was an independent country from Somalia. The Minister was responding to comments by President Mohamud of Somalia at the swearing in of President Ali Abdullahi Osole of the newly formed Hir-Shabelle state in Somalia that federalization in Somalia was "almost complete with only Somaliland and Be nadir remaining."

Twenty-six Asian sailors held hostage for more than four years by Somali pirates have been released after a ransom was paid. International mediators said this "represents the end of captivity for the last remaining seafarers taken hostage during the height of Somali piracy." The sailors came from Vietnam, Taiwan, Cambodia, Indonesia, China and the Philippines.

South Sudan

President Salva Kiir has appealed to the Troika countries (the US, the UK and Norway) to provide the financial assistance needed for his government to implement the August 2015 peace agreement, rather than advocating punitive measures which, he said, could undermine the country's reconciliation efforts.

The Chairman of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JEMC) for South Sudan, Festus Mogae, visited Addis Ababa on Monday (October 24) for talks with Ethiopia's Foreign Minister Dr Tedros Adhanom. (See article)

The government has given Sudanese rebels in South Sudan an ultimatum to leave South Sudan within 30 days. Defence Minister, Kuol Manyang said on Monday (October 24) that the government was fully committed to respecting and implementing its non-aggression pact with Sudan. This followed a US State Department last week urging South Sudan to comply with its commitments to cease harboring or providing support for Sudanese armed opposition groups, as required by UN Security Council Resolution 2046 (2012).

The UNHCR said on Saturday (October 22) that increasing numbers of South Sudanese refugees were arriving in Gambella Regional State, 42,684 since the beginning of September. UNHCR has now opened a new refugee camp at Nguenyiel, relocating nearly a thousand refugees from Pagak. UNHCR officials say an average of at least 900 South Sudanese asylum-seekers arrive at Pagak Transit Centre on a daily basis.

Sudan

President Omer Hassan al-Bashir, on an official visit to Saudi Arabia, held talks in Riyadh with King Salman bin Abdel-Aziz Al Saud on Monday (October 24). Talks covered latest developments in the region and further prospects of cooperation. The President was accompanied by Foreign Minister, Ibrahim Ghandour and the Minister of Presidential Affairs, Fadl Abdallah Fadl.

Sudan's Foreign Ministry said on Monday (October 24) that the Sudanese government has once again lodged a complaint with the United Nations Security Council over its dispute with Egypt concerning the Halayeb triangle, a 20,580sq/km area on the Red Sea. The area has been under Egypt's military control since the mid-1990s. In April, Egypt refused a Sudanese demand for direct talks on Halayeb; nor is it prepared to refer the dispute to the International Court of Arbitration. Referral to arbitration needs the agreement of the two parties.

U.S. Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, Donald Booth, on Monday met the Secretary General of the National Dialogue, Hashim Ali Salim, to discuss ways to implement the dialogue outcome. Earlier this month, the government-led national dialogue concluded the process by signing the national document, which includes the general features of a future constitution to be finalized by transitional institutions. The dialogue's recommendations include the creation of the post of prime minister, the addition of new seats to parliament and changing the name of current "National Unity Government" to the "National Reconciliation Government."

The Sudanese government on Tuesday (October 25) expressed readiness to deploy joint forces along the 2,000km-long border long borders with South Sudan to prevent cross border attacks by rebel groups.

The House of People's Representatives passes the State of Emergency Proclamation

During its third regular session on Thursday last week (October 20), the House of People's Representatives ratified the State of Emergency Proclamation. The State of Emergency was declared by Prime Minister Hailemariam in order to bring an end to the violence that had been taking place in some parts of the country. It became effective from October 8. The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia grants the Council of Ministers the power to decree a state of emergency in cases of external invasion, a breakdown of law and order which endangers the constitutional order and cannot be controlled by regular law enforcement agencies and personnel. The Council also has to notify the House of Representatives within 48 hours and it has to be approved by Parliament with at least a two-thirds majority vote MPs.

The necessary legislation, entitled "The State of Emergency Proclamation for the Maintenance of Public Peace and Security," was endorsed with an overwhelming vote two weeks after the Council of Ministers announced the decree. The State of Emergency Proclamation has a total of 12 articles, which are categorized under four provisional headings: a General part, Emergency Measures and Prohibited Actions, the Establishment and the Responsibilities of State of Emergency Command Post and the Inquiry Board and Miscellaneous Provisions. The General part of the Proclamation includes the legal nomenclature being used within the proclamation, such as the Inquiry Board, the Low Enforcement Body, the State of Emergency and the Command Post. The Emergency Measures and Prohibited Actions are covered in detail under the "Directive for the Execution of the State of Emergency Issued by the State of Emergency Command Post" on Saturday October 17. The third part contains an

executive summary of the rationale behind the necessity for the proclamation of an establishment of the State of Emergency, and the setting up of the Command Post and Inquiry Board and their respective responsibilities. All the five points listed under the duties and responsibilities of the Inquiry Board are directly copied from the FDRE constitution Article 93, sub-article 6. The last section covers miscellaneous provisions dealing with the time-frame for the applicability of the State of Emergency and possible amendments that might need to be carried out. The detailed applications of the Proclamation are to be found in the directive issued by the Command Post.

Following the endorsement of the State of Emergency, the House revealed the details of the establishment of the Inquiry Board, which has the authorization and responsibility to report publicly on the names and number of people who have been put under custody by the Command Post in a month's time. The constitution of the country under article 93, sub article 5 stipulates that the House of People's Representatives, while declaring a state of emergency, shall simultaneously establish a State of Emergency Inquiry Board. Under sub-article 6 the State of Emergency Inquiry Board has the following powers and responsibilities: (a) To make public within one month the names of all individuals arrested on account of the state of emergency together with the reasons for their arrest. (b) To inspect and follow up that no measure taken during the state of emergency is inhumane. (c) To recommend to the Prime Minister or to the Council of Ministers corrective measures if it finds any case of inhumane treatment. (d) To ensure the prosecution of perpetrators of inhumane acts. (e) To submit its views to the House of Peoples' Representatives on request to extend the duration of the state of emergency.

The seven members of the Inquiry Board, responsible for checking and reporting on implementation of the State of Emergency, were presented to the House by the Speaker of the House of People's Representatives, Abadula Gemedo. The board is made up of four Members of Parliament and three legal experts. Tadesse Hordofa, Chairperson of the House's Higher Educational Institutions Affairs Standing Committee, is Chairman. Genet Tadesse, Chairwoman of the Budget and Finance Affairs Standing Committee, will serve as Deputy Chair of the Board. Two other MPs, Muna Ahmed (Chairwoman of Works and Urban Development Affairs Standing Committee) and Nuriya Abdurahman (Member of the Advisory Committee to the House), are also members. The remaining three members of the Inquiry Board are all members of the judiciary: Kifletsion Mammo, a Federal Supreme Court Judge and Member of the Council of Constitutional Inquiry; Habte Fichalla, (Head of the Office of the Deputy President of Federal Supreme Court); and Se'id Hassan, a Federal High Court Judge.

Meanwhile on Monday this week (October 24), Attorney-General Getachew Ambaye clarified tourist concerns about travel around the country. One of the directives issues by the Command Post limited foreign diplomats from travelling more than 40 kms from Addis Ababa without giving notification. This does not apply to tourists. The Attorney-General said; "The directive is not applicable to foreign tourists who come to Ethiopia to visit tourist destinations. They can travel from place to place freely as usual." Getnet Yigzaw, Public Relations Director at the Ethiopian Tourism Organization also pointed out to journalists this week that tourists can travel to any part of the country just as they were doing in the past. The country was returning to normal and there was no reason for any tourists to cancel plans to visit Ethiopia's historic and natural tourist sites.

Inter-parliamentary diplomacy: Dutch MPs visit Ethiopia

Ethiopian parliamentarians met last weekend (October 22) with a delegation of Dutch MPs at the House of People's Representatives in Addis Ababa. Their discussions focused on possible cooperation to reduce poverty and unemployment.

Tesfaye Daba, Chairperson of the Foreign Affairs Standing Committee of the House of People's Representatives, briefing the Dutch parliamentarians, reiterated Ethiopia's uncompromising position on the importance of pro-poor and equitable development, embracing opportunities for youths in particular. This lies at the heart of Ethiopia's development programs. He also noted that Ethiopia's generosity in sheltering more than 800,000 refugees from various countries was a considerable burden. He would, he said, like to see support from the European Union, and the Netherlands in particular, to help refugees through economically productive mechanisms. Ethiopia is one of the leading countries sheltering refugees, helping them with access to humanitarian assistance and providing opportunities to access education and income generating activities in agriculture and in the new industrial park projects. Ato Tesfaye emphasized that Ethiopia, in collaboration with its partners, was playing a major role in fighting al-Shabaab in Somalia, adding that al-Shabaab had currently been reduced to a level where it was no longer such a serious threat to peace in the region. In conclusion, the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Standing Committee said Ethiopia would like to see more investment from the Netherlands, particularly in the floriculture sector.

The head of the Dutch parliamentary delegation, Ms Loes Ypma, offered assurances that the Netherlands would continue to support Ethiopia's efforts to reduce poverty and unemployment through continuing collaboration on trade and investment relations.

The Ethiopian Parliament participates in foreign policy activities through the ratification of international treaties and enactment of laws relating to the sovereignty, defense and security of the country; through parliamentary oversight mechanisms such as committee hearings, petitions, and where appropriate censure motions; through fiscal arrangements including approval of the annual budget for foreign activities and the Foreign Ministry; and recently through bilateral and multilateral diplomatic negotiations. Indeed, the role of the Ethiopian parliament in bilateral and multilateral diplomatic communications and negotiations in parliamentary diplomacy has been steadily increasing.

The number of countries showing interest in establishing parliamentary relations with Ethiopia has now reached over 30. Ethiopia is a member of various parliamentary unions and a considerable number of countries have forged bilateral relations with the Ethiopian lower house, the House of People's Representatives. The House uses parliamentary diplomacy as a means of image building in addition to serving as a platform to acquire legislative and oversight experience as well as a basis for creating a conducive environment for the expansion of trade and investment on which much of Ethiopia's foreign policy is based.

The House has established relations with members of parliament of the East African IGAD member countries, South, West and North African countries, the Middle East and European countries as a group. It has also established independent relations with member of parliaments of countries with which Ethiopia has special economic and political relations like the US, China, Japan and Korea in its efforts to help encourage peace and stability as well as economic development and democracy. Besides participating in the Pan-African Parliament, the International Parliamentary Union, IGAD and other groupings, the House of People's Representatives has been playing an important role in advancing the causes of the African Union.

Parliamentary diplomacy is becoming a highly recommended form of diplomacy among scholars and practitioners. Members of parliament can bring alternative public views into parliament and put them to government and, when relevant, ensure they are reflected in the conduct of foreign policy. This will enhance the legitimacy of foreign policy initiatives. Parliament, in other words, can act as a clearing house for different aspirations, interests and view. Members of Ethiopia's House of People's

Representatives, from nations, nationalities and peoples with diverse aspirations and interests, can represent a wide variety of views. This can enrich foreign policy approaches and activities.

Parliament, within a democratic setting, is a reservoir of public opinion. It can communicate opinions from within the societies it represents to the government and to the peoples of other countries. This can be done either through parliamentary visits or trans-national parliamentary activities. It enhances understanding between nations. The Ethiopian parliament, through its oversight mechanisms, evaluates the activities of the executive and the implementation of foreign policy directions on the one hand, and has direct contact and communication with its constituency on the other. This means it reflects a broad-based opinion which can help formulate enlightened national interest policies on a broad-based opinion of their counterparts in other countries.

There are also cases in which governments fail to resolve differences and disputes. Here parliamentary diplomacy can be useful, allowing members of the parliaments from different countries, through inter-parliamentary friendship groups, to discuss problems and find new ways of approaching them without committing governments. Less formal settings can encourage frankness and candid discussion, and makes it easier to reach a mutual understanding. It often allows solutions to problems to appear.

Equally, parliamentary diplomacy and inter-parliamentary discussion helps to build mutual confidence, trust and understanding. People-centered approaches in foreign policy decision-making and in articulation of national interests are a vital element in reaching mutual respect and win-win formulations. In Ethiopia where the government is keen to expand regional cooperation and integration, inter-parliamentary diplomacy is a crucial element to expand links into a broad based and inclusive web of relations, to create a sense of community and to generate new thinking, new approaches and fresh ideas. This is an area in which inter-parliamentary fora are often more suited than direct inter-governmental relations.

The Food and Agriculture Organization's Situation Report for October 2016

The latest report of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is based on the August Mid-Year Review of the Humanitarian Requirements' Document and draws attention to the fact that livestock-dependent families in pastoral areas still face immense challenges in the wake of the 2015/2-16 drought caused by one of the harshest El Niño events on record. There are also some prolonged dry spells predicted for southern pastoral areas and the report says urgent assistance will be required to safeguard the herds, improve milk and meat production and ensure access to feed and water for the 2.4 million households requiring urgent livestock assistance until the end of the year. According to the Mid-Year Review, more than US\$ 36.2 million is needed to reach these households with assistance for animal health, forage production and water-point rehabilitation. The FAO says it needs US\$14 million for urgent livestock interventions, and a total of US\$59 million for its interventions to assist 1.8 million people, of which it has received US\$14 million so far.

Nationally, the Mid-Term Review considered 9.7 [million] people food insecure, with just under a third of the woredas districts classified as Priority 1 hotspots. This is down from 224 in March to 204 in July. While the ongoing *meher* harvest is expected to gradually improve food security, millions are anticipated to remain at risk. The FAO report noted that food insecurity remained high in the wake of the El Niño phenomenon which caused significant crop and livestock losses, affecting the livelihood of farmers, pastoralists and agro-pastoralists alike. Two failed crop seasons meant wide-scale dependence on food aid, and also led to high rates of debt and "massive depletion of household seed supplies." The report says 1.7 million households were identified as seed insecure but 88% of these

were reached with emergency agricultural inputs for the *meher* season by the FAO and other humanitarian organizations.

It noted that the Post-Distribution Assessment, which analyzed the effectiveness and appropriateness of the *meher* 2016 emergency seed distribution, found that 9 out of 10 respondents received the seeds of their choice, found it to be of excellent or good quality, received it in time for planting, and that they were overall very satisfied or satisfied with the distribution. A Seed Systems Security Assessment will be carried out before the end of the year by FAO and partners to define seed needs for upcoming crop dependent households. The FAO report says that the same level of commitment and determination is now needed to assist pastoralist and agro-pastoralist households in the worst affected areas of the Afar, Oromo and Somali Regional States. These areas have also been affected by falling livestock prices, by as much as 60% in some areas, reducing incomes and increasing food and nutrition insecurity. The *belg* rains earlier this year, which should have fully replenished water points and pasture, were mixed to poor. A recent forecast by the National Metrological Agency indicates that the lowland and agro-pastoral areas are likely to receive below-average rainfall between October and December. This will have an impact on water and pasture for livestock. It also notes that the October –January *bega* rains, particularly important in southern Ethiopia, are late and may be below-normal in some areas. This season supplies some 45% of the total annual rainfall in these areas and is essential for animal health and adequate pasture.

The FAO report notes that an added complication is the large number (227,000) of South Sudan refugees in the Gambella Region. With limited resources, both the refugees and the host communities are facing possible food insecurity. Livestock owners are also threatened by increased risks of trans-boundary animal diseases. The FAO says it will oversee a livestock assessment and prepare for a joint intervention with local authorities, the UNHCR and partner NGOs.

Ethiopia's National Disaster Risk Management Commission said on Wednesday (October 26) that Ethiopia currently has a stock of over 1.3 metric tons of grain available to feed those vulnerable to drought. Abebe Zewde, Public Relations Director at the Commission, said the Commission, in partnership with other bodies, continues to provide assistance on a large scale to those affected by the drought. Current stocks are sufficient to feed those in need until early December. The government, he said, had been providing support from its own resources for 5.7 million of the 9.7 in need of assistance. The remainder were receiving aid from WFP and other humanitarian agencies. He noted that a team was currently conducting a survey to identify the numbers of farmers still in need of assistance.

Meanwhile, the European Commission announced on Wednesday (October 26) new actions to further the EU response to the El Niño and food security crisis in the Horn of Africa. A total of €66.5 million will be provided under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa to address the destructive impacts of the El Niño phenomenon including floods and drought. This package focuses on the four countries most severely hit by El Niño and that are experiencing the highest levels of food insecurity: Ethiopia (€22.5 million), Somalia (€8 million), South Sudan (€28 million) and Sudan (€8 million). It focuses on short and long-term solutions for vulnerable groups and combines measures for relief, rehabilitation and development. The four resilience-oriented projects will contribute to peace-building and economic development; empowering vulnerable groups to meet food and nutrition needs by creating linkages with markets; developing more efficient water management systems and resilient agricultural practices; creating income generating opportunities to help poor households become self-sufficient and therefore enhance community livelihoods; strengthening the capacity of local institutions for service delivery, thereby supporting vulnerable communities; and support social networks in resolving community conflicts in a peaceful manner.

Neven Mimica, EU Commissioner responsible for International Cooperation and Development, said: "When people are at risk of starvation, we have to mobilize our means – and have to do it fast. With these four actions we are providing an immediate response in the Horn of Africa. This clearly demonstrates the value of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa as a highly swift and responsive tool in critical situations." The press statement noted that droughts and other climate change-related occurrences are a major driver of displacement. They have the potential of increasing food insecurity and fuelling tensions and local conflicts over scarce resources and livelihood opportunities. To maximize the impact of EU action and to support a broader development response in the region, the package is being channeled through the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. The Trust Fund has already provided two previous packages of action worth a total of €370 million for the Horn of Africa region, with €253 million and €117 million adopted in December 2015 and April 2016 respectively, as an ongoing response to the commitments made by the EU and African partners at the Valletta summit on migration in November 2015.

The first meeting of the Mexico-Ethiopia Consultation Mechanism

Mexico and Ethiopia held the first meeting of their Consultation Mechanism on Matters of Common Interest on Tuesday last week (October 18). The meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Mexico City was co-chaired by Mexico's Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Carlos de Icaza, and the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie. Ambassador Taye was on a two-day working visit to Mexico. Mexico's Director General for the United Nations Organization, Ambassador Joel Antonio Hernández García, also participated in the meeting at which issues of bilateral relations covering political cooperation as well as economic and trade links were discussed.

Both sides underlined the long historic ties of friendship between the two countries. They also identified new opportunities for collaboration in investment and business and agreed on the importance of raising their level of bilateral political dialogue through an exchange of visits by senior officials and the holding of meetings at international fora. Other issues discussed covered regional and multilateral agendas and Ambassador Taye briefed the meeting on Ethiopia's priorities as a non-permanent member of the Security Council of the UN. Ethiopia takes up its position on the Security Council on January 1 for two years.

During his visit, Ambassador Taye also met with officials from various Directorates-General of the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID). He discussed specific issues of technical-scientific interest as well as possibilities of educational, cultural and tourism cooperation. In a meeting with the head of the Institute for Mexicans Abroad, Dra Alma Rendon Eunice Cardenas, Ambassador Taye exchanged information on the policies of both governments towards their respective Diaspora communities.

During his stay in Mexico, Ambassador Taye also met with officials of the Mexican Ministry of Culture, the National Institute of Anthropology and History and ProMéxico. He also visited Ethiopia Station in the Mexico City Metro, where there is a plaque commemorating the historic ties of friendship between the two peoples. Ethiopia was the first state in Africa with which Mexico established diplomatic relations on November 1, 1949.

Mexican officials noted that Ethiopia's economy has shown accelerated growth in recent years, 8.7% in 2016 according to figures from the African Development Bank, and is an important promoter of

peace and regional security, standing first as a contributor of military and police operations for UN peacekeeping as well as hosting the largest number of refugees in Africa.

Sustainable energy development gathering momentum in Ethiopia

A panel discussion to share experiences on energy development was held in Addis Ababa last Sunday (October 23). Those attending included officials from the Korean International Cooperation Agency and from Ethiopia's Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Electricity, as well as other government officials and private interests.

The Minister for Water, Irrigation and Electricity, Motuma Mekasa, emphasized to participants that Ethiopia, which subscribes to a green development framework to achieve broad-based sustainable development, had continued its search for sustainable energy generation. The Minister noted that the massive development of power projects in the country offered a demonstration of Ethiopia's strategic orientation and concrete application of its green development vision. He noted that the government placed stress on international technical cooperative partnerships in this regard. It was important to share knowledge and expertise as a propeller to engage the untapped renewable energy potential of the country. He said the Republic of Korea's successful experiences in the field of energy development would, in this context, serve as "an important lesson for Ethiopia to tap more into its vast energy resource."

Minister Motuma underlined that the energy sector's role as the central element, a necessary bloodline, for the development of any economy had prompted increased government action to develop energy from renewable sources. These included geothermal, wind and solar power as well as its hydropower development. Ethiopia was, he said, pushing forward on green energy development, embarking on huge power projects to fill the gaps in power supplies across the country. Aware of the importance of investment on green energy generation, the Minister said the government was supporting and encouraging investors in the solar and geothermal sectors to ensure nationwide access to electricity. Ethiopia's development model, the Minister added, had undertaken several initiatives to enhance renewable power supplies specifically in order to benefit rural localities, mainstreaming real improvement for the lives of the poor.

Doh Young Ah, Country Director of KOICA, noted that as Ethiopia was implementing the second Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP-2), it could take positive lessons from Korean experience in the field of renewable energy. He said: "With development activities boosting up, it is obvious the need for energy is more than a quest now. It is especially clear that in speeding up the transition from agriculture to industry sector, Ethiopia needs a new and modern energy sector which is sustainable and dependable." KOICA's Country Director added that Korea "had experienced rapid electrification, and developed a robust energy system. It is my belief that Ethiopia can learn a lot from this experience of Korea in its efforts to become a middle-income country by 2025." He said Ethiopia needed new and modern energy systems which were sustainable and dependable, pointing out that "through our newly designed Country Partnership Strategy (CPS), our office will focus on facilitating support to enhancing accessibility and reliability of energy sources in Ethiopia."

The Chairperson of the KOICA Club Ethiopia, Professor Iyasu Mekonnen, emphasized the importance to Ethiopia of improving the energy sector by building huge projects in the country such as the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. He underlined that alternative energy supplies could play a vital role in improving the lives of people in a sustainable manner.

The start of the electoral process for Somalia's Lower House

The Chairman of the Federal Indirect Electoral Implementation Team, Omar Mohamed Abdulle, said on Sunday (October 23), as the electoral process for the Lower House started, that there would be no extension. The process would come to an end on November 10. He said, "We have started registration of aspirants vying for parliamentary seats," adding that the FIEIT would stick to its announced timetable for the vote. Any remaining issues to be dealt with were progressing and the Independent Dispute Resolution Committee was in place to handle any other emerging concerns. Mr Abdulle said stiff competition was expected during the election given the large number of contestants who are taking part. "Initially we expected to have two or three aspirants per seat but we have more than that," he said. 200 local and international observers had been accredited to monitor the process, while most of the logistical requirements were in place. He also said a 30% quota for women in the Lower house would be met. He noted that although the quota had not been achieved for the Upper House, a number of women had been elected senators to represent the federal states.

At a press conference at the weekend, the Chairman of the Federal Indirect Electoral Implementation Team also responded to concerns of possible corruption in the ongoing electoral process. He said the election commission was setting out new rules aimed to prevent vote-buying and bribery during the election period. He said the new measures would prevent potential parliamentarians from selling their vote or allow MPs to place a special mark against candidate's name during the casting of votes. He said mobile phones and camera device would be banned inside the voting centers, to avoid the possibility of MPs, who took bribes from presidential candidates, using such devices to prove how they voted. This follows a recent statement by Michael Keating, the UN Special Envoy to Somalia, expressing concern over possible corrupt practices and the use of bribery in the elections. There has been some public concern about the possibility that only the presidential candidate with the most financial support would be able to buy sufficient votes from parliamentarians in the presidential elections to secure victory. Some observers have also expressed concern that vote-buying happens away from the ballot and have suggested that if any candidates are found to have been involved in bribery, the results and the candidacy of such individuals, should be immediately declared void.

These measures were announced as the elections for the Upper House were concluded last week in some regional states. Each state is allowed eight members for the Upper House with an extra three seats for Somaliland and Puntland. This leaves out the capital Mogadishu and the surrounding Benadir region whose federal status has yet to be decided. The Senate will be made up of 54 members. Candidates have been nominated by regional presidents on the basis of the clan representation in the state, and voted upon by the respective regional parliaments. Of the eight members of the Senate from Galmudug, six are from the Hawiye, one is a Darood and one a Dir. Two were women. In Jubaland, there are two Ogaden/Darood and two Marehan/Darood, and one each from the Dir, Merifle, Awrmale and Koombe. Jubaland only selected one woman. South West State chose five Merifle, two Digil and one Dir, with two seats going to women. In Puntland, four seats went to Majerteen, two to Dhulbahante, one to Warsengeli, one to Dishishe, one to Abdi Kombe and one to Lelkasse, all Darood clans, and one to Awtable. Three of the Puntland seats were taken by women.

Two weeks ago the FIEIT required all the candidate lists, with the exception of South West State, to be revised as the states had failed to provide the required 30% quota of female candidates. New candidate lists were produced and elections took place for all the states, with the exception of Somaliland and Hir-Shabelle. The effort to reach the 30% quota for women has not, however, been successful. At the beginning of the week, in the elections completed so far, a total of 8 of the 35 names so far chosen were women, a total of 22%. None of the states reached the required 30%.

Hir-Shabelle has yet to finalize the process, though it has created a parliament and chosen Ali Abdullahi Osole as its regional President and Ali Abdullahi Hussein as Vice-President. Concerns were raised, however, over the election of the Speaker as all the candidates came from one clan. There have been calls by members of the Hawadle clan in Hiiraan, led by Ugaas Hassan Ugaas Khaliif, to set up a separate administration for Hiiraan, centered in Belet Weyne, the capital of Hiiraan. Talks have been going on to resolve the problem and to negotiate an equitable agreement over the balance between the major clans in the Hir-Shabelle state and its two major regions of Hiiraan and Middle Shabelle as well as over the choice of candidates for both the Upper and Lower Houses.

The case of Somaliland is different from all the other states as those involved in the electoral process are members of Somaliland clans resident in Mogadishu involved despite the Somaliland government that has made it very clear that it has nothing to do with the electoral process. Somaliland's Foreign Affairs Minister Sa'ad Ali Shire speaking to journalists in Hargeisa on Monday (October 24) firmly underlined Somaliland's self-proclaimed status as an independent country from Somalia. The Minister was responding to comments by President Mohamud of Somalia at the swearing in of President Ali Abdullahi Osole of the newly formed Hir-Shabelle state in Somalia that federalization in Somalia was "almost complete with only Somaliland and Benadir remaining." The Somaliland Government has made it clear that Somalilanders participating in the electoral process do so in defiance of the Somaliland government, which does not recognize the process as having any relevance to Somaliland.

The next stage of the process is for Somalia's Lower House representatives to be selected, also along clan lines, by the 14,025 members of the Electoral College who have been chosen by clan elders. The 51 Electoral College members for each clan will then vote to choose their candidate. This process started on Sunday and is currently going on though there have been delays in submitting lists of delegates and deadlines have been missed. Campaigning by candidates started on October 23 and continues to November 10. Voting takes place on November 11, and for logistical reasons and effectiveness, the process will be done in batches especially in states such as South West that have large numbers of delegates and candidates for each seat. Once this has been completed, the Upper and Lower Houses, together, will choose the President in a vote on November 30.

One of the remaining concerns for the electoral process is over security, not least because of a recent upsurge in al-Shabaab activity, with three attacks on Tuesday this week. One was in Mandera town in Kenya, but the others were at a mosque in Mogadishu, and against an AMISOM base in Belet Weyne in Hiiraan region. Equally, the withdrawal of some Ethiopian troops from a number of towns has caused concern as al-Shabaab fighters immediately occupied several of the towns. The Head of Ethiopia's Government Communications Agency Office, Minister Getachew Reda, said **the troops that had been withdrawn were not part of Ethiopia's 4,400 troops with AMISOM, but were some, not all, of those present in Somalia under a bilateral agreement with the Somali Federal Government.** The Minister said: "Troops who are not under AMISOM are leaving some parts of Somalia, assuming that the international community and the Somali National Army would fill the gap". We have been making a very conscious and responsible decision to evacuate our forces from many parts of Somalia. We and other AMISOM forces cannot remain there indefinitely." He said the international community had a responsibility either to train or to support the Somali National Army He warned that indifference to the problem would only pave the way for an al-Shabaab takeover.

AMISOM is due to start leaving Somalia in late 2018, but the main troop-contributing countries have all been facing problems over the payment of their forces in Somalia. Burundi, which has 5,400 soldiers deployed in Somalia, has been threatened with cuts in EU commitments to the country's AMISOM contingent. In June, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni threatened to withdraw his country's contingent of more than 6,000 troops. Kenya, which contributes about 3,500 troops to AMISOM, has

been complaining about delays in payment for the troops. Earlier this year, the European Union, the main contributor of funding for AMISOM, cut 20% of the funding that it has been providing for AMISOM soldiers' salaries. There have been delays in the disbursement of salaries of up to six months. It was not until September that the African Union could secure back payment of salaries and other operational expenses this year. Payments are also due to expire altogether in May 2017. At the moment, AMISOM is still very necessary to defeat Al-Shabaab, and there is a long way to go before the Somali National Armed Forces will be capable of operating without AMISOM support.

South Sudan's Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission chairman visits Addis Ababa

The Chairman of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) for South Sudan, Festus Mogae visited Addis Ababa on Monday (October 24) for talks with Ethiopia's Foreign Minister Dr Tedros Adhanom. The JMEC is responsible for monitoring and overseeing the implementation of the Peace Agreement mediated by IGAD, and the mandate and tasks of the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU), including the adherence of the Parties to the agreed timelines and implementation schedule. In case of non-implementation of the mandate and tasks of the TGoNU, or other serious deficiencies, the JMEC recommends appropriate corrective action to the TGoNU. The JMEC also oversees the work of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, and its successor mechanism, the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism, the Economic and Financial Management Authority, the Strategic Defense and Security Review Board, the National Elections Commission, and all other transitional institutions and mechanisms created by the Agreement and established as part of the TGoNU.

Mr Mogae and Dr Tedros reviewed the implementation of the August 2015 peace deal intended to bring peace and stability to South Sudan and discussed current political developments. Mr Mogae said that although the international community might have failed to broker a lasting peace in South Sudan it was not prepared to give up. He stressed that the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan was "still alive". It must, he said, be implemented. What makes the agreement alive, he added, was that "there are representatives of the opposition involved and there are others who are currently not taking part, but they have not said they would not take part." Mr Mogae said, "we have said the agreement is alive for the reason that we are not giving up on the peace because there are no alternatives anyway." Regardless of the challenges, South Sudan and its international partners must implement the peace accord ratified by President Salva Kiir and Dr Rick Machar. The Chairperson of the JMEC commended the efforts of the Ethiopian government in encouraging the necessary efforts to ensure peace and stability in South Sudan.

Foreign Minister Dr Tedros underlined Ethiopia's commitment to ensuring peace and stability in South Sudan. He said: "I would like to reaffirm my government's continued engagement to realize peace for our neighbor South Sudan in general and the full operationalization and implementation of the August 2015 Agreement, in letter and in spirit in particular."

On Wednesday last week (October 19), the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission held its first plenary since June. In his opening remarks, Chairman Mogae said from the beginning of July there had been escalating hostility leading to near daily violations of the ceasefire and a developing conflict between the parties drawing in other armed groups. He spoke of the "egregious violations of human rights, including rape, gang rape, looting, intimidation and harassment of civil society and the media, and the killing of civilians," and noted that the fighting had "disintegrated [sic] all the Transitional Security Arrangement Mechanisms". He emphasized, however, that "there cannot be and will never be a military solution to the conflict in South Sudan. The only path to sustainable peace is dialogue and the relentless pursuit of reconciliation and an inclusive political process." Mr Mogae underlined that

“the 2015 Peace Agreement...is still alive. No one Party can unilaterally dissolve or renegotiate this Agreement.”

He admitted that the implementation of the Peace Agreement was compromised and partially derailed, but stressed that the immediate cessation of hostilities and the restoration of the ceasefire was the important priority. He said there were “almost daily violations of the ceasefire, perpetrated by uniformed armed forces of SPLA and SPLA-IO and other armed groups. This hostility has the potential to trigger an uncontrolled escalation of violence motivated by retribution.” There were reports of an increase in offensive operations by both Government Forces and Opposition Forces, specifically in and around Yei, Leer, Jezeera and Nassir. The situation in Equatoria states was of particular concern. Increasing numbers of civilians were fleeing their villages.

Mr Mogae said political inclusivity must also be addressed. The Peace Agreement must be inclusive and representative. He was concerned that not all Parties were currently included or fully represented. He urged the TGoNU to re-establish an environment within which all people of South Sudan, irrespective of their ethnicity or background, could safely return and engage in constructive and peaceful dialogue.

He welcomed UN Security Council Resolution 2304, providing for the deployment of a Regional Protection Force to secure Juba as a neutral environment. He said this was a pre-requisite for a secure, peaceful and stable environment within which political inclusion can be pursued. Its deployment was of paramount importance in order to build trust and confidence and establish the necessary security arrangements to facilitate the resumption of inclusive implementation of the Agreement.

At the end of the JMEC meeting, Mr Mogae thanked Martin Elia Lumoro, the Minister of Cabinet Affairs, for his briefing on the progress and the assurances of the TGoNU’s commitment to implement all pending tasks. The Minister also agreed to provide JMEC members with the revised timeline and implementation schedule. Mr Mogae also welcomed the willingness and readiness of the international community, partners and friends of South Sudan to support the TGoNU, “if further progress is made in adherence to the Agreement”. He said it was clear the current peace process was essentially functional but that it should be made more inclusive in accordance with the Agreement. The TGoNU should also reach out with greater effort and maintain an open door to all parties who renounce violence, and are willing to re-join the peace process. The meeting also called for the “expeditious deployment of the Regional Protection Force to guarantee a neutral, secure and stable environment”.

The danger that South Sudan’s conflict has entered a new and a more challenging phase has been underlined by the significant tension that has been spreading across the country. In its wake, there has been an upsurge of refugees fleeing into neighboring Uganda and Ethiopia, apparently fearing there is more fighting to come. The UNHCR said at the end of last week that there were increasing numbers of South Sudanese refugees arriving in Gambella Regional State, in Ethiopia. There had been 42,684 since the beginning of September, and, according to UNHCR officials, an average of at least 900 South Sudanese asylum-seekers arrive at Pagak Transit Centre in Ethiopia on a daily basis.

The California-based Oakland Institute joins in external opposition’s destructive abuse

The California-based advocacy organization, Oakland Institute, was quick to take note of Ethiopia’s State of Emergency, issuing a statement on Friday last week, typically describing the measure as “authorizing oppression.” With its usual effort at misdirection, it began its comment: “The government of Ethiopia has responded to a groundswell of protests, which are calling for democracy and human rights for all, by imposing a six-month long state of emergency, effective October 8.” Over the next two pages it then manages to totally ignore the fact that the declaration of the State of

Emergency followed the draft of proposals for change and reform outlined in the President's speech to Parliament a few days earlier, notably, of course, proportional representation. The proposals detailed by the President are, of course, proposals that require peace and stability for implementation. In a piece of deliberate duplicity, designed to deceive, Oakland Institute even claims the State of Emergency does not address the situation on the country but merely "legalizes and expand the authoritarian and repressive rule that the Ethiopian regime has maintained for years."

The Oakland Institute claims that the State of Emergency is "far-reaching", though in fact the regulations it imposes are normal in a situation where the government is concerned that the sort of gross exaggerations and false information, peddled all-too-often by organizations like Oakland Institute itself, among others, appears intended to generate ethnic conflict. It is hardly accurate to describe as appalling an attempt to limit listening to the abhorrent and dangerous encouragement of violence that are regularly put out over the US and Europe-based ESAT TV station or over the Oromo Media Network. Similarly, to claim a ban on the provision of information to "international civil society groups" such as the Oakland Institute begs the question as to whether Oakland Institute has any right to describe itself in those terms, given its record of support for violent opposition in Ethiopian politics, its own manipulation of information and its efforts to end development aid to Ethiopia.

In its comments last week, the Oakland Institute managed within a page to misquote the Prime Minister, seriously exaggerate the number of deaths that occurred in a prison fire and repeat a whole number of its previously unconfirmed allegations. It also launches into its usual attack on Ethiopia's Anti-Terrorism Proclamation of 2009, which no more violates international humanitarian law than do the anti-terrorist laws of the US, the UK and other states around the world. It also launches into its usual attack on Ethiopia's donors, accusing the US, the UN, the EU and Canada of "toothless rhetoric", for failing to condemn "the violence and repression," and mocking their calls for peaceful or inclusive dialogue. It accuses donors of failing to acknowledge what Oakland Institute calls "years of oppression and abuse" and claims there is no one left for the government to talk with. It goes on: "For years, the US, UK, and others have heralded Ethiopia as a blueprint for development, and provided massive financial support to their champion. But the model has failed."

Oakland Institute claims its most recent report "Miracle or Mirage? Manufacturing Hunger and Poverty in Ethiopia", published last month, shows that economic growth in Ethiopia has "not lifted up the masses." Surprisingly admitting for the first time that there has actually been growth in Ethiopia, it claims this has happened "alongside widespread hunger and poverty, forced displacements, and massive human rights abuses," arguing that it is this that has led to the tensions in the country "finally, understandably boiling over." It is this sort of statement that makes it very clear that Oakland Institute has no understanding of what has been happening in Ethiopia in recent months, or years, or why demonstrations have been taking place. Even by its own accounts "the widespread hunger and poverty and forced displacements" it claims have been occurring have not been happening in areas where there have been demonstrations. Nor does the Oakland Institute seem to have any knowledge of the way some of the demonstrations have been high-jacked by criminal or opposition elements deliberately aiming to cause violence.

These exaggerated and inaccurate claims are exactly what the Oakland Institute, making no secret of its dislike of the Ethiopian Government and of its development policies, has persistently produced in a number of reports, viciously, if inaccurately, attacking government policies and criticizing any, and all, organizations that have provided support to the country's development efforts. Its targets include the World Bank, the UN the EU, the UK's DfID and most countries that provide developmental assistance and aid to Ethiopia.

“Miracle or Mirage? Manufacturing Hunger and Poverty in Ethiopia,” fits squarely into this negative approach to development in Ethiopia, as its title underlines. Indeed, in its press release on the publication of the report on September 27, the Oakland Institute enthusiastically claims that “as months of protest and civil unrest hurl Ethiopia into a severe political crisis,” it is now debunking “the myth that the country is the new “African Lion”, exposing how authoritarian development schemes have perpetuated cycles of poverty, food insecurity, and marginalized the country’s most vulnerable citizens.” It says food shortages over the last year were widely attributed to the El Niño phenomenon, but calls this “very convenient” for the government and its international backers who have been closely involved in Ethiopia’s development strategy. For the Oakland Institute, “the 2016 crisis is a harsh reminder that despite the trumpeted economic model, Ethiopia has not moved beyond its tragic history of chronic hunger and famine. Every year since 2005, 8 to 18 million Ethiopians have relied on food assistance for their survival.”

Ms Mittal, Executive Director of the Oakland Institute, in an interview with VOA this month underlined these views, and indeed it appears her own hopes: "You cannot just focus on building the economy and talk about double-digit growth....An economic model which is built on denying democracy, denying people basic human rights, isn't sustainable, and it will collapse." Underlining her support for the collapse she is predicting, Ms Mittal said: "If I am a foreign investor, I look for opportunities. I understand that there are risks, but in the face of this growing unrest where foreign companies have been targets, given all that has happened in terms of displacement of people and their lands given away to foreign investors, it would be astute to not go into a country like that." Ms Mittal’s comments are, of course, based on the Oakland Institute’s own failures of research as well as the seriously exaggerated stories emanating from Diaspora social media in the US. These, as even the *Washington Post*, normally highly critical of the Ethiopian government, was constrained to admit a couple of weeks ago, are “a bit hard to swallow”; the *Post* even referred to more and more dissident voices being heard over social media “but often without the restraint or commitment to accuracy of more mainstream media”. It quoted Prime Minister Hailemariam at the UN General Assembly: “We are seeing how misinformation could easily go viral via social media and mislead many people, especially the youth...Social media has certainly empowered populists and other extremists to exploit people’s genuine concerns and spread their message of hate and bigotry without any inhibition.”

As the Oakland Institute has shown in a number of reports, it always accepts, totally uncritically, all Diaspora information as a norm in support of its contention that the promotion of large-scale industrial farming along with large-scale land seizures has been the key governmental strategy to drive development in Ethiopia. It argues that this is the central element in what it claims has been the total failure of development – the mirage, “manufacturing hunger and poverty in Ethiopia.” Its latest report says, “By 2011, the government had earmarked 3.6 million hectares for large-scale agriculture, and recently announced that 11.5 million hectares are available to investors.” This is a statistic repeated from earlier reports. In December 2014, Oakland Institute said: “in recent years, the Ethiopian government has leased over 3 million hectares to corporations for the development of large-scale agricultural plantations and is making available a total of 11.5 million hectares to investors.” In an earlier paper in 2011, “Understanding Land Investment Deals in Africa,” it said: “since early 2008, the Ethiopian Government has embarked on a process to award millions of hectares (ha) of land to foreign and national agricultural investors. Our research shows that at least 3,619,509 ha of land have been transferred, though the actual number may be higher.”

This is quite simply untrue. After an extensive investigation, done in 2014, of all relevant deals over the previous two decades, the Gates Foundation found the actual figures amounted to just about a million hectares leased. These came from the federal land bank - 380,000 hectares; regional government allocations - 335,000 hectares; and a further 335,000 hectares allocated for state-run

sugar plantations. The Gates Foundation also pointed out these figures gave no indication of how much of this was actually in process of development. A great deal is not. The amount of land actually being used by large-scale investors is no more than a fraction of what the Oakland Institute, despite being corrected on a number of occasions, still persists in claiming is 3.6 million hectares.

This disparity, or rather this major error, on which much of Oakland Institute's subsequent comments are based, must raise serious questions about the quality of Oakland Institute 'research' and the sources it employs. Similar questions arise out of other assertions that it persists in making. It claims, for example, in another repeated inaccuracy that the Gilgel Gibe III Dam, and the creation of sugar plantations in the Lower Omo River, could reduce the flow of the Omo River by as much as 70%, threatening the livelihoods of 200,000 Ethiopians and 300,000 Kenyans who depend on the water for herding, fishing, and flood-recession agriculture. The most recent studies of the Omo flow, ignored by the Oakland Institute, show that the amount of water needed for irrigation of the sugar plantations will only be extracted over three or four months each year, and will take out no more than 4%-6% of the river's flow, and will have a minimal impact on Lake Turkana. In July this year, the World Heritage Committee concluded Ethiopia's Kuraz Sugar Development Project neither endangered the Lower Omo Valley World Heritage Site nor compromised any environmental issues. As usual, the Oakland Institute's 'research' ignores inconvenient facts like these. It prefers to quote problems that arose from the flawed attempts to set up sugar and cotton plantations in the Awash Valley in the Afar Region in the 1950s. Those projects did indeed drastically reduce land and water availability for people and livestock in the Awash Valley. But that was sixty years ago, and it has little bearing on the very different current development projects.

The central claim of the Oakland Institute is that the government is only interested in accelerating industrialization through large scale farming projects, through land grabs and driving indigenous groups off the land through its Commune Development or Resettlement Program. In order to support these allegations, it has to ignore the mass of publicly available information about all the programs that support, directly and indirectly, development of smallholder farmers. This is, in fact, a core element of both the Growth and Transformation Plans 1 (2010/11-2014/5) and II (2015/16-2019/2020) as well as a central element in the Government's commitment to pro-poor spending, the progress achieved in poverty reduction and massive contributions to health, education and employment across the country. Over 70% of the federal budget is dedicated to pro-poor policies.

In fact, with its central aim of poverty reduction, much of Ethiopia's growth strategy has been centered on the Agricultural Development-Led Industrialization program, focused on agriculture supplying commodities for export, domestic food supply and industrial output and expansion of the market for domestic manufactured goods. This has, of course, involved some support for large-scale commercial agricultural development, but it has also, necessarily and consistently involved major support for commercialization of smallholder agriculture, which makes up the far larger part of the country's agricultural production. The ADLI operates through product diversification, a shift to value-added crops, promotion of high-value export crops and integration of local farm production with internal and external markets. A key element has been the deployment of agricultural extension workers, supported by an extensive TVET program, to every *kebele* in the country where they can provide support to smallholder farmers. Between 2004/05 and 2009/10, 61,785 agricultural extension agents were trained and 9,265 farmer-training centers were established. A very large part of the finance for this came from the Government, allowing it to ensure agricultural extension programs continued to be aimed at smallholder farmers.

Other pro-poor development programs have included the Sustainable Land Management Program (SLMP II), specifically aimed at reducing land degradation and increasing land productivity of

smallholder farmers; and the Purchase for Progress (P4P) program to provide training for smallholder farmers in key techniques such as post-harvest handling, group marketing, agricultural finance and contracting; the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), the largest social protection program in Africa and a key driver of poverty reduction, targeting the most vulnerable areas and households in order to increase rural poor families' long-term resilience to food shortages; and the Promotion of Basic Services (PBS) program, much of which specifically benefits smallholder agriculture with its continued decentralization of basic services, increasing completion of primary levels of education, lowering maternal mortality rates, increasing agricultural productivity, lowering the average time to reach all-weather roads, increasing access to potable water, increasing local government budget controls and audit controls, and increasing information flows to people in the *woredas* (districts). As the financial breakdown of the PBS demonstrates, education (62%), health (17%), and agriculture (18%) account for 97% of *woreda* spending. It is complemented by support for greater engagement among the people, improvements in local capacity to manage resources, and better access to information on national and local budgeting and development objectives. Increased *woreda*-level spending on agricultural extension workers is associated with higher yields for major crops, including cereals, vegetables, enset ['false banana'], coffee and fruit, and increases the probability that farmers, regardless of the size of their plots, will use improved farming techniques. The latest World Bank report noted the PBS was one of the few examples of a development program that has clearly quantifiable achievements. Indeed, not only does PBS meet its objectives, it has helped to make government spending more effective. The PBS has been described by those who know as "the most successful project of its kind in the world."

All these pro-poor programs operate at local and regional state levels and thus place special emphasis on enhancing the productivity of smallholder farmers and pastoralists, strengthening market systems, improving participation of the private sector in agriculture, expanding the amount of land under irrigation and reducing the number of chronically food insecure households. They have achieved some impressive progress, an 8% or more growth rate for agriculture, the reduction of safety net program beneficiaries from 7.8 million to 1.8 million households, doubling production of major crops, and raising the emergency food reserve to 3 million tonnes. The delivery of public services across the country has allowed *woredas*, *inter alia*, to hire 100,000 additional primary school teachers, 38,000 health extension workers and 45,000 agricultural extension workers. It has helped people gain access to public budget information and provide basic budget literacy training for thousands. The proportion of people living below the poverty line has fallen steadily in the last few years, reducing to 22% last year. The Oakland Institute ignores all this, and equally disregards the fact that Ethiopia's policies over the last decade or more have been specifically based on pro-poor and pro-development strategies, implemented through integrated planning, coordination, management and cooperation of government at federal, regional and local levels, aid agencies and the people. The fact that poverty reduction and food security have yet to be fully achieved does not render the policy a failure, whatever the Oakland Institute may think.

A good example of the way the Oakland Institute operates can be seen in its response to the Commune Development or Resettlement Program, instituted in 2003 for relevant areas of Afar, Gambella, Benishangul Gumuz, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, Somali, Amhara and Tigray regional states. This is a program based on voluntary resettlement after full consultation; the use of under-utilized land; resettlement within the same regional state; and adequate preparation and provision of infrastructure and public services. The programs have achieved considerable level of success, and despite Oakland Institute claims of forced resettlement and widespread abuse, no independent investigations have found any serious failures or extensive abuse, though there have certainly been some minor hiccups.

The Oakland Institute, however, persists in claiming the World Bank, the IMF, UN agencies, EU agencies, the African Development Bank, the Donors Assistance Group, donor ambassadors and embassies in Ethiopia, NGOs working on the ground, and visitors to these areas, including Sir Malcolm Bruce, Chair of the UK Parliament's Committee for International Development, and former US Ambassador, Donald Booth, either repeatedly and consistently lie, or deliberately refuse to see all the "numerous atrocities" that the Oakland Institute has seen from California. It dismisses out of hand all World Bank investigations and assessment missions, 34 investigations and evaluations of the PBS program by officials and experts of a dozen INGOs, assessments by representatives of the Governments of Austria, Spain, the Netherlands and others, Ethiopian federal, regional and local officials and others.

In its latest paper the Oakland Institute complains that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has labeled it as anti-development. We have. It is a conclusion that is difficult to avoid when one considers the repeated efforts of the Institute to put a stop to the assistance provided by DfID, the World Bank and other partners to support the PBS and other highly successful pro-poor development programs aimed at improving smallholder agriculture. The Oakland Institute uses flawed methodology, unacceptable by any normal evidential research standards, built up from unverified and unverifiable information, with inaccurate and exaggerated accounts drawn from externally-based politically-motivated sources and seldom, if ever, checked on the ground. It ignores any criticisms of its reports. It refuses to accept any factual corrections. Indeed, despite a significant number of highly detailed and accurate refutations of its claims, it remains armored in its own "certainties". It repeatedly criticizes the development programs that Ethiopia is trying to implement and even invents facts and figures to try to buttress its claims. In fact, it gives every indication of propagating a political agenda aiming to stop the contributions of the World Bank and other donors to Ethiopia's pro-poor developmental programs and of supporting violent opposition to the government as well as contributing to the country's destabilization. Indeed, in one of its recent reports, the Institute specifically said, "Our hope is that this report will further pressure the US Congress and State Department to renegotiate the development assistance to Ethiopia."