

News in Brief

Prime Minister Hailemariam makes an official visit to Saudi Arabia

Ethio-Morocco ties move to a new level of practical cooperation

The 4th Afro-Arab Summit in Malabo

Calls for decisive action to address electoral abuse in Somalia...

...and the IMF Mission on Somalia welcomes the commitment to reform

UN Security Council expresses “Deep alarm and concern” over South Sudan

Ethiopia-Kenya Joint Border Meeting in Mombasa

Implications of the decision to hear Eritrean ‘slavery’ case in Canada

UN Security Council welcomes stronger co-operation with AU

The UN Security Council’s first debate on Water, Peace and Security

News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

The 4th Afro-Arab Summit took place in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea on Wednesday this week (November 23) under the theme: “Together for Sustainable Development and Economic Cooperation”. The Summit was preceded by the meeting of the Africa-Arab Joint Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs on Monday, in a joint opening session with Africa-Arab Ministers of Economy, Trade and Finance. Foreign Minister, Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu led the Ethiopian delegation. **(See article)**

The Least Developed Countries Group of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change announced the launch of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Initiative (REEEI) for Sustainable Development at last week’s COP22 meeting at Marrakech. The LDC elected Ethiopia to chair the Group for the next two years. Ethiopia is also chairing the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF).

The United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2320 (2016) on Friday last week (November 18), welcoming cost-sharing proposals and stronger cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union. **(See article)**

The United Nations Security Council held an open debate on Water, Peace and Security on Tuesday this week (November 22). The debate, open to non-members of the Security Council, was the first such debate the Security Council has held on this topic. Ethiopia’s Minister Counselor at its UN Mission, Leulseged Tadesse, spoke at the debate. **(See article)**

The 11th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage will be held at the UNECA next week. It’s expected that close to 1000 delegates from all around the world will attend. This week, Ethiopia’s State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie, briefed Ambassadors of the members of the Intergovernmental Committee on the preparations for the meeting. He called on the resident Ambassadors of the Intergovernmental Committee Member States to contribute to the success of the meeting.

Ethiopia

King Mohammed VI of Morocco made a state visit to Addis Ababa last weekend. During his visit he held talks with Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn, with both countries underlining their interest of advance their practical economic and political cooperation. An Ethio-Moroccan Business Forum was held during the visit. **(See article)**

President Dr. Mulatu Teshome met a Chinese delegation, headed by General Fang Changlong, Vice Chairman of the Central Military of China (CMC). Their talks focused on maintaining peace and security in Africa and on further possibilities of transforming Ethiopia to an industrialized middle income nation. They shared views on promoting the production capacity of Ethiopian industries, and on peace and security. The Chinese military delegation also met with officials from the Ministry of Defense.

Prime Minister Hailemariam paid a two day official visit to Saudi Arabia on Sunday (November 20). He met and held talks with the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman Bin Abdulaziz, as well as with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Naif bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Premier and Minister of Interior, and other officials. The aim of the visit was to strengthen political and economic relations and discuss economic, political and security issues as well as regional peace and development. **(See article)**

Foreign Affairs Minister Dr Workneh Gebeyehu paid an official visit to Djibouti last weekend and held discussions with President Ismail Omar Guelleh. The two sides agreed to work together enhancing people-to-people relations as well as strengthen cooperation in investment and trade. Dr. Workneh also met with Mahmud Ali Youssof, Djibouti's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to discuss possible ways of further speeding up economic integration.

Foreign Affairs Minister, Dr Workneh, met Somali Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke on Friday (November 25). He said Ethiopia would continue to share experiences in building federalism and support the Somali government in technical areas and capacity training. They agreed to diversify existing security cooperation as well as increase infrastructural and economic areas of cooperation.

Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, met with Ambassador Mohamed Abdi Affey, Special Envoy for the Somali refugee situation and Ms. Clementine Nkweta-Salami, UNHCR Representative to Ethiopia, on Wednesday (November 23). He reiterated Ethiopia's commitment to sustain protection of refugees and promote of their livelihood.

Morocco signed an agreement on Saturday to invest over two billion dollars in Ethiopia over a five year period to build a fertilizer factory at a cost of \$3.7 billion between 2017 and 2022 near Dire Dawa. The Office Cherifien des Phosphates (OCP) said this was its largest investment outside Morocco and it aimed to reduce Ethiopia's dependence on fertilizer imports. **(See article)**

Ethiopia's Ambassador to Turkey, Ayalew Gobezie said on Tuesday this week (November 22) that trade between Turkey and Ethiopia reached to over \$400 million

last year. Turkish investors, he said, had created more than 10,000 jobs. He also noted that Ethiopia needed more investment from Turkish companies.

A statement from UNHCR this week said Ethiopia currently hosts 783,340 refugees, 58.3% of whom are children under 18, 38,502 of them unaccompanied children. There has been a recent new influx of 39,000 South Sudanese refugees fleeing renewed violence and food shortages, 64% of whom were children. UNHCR said on Friday (November 18) it had opened a new camp for the new arrivals. UNHCR has signed an agreement with UNICEF to collaborate in child protection, to “advance our respective mandates in Ethiopia.”

The National Geography Magazine, Russian Branch, on November 17, affirmed Ethiopia as the third top destination of tourists following a readers’ online vote. Last year, Ethiopia was the number one destination for Russian tourists.

Djibouti

President Ismail Omar Guelleh meeting with Chinese Vice-President Li Yuanchao on Thursday last week (November 17), welcomed cooperation with China. Mr. Li Yuanchao described bilateral relations between China and Djibouti as sustainable and healthy. He said the Chinese Communist Party was willing to work with the ruling People’s Rally for Progress to deepen exchanges and cooperation.

Eritrea

President Isaias received the credentials of six Ambassadors on Tuesday (November 22), the Ambassadors of the United Kingdom, Qatar, Yemen, Italy, Israel and France. He explained “the erroneous stance of the British government towards Eritrea”, and called on Israel “to play due role in promoting regional peace and stability”, as well as asserting Italy was expected to play its “due role in bilateral relations and regional issues,” and discussing the forthcoming election in France and the efforts to bring about peace and stability in Yemen.

Eritrea’s Foreign Affairs Minister, Osman Ahmed Saleh, at the Afro-Arab Summit in Malabo, called for the need for the UN Security Council to give two permanent seats to Arab and African states. He said Eritrea would look into joining the Arab league if this fulfilled the interests of Eritrea. He said the security and stability of the Red Sea was the responsibility of neighboring Arab and African states and called on the concerned countries to create a strategic partnership to strengthen the region’s economy and diversify investment and trade opportunities.

Kenya

Kenya’s President Uhuru Kenyatta on Sunday (November 20) urged the international community to respect decisions made by Kenya. Speaking during the 2nd annual Diplomatic Forum organized by the Diplomatic corps in Uganda, President Kenyatta said Africans should demand equal treatment when engaging with other countries on the illegitimate and the unfair international order. The President said rapid sustainable development was the last agenda of Africa’s freedom struggle and called on Africans to speak with one voice.

Kenya hosted the 31st Ethiopia-Kenya Joint Border Administrators and Commissioners' Meeting in Mombasa on Wednesday (November 23). More than 60 Ethiopian and Kenyan officials participated. Kenya's Interior Cabinet Secretary Joseph Nkaissery led the Kenyan delegation and Ambassador Girma Temesgen, Director General for Africa in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, headed the Ethiopian delegation. **(See article)**

The Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly said on Monday that the East African Community was facing a serious financial crisis, and a number of institutions and organs within the Community had either cancelled or significantly curtailed their activities. Speaking in Nairobi on Monday, Speaker Kidega said states were failing to contribute their commitment and appealed to them to make their full remittances by December. The Assembly recently passed a resolution urging the EAC Heads of State to direct that the Council of Ministers to fast track implementation of the alternative sustainable funding mechanism for the EAC.

The highway linking Kenya and Ethiopia is now complete and awaiting official commissioning by Kenya's President Kenyatta and Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam. The last mile at Marsabit in Kenya was completed on November 18. A One Stop Border Post on the border between the two countries at Moyale will allow for passport and Customs controls at the border crossing, replacing the two previous separate customs points

Somalia

In a statement issued on Sunday, (November 20) Somalia's international partners congratulated the Somali authorities and electoral bodies for the progress achieved so far in the elections which have continued all this week. It also called on the National Leadership Forum to use its authority to prevent harassment and intimidation of candidates, or manipulation of delegate and candidate lists. **(See article)**

An International Monetary Fund (IMF) team held discussions on the 2016 Article IV Consultation on Somalia and carry out the first review of the Staff-Monitored Program from November 14–21. **(See article)**

Federal Prime Minister Abdirashid Ali Omar Sharmarke brokered another peace agreement between President Abdiweli Mohamed Ali "Gaas" of Puntland and President Abdikarim Hussein Guled of Galmudug to extend the current ceasefire in Galkayo and establish a two-kilometer-wide buffer zone between their security forces stationed in the city on Friday (November 18).

AMISOM military officers and senior commanders from the Somali National Army (SNA) agreed on new plans for joint operations against Al-Shabaab at a three day meeting this week in Mogadishu including major actions to liberate areas still under Al-Shabaab control. The meeting discussed strengthening the SNA in preparation for AMISOM's exit from Somalia in 2018 to begin in October 2018 and be completed by the end of 2020.

U.S. Africa Command's General Thomas Waldhauser said in an interview this week that US special operations forces working with Somali troops had moved from training individual troops to unit-level training. He said the focus was on building up

the capabilities of Somali troops, “to train enough of these units in the next couple years so that when AMISOM leaves, the Somali national army is able to take on the disruption of al-Shabaab by themselves.” The New York Times said last month there are 200 to 300 U.S. Special Operations troops in Somalia.

Mohamed Omar, director-general of Somalia’s Ministry of Livestock, says Somalia has exported some 5.5 million camels in 2016 and is targeting new export markets in Egypt and Malaysia. Exports reached US\$384 million in 2015, the highest figure for over twenty years. He expects the income from camel exports this year to be significantly higher. Somalia has been expanding port facilities for shipping live camels, cattle and goats as well as improving vaccination programs.

EUCAP Nestor and EU Naval Force Somalia (EU NAVFOR Operation Atalanta) recently held a series of meetings with state government officials and local leaders in Bosasso, in Somalia’s Puntland state to discuss the maritime security situation off the Somali coast and the importance of continuing to keep down pirate attacks.

The Somalia’s religious council appealed to Somali traders this week to provide humanitarian assistance to people affected by the severe drought. Sheikh Bashir Ahmed, the Chairman of the Council said the most urgent needs included access to water, food, cash relief, emergency livelihood support, nutrition and health services to reduce morbidity and mortality.

South Sudan

The United Nations Security Council has called for urgent steps to address increasing hate speech and ethnic violence in South Sudan, advocating promotion of reconciliation among the people through a justice and accountability process. It also expressed “deep alarm” over the escalation of ethnic violence and underlined its commitment to the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict. It also expressed its readiness to consider taking additional measures including appropriate sanctions as necessary. **(See article)**

South Sudan President Salva Kiir, calling any imposition of targeted sanctions and arms embargo “undesirable”, on Monday (November 21) appealed to the international community to support his administration, He said the peace agreement was being implemented: there was a First Vice President; a cabinet in which all parties were represented, and a transitional national legislative assembly; he had approved the establishment of cantonment sites, all as required by the agreement. The international community should provide support. This was what was needed now, not sanctions, he said. **(See article)**

Sudan

President Omer al-Bashir, after attending the UN Climate Change Conference (COP22) in Marrakech, Morocco, led Sudan’s delegation to the 4th Afro-Arab Summit which convened in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, this week.

Prime Minister Hailemariam makes an official visit to Saudi Arabia

Prime Minister Hailemariam paid a two day official visit to Saudi Arabia on Sunday (November 20), during which he met and held talks with the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman Bin Abdulaziz, as well as with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Naif bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Premier and Minister of Interior, and other officials. The aim of the visit was to strengthen political and economic relations and to discuss a variety of economic, political and security issues as well as regional peace and development.

On arrival at the King Salman Air Base Airport at Riyadh, the Prime Minister was received by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Naif; Prince Faisal bin Bandar, the Governor of Riyadh; State Minister and member of the Cabinet, Usaed bin Mohammed Al-Aiban, and other senior government officials. The Prime Minister's delegation included Abraham Tekeste, Minister of Finance and Economic Cooperation; Siraj Fergessa, Minister of Defence; Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos, Special Envoy, and Sufian Ahmed, advisor on fiscal policy. The overall aim of the visit was to strengthen relations between the two countries in political and economic areas as well as encourage people-to-people relations.

The Prime Minister held talks with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Naif after his arrival, focusing on issues of the economy, trade, investment, terrorism and peace. The Prime Minister called upon Saudi investors to increase their investment in Ethiopia, particularly in agriculture, animal breeding and fattening, trade and leather industry. There has been a dramatic growth of Saudi investment in Ethiopia during the last two years. There are over 300 Saudi projects now operating in Ethiopia and investment between the two countries has reached SR 7 billion. These have created nearly 60,000 permanent and 190,000 temporary employment opportunities in Ethiopia. The two sides also discussed on how to co-operate on efforts to bring peace, security and stability in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East.

Following the talks, the Crown Prince hosted a lunch banquet in honor of the Prime Minister. Later the Prime Minister held meetings with Commerce and Investment Minister, Majid Al-Qassabi, and the Deputy Minister of Finance Hamad bin Sulaiman Al-Bazei. He also attended a reception hosted by Ethiopia's Ambassador to the Kingdom, Amin Abdulkadir and met members of the Ethiopian Diaspora. He met with King Salman Bin Abdulaziz on Monday (November 21).

During the visit, Defense Minister Siraj Fegessa, met with Ethiopian nationals and foreigners of Ethiopian origin from Riyadh and other areas, on Monday (November 21). He briefed the members of the Diaspora on the progress made in areas of peace, development and democracy as well as on the State of Emergency. He highlighted the hard work of the government in conjunction with the private sector and the people at large for development and noted the progress made in improving the livelihood of the people. The Defense Minister emphasized the State of Emergency was restoring peace in the country, and noted that the government was now responding to the demands raised by the people. The members of the Diaspora pledged to increase their contributions to the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and other ongoing development programs.

Ethio-Morocco ties move to a new level of practical cooperation

The longstanding friendship and cooperative relationship between Ethiopia and Morocco is moving to new levels of practical cooperation, from the political to the economic sphere of partnership, with the two day state visit of King Mohammed VI of Morocco to Addis Ababa last weekend. The talks between King Mohammed VI and Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn underlined the interest of both countries to move into the realm of practical economic cooperation, making development and mutual interest the core element of bilateral relations. The practical application of the new cooperative partnership between the two countries was exemplified by the signing of a framework agreement between the government of Ethiopia and Morocco's Office Cherifien des Phosphates to partner in a joint venture to build a \$3.7 billion fertilizer plant. The complex, which will be OCP's biggest investment outside Morocco, will be in Dire Dawa. OCP's Chief Executive Officer, Mostafa Terrab, said the aim would be to reduce Ethiopia's dependence upon fertilizer imports. By 2022, Ethiopia would be able to produce 80% of its fertilizer needs through this plant and be self-sufficient by 2025.

The bilateral talks emphasized that both sides were ready to carry forward bilateral ties and deepen existing bonds of friendship. King Mohammed VI and Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn discussed various issues of common interest. They agreed to elevate links to a new high and expedite cooperation in a comprehensive manner. The two sides agreed on the need to break new ground and tap into a new level of cooperation within the framework of the Joint Ministerial Commission. They called upon the respective business communities to exploit the potential of business and investment opportunities.

Prime Minister Hailemariam applauded Morocco's unremitting commitment for Africa's peace, stability and development. He reiterated Ethiopia's devotion to the realization of the values and principles of the African Union. The Prime Minister noted that it was in this regard that Ethiopia commended the recent decision of Morocco to rejoin the African Union as early as the next AU Summit. King Mohammed VI, who expressed appreciation of the role played by Ethiopia in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, (IGAD) described Ethiopia as an advocate and promoter of peace, stability and integration in Africa. He congratulated Prime Minister Hailemariam on Ethiopia's election as a non permanent member of the UN Security Council and hailed Ethiopia's commitment to promote Africa's interests.

The two leaders also exchanged views on issues of peace and security in the region. They agreed on the necessity to remain committed to the fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations as well as to work together against transnational crimes. They also agreed to strengthen international and regional coordination and cooperation in support of peace and stability, prevent armed conflicts, combat terrorism, and promote a culture of tolerance and peaceful coexistence. They also shared a commitment to support efforts to combat the threat of climate change in addition to working together to promote sustainable development.

King Mohammed VI and Prime Minister Hailemariam attended the signing ceremony for cooperation agreements covering a number of areas including a convention for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income; agriculture; air services; and reciprocal promotion and protection of investments. The two countries also signed Memoranda of Understanding committing both sides to work together in economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation; renewable energy development; water management and irrigation, and hotel and tourism training.

On the occasion of the King's visit, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Business Diplomacy Directorate-General hosted an Ethio-Morocco business forum at Hilton Addis on Friday (November 18), to lay a foundation for their joint trade and investment relations. The occasion brought together more than 40 investors and representatives of businesses from both countries. Ethiopia's State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Regassa Keffale in his opening remarks said the Forum provided an important platform where the two countries could strengthen their bilateral ties. With the recent opening of Ethiopian mission to Morocco, he said relations between Ethiopia and Morocco were gathering momentum, adding that Ethiopia was ready to receive Moroccan investors. He said Ethiopia offered significant opportunities to Moroccan investors, not least as a gateway to the markets of Eastern Africa. The head of the Moroccan business delegation, Ms. Miriem Bensalah-Chaqroun, declared that the Forum provided the opening for a new economic relationship, stressing "the need to strengthen our Economic ties". She said the two countries shared common grounds of economic growth, more investment and local jobs. She also noted that non-tariff regimes, and structural and institutional problems related to economic connectivity were areas on which the two sides could work.

Investment Commissioner Fitsum Arega in his presentation on Ethiopia's conducive business environment noted that Ethiopia had a clear vision, strategy and policy, promoting specific sectors. It had a fast growing economy, a huge consumer market, an untapped natural resource, a trainable and cheap labor force, and ample infrastructure to ease connectivity in trade. Moreover, he said, it offered duty-free market access through agreements to the US, Europe and East and Southern Africa. It also provided attractive incentives including tariff-free import and tax holidays. He invited Moroccan investors to build their own industrial park. Mr. Solomon Tadesse from the Ethiopian Tourism Organization also briefed the delegation on Ethiopia's tourist attractions, which he noted included a number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. He called on Moroccan business delegates to demonstrate their rich experience in tourism development in Ethiopia.

The 4th Afro-Arab Summit in Malabo this week

The 4th Afro-Arab Summit took place in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea on Wednesday this week (November 23) this week under the theme: "Together for Sustainable Development and Economic Cooperation". The Summit was preceded by the meeting of the Afro-Arab Joint Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs on Monday, in a joint opening session with Afro-Arab Ministers of Economy, Trade and Finance. The one-day Joint Council Meeting considered the Recommendations of the Afro-Arab Senior Officials

Meeting, held last week, the Progress Report on the Implementation of the Initiatives of the Emir of Kuwait on Investment and Development announced during the 3rd Afro-Arab Summit, the Report of the 3rd Afro-Arab Ministerial Meeting on Agricultural Development and Food Security, Recommendations of the Afro-Arab Economic Forum, held in Malabo last week on 18 November 2016, and the outcome of the Afro-Arab Meeting of Ministers of Economy, Finance and Trade. The Ministers also the draft outcome documents of the 4th Afro-Arab Summit, including the Malabo Declaration, the Declaration on Palestine, and the resolutions and draft Agenda of the 4th Afro-Arab Summit.

Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, spoke to the Joint Council of Ministers of the Fourth Afro-Arab Summit on Monday, thanking the AU Commission Chairperson, Dr. Dlamini Zuma, and the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, for their statements on the progress made in implementation of the decisions of the 3rd Afro-Arab Summit held in Kuwait in November 2013 when Ethiopia served as co-chair of the Summit. He noted that this had meant Ethiopia had been involved in implementation of the various resolutions of the Summit and in the preparation of the 4th Summit. He said the Senior Officials of the Coordination Committee of the Afro-Arab Partnership had done a commendable job, through the series of meetings in Cairo and Malabo, to advance implementation of the Partnership's decisions and prepare for the Fourth Afro-Arab Summit. In addition the ministerial level of the Coordination Committee had also met annually for three consecutive years, in New York on the margins of the UN General Assembly to follow-up implementation of the Summit's decisions.

Dr. Workneh underlined the great potential of the Afro-Arab Partnership to benefit the people of the two regions linked as they are by history, language, culture and geographic proximity. He commended the choice of the theme of the fourth Summit: "Together for Sustainable Development and Economic Cooperation". This was, he said, a highly pertinent theme for both regions. Given the right decisions at the Summit, this would allow both parties to make use of the partnership's immense potential. It also fitted in very well with the outcome of the Kuwait Summit and would enable the partnership to continue to emphasize the important areas of economic and infrastructural development, agricultural cooperation, energy, trade and investment.

Dr. Workneh also welcomed the other meetings taking place during the Summit including the Afro-Arab Economic Forum and the joint Meeting of Ministers of Finance, Economy and Trade. These, he said, were exactly the type of consultations that can help members of the partnership to find ways and means of addressing development challenges. They would also help inform the drawing up of the Joint Action Plan and enhance its implementation, taking into account the massive potential of the partnership. Dr. Workneh stressed that there was no doubt that Africa and the Arab world possessed comparative advantages that could be utilized for advancing the partnership. In recent years, he pointed out, Africa had increasingly become one of the most attractive regions for investment. Its markets were sought after by businesses throughout the world. It had abundant agricultural resources, including significant amounts of arable land that could be utilized to address the food security challenge that both regions faced. Equally, Arab states had substantial resources available for

investment that could be channeled into agriculture, agro-processing, manufacturing, energy and other areas in Africa. This would benefit both sides.

Dr. Workneh underlined the importance of redoubling efforts to achieve peace and security in Africa as well as the Arab world. There was continued prevalence of conflict in parts of both regions. Indeed, as agreed in the Joint Partnership Strategy, it was important to increase efforts in the fight against terrorism, trans-border crime, human and drug trafficking, illegal trade in arms and other threats to regional and international peace and security.

In his address, Dr. Workneh also thanked Sheikh Sabah Al Khalid Al Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kuwait for his briefing on the implementation of the three initiatives of the Emir of Kuwait, in support of the development of African nations. These initiatives, he noted, had started to benefit the people in many African countries and they provided a practical demonstration of the kind of development-oriented cooperation that had a significant impact on poverty reduction and changing the livelihood of people in Africa. He said he would like to encourage the promotion of other similar development-centered initiatives that could play a positive role in improving the lives of people.

Calls for decisive action to address electoral abuse in Somalia.....

Representatives of the international community in Somalia issued a statement at the weekend underlining their concern that the new Somali parliament and incoming federal government should be elected properly, in accordance with the rules established by the National Leadership Forum and implemented by the Federal Indirect Electoral Implementation Team and the State-Level Indirect Electoral Implementation Teams. The statement said the actual and perceived legitimacy of the process were critical to the acceptability and credibility of the parliament. The statement issued by the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union, IGAD, Ethiopia, Italy, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States called on the members of the National Leadership Forum to use their authority and influence to prevent abusive and unfair electoral practices. These, it suggested, included the harassment and intimidation of candidates, the manipulation of delegate and candidate lists, and the use of security forces and other government resources to favor one candidate over another.

The international partners congratulated the Somali authorities and the country's electoral bodies for the progress achieved so far. They highlighted the work of the Indirect Electoral Dispute Resolution Mechanism in reviewing the many complaints it has received. It recognized the positive role that traditional elders in resolving intra-clan disputes, noting it was healthy that malpractices were exposed and rectified. The partners were, however, alarmed by a number of high-profile incidents of disregard for the rules and regulations. These included corruption and vote-buying, and the harassment and intimidation of candidates, Electoral College delegates, traditional elders and others. The statement said they would fully support decisions made by the Federal Implementation Team or the Dispute Resolution Mechanism to suspend voting for a particular seat or disqualify a winning candidate on the basis of

conclusive evidence that verifies complaints of serious irregularities in the electoral process. It underlined the importance of the Electoral Implementation Teams to adhere to their respective mandates in submitting the lists of delegates and candidates, the allocation of seats for exclusively female candidates and the provisional voting results in a timely manner.

The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Somalia, Michael Keating, said the electoral process was going much better than many had predicted three or six months ago. It would, he said, “be highly counterproductive if instances of abuse, rule breaking and misconduct tarnish what otherwise promises to be a remarkable achievement.” He said it was essential that the Indirect Electoral Dispute Resolution Mechanism investigated credible reports of violations of the rules and regulations and appropriate action taken.

Overall, the elections for seats in the House of the People continued this week, with the total of MPS elected reaching 131 by Wednesday. Voting resumed in Jowhar, the administrative capital of Hir-Shabelle state, after a five day suspension on Tuesday. The Hir-Shebelle State-Level Indirect Electoral Implementation Team said “we are moving well and we hope to finish the process on time.” In Galmudug state, three candidates were elected to the House of the People, raising the number of MPs from Galmudug to 21 out of an allocation of 36 seats. On Thursday, South West elected four more women, making the number of women MPs for South West to nine. South West has now elected 49 of its 69 MPs for the Lower House, and SIEIT hopes that the remaining 20 seats will be filled in the next week.

The third phase of the election in Puntland opened in Garowe on Wednesday, after a two week break, with elections for MPs representing the Dulbahante, and the Ba’idian and Muse Saleban sub-clan seats for the Majerteen. Reports said the security of the venues had been tightened, with all the roads leading to the areas of the election blocked. At the beginning of the week, the Chairman of Puntland’s State-Level Indirect Electoral Implementation team cited “financial reasons” for delays in the parliamentary elections in Puntland region. Voting in Jubaland concluded on Thursday (November 24) with the last two MPs elected, bringing the total to 43 MPs elected, ten of them women. Jubaland was the first of the states to conclude the Lower House elections. A total of 2,193 delegates participated in the exercise. The Jubaland SIEIT disqualified one minister accusing him of voter bribery, bribing security guards and instructing them to cause violence during the voting and ordering the guards to chase away delegates from voting centers.

In fact, with less than a week to go before the Presidential election due on November 30, it still seems possible there will have to be another brief postponement. The President is elected by a joint session of the 275 member Lower House of the People and the 54 members of the Senate. Under the last revised schedule, the members of the House of the People should have been sworn in on Thursday this week. As of Thursday, a total of 131 members of the Lower House had been elected and 43 of the Senators. There has been no start to the process for Somaliland’s MPs or Senators, or for the MPs for Benadir.

Another major concern is the failure to achieve the 30% quote for women The Somali Gender Equity Movement wrote to the members of the National Leadership Forum,

the FIEIT and the SIEIT and the traditional elders on Wednesday (November 23) expressing grave concern “about the lack of achieving the 30% quota for women in the Lower House of the Federal Parliament. In total, 137 Members of Parliament (MPs) were elected out of the 275, but as of today only 24 female MPs have been elected out of the expected 82 seats apportioned for women. To date, 17% out of the 30% seats reserved for women are elected. It also expressed “deep concerns about the barriers to women’s political participation in the current indirect electoral processes. It is demoralizing to see this persistent negative attitude, which oftentimes seems to deliberately block Somali women from getting the 30 percent quota.” It added that these barriers were “in clear violation of article 5.2 of the National Leaders Forum’s September 2016 statement, which clearly stipulates, “If a clan has three (3) seats in the House of the People, one of these seats should be contested exclusively by the women of that clan.”

The process has faced other challenges. The Federal Interim Election Implementation Team has suspended two seats, in Jubaland and Hir-Shabelle, both contested by Federal ministers. Following a brief gun battle last week between the security guards of two candidates for the parliamentary seat of the Jidle sub-clan in Jowhar, the capital of Hir-Shabelle, FIEIT suspended voting for five days. AMISOM troops took over responsibility for security. FIEIT said on Tuesday that it had appointed a committee to investigate the incident. It would be led by the Attorney General, Dr. Ahmed Ali Dahir, in collaboration with security agencies and the outcome will be made public. The election for other candidates was, however, resumed on Tuesday. Another issue which FIEIT will have to deal with is the vacancy left by the death of a newly elected MP in Garowe on Sunday, as the procedure for filling the seat was not clear.

Another major issue has been allegations of corruption. In an interview with the Voice of America, the Auditor General, Dr. Nur Farah claimed that a number of seats had gone to the highest bidder, alleging that “Some votes were bought with \$5,000, some with \$10,000, and some with \$20,000 or \$30,000.” He added that his office had recorded two seats costing their respective winners \$1.3 million each, one in Galmudug and the other in Hir-Shabelle. Dr. Farah also told VOA that some delegates and candidates were prevented from entering the election halls while polling was ongoing allowing their opponents to secure a win. Some delegates were threatened, some stayed away because they were afraid, and others weren't allowed into election halls while other people used their names to vote. He said his office recorded six candidates who were elected under these circumstances. He also said he wasn't ruling out the possibility that taxpayer’s money had been used in buying votes.

....and the IMF Mission on Somalia welcomes the commitment to reform

An International Monetary Fund (IMF) team visited Nairobi from November 14–21 to hold discussions on the 2016 Article IV Consultation and carry out the first review of the Staff-Monitored Program. Discussions covered recent economic developments including: near-and medium-term outlook; economic risks; reforms at the Central Bank of Somalia; and policies to sustain growth and revive the financial sector. A statement issued at the end of the Mission said: “The IMF Executive Board concluded the first Article IV Consultation with Somalia since 1989 in July 2015. At the request of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), the IMF’s Managing Director approved

a 12-month SMP on May 27, 2016, marking another milestone in normalizing relations with international financial institutions. We are encouraged by the pace of reforms to restore key economic and financial institutions since the approval of the SMP. We also welcome the authorities' commitment to keep the program on track." The report is expected to be discussed by the IMF's Executive Board in January 2017.

The statement said that for 2016, real GDP growth was projected at 3.7%, driven by the telecommunication, construction and service sectors. Consumer price inflation was projected to remain low at about 1.0-1.5%. This reflected weak commodity prices. It said that for 2017 growth was projected to decelerate to about 2.5% while inflation was expected to remain low at 1-2%. However the IMF expected growth to recover to about 3.5–4.5% in 2018–19. The figures for 2017 largely reflected the impact of the weak rainy season on the agriculture sector. Construction, telecommunications, and service sectors, however, should continue to register strong growth. The external current account deficit was projected to remain large but the IMF expected remittances and grants to cover the deficit. It noted that the Somali Shilling/U.S.dollar exchange rate had remained stable within the range of about 22,200 and 23,000 since February 2015.

It went on: "The authorities have met all the structural benchmarks and six out of seven quantitative performance targets for the first review of the SMP." While domestic government arrears had accumulated due to a shortfall in revenue and delays in the disbursement of donors' grants through the end of September, the Government had been able to settle these arrears following recent disbursement of donors' grants. They had also taken corrective measures to avoid occurrence of future arrears, updating their memorandum of economic and financial policies, and establishing a comprehensive roadmap for currency reform. They were also preparing a national development plan to underpin development strategy with a roadmap for institution building and plans to initiate a social safety net program. These measures, the IMF said, would help put the economy on a sustainable path and promote inclusive growth.

The IMF said that to achieve the Federal Government's economic and financial policy objectives, it was essential to focus on a number of issues. The first of these was the preparation of a coherent a national development plan with a roadmap for institution building and strong program for social safety nets, as well as improving the business environment to encourage private sector activity. Secondly, it was critical to develop domestic capacity and continue to rebuild economic and financial data. The IMF said it would continue to intensify its capacity development activities in Somalia using the multi-donor trust fund to help rebuild Somalia's institutions and economic and financial infrastructure. Thirdly, the IMF emphasized the necessity to strengthen fiscal discipline while ensuring that the fiscal framework underscores the need for a realistic tax revenue projection and confirm external grants in order to avoid new arrears. It noted the Federal authorities were committed to placing high priority on enhancing budget operation while also adhering to new arrears management and broadening the revenue base. The importance of currency reform and governance was another issue. This required fully implementing the agenda for currency reform, reinforcing the central bank governance structure, and improving its safeguards. Finally, the IMF wanted to see effective implementation of the anti-money laundering law and the guidelines needed to sustain the inflows of remittances to Somalia. These, of course, are vital for supporting economic growth.

During the visit, the IMF team met with Finance Minister, Mohamed Adan Ibrahim; Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Abdirahman Yusuf Hussein Aynte; the Governor of the Central Bank, Bashir Issa Ali; the Director General in the Office of the President, Ali Omar, and other officials. It also met with representatives from development partners.

UN Security Council expresses “Deep alarm and concern” over South Sudan

The United Nations Security Council at the end of last week "expressed deep alarm over the escalation of ethnic violence in South Sudan, reportedly carried out by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), the SPLA in Opposition, as well as militias, and unidentified armed groups." It "strongly condemned all instances of attacks against civilians, ethnically targeted killings, hate speech, and incitements to violence." Indeed it underlined that "urgent steps to address the increasing hate speech and ethnic violence in South Sudan need to take place along with an advocacy for promotion of reconciliation among the people, mainly through justice and accountability process".

In a statement issued on Friday (November 18), the Security Council underscored that the only way forward in South Sudan was through a genuine and inclusive political process, based on the framework provided by the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan which allowed for all voices to participate in shaping the future of the country. The Security Council stressed that all parties must commit themselves to peace and take meaningful steps to end violence and ceasefire violations, Council members called on the parties to agree immediately on implementation of an effective cessation of hostilities in order to avoid escalation of the conflict in the upcoming dry season and reiterated that there is no military solution to the conflict. The Security Council agreed with the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, who briefed the Council earlier that what began as a political conflict had been transformed into what could become an outright ethnic war. The Security Council indicated its readiness to consider taking additional measures in order to prevent a further escalation of violence and conflict, including potential sanctions as appropriate. It also said it was committed to work with the African Union High Representative for South Sudan, former President Alpha Oumar Konaré, the Chairperson of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, Dr. Festus Mogae, as well as other stakeholders, in the reinvigoration of the political process and the design of a clear political strategy for the peaceful resolution of the conflict in the country.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon warned of the "risk of mass atrocities" in South Sudan. Indeed in a report released last week, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon said the UN peacekeepers must be prepared to protect innocent civilians. "There is a very real risk of mass atrocities being committed in South Sudan, particularly following the sharp rise in hate speech and ethnic incitement in recent weeks," he said, adding, "It must be clearly understood that United Nations peacekeeping operations do not have the appropriate manpower or capabilities to stop mass atrocities."

The Security Council statement came shortly after a US proposal to impose an arms embargo on South Sudan, and sanction SPLM-IO leader, Riek Machar, the government army commander General Paul Malong and Information Minister, Michael Makuei, failed to get agreement. The United State Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Samantha Power, called for an arm embargo, pointing that all the components for genocide exist in South Sudan. She admitted that no embargo could completely stop weapons getting into the country, but said that nevertheless "an arms embargo could have a significant impact on the ground. This proposal was supported by the UK and France but Russia objected, pointing out the proposed sanctions would complicate relations between the host country, the peacekeeping mission and the international community. Russia said "Introducing targeted sanctions against South Sudanese leaders would be the height of irresponsibility now." China also expressed reservations.

On Monday, this week, President Salva Kiir appealed to the international community to support his government in implementing the Peace Agreement. He described any imposition of targeted sanctions or an arms embargo as "undesirable". He said: "They were saying they cannot provide any assistance because the Transitional Government of National Unity was not formed. But when we formed it after signing the peace, which they themselves designed and we accepted despite our reservations because we want to stop this senseless war and to end the sufferings of our people, they came up again with other conditions." The President went on: "They are now talking of an arms embargo and targeted sanctions. So you really don't understand what they want." He said the only way to end the conflict and the suffering of the people was to help him and his appointed First Vice President, Taban Deng Gai, to implement the Peace Agreement. He said there were people saying the peace had collapsed. How was this, he asked? He said: "There is a First Vice President as in the agreement. There is a cabinet in which all the parties are represented according to the agreement. There is a transitional national legislative assembly. We have approved the establishment of cantonment sites and I have directed the Chief of General staff and his team to work together with the First Vice President and his team to ensure that his forces go to these sites. We have done all these because peace is what our people want and we stand with them." President Kiir concluded: "To implement this peace, the international community should provide support. This is what is needed now, not sanctions."

Ethiopia-Kenya Joint Border Meeting in Mombasa

The 31st Ethiopia-Kenya Joint Border Administrators and Commissioners' Meeting took place in Mombasa on Wednesday (November 23) with more than 60 Ethiopian and Kenyan officials participating. Kenya's Interior Cabinet Secretary Joseph Nkaissery led the Kenyan delegation and Ambassador Girma Temesgen, Director General for Neighboring Countries and IGAD Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, headed the Ethiopian delegation. Ethiopia's Ambassador to Kenya, Ambassador Dina Mufti was also present. The meeting reviewed the decisions of the 30th Joint Border Administrators and Commissioners' meeting held in Hawassa in Ethiopia last year. It discussed implementation mechanisms and developed action plans to deal with specific issues.

Mr. Nkaissery told journalists that Kenya and Ethiopia faced problems to do with Al-Shabaab attacks, illegal immigration and water conflict at the border. It was important to discuss and see what could be best done to ensure maintenance of security. He said implementation of some of agreements signed between the two countries on security matters had been challenging. Mr. Nkaissery noted that “in order to serve the best interests of the two countries, we must constantly review the implementation of our agreements and make available resources to make them fully operational.” There were always changes taking place in the dynamics both in security and economics, so “we are looking in totality the whole agreement to see how it will suit the interest of the two countries.”

During the meeting, Mr. Nkaissery challenged delegates to come up with suitable ideas that would hasten the inspection of the boundary pillars. He noted that over the last two years, the two sides had successfully conducted a joint exercise which had yielded positive results. 43 kms of the approximately 861 kms of the boundary had been inspected and completed. However, this meant, he said, that it would take more than 40 years to complete maintenance of the boundary. Ambassador Girma Temesgen agreed it was important to produce more pro-active mechanisms to monitor implementation of decisions. He said “I am glad that the meeting has provided us an opportunity to deliberate on implementation challenges.” It was his belief they could build bridges to bring the two countries even closer together and allow them to deal with the challenges they faced in common. Ambassador Dina also emphasized that the two countries would continue working together in tackling issues affecting them at the border and ensure they could meet their economic commitments.

Ambassador Girma underlined Ethiopia’s “longstanding and exemplary relations” with the people and Government of Kenya and stressed that they had worked together in all bilateral and multilateral fora. He also stressed the unique element in the relationship with the communities living alongside the common border, interacting on a daily basis, trading with each other, sharing grazing and even common basic facilities such as schools and health centers. He stressed that the Administrators and Commissioners’ meetings provided an important platform for the communities on each side of the border to exchange ideas on and tackle common challenges. There were, he said, a considerable number of success stories: the significant reduction in ethnic clashes and cattle rustling, as well as smooth border trade. The different committees and institutions met regularly and worked together to address issues of common interest. One example was the Joint Border Technical Committee, which was involved in inspecting the common border and maintaining the boundary pillars on a regular basis. Following the decision of the previous Joint Border Administrators and Commissioners’, the committee had successfully maintained the boundary pillars in sectors 2 and 3 in April and May this year.

Ambassador Girma said he hoped the road connecting Addis Ababa to Nairobi and other planned infrastructure such as the proposed Standard Gauge Railway project would further bring communities together. These projects are the precursor of peace and development along the border and a bench mark for cooperation among countries in the region. Equally, he said, the Integrated Cross-border Program, launched at Moyale by President Kenyatta and Prime Minister Hailemariam, is expected to bring about a socio-economic transformation of the border region, as well as remove the

fundamental causes of conflict, integrating the communities through common development schemes. These projects can be expected, on completion, to make the border region a vibrant regional development corridor.

At the same time, Ambassador Girma also acknowledged the significant challenges facing the border communities. These included illegal migration and human trafficking and contraband trade, as well as the smuggling of small arms and light weapons which had a broader regional impact. Criminals and terrorist groups still operated, affecting the relationship between the border communities by fueling ethnic clashes. The relationship between the different institutions and committees along the border needed to be further strengthened, he said. In this context, he noted that during the last meeting it had been suggested that community elders should play decisive role in leading their communities, in settling disputes, or coming up with ideas that would further cement existing relations. They could, he underlined, be used as “socio-economic change agents’ for all the border communities.

Implications of the decision to hear Eritrean ‘slavery’ case in Canada

At the beginning of last month, on October 6, the Supreme Court of British Columbia in Canada decided that three Eritrean men could proceed with their lawsuit over modern-day slavery against the Vancouver-based Nevsun Resources Ltd. in Canada rather than in Eritrea. In a ruling handed down on October 6, Justice Abrioux wrote, “there is sufficient cogent evidence from which I can conclude that there is a real risk that the plaintiffs could not be provided with justice in Eritrea.” This decision was only on the issue of jurisdiction and does not, of course, address the merit or otherwise of the plaintiffs’ claims, but lawyers believe it has considerable implications for Canadian companies that do business or have suppliers based in countries with questionable human-rights records.

There are two main reasons for this. One relates to the question of how far holding companies can insulate the parent company from direct liability for actions elsewhere. Nevsun had subsidiary companies incorporated in Barbados that operated between it and its Bisha mine in Eritrea. Normally, each company is treated as a separate individual entity not regarded as legally responsible for the actions of another company. However, in this case, the lawyers for the plaintiffs successfully argued Nevsun’s involvement in the policy and affairs of the mine’s operating subsidiary was in excess of the “normal role of association” between a holding company and a subsidiary. In other words, the court accepted that Nevsun’s Canadian head office had a specific relationship with the plaintiffs. The court’s decision to allow the case against the parent company to go forward suggests that in future anyone who sits on the board of directors or management team of a Canadian public company that uses offshore holding companies in its corporate structure will need to consider carefully their involvement in the policy and affairs of their operating subsidiaries, and make sure this is not in excess of the normal role between a holding company and an operating subsidiary. Courts in the UK and Australia have made similar findings in parallel cases. This, one of the lawyers for the plaintiffs in the Nevsun case, said, “seems to be the way the law is going.”

The other ground-breaking element of the decision was to allow the claims that Nevsun was an accomplice to crimes against humanity, slavery, forced labor and torture to go forward through the so-called “doctrine of adoption.” This is an emerging area of international law suggesting that corporations may also have civil liability if they have aided and abetted such crimes or violations of human rights in any way. Lawyers point out that unless this decision is overturned on appeal, the same argument may be used against all kinds of public companies whose supply chains extend into countries with doubtful human-rights records. This suggests the Nevsun case may have special importance for extractive companies, which can’t just move their mineral deposits to more socially enlightened countries. One lawyer said all such companies should “be very nervous about proceeding with an acquisition right now, before there is some clarity on the outcome of this challenge without having a really good, strong sense of the operations, protections and steps being taken by the operating company and the parent company around the local operations.”

One company that might want to think carefully about its future in this context is the Australian company, Danakali Ltd, working to exploit the Colluli potash project in Eritrea. Danakali, formerly South Boulder Mines, has as its 50% joint venture partner the state-owned Eritrean National Mining Corporation (ENAMCO). ENAMCO has been developing the Bisha copper-zinc mine in central Eritrea in partnership with Nevsun Resources in. Earlier this month, Danakali managing director and CEO Paul Donaldson, returned from a site visit with potential engineering and construction contractors. He told the Mining Journal: “It’s a tier 1 project for all of the right reasons, it has access to global markets, access to coast, low operating costs, low capital intensity, expandability, low incremental growth capital, diversification and growth potential – and the fundamentals for potash are both robust and predictable, it’s a sound population growth story.”

In its last annual report in June this year, Danakali noted it had a good working relationship with the relevant government departments, the Ministry of Energy and Mines, and the Ministry of Land, Water and the Environment. It described the Eritrean government as stable, offering a high degree of focus on health and education with development emphasizing the agricultural, industrial and mining sectors, and building up a track record of success in a maturing mining industry, with no evidence of corruption and gender equality. It claimed that the Colluli Mining Share Company, 100% owned by ENAMCO and Danakali, is “progressing a sustainable development framework that addresses the policy, management plans and compliance monitoring in key areas including human rights, anti-corruption, local communities and health and safety.”

The Colluli deposit is located in the Danakil desert region of Eritrea often identified as the hottest place on earth. It lies approximately 350 kms south of the capital, Asmara, and 180 kms from the port of Massawa through which the potash would be exported, though the mine is only some 75 kms from the Red Sea. It will, however, need a road link to the existing all-weather Massawa to Assab road which runs along the coast and which was built by national service conscript labor. Any transport links must involve Eritrean construction companies like Segen, a military company, one of those mentioned repeatedly in forced labor claims in reports on human rights in Eritrea. Segen also figured largely in the claims made by the plaintiffs in the Nevsun case in Canada as a major employer of national service conscript labor. It is

the company which the government insisted that Nevsun must employ for construction work at Bisha and which was also used on the road improvements between Bisha and Massawa

Indeed, judging by the latest report in June this year of the UN Commission of Inquiry into human rights violations in Eritrea, as well as numerous earlier investigations into human rights abuses in Eritrea, any mine construction and related transport links will be built by Eritrean national service conscripts, who provide the labor for all construction companies which are either owned by the ruling party or the military. The Commission of Inquiry provided detailed and extensive evidence of the use of widespread forced labor in the context of the development and exploitation of Nevsun's Bisha mine. Work at the Bisha mine site started in September 2008. Segen was the main Eritrean company involved in the site work. The report says "the majority of Segen's "workers" were in fact conscripts performing their national service.... conscripts whose military units were put at the disposal of Segen by the army." Their work included building the transport infrastructure to access the site, the housing compounds and the mine infrastructure. It quotes one former conscript who said "We were under the control of our direct commanding officers...before we went to Bisha, they briefed us that we were not to reveal our identity as soldiers. We wore civilian clothes and working uniforms." Another former worker said, "The Segen people were doing the harder work and all the heavy duty, including driving big construction trucks...they transported the heavy material, constructed roads, etc... they had only lentils to eat, no proper clothes, no security equipment. The Segen workers are all soldiers doing their national service." Other former Segen workers provided full details of their poor working conditions, poor food, lack of proper housing and health care, and minimal wages – as conscripts they received 450 Nakfa a month, equivalent to 10 dollars.

The three plaintiffs in the Nevsun case in British Columbia provided similar details in their affidavits, arguing since they were pressed into working at the Bisha Mine against their will, this constituted modern slavery and Nevsun knew, or should have known, that its labor force was made up of slave laborers. In 2012, Nevsun's CEO, Cliff Davis told a subcommittee of the Canadian Parliament's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development that by the time construction commenced at Bisha in late 2008, forced labor was an inseparable feature of Eritrea's economy. "We recognized that there was a potential National Service issue with respect to the subcontractor," he said. Nevsun required any Eritrean applying to work at Bisha to provide documents proving they'd been discharged from National Service. However, this policy was not, initially, extended to Nevsun's sub-contractors. In 2009 Nevsun was told Segen might be using conscripts, so said Mr. Davis, it responded by altering its contracts with Segen to include an explicit guarantee that Segen would not use conscripts and requiring Segen employees to provide discharge papers. However, many former workers have testified that this did not prevent Segen continuing to use conscripts on a large scale.

In 2011, the London-based Human Rights Concern-Eritrea gave details of the treatment of Segen workers at Bisha. One former worker said that 850 of the 1,000 Segen workers at the site, all but 150 were conscripts: "Generally, you would call it slavery and/or servitude," he said. "Segen Construction means a company which exploits its workers and uses slave labor." Human Rights Watch also published a

report, reaching similar conclusions that Segen conscript workers suffered from inadequate food and shelter at Bisha. It accused Nevsun of complicity and said that Nevsun appeared “to feel that it has no power to confront its own politically connected contractor about allegations of abuse at its own mine site.” Nevsun issued a statement saying it had been compelled to hire Segen. Indeed, it said, it had attempted to do further work on the site without Segen in late 2011, only to be ordered by the government to rehire the subcontractor.

Given all the evidence for the use of forced conscript labor at the Bisha mine and elsewhere by Eritrea’s military construction companies, and the government’s insistence that mining operations use these companies, it is hardly surprising there had been serious concern that national service conscripts may also be used for the Colluli project. Indeed, Human Rights Watch Eritrea issued a warning two years ago over the use of conscript labor to link the Colluli Potash project in the Danakil area with the coast at Marena and on to Massawa. It said Mereb Construction, another military construction company set up by the Ministry of Defense, and operating under Segen Construction was carrying out the road construction. Human Rights Watch Eritrea said the workers for Mereb Construction were all conscripts who were forced to work for six days per week and up to 12 hours per day, and paid 500 Nakfa (then equivalent to \$10 US dollars) per month. At the time the Colluli Mining Share Company, now Danakali Ltd, was a joint venture between Australia’s South Boulder Mines Ltd and the Eritrean National Mining Company (ENAMCO). ENAMCO is headed by Hagos Kisha, the Head of Economic Affairs of the People’s Front for Democracy and Justice, Eritrea’s sole and ruling party, Yemane Gebremeskel, Director of the President’s Office and presidential spokesman, and Berhane Habtemariam, the current Minister of Finance and former Auditor-General. The former Minister of Defense, General Sebhat Ephrem, is now the Minister of Mines and Energy.

UN Security Council welcomes stronger co-operation with AU

The United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2320 (2016) on Friday last week (November 18), welcoming cost-sharing proposals and stronger cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union. Following a debate on the modalities of cooperation on peace and security between the United Nations and the African Union, the Security Council welcomed the AU’s efforts to create a predictable cost-sharing structure for the funding of peace-support operations authorized by the Council. The Security Council expressed its readiness to consider options in response to the African Union’s proposal to finance 25 per cent of the cost of such operations by 2020. It also emphasized that consultative analysis and joint planning with the United Nations was critical to developing common joint recommendations on the scope and resource implications of any missions. It expressed its support for the principles of cooperation set out by the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations for strategic partnership with the African Union. It encouraged the African Union to finalize its disciplinary and conduct-compliance frameworks and to achieve greater accountability, transparency and compliance with international human rights and humanitarian law.

Before it adopted the resolution, the Security Council heard briefings from El-Ghassim Wane, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; Ambassador Smaïl Chergui, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security; Haile Menkerios, the Secretary-General's Special Representative to the African Union; and Donald Kaberuka, High Representative of the African Union Peace Fund. Mr. Wane stressed the need to be "pragmatic and result-oriented, driven by the imperative to respond to the needs on the ground, to assist countries and shattered communities to turn the page from violence and conflict and consolidate peace where it is achieved." It was, therefore, necessary to ensure predictable, flexible and sustainable financing for African operations authorized by the Security Council. He pointed out that the Secretary-General had commended the African Union's commitment to self-reliance and that he had also urged Member States to give urgent consideration to how the United Nations could respond to that initiative. The debate was, he said, an opportunity to initiate a response.

Tete Antonio, Permanent Observer for the African Union spoke on behalf of the African Union Commission. He said the African Union's proven ability to act as first responder was a critical element of the evolving international peace and security architecture. The AU and its sub-regional organizations had a clear comparative advantage where operations were needed and the United Nations was unable to deploy in a timely manner or unable to mobilize a political consensus. In this respect, the African Union had deployed missions to Burundi, Darfur, Somalia, Mali and the Central African Republic. However, he pointed out, African missions were not sustainable over the medium to long term because of the lack of sufficient support. This was why the AU had argued consistently for predictable and sustainable financing through assessed contributions to the United Nations. He pointed out that the Joint African Union-United Nations Reviews of the mechanisms available to finance and support African Union peace support operations authorized by the Council had concluded that access to assessed contributions provided a reliable, predictable and sustainable means of financing such operations. The AU was confident that the two organizations could quickly establish a joint process for developing more detailed implementation modalities so as to move towards a substantive framework resolution on predictable financing. Greater predictability would allow the African Union to properly stabilize a given situation before handing over to a United Nations mission, which would be in the best interest of the African Union, the United Nations as well as peace and security in general.

Haile Menkerios, Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union, said conflicts in Africa today had grown in scale and complexity, posing a greater threat to international peace and security. Terrorism, transnational crime, threats to maritime security, weak governance institutions and electoral disputes were just some of the challenges that the continent faced, he said, noting that poverty, unemployment, demographic pressures and climate change were increasingly having an impact on peace and security. While the Security Council had the ultimate responsibility for international peace and security, it was clear that the United Nations, the African Union or regional economic communities could not address such threats on their own, he said, emphasizing that collaboration was an absolute necessity. The Secretariat and the African Union Commission were making good progress in strengthening cooperation and collaboration and coordinated interventions had improved in such places as Sudan and South Sudan and in Burundi. The Joint

Task Force, of senior leaders from the United Nations Secretariat and the African Union Commission, met twice a year. He pointed out that a review of the United Nations-African Union partnership revealed that it was time for the two organizations to move towards a more structured partnership. “The wheel should not have to be reinvented every time a new conflict emerged on the continent.” A strategic partnership, he said, would put mechanisms in place and ensure early and continuous engagement. He emphasized the value of the Secretariat and the African Union Commission undertaking joint analysis of conflicts, developing coherent conflict-prevention strategies, and providing proposals to their two respective parent organizations. Sustainable funding remained a major challenge, particularly in the three focus areas of the Peace Fund – preventing conflict, building capacity, and peace operations. Establishing a strategic partnership and implementing the African Union’s proposals, he said, would enable both organizations to address conflicts more effectively, while helping Africa to achieve long-term peace.

Mr. Kaberuka, High Representative of the African Union Peace Fund noted that the crises facing the global community were so complex that no single organization could respond on its own; regional organizations enjoyed a comparative advantage in that regard; and financing mechanisms for special funds should be predictable and sustainable, rather than voluntary and ad hoc. He said “a well-funded African peace and security architecture is not simply an African priority, it is a global strategic imperative.” His intention was to present ideas on how the Peace Fund could be structured, funded and governed in order to respond to current challenges, while steering away from over-reliance on multiple unpredictable funding channels. Strengthening the Peace Fund would provide a more effective partnership tool. He also underlined that both the African Union and the United Nations needed more work to define what a 25% contribution would imply and the conditions under which the 75% United Nations contribution would be requested. He said the African Peace Fund provided a robust mechanism, unified governance and reporting lines, away from the numerous channels and accountability frameworks that raise transaction costs and reduced effectiveness for all. He hoped that the international community would agree that a revitalized Peace Fund would provide a more coherent partnership framework.

In the debate, Council members welcomed efforts to strengthen strategic cooperation with the African Union in peace and security under the Charter’s Chapter VIII, and commended the African Union for shouldering increased responsibilities for the continent’s peace and security. Most speakers fully supported adoption of the resolution and called for intensified consideration of the financing structure in order to ensure that authorized African operations were sustainable.

In addition to sustainable financing, speakers also called for the development of common analysis of activities to be conducted by the two organizations, increased engagement between officials at all levels, up-front mission planning, joint visiting missions and mutual standards in their codes of conduct, environmental issues and other areas. The representative of Venezuela noted that African input into decisions regarding the continent were frequently ignored and called for meaningful consultation at every stage of formulating responses to conflict.

The UN Security Council's first debate on Water, Peace and Security

The United Nations Security Council held an open debate on Water, Peace and Security on Tuesday this week (November 22). The debate, open to non-members of the Security Council was called by Senegal, this month's Council President. It was the first such debate the Security Council has held on this topic, and according to the concept note given by Senegal disputes over water could lead to confrontations in future in the same way that disputes over oil and land have led to conflicts in the past. The debate was intended to provide an opportunity to showcase successful experiences and mechanisms for cooperation and mediation with a view to strengthening one of the UN's admitted weaknesses, conflict prevention.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, Danilo Turk, Chair of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace, Ms. Christine Beerli, Vice-President of the ICRC and Sundeep Waslekar, President of the Strategic Foresight Group provided briefings on the subject. The UN Secretary-General underlined the value of water resources as a reason for cooperation, not conflict. He pointed out that the need for coordination in water management was compelling. There were more than 260 international rivers and at least that many trans-boundary aquifers, he said, adding that access to water could exacerbate communal tensions. Equally, shared water resources could also bring adversaries together and offer crucial confidence-building measures in both inter-state and intra-state conflicts. He pointed out that in the second half of the 20th century, more than 200 water treaties had been successfully negotiated. International river agreements could provide enhanced security and stability in river basins. As examples, he quoted the 1960 Indus Waters Agreement between India and Pakistan, and the long history of benefit-sharing between Mali, Mauritania and Senegal, the Senegal River Basin riparian states. He also mentioned last year's signing of a Declaration of Principles by the Governments of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan.

The Secretary-General said that with at least one in four people likely to live in a country affected by shortages of fresh water by 2050, the UN was actively promoting the potential for cooperation. He noted the work of the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia on "hydro-diplomacy"; and the UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Water Convention. These, he said, offered the opportunity to create a global framework for dealing with trans-boundary water issues. The Department of Political Affairs and the UN Environment Program, he said, had published a useful guide containing examples of best practices. He concluded by noting that although there might be serious challenges, there was also the potential for cooperation around shared water resources, adding, "let us commit to invest in water security as a means to ensure long-term international peace and security."

Ethiopia's Minister Counselor at the UN Mission in New York, Lulseged Tadesse, told the debate that although the discussion had been in terms of the threats posed by water scarcity, and the premise that "water has always been considered as a driver of conflict" this was certainly not inevitable. History underlined that water could indeed be a source of cooperation rather than of conflict. Trans-boundary water resources, he said, provide an opportunity for cooperation in ensuring effective water management at national and regional levels. He said it was a matter of record that "no states have gone to war specifically over water resources". Ethiopia, he said, strongly believed

that cooperation on water was indeed possible and was the only rational way forward for ensuring sustained development benefits for all states based on the principle of equitable and reasonable utilization of trans-boundary water resources.

It is in this context, he pointed out, that Ethiopia had been participating in the Nile River Basin Initiative and the Cooperative Framework Agreement negotiated over a decade. This had now been signed by six riparian States and ratified by three. Once the remaining three riparian states ratified it, he said, a permanent River Basin Commission would be established. This was exactly the kind of regional mechanism that was critical to reduce the risk for potential conflict but would also ensure that trans-boundary water resources were equitably shared among the riparian States on the basis of win-win cooperation.

Mr. Lulseged noted that the 2030 Agenda recognized the critical role of water for inclusive and sustainable development as laid out in the Sustainable Development Goal 6. The Agenda emphasized the importance of water resource management at all levels, including trans-boundary cooperation. The 2016 World Water Development Report demonstrated that sustainable water management, water infrastructure and access to a safe, reliable and affordable supply of water were among the fundamentals to eradicate poverty and ensure sustainable peace and development for all countries.

Adopting universal goals was a step in the right direction, he said, but their implementation required sustained political commitment, determination, long-term vision and efforts from all governments and stakeholders. He added that the promotion of cooperation demanded frank and constructive discussions among states and effective regional cooperation frameworks. He noted that discourse on water security was often dominated by inflammatory rhetoric, tending to politicize issues unnecessarily: more important was to foster constructive dialogue and cooperation in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation.

U.S. Representative to the UN for UN Management and Reform, Ambassador Isobel Coleman, welcomed the focus on the important linkages between water, international peace, and security. She emphasized two points: the example of the Lake Chad Basin as an area struggling with water insecurity; and second, the role that the international community can play in helping prevent water disputes from becoming armed conflicts. She described the Lake Chad Basin, bordering Chad, Niger, Nigeria, and Cameroon, as an example of what happens when water scarcities contribute to conflict. Poor management practices and expanding desertification had meant Lake Chad had lost nearly approximately 90% of its water. This, the basis of survival for millions of people, had led to territorial disputes and helped encourage the rise of Boko Haram. There was, however, a glimmer of hope in the Lake Chad Basin Commission established by regional governments and civil society to try to peacefully resolve disputes. The commission had also formed a Multinational Joint Task Force to fight Boko Haram. Equally, the international community should urgently bolster its support to the Task Force. Support to local governments to help build capacity for rehabilitation and reconstruction, she said, would go a long way in helping to ensure lasting peace and stability. Ambassador Coleman also mentioned the way ISIL in Iraq had manipulated strategic dams on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers as part of its strategy.

Ambassador Coleman said the United States, with 50 states sharing 21 large rivers and more than 20,000 watersheds, had learnt to cooperate. It had a close relationship with Mexico allowing Mexico to store water in the United States for drought protection and U.S. entities to invest in water conservation projects in Mexico and then share in the water saved. She suggested some best practices including international community support for regional resolution of water disputes by building the capacity of states and stakeholders. This should include technical skills as well as the means to address challenges and opportunities. In addition, the establishment of regional organizations, bilateral agreements, and information-sharing platforms can all play a role in institutionalizing and maintaining cooperation, “locking-in” progress. The United States, she said, has been working with several other donors to develop the Shared Waters Partnership that supports cooperative efforts on trans-boundary waters in regions where water is, or may become, a source of conflict. She also underlined the importance of sound data and impartial analysis to develop a common view of the challenges and opportunities, quoting the example of a project in the Okavango River Basin, involving Angola, Namibia, and Botswana, which provided early warning of resource conflict, allowing the parties to proactively resolve issues before they could become serious.