

Dr Tedros meets with Second Permanent Secretary of the UK Home Office, Oliver Robbins

February 25, 2016

Foreign Minister, Dr Tedros Adhanom, held discussions with Second Permanent Secretary of the UK home office, Mr Oliver Robbins, yesterday (February 24). Dr Tedros and the Permanent Secretary discussed several issues, ranging from migration to regional peace and security. The Permanent Secretary appreciated the Government of Ethiopia for its commendable leadership roles in the region, particularly on migration issues. He said his country had a keen interest to build a better relationship with Ethiopia on such issues given that Ethiopia is hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees. The Permanent Secretary also requested that the Minister brief him on how the two countries could work together to deal with the challenge of migration.

Mr Robbins further noted that the UK is now serving as Chair of the Khartoum Process, which is an EU and African Union initiative to combat the smuggling of migrants. He expressed his country's readiness to ensure a smooth transition from the UK's position as Chair to Ethiopia's, who will be the next Chair of the process.

Mr Robbins also disclosed that the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, and Foreign Secretary, Phillip Hammond, will visit Ethiopia, a valued partner to the UK government. Referring to the upcoming visit he emphasised the need to strengthen and formalise the UK-Ethiopia relationship on various strategic levels to ensure maximum cooperation.

Dr Tedros welcomed the UK's support for Ethiopia and underlined the importance of deepening operational partnerships on migration as well as other technical and development endeavours. He said Ethiopia is ready to cooperate on the issue of migration, especially considering the country is currently hosting more than 700,000 refugees. The Minister emphasised that Ethiopia has an open door policy for those seeking humanitarian assistance and his country is willing and ready to help even if there are some resource constraints.

Dr Tedros highlighted that Ethiopia is a source, transit country and destination for migrants and for this reason his government has devised a comprehensive programme to alleviate any problems from the roots; there is also a guaranteed presence of political will for this programme as it is led by the Prime Minister and his deputy.

He added that, his country is doing everything within its power to alleviate poverty and increase economic growth, creating ample employment opportunities and above all changing the image of Ethiopia worldwide to show that it is a land of opportunity. As a transit corridor for migrants, Ethiopia is working to track and dismantle the highly sophisticated network of illicit human traffickers by cooperating with neighbouring countries. Dr Tedros called for enhanced EU support and funding, stressing that there needed to be coordinated action. He also said: 'Moving to emergency issues without addressing the root cause such as poverty alleviation will not work; if not it would be mere firefighting'.

**Embassy of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, London
February 25, 2016**