

**REPORT**

**BY**

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**PRIME MINISTER OF THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF**

**ETHIOPIA**

**AT**

**THE SIXTH SUMMIT OF THE SANA'A FORUM FOR COOPERATION**

**30 DECEMBER 2008**

**KHARTOUM**

**Excellency Omar Hassan Ahmed al Bashir,  
President of the Republic of Sudan and  
Chairman of the Sixth Summit of Sana'a  
Forum for Cooperation,**

**Excellency Mr. Ali Abdullah Saleh, President of the Republic of Yemen,**

**Excellency Ismail Omar Guelleh, President  
of the Republic of Djibouti,**

**Excellency Hassan Hussien 'Nur Adde',  
Prime Minister of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia,**

**Distinguished Heads of Delegation,**

**Distinguished Ministers,**

**Excellencies Invited Guests,**

**Dear Delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like, first of all, to express, on behalf of my colleagues and on my own behalf, deep gratitude to President al Bashir and to his Government for the very warm reception that has been accorded to all of us upon our arrival in Khartoum and for the generous Sudanese hospitality we have enjoyed since.

We are pleased to have President Ismail Omar Guelleh amongst us at this Sixth Summit of the Sana'a Forum for co-operation. The presence of Djibouti as an observer at this Forum at the highest level is indeed a source of satisfaction for us all and I have no doubt it will enrich our deliberation and will help make the Forum an even more effective instrument for regional peace and security and for a far more strengthened economic co-operation among member countries.

**Dear Colleagues,  
Distinguished Heads of Delegation,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

The Sana'a Forum for Co-operation is not an old institution. It is very young indeed. When the Forum came into being in October 2002, perhaps not too many expected that it would last as long as it has. Many might have felt that the Sana'a Forum had only very short-term objectives. That, that is not the case, must have been clearer to skeptics now than had been the case six years ago.

But yet still, the Forum has the pressing need to do more to ensure its viability and its sustainability over the long term. The setting up of the Secretariat of the Forum is one such task that we have the obligation to carry out as per the decision that we have already taken. The Forum has existed as long as it has, not without reason. The reason must be plain. It is needed. It responds to real and manifest common interests that the countries of the Forum have with respect to issues of Security as well as a host of challenges in the economic, trade and related areas and in the social sector.

It is my conviction that the fact that we have now been joined by Djibouti, albeit as an observer, is a welcome development which is bound to revitalize this invaluable process of co-operation among our countries.

I suppose it is critical that we reiterate, once again, that the Sana'a Forum for co-operation is far from being sectarian, nor is it designed to exclude some; and embrace others selectively. The Forum has no parochial objectives. It is open to all; to all those who share those propositions which have brought

members of the Forum together --- a secure and stable Horn of Africa-Southern Red Sea Region; conviction that the countries of the region have a common destiny which makes it imperative that they strengthen their co-operation in all areas of economic activities for whose achievement the fostering of mutual trust and confidence is indispensable; and devotion to principles of international law governing inter-state relations and to treating each other with decency and constructive attitude.

I am pleased to report, in this regard, that since our last Summit in February 2007 in Addis Ababa, we have continued to coordinate our positions on vital security and political matters in our region. On Somalia, we have managed to send the same message to the various Somali parties with the view to helping them move forward in the peace process under difficult circumstances.

The fact that Djibouti, Sudan and Ethiopia are members of IGAD has afforded us the opportunity to synchronize our positions as was amply demonstrated at the last IGAD Summit as well as at the Extra-Ordinary Session of IGAD Council of Ministers on 21 December in Addis Ababa.

With Yemen, we all have had the opportunity to work closely on Somalia, and its contribution towards creating the right conditions for negotiation and exchange of view among Somalis, and others working for peace in Somalia, has always been admirable. In the case of Djibouti, it is only fair on our part to express our appreciation for the opportunity it has afforded the TFG and the ARS to embark on the Djibouti peace process in an environment free of too much distraction, and with vital support from Djibouti.

But, of course, Somalia continues to be a challenge for our region. We have the obligation to be more, not less politically engaged, to help the Somalis achieve peace and national reconciliation that has eluded them for too long. We on our part have decided to withdraw our troops from Somalia because we came to the conclusion that no good would be served by the continuing presence of our troops in Somalia. But this should in no way be interpreted as meaning that we have decided to wash our hands of Somalia. That neither Ethiopia, nor other members of the Forum, nor the Forum in general, can afford to do that, should be obvious. But whatever we do has to be based on an approach that would encourage the Somalis to take the lead and to own the process of national reconciliation in their country. This is a matter that cannot be emphasized too strongly.

Though, at the end of the day, it is only Somalis themselves that can bring peace to their country, there is little doubt that Somalia has not been treated by the international community fairly. It is still not too late for this to change. This Summit would need to renew its call on the international community, particularly, the Security Council, to do what it must in order to help the Somalis make progress towards achieving sustainable peace. No more reminder is needed than the challenge of piracy off the coast of Somalia, that a stable Somalia is also in the interest of those outside the region.

**Dear Colleagues,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On the problem between Ethiopia and Eritrea there is little new to report. Eritrea has continued to be more, not less, bellicose. Its proclivity for being a menace to peace in our region including in Ethiopia, has not been matched by

its capacity to act on its belligerent desire. But still the damage being wrought by Eritrea cannot be underestimated. This is true whether in Ethiopia, Somalia, or in Djibouti, the latest victim of Eritrean aggression. The Eritrean move against Djibouti --- which has been only mildly condemned by the Security Council --- is a naked aggression and destabilization attempt which has absolutely no justification. IGAD has taken a position on the matter, so should, in our view, the Sana'a

Forum. The Eritrean aggression against Djibouti should not be mixed with, or linked to, any other issue, including the crisis between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Despite the mendacious insinuation by Eritrea to the contrary, Eritrea has absolutely no justification for its hostile act against Djibouti.

It is indisputable that with respect to Sudan, both on the implementation of the CPA and the various issues related to Darfur, the Sana'a Forum for Co-operation must and should seek ways of being of service to contribute towards ensuring that the various challenges of Sudan would be addressed in full conformity with the dictates of the solemn commitments entered into; the true interests of the people of Sudan, including their right to determine their own destiny; and sustainable and durable peace in Sudan which is also vital for the region as a whole.

**Dear Colleagues,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Sana'a Forum for cooperation has also long agenda items in the economic, trade and social areas. Let us admit that we have not moved as rapidly as we ought to in these areas. No doubt, the commitment is there, as can be gleaned from the more than a dozen agreements, protocols and MOUs that we

have signed. Indeed, we have made significant progress in developing co-operation in the hydropower sector and towards interconnecting our electric power systems. This is an area that can be expanded even further to be a firm basis for integrating our region.

In terms of laying a strong foundation for a rapid expansion of economic ties among our countries, there is no substitute to what our respective business communities can do. In this regard, it is my earnest hope that we would do the best we could to expedite the implementation of the Draft Protocol on the Implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding for the Establishment of the Joint Business Council of the Sana'a Forum member states. We indeed look forward to the convening of the first meeting of the Council, soon. In the social sector, the implementation of the General Framework Agreement in the Field of Culture and Youth also needs to be pursued with greater vigour.

**Dear Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In general, however, it is with greater optimism than ever before about the prospects for a far more enhanced co-operation among member states of the Sana'a Forum for cooperation, that we have come to Khartoum for the 6<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Forum. I have no doubt that we will leave Khartoum having strengthened the Forum and having injected further dynamism into this process of cooperation which is so critical for us all.

I cannot conclude without expressing the anguish we all feel over the tragedy unfolding in Gaza. Military action leading to the killing and suffering of civilians, by whomever is carried out, deserves to be condemned. The latest development between Israel and Hamas should be contained and should not

be allowed to deteriorate even further. There is no military solution to this crisis. The Sana's Forum for Cooperation should call for an immediate end to military activities and for a speedy and immediate ceasefire and truce. There is no substitute to the two-state solution, Israelis and Palestinians living side by side, with peace and security for all. A genuine and equitable effort should be made towards that goal. Attempts at military solution by either party, or both, will not bring that objective closer, but will rather make it ever distant, from which neither will benefit. It is our hope wisdom would prevail.

I Thank you