

News in Brief

*The UN General Assembly adopts the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development...
...Prime Minister Hailemariam addresses the General Assembly....
...Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros participates in a High-Level Panel on the SDGs...
...Dr Tedros addresses the High-Level Forum on Land Locked Developing Countries...
... and the Roundtable on Financing Health and Education: Girls' Driving Development
Pledges to scale up and modernize UN Peacekeeping
The AU Peace and Security Council and a UN Summit discuss South Sudan
A High-Level meeting on Somalia reiterates: no extension for the Government
The visit of Pope Tawadros II, Pope of Alexandria, to Ethiopia*

News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

The 70th UN General Assembly formally adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, along with a set of bold new set of 17 Global Goals on Friday last week (September 25). The Assembly's general debate opened on Monday (September 28). (**See article**).

The AU's Open-ended Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs on the International Criminal Court (ICC) met on Sunday (September 27) in New York. Dr. Tedros Adhanom, Ethiopia's Foreign Minister was elected chair of the Committee which recommended the AU Chairperson to request deferrals of ICC proceedings against President Al-Bashir of Sudan and Deputy President Ruto of Kenya, and engage with the UNSC over AU concerns over the ICC.

A High Level Summit on peace keeping in New York, attended by leaders of more than 50 countries, pledged new commitments and the strengthening of existing capabilities for UN Peace Keeping Operations. (**See article**).

International Coffee Day was celebrated for the first time on Thursday, October 1 around the world. The occasion was launched by the International Coffee Organization at the Milan World Exposition 2015. (**See article**)

Ethiopia

President Dr. Mulatu Teshome held discussions with His Holiness, Abune Tawadros II, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark, on Wednesday, (September 30). The Pope, in Ethiopia to attend the Meskel Festival on Sunday (September 27) also met with State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Berhane and other officials and church leaders. (**See article**)

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn addressed the 70th General Assembly of the United Nations in New York on Monday (September 28), welcoming the adoption of the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (**See article**).

Prime Minister Hailemariam held bilateral talks with Egypt's President El-Sisi on Tuesday (September 29) in New York. The discussion focused on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, Climate Change and the coming negotiation in Paris, the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. The Tripartite Committee on the Dam is due to meet in Addis Ababa on October 5.

Among other bilateral meetings, Prime Minister Hailemariam met with Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Saturday (September 26). Prime Minister Abe said Japan's JETRO had decided to establish an office in Addis Ababa. Prime Minister Hailemariam welcomed the decision and expressed his hope for further development of bilateral economic relations.

On Friday (September 25), Prime Minister Hailemariam, speaking at an investment meeting in new York, said global investors should become profitable by deciding to invest in Africa, as the continent was not only growing economically but also in human resources. Economic transformation was the current agenda of Africa, he said, and the era is that of 'emerging Africa.'

Prime Minister Hailemariam attended the launch of the Global Strategy for Women, Children and Adolescent Health in New York on Saturday (September 26). UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon announced over US\$25 billion in commitments for a five year period, to help end preventable deaths of women, children and adolescents and ensure their health and well-being.

Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros Adhanom was one of the speakers at the High-Level Roundtable discussion under the theme "Financing Health and Education: Girl's Driving Development". Other speakers included Gordon Brown, former Prime Minister of UK and Special Envoy of the UN on Education and Borge Brenede, Foreign Minister of Norway. **(See article)**

Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros participated in the High-Level Forum on Land Locked Developing Countries (LLDC) on Tuesday (September 29) in New York, to deliberate on the 10 year Vienna Program of Action adopted last year and the special development challenges for land locked states. **(See article)**

Foreign Minister Dr Tedros, Foreign Minister of Italy, Paolo Gentiloni and Somalia's Foreign Minister Abdisalam Hadiye Omer met on the margins of the UN General Assembly to discuss Somalia on Thursday (October 1) in New York. **(See article).**

During the week in New York, Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros held numerous bilateral meetings. These included discussions with the Foreign Ministers of Chad, Finland, Kazakhstan, the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Serbia, the Seychelles, South Sudan, Sweden and the UAE. He also met with the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Canada's Minister for International Development and La Francophonie, the President and CEO of the International Crisis Group and the US Assistant Secretaries of State for Political, Military Affairs, and for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.

Minister of Mines, Tolesa Shagi, speaking at the two day Ethiopia International Mining Conference and Exhibition 2015 that opened on Friday last week (September 25), called on all

Ethiopia's development partners to assist the efforts of the Government to develop the country's mining sector.

Ethiopia and Djibouti signed an agreement for a \$1.55 billion fuel pipeline with developers Mining, Oil & Gas Services and Blackstone Group LP-backed Black Rhino Group on Tuesday (September 29). The agreement is to construct a 550-kilometer Horn of Africa Pipeline to transport gasoline, diesel and jet fuel from Djibouti port to central Ethiopia. The pipeline will be capable of transporting 240,000 barrels of fuel a day.

The African Hotel Investment Forum (AHIF 15) took place at the Sheraton Hotel in Addis Ababa on Wednesday and Thursday this week (September 30-October 1) bringing together more 500 investors, business leaders, and others interested the development of the Hotel and tourism sectors in Africa. 'Hotel Partners Africa' listed Ethiopia as the leading investment opportunity in the Hotel sector in East Africa.

A delegation of United Kingdom MPs praised Ethiopia's efforts in promoting child health and ending a polio outbreak in the region during a visit to the World Health Organization's Country Office in Addis Ababa on Thursday (October 1).

Djibouti

At a meeting on Somalia in New York on Tuesday (September 29) President Ismail Omar Guelleh called for a follow-up summit of Troop Contributing Countries To AMISOM to be held in Djibouti in late October. President Mohamud of Somalia welcomed the suggestion.

Eritrea

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Osman Saleh, addressing the UN summit on the adoption of the post-2015 development agendas on Tuesday (September 29), describing the UN sanctions on Eritrea as politically-motivated, unjust and having negative implications on the socio-economic welfare of the Eritrean people, demanded they should be lifted.

Eritrea's Minister of Finance Berhane Habtemariam met with President Al-Bashir in Khartoum on Thursday (October 1) to discuss strengthening cooperation between the two countries, increasing trade volume and linking the two countries by road to bolster trade. Ato Berhane also held talks with Sudan's Minister of Finance Badr Eddin Mahmoud on cross-border trade and the possibility of establishing a free trade zone.

Somalia

A High-Level meeting in New York this week on Monday (September 28) was co-chaired by President Mohamud, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, and the UN Secretary-General. **(See article)**

Foreign Minister Abdisalam Hadiye Omer met with Ethiopia's Foreign Minister Dr Tedros and Italy's Foreign Minister, Paolo Gentiloni in New York. **(See article)**

Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke told the United Nations General Assembly on Thursday (October 1) that a new Somalia is taking shape. He proposed a grand development plan, aligned with the new Sustainable Development Goals, to provide for rebuilding of roads, schools, hospitals, community centers, ports, airports and markets to build a better future. The Prime Minister also met with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon.

At the end of last week, Somalia's Parliamentary Speaker withdrew the impeachment motion brought against President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. He said a majority of the 275 MPs wanted the motion resolved through dialogue.

South Sudan

The AU Peace and Security Council held a meeting to discuss progress on the South Sudan's Peace Agreement on Saturday (September 26) in New York. And a UN Summit on Tuesday (September 29) was attended by first vice-president designate, Riek Machar, incumbent vice president, James Wani Igga and Pagan Amum, representative of former detainees. President Salva Kiir addressed the meeting through a video teleconference link. **(See article)**

Minister of Defense Kuol Manyang Juuk is in Cairo this week for talks on ways to enhance South Sudan's military strategic cooperation with Egypt. The talks are within the framework of the 2014 military cooperation agreement under which the two sides agreed to develop strategic ties in areas covering military training, armament and the exchange visit of high ranking military personnel.

Sudan

Sudan has officially requested Chad President Idris Deby to persuade rebel groups in Darfur region to join the national dialogue conference which is due to start later this month. Sudan Presidential assistant Ibrahim Mahmoud Hamid who handed letters from President Al-Bashir to President Deby said on Wednesday (September 30) that Sudan looks forward to the support of President Deby in convincing the holdout movements to sign the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur and join the national dialogue process.

The Secretary-General condemned in the strongest possible terms the attack on Saturday (September 27) against peacekeepers of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operations in Darfur (UNAMID) in which one South African peacekeeper died and four others were wounded.

The UN General Assembly adopts the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development...

The 70th UN General Assembly formally adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, along with a set of bold new set of 17 Global Goals on Friday last week

(September 25). UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon hailed the Agenda as a universal, integrated and transformative vision for a better world. He said it is “a promise by leaders to all people everywhere. It is an agenda for people, to end poverty in all its forms – an agenda for the planet, our common home.” The new framework for development “Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” is composed of 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets with the overall aim of wiping out poverty, fighting inequality and tackle climate change over the next 15 years. The SDGs aim to build on the work of the Millennium Development Goals, which in September 2000 rallied the world around a common 15-year agenda to tackle the indignity of poverty.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are (1): End poverty in all its forms everywhere; (2) End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; (3) Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; (4) Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning; (5) Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; (6) Ensure access to water and sanitation for all; (7) Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all; (8) Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all; (9) Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; (10) Reduce inequality within and among countries; (11) Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; (12) Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns; (13) Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; (14) Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources; (15) Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss; (16) Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies; and (17) Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

The UN Secretary-General hailed the new framework as an agenda for shared prosperity, peace and partnership and emphasized that it conveyed the urgency of climate action and was rooted in gender equality and respect for the rights of all. He urged world leaders and others at the UN Summit for Sustained Development to successfully implement the Global Goals or Agenda 2030 by launching ‘renewed global partnership.’ He said “The 2030 Agenda compels us to look beyond national boundaries and short-term interests and act in solidarity for the long-term. We can no longer afford to think and work in silos. Institutions will have to become fit for a grand new purpose. The United Nations system is strongly committed to supporting Member States in this great new endeavor.” Mr. Ban Ki-Moon said, “We must engage all actors, as we did in shaping the Agenda. We must include parliaments and local governments, and work with cities and rural areas. We must rally businesses and entrepreneurs. We must involve civil society in defining and implementing policies. We must listen to scientists and academia. We will need to embrace a data revolution. Most important, we must set to work – now.”

When he opened the General Assembly debate on Monday (September 28), the UN Secretary-General added that “You, the world’s leaders, have committed to leave no one behind,” praising the Assembly for its towering achievement in adopting the 2030 Agenda and urging members to do more by coming to a robust agreement on climate change. Confronted with the risk of temperatures rising above the 2°C threshold, the international community must, he said, work in synergy and get the Green Climate Fund up and running. He encouraged leaders in conflict situations around the world to return to the negotiating table. He said reaching sustainable

development goals meant better organizing. He welcomed the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the renewed pledge by developed countries to invest 0.7 per cent of the gross national income in Official Development Assistance (ODA). He stressed that climate finance would be crucial and developed countries should meet the agreed goal of \$100 billion per year by 2020.

The President of the General Assembly, Mogens Lykketoft of Denmark said the Assembly's approval of the 2030 Agenda now faced the even more daunting task of transforming its vision into action. A sustainable global infrastructure over the next 15 years required trillions of dollars, and the least developed countries depended on rich countries' longstanding commitments to provide development assistance. Much stronger international cooperation was needed to ensure that rich companies and individuals no longer evaded payment in tax havens. A huge share of investment must come from private sources, he said, and governments must create a framework for markets that made green investments the obvious, safer and better investment for business and mankind. The United Nations must make an extraordinary effort to act in accordance with the 2030 Agenda, recognizing the strong linkages between development, peace and security, and respect for human rights. It must take specific actions to achieve progress in each of those areas.

Speaking on the opening day of the debate were the Heads of State and Government of the United States, the Russian Federation, France, Iran, Jordan, China, Cuba, Bolivia, South Africa, Brazil, Poland, Republic of Korea, Qatar, Mozambique, Netherlands, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Portugal, Denmark, Ethiopia, Uganda, Chile, Egypt, Switzerland, Zimbabwe, Argentina, Belarus, Nigeria, Gabon, Paraguay, Kenya, Senegal, Mali, Ecuador and Afghanistan.

...Prime Minister Hailemariam addresses the General Assembly....

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia told the Assembly that the political will and commitment demonstrated in adopting the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda gave hope and optimism that a new globally binding climate agreement could be secured during the Climate Change Conference in Paris in December. Ethiopia, he said, a United Nations' founding member, had not been able to count on the support of the League of Nations in its hour of need in the 1930s, but it had never lost confidence in multilateralism. It remained a staunch supporter of the principle of collective security embodied in the Charter. On the basis of this conviction, Ethiopia had, therefore, actively contributed to the advancement of the Organization's principles and purposes. It was, today, the second largest contributor to United Nations peacekeeping.

Prime Minister Hailemariam said that while the "very many failures", of the United Nations, especially in the areas of peace and security, could not be overlooked, nevertheless, the United Nations remained an organization that no one could afford to live without. It remained the only universal organization that provided all nations, regardless of their size or wealth, with a platform to advance common objectives and address the myriad problems they collectively faced. Equally, it needed to become more relevant and effective and it was up to Member States to empower it to fulfill its promises in this new era. Membership had changed dramatically over the years, and so had the world's geopolitical and economic realities. The need to reform the Organization had long been recognized, but creating the necessary compromise among the wider membership had not been easy. It could not, however, be further delayed. It was not enough to

adopt the next generation of Development Goals; the United Nations must be made fit for the Agenda 2030 and the post-2015 era. The Prime Minister said comprehensive reform of the United Nations, and of the Council in particular, was imperative. He repeated Africa's call for its full representation in all of the Organization's decision-making organs.

Prime Minister Hailemariam expressed gratitude for the United Nations' support for Ethiopia's development efforts. Ethiopia, he said, had been able to achieve remarkable progress, including most if not all of the Millennium Development Goals. It had been able to do this because it took charge of its own destiny and had made the best use of its partnership with the United Nations. Ethiopia would now continue to work towards achieving middle-income status by 2025, on the basis of the carbon-neutral growth and the climate-resilient green economy strategy that it was implementing.

....Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros participates in a High-Level Panel on the SDGs...

A high level panel discussion was held on Goal 17, "Mechanisms and Partnerships to reach the Goals", on the sidelines of the General Assembly on Monday (September 28). Ethiopia's Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros said Goal 17 was the most important in the SDGs because it provided for the ways to achieve the other 16 goals. He noted that the successful changes in Ethiopia had been happening mainly because of the political commitment of the government and its success in rallying the society behind its development agenda. He said: "Nothing is unachievable for a committed government and prepared society", adding that the secret behind Ethiopia's rapid and pro-poor development was more of political than technical intervention. He said Ethiopia's innovative approach to finance emanated from thinking that searching for finance for an intended development should be part of the plan itself. Speaking on the importance of partnership goals, and specifically referring to Sustainable Development Goal 17, Dr Tedros said unless governments, private sector, civil society and philanthropic organizations, international and regional organizations, both at national and international levels, create a genuine and truthful partnership to mobilize essential resources and the necessary technology to implement the post-2015 development agenda, it would remain a mere ambition. He noted that developed countries and the non-traditional donors, the emerging economies, must shoulder the responsibility to avail resources for the implementation of the SDGs.

Dr. Tedros added that developing countries should also play their part by expanding domestic resource mobilization and proper utilization of funds. He stressed the role of the private sector saying, "if you are part of the solution in alleviating poverty and empowering consumers, ultimately you promote markets for your products and services and you will be rewarded from your partnership in sustainable development." He also highlighted the indispensable role that civic organizations and international organization would have in the partnership for the SDGs. Erik Solheim of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) hailed the just completed MDG's as an important exercise in forging global partnerships, noting that today there were just two countries that were not declared polio free, a major leap forward from fifteen years ago. He agreed that the future of the SDGs did not only depend on finance but also on politics and the right mix of policies. He said, "Ethiopia has made astonishing gains with a two-thirds decrease in infant mortality rate because it had the political will to do so." He said that aid, development assistance, private investment and tax would be the main finance sources for the implementation

of the SDGs. He also briefed the meeting about OECD plans to support developing countries in capacity building for domestic resource mobilization through the Addis Tax Initiative launched at the conclusion of the third Finance for Development Conference in July.

The representative of the UAE shared her country's experience of Official Development Assistance (ODA), noting that the UAE was a top donor exceeding 0.7% of its GDP. It would continue to shore up assistance despite the weight of the responsibility. She said that "as much as we are keen to be top donor country, we want to make sure that the aid is effective and impactful," so the UAE is revising its ODA strategy and policy. In relation to SDG's Goal 17, the representative said that acknowledging and incentivizing private sector finance, removing risks to FDI flows and adopting financial guidelines could have a real impact to increase the finance needed to implement the SDGs. She pointed out the potential of using "Zekah" as a source of development finance with proper collection and management. In relation to lowering transfer fees for international money transfer, she noted that the UAE has the lowest transfer fees in the world, and some US\$30 billion leaves the UAE as remittances. Other speakers also emphasized the need to find new and innovative finance mechanisms; and the meeting ended on the note that partnerships and innovative financing should be strengthened in order to avoid leaving anyone behind.

...Dr Tedros addresses the High-Level Forum on Land Locked Developing Countries...

Another Forum convened on the sidelines of the General Assembly was the High-Level Forum on Land Locked Developing Countries (LLDC). Held on Tuesday (September 29) the Forum met to deliberate on and adopt a report on the Vienna Program of Action. This is the ten-year program (2014-2024) aimed to address the special development challenges faced by the world's 32 land locked countries and in particular the issue of their international trade. The Forum follows the second LLDC Conference Developing Countries Conference held in Livingstone, Zambia in June this year.

President Lungu of Zambia, current chair of the LLDC, told the Forum that greater partnership and solidarity among LLDC's transit countries and global partners was needed for accelerated implementation of the Vienna Program of Action. "We must all ensure", he said, "the 450,000,000 people living in the LLDC are not left behind during the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals." He called on the LLDC to mainstream the Vienna Program in their development plans while also pointing out the need to put refined monitoring and evaluation systems in place. He stressed the importance of heavy investment in both soft and hard infrastructure to address the serious challenge of transport costs, and underlined the need to encourage Private-Public Partnerships to help provide the necessary finance.

The current President of the General Assembly, Mogens Lykketoft, noted that since the launch of the Almaty Program of Action, in 2003, the precursor to the Vienna Program of Action, the LLDC had much improved their infrastructure. He said it was incumbent on all to address trade facilitation issues to ease the LLDC's international trade problems and promised to convene a high level meeting to help the LLDC meet the goals of the SDGs. Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, told the Forum that the

Vienna Program of Action was about renewed partnerships, and developing these “partnerships between landlocked developing countries, transit countries and partnerships between them and development partners, to address the special development needs and challenges arising from landlocked-ness, remoteness and geographic constraints in a more coherent manner.” He said “effective and meaningful collaboration of the transit countries is fundamental to ensure access in an effective manner”, adding that “reduction of transit time and procedures and harmonisation of rules will be crucial to ensure effective implementation of relevant international, regional and bilateral agreements on transit transport and trade facilitation.”

The President of Mongolia noted that 20-30% of the cost of Mongolia’s international trade was transport making Mongolia’s products less competitive in the global market; and 2% of the country’s GDP was lost on transport of goods. This underlined the challenge in industrialization in particular. He, therefore, proposed the establishment of an international think-tank to study the problems of the LLDC and look for innovative responses. The President of Tajakistan urged concerted global action on the six priorities of the Vienna Program of Action: addressing fundamental transit policy issues, infrastructure development and maintenance, international trade and trade facilitation, regional integration and cooperation, structural economic transformation and availing means of implementation. These, he said, would help transform economies and hasten regional integration. The Prime Minister of Bhutan said that building infrastructure and enhancing LLDC’s production capacity should be addressed within the Sustainable Development Goals 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and 9 (Industry Innovation and Network). He welcomed the Addis Ababa Action Agenda for establishing a special fund for infrastructure as an important measure to help the LLDC close the financial gap.

The Prime Minister of Lesotho outlined six important measures to be taken to help transform the LLDC’s economy through the Vienna Plan of Action. The LLDC should work on trade related infrastructure and increase competitiveness of products in regional value chains through the Aid for Trade program. Increased FDI had an indispensable role to help the LLDC start on value addition for raw materials instead exporting only primary commodities. Thirdly, with the decline in ODA flows to the LLDC, he urged the need to reverse the trend to slowdown implementation of the Vienna Program of Action. Special and differential treatment should be given to the LLDC through improved trade facilitation arrangement to ease the cost of doing business. A special fund should be set up to ease the burden of transit costs; and finally, export diversification and market access must be encouraged. Botswana’s representative noted the problems of climate change, dependence on a single commodity and the slump in economic growth due to volatile commodity exchange rates, the prohibitive cost of doing business, and the prejudices associated with the LLDC as major challenges. He highlighted the need to increase levels of development and develop new tools of trade facilitation, increase rail and road infrastructure and work on capacity building as well as the importance of ratification of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. Others underlined the “daunting” cost of transport, and the importance of the LLDC engaging industrialization to reduce over-dependence on a single commodity.

Ethiopia’s Foreign Minister, Dr. Tedros told the Forum that lack of direct territorial access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from world markets, cumbersome transit procedures and inadequate infrastructure were some of the critical issues hindering LLDC progress and posed serious challenge to hard-fought development gains. Speaking about Ethiopia’s development

efforts, Dr Tedros underlined that Ethiopia was “unswervingly engaged to pursue our development despite the constraints”. He pointed out it had now become one of the fastest growing economies in the world, adding that it now realized “the daunting task is to sustain the high economic growth we have enjoyed over the last decade.” He said Ethiopia had integrated “the Program of Action into the national logistic strategies of the Maritime Affairs Authority. Furthermore, preparation to establish the national program of action and the road map for the implementation of the Vienna Program of Action has also been finalized with the participation of the relevant ministries.” He noted that Ethiopia aimed to become a regional energy/power hub through the development of its massive renewable energy resources which in turn would have a role in hastening regional economic integration. Dr. Tedros also flagged the US\$25 billion LAPSET project, linking Kenya’s Lamu Port to South Sudan and more widely, as a testament to collaboration with transit countries and for its potential transformative role in developing and integrating the economies of the East African region. He concluded by saying: “We stand a better chance of overcoming the various development challenges that arise from the geographical barriers if we are determined to make our development sustainable, strengthen regional cooperation and forge strong partnerships.” The meeting concluded by adopting the New York Declaration.

.....And the Roundtable on Financing Health and Education: Girls’ Driving Development...

Foreign Minister Dr. Tedros Adhanom attended the High-Level Roundtable under the theme “Financing Health and Education: Girl’s Driving Development”. The Roundtable was organized by the Global Partnership for Education, UNICEF, UNAIDS and the Global Fund. The meeting focused on the opportunities and challenges for integrating health and education and adopting a multi stakeholder approach to improve the lot of women in developing countries. The meeting was attended by stakeholders drawn from UN agencies, donors, advocacy groups, civic society representatives and officials of developing countries.

Dr. Tedros shared Ethiopia’s experience in women and girls education and the achievements in meeting the Millennium Development Goals over the past fifteen years. He stressed that education and health goals should be seen as complimentary and hence integrating health and education goals was key to unleash the potential of women in developing countries. He noted that the political commitment both at top leadership and local level had been a central element in the successes of Ethiopia in achieving near universal primary education and health care. He also emphasized the importance of Ethiopia’s approach in making women and girls the agents and owners of development. He added that Ethiopia’s unique experience with women in the Development Army program had also been instrumental in the achievement since it enabled women to be masters of their own destiny by bringing about changes through their own actions and agency. He also noted that Ethiopia’s success was due to its efforts to aggressively collect resources internally and to use resources, gained internally or from international partners, efficiently and effectively

Dr Tedros further said” when we talk about political will, it should be noted that it has indicators in the form of aggressive plans and commitment to spend significant amount of money from government coffers. He said “what explains the rise in girls’ primary school enrolment, from a mere 5% to 32%, was the political commitment demonstrated both in resource allocation and at

planning level. He stressed the importance of family planning, pointing out that “less children mean more time for other economic activities which in turn will bring about economic empowerment that will gradually translate into social and economic empowerment.” Referring to the need to improve incomes of women as the basis for allowing women contribute to, and play their rightful role within, their communities, he stressed that it was “imperative that we understand economic empowerment begins at home.”

Gordon Brown, former Prime Minister of UK and Special Envoy of the UN on Education also underlined the interdependence of education and health goals. He said “less educated girls indicates a high birth rate, early marriage and exposure to HIV/AIDS.” The new UN Commission on education financing, he said, was grappling with ways to find the best ways to finance education in a way that addressed the interlinks between health and education goal. He noted that pilot projects were underway to test possibilities of integrating the two goals in a cross-sectoral approach.

Borge Brenede, Foreign Minister of Norway discussed at length the dire situation of Syrian children in Lebanon, citing a recent visit to Syrian refugee centers. He noted that out of 500,000 children, 300,000 children were out of school. This underlined that education emergencies should be given due attention as well as humanitarian emergencies. He said that Norway had increased its ODA five-fold over the past few years to help expand education in developing countries.

Neven Mimica, European Union Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, said that “if all girls could go to school, child mortality will decrease by half”. This, he said, was telling evidence that showcased the correlations between education and health goals. He cited the fragile nature of the health systems in West Africa seen during the Ebola crisis and the concomitant forced stay of children out of school for over a year. This made clear the need for an integrated approach to tackle the challenges of education and health. He said that the EU, taking into consideration the need to balance the two goals, had allotted Euros 4.7 billion for education and Euros 2.7 billion to health until 2020. He affirmed the EU’s development approach in the coming 15 years for the Sustainable Development Goals, would be based on principles that prioritize country ownership, innovation and concerted action. He added that the EU would, above all, put the needs of girls at the center of its development partnership by advancing gender parity. He said that the EU External Office, in fact, had even more ambitious goals than the SDG’s in terms of gender equality. This arose from its commitment to improve girls’ education and health.

Julia Gillard, Board Chair of Global Partnership for Education said that recent studies showed that a dollar investment in education paid off five dollars in terms of gains in health targets. She said faulty understanding of education and health as competing goals had hampered realization of even better achievements in the MDG’s. She noted the vast US\$39 billion financial gap in finance for education but said with the launch of the SDG’s and the global commitment to finance these, the gap was “eminently bridgeable” Keith Hansen of the World Bank highlighted success stories from the results-based approach of the Bank in delivering education and health and leveraging a flow of further finance. He said the Bank would be making US\$51 billion available for education and health through the UN Secretary General’s Global Financing Facility

for Every Women and For Every Child. Other speakers included Nick Daya of DFID, who emphasized prioritizing girls' needs as the key intervention point to bring changes in education and health, and underlined the importance of ensuring quality education. Jean Biges of UNAIDS said integration of education and health should be based on a people-centered approach, based on wide involvement of civil society and on an efficient data system. Public-Private Partnerships could be an important source of finance, UNESCO noted in its 15 year inter-sectoral program of education that took into consideration the physical and mental health of girls and children generally.

Dubai Care gave details of its US\$4 million school feeding project to address the health and nutrition needs of approximately 30,700 primary school children in 30 schools in Ethiopia's Southern Nations and Nationalities Peoples' Region. This used home-grown food and involved health intervention. It showed "incremental changes" in increasing quality of education in the pilot schools. Theo Sawa of the African Women's Development Bank challenged the mainstream understanding of resources as being confined to finance. She said "girls should not be thought of as burdens, rather we need to refine our views on the community resources into doing old things in new ways." She related Ethiopia's success in girls' education to its commitment to work with the community.

Pledges to scale up and modernize UN Peacekeeping

A High Level meeting on Peacekeeping, to pledge new commitments and strengthen existing capabilities, took place in New York on Monday (September 28). The meeting was attended by leaders of more than 50 countries during which many promised to scale up contributions to peacekeeping operations across the globe. The aim of the meeting was to encourage leaders of major contributing countries to strengthen UN peacekeeping in concrete and meaningful ways, and a total of 40,000 troops were pledged as well as other contributions including helicopters and engineering units. There are currently 125,000 troops, police and civilian personnel in 16 UN peacekeeping operations spanning four continents with 120 nations contributing to these missions which had a budget of US\$8.2 billion. The five leading troop-contributing nations are currently Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Pakistan and Rwanda

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, emphasizing the need for further cooperation on peacekeeping and calling for increased commitment, said "the demand for peacekeeping has never been greater". The Secretary-General said more than 120 countries contributed to peacekeeping operations and "these numbers show peacekeeping's value" but, he added, they were also "a sign of troubled times." He itemized the four main needs for the future of peacekeeping missions included predictable and effective military capabilities, the need for further qualified police personnel, a standby reserve force and fourthly civilian protection

Addressing the meeting, US President Barack Obama said: "we know that peacekeeping operations are not the solution to every problem," but, he added, "they do remain one of the world's most important tools to address armed conflict". Ethiopia's Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, referring to Ethiopia's position on commitments to peacekeeping, said Ethiopia would

continue with its unwavering and longstanding commitment to global peace and collective security. Ethiopia, the Prime Minister noted, had become a leading country among those contributing to peacekeeping missions. It would continue, the Prime Minister said, to send troops on peacekeeping missions, provide military training and share its successful experience with others as required.

Among the member states that announced increased commitments at the Summit, China announced that it would set up an 8000-strong stand-by force while Colombia made a first-time offer of as many as 5,000 troops. China's President Xi Jinping, expressing his country's commitment in terms of extending financial support to peacekeeping mission, noted that China would provide \$100 million to the African Union to support the new African standby force, and send the first peacekeeping helicopter squad to Africa. China also offered more engineering, transport and medical staff and pledged to train 2,000 peacekeepers from other countries in demining operations. Rwanda offered two attack helicopters, two field hospitals, an all-female police unit and 1,600 new troops. The UK announced it would send 70 troops to provide training for AMISOM and up to 300 troops for South Sudan. Other countries also pledged first time contributions.

The Secretary-General said major armed conflict had tripled since 2008. New patterns of violence were confounding traditional mechanisms and this was why he had set up the High-Level Panel on Peace Operation last year. Its report, the Secretary-General said, provided a solid foundation on which to build a reinvigorated approach to UN peace operations, and he had submitted an agenda for action to the General Assembly and the Security Council earlier this month. The Secretary-General said that the central element in changes must be the pursuit of negotiated political settlements that respond to the aspirations of the people and this must be done through coordinated, collective efforts, bilaterally, regionally and multilaterally. No harm must come to the people we are mandated to protect; the role of peace operations is to advance the rights of people. He said he intended to make significant changes to the way peacekeeping operations were planned and operated in order to make them faster and more responsive, agile and flexible. This would involve strengthening capabilities and making better use of technology to implement mandates, more effectively. He stressed that adapting UN peace operations to meet today's challenges must be a collective effort. UN peace operations were "manifestation of collective will"; member states had to ensure the right tools were available for the job. He noted in this context that President Obama's Leaders Summit the previous day was a significant affirmation of support for peacekeeping. He hoped this backing would be demonstrated by contributions of force enablers as well as in other ways as the UN moves to implement the package of recommendations contained in his report on the future of UN peace operations. The Secretary-General said there was a need "to act urgently, boldly and collectively" to have predictable and effective military capabilities, a qualified police personnel, including more female officers, and a standby reserve for tomorrow. He also reminded the participants of the need to prevent and punish sexual exploitation and abuse, and said he counted on all troop- and police-contributing countries to act swiftly and decisively to hold perpetrators to account. "Those who serve in peace operations must never prey on the people they are meant to protect," he said.

The High-Level Panel on the Comprehensive Review of UN peace operations established in October 2014 submitted its report to the Secretary General in June after consulting with various

regions, troop and police contributing countries and also the AU Peace and Security Council and the AU Commission. The report calls for change through re-establishing the primacy of politics, insisting that peace operations should always be deployed as part of a wider political process in which the United Nations plays a leading role. They must be flexible and tailored to local situations. The Panel suggested the UN should stop differentiating between peacekeeping missions with a military component and political missions. They are all peace operations and should be appropriate to needs on the ground. It suggests that the UN-AU relationship should be strengthened and there should be greater interaction between the UN Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council. In addition, peacekeeping operations must become more field-focused and people-centered, and ensure a renewed resolve amongst peace operations personnel to serve and protect the people.

Following this, the Secretary-General presented a report on “The Future of UN Peace Operations”, on September 2, offering a vision of stronger, fit-for-the-purpose peace operations with a detailed agenda of over 70 proposed actions. These provided for: a renewed commitment to conflict prevention and mediation; comprehensive changes in the way peace operations are conducted and planned; and reinforced partnerships with regional organizations; and for a political approach to be at the center of all UN peace operations.

The High-Level Panel noted the adoption of an African Common Position on the UN Review of Peace Operations by the AU Peace and Security Council in April. It said that “the AU and its Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) had been working towards a coherent continental peace and security architecture, including the African Standby Force and the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises for the future”. It said “the UN-AU strategic partnership should be underpinned by a number of principles of cooperation: consultative decision making and common strategy; the division of labor based on respective comparative advantage; joint analysis, planning, monitoring and evaluation; integrated response to the conflict cycle, including prevention; transparency, accountability and respect for international standards.” The Panel also recognized the validity of the AU’s calls for predictable, sustainable and flexible funding of AU led peace support operations authorized by the UNSC and recommended UN-assessed contributions on a case-by-case basis to support Security Council-authorized AU operations to complement funding from the AU or African Member States.

The Peace and Security Council made it clear strategic relationship between the AU and the UN is based on the primacy of the UN Security Council and the need to forge partnerships with regional arrangements in the context of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. AU interventions must be understood in this context and as part of collective security arrangements as provided for in the Charter. Partnership between the two organizations must be on the basis of consultative decision-making and equitable burden sharing. The African Common Position also suggests the financing of African-led, UN Security Council-endorsed peace operations in a flexible, predictable and sustainable manner and underlines the fact that as Africa has become the largest single contributor to UN peace operations, African military capacities are a critical resource for the success of the UN’s own missions and need to be adequately supported.

The AU Peace and Security Council and a UN Summit discuss South Sudan

South Sudan was one of the more prominent items on the agenda in New York during the last week, with an AU Peace and Security Council meeting on Saturday (September 26) and a UN Summit on Tuesday (September 29) which UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon said came at a pivotal moment for South Sudan. Both underlined the international community's concern for urgent progress on the IGAD-Plus Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict and the establishment of peace in South Sudan as well as the concern over humanitarian issues.

The AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) in a Heads of State and Government level meeting commended the warring parties in South Sudan for signing the peace agreement and urged them to fully implement it, stressing that they should fully commit to the document they signed without any reservations. The PSC said the agreement represented a decisive step in the efforts aimed at ending the conflict. In its communiqué, however, the PSC noted with deep disappointment and concern that following the signing of the peace deal last month there were reports of violations of the permanent ceasefire. It warned that it would not tolerate any further violations and, in line with its previous pronouncements, "expressed its determination to impose measures against all those who would impede the implementation process of this Agreement."

It called for the urgent transition of the IGAD Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVM) into the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM), as provided for in the Agreement and for this to be operationalized as soon as possible. The PSC welcomed the Permanent Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements (PCTSA) Workshop, held in Addis Ababa; it noted the Government's signing of the minutes of the workshop and demanded that SPLM-in-Opposition should also sign without precondition and without further delay. It requested the AU Commission, working closely with IGAD and the UN, as well as with other stakeholders, to submit concrete proposals on how best the AU could contribute to the implementation process of the Peace Agreement. The PSC said it was ready, if this becomes necessary, to authorize the deployment of a force to support implementation of the Agreement, and requested the Commission to conduct contingency planning with relevant international partners, including the UN, to this effect.

The PSC requested the Chairperson of the African Union's Commission to release the AU Commission's of Inquiry report on atrocities committed in South Sudan since 15 December 2013, and called for the establishment of an independent hybrid court in South Sudan to try individuals accused of committing the atrocities. It reaffirmed the AU's commitment to a comprehensive approach to the issues of justice and reconciliation in accordance with the peace agreement, noting that "the achievement of lasting peace and reconciliation in South Sudan requires a holistic approach addressing, in a mutually-supportive way, the inter-related issues of accountability, reconciliation, healing and institutional reforms, based on ownership by the South Sudanese stakeholders and robust African and international support."

The PSC called on the AU Commission to release the AU Commission of Inquiry for South Sudan report. It noted that the report highlighted the extreme violence took place in Juba (16-18 December 2014) and secondly in three states centering round the towns of Bor, Bentui and Malakal. Most of the atrocities were carried out against innocent civilians, especially women,

and places of religion and hospitals were among those attacked. Both sides committed murder, rape and sexual violence and torture but “there are no reasonable ground to believe that the crime of genocide has been committed”

On the basis of the recommendations of the report, the Council agreed to the establishment by the AU Commission of an independent hybrid judicial court, the Hybrid Court of South Sudan, “to investigate and prosecute individuals bearing the responsibility for violations of international law and/or applicable South Sudanese law”. It requested the AU Chairperson of the Commission to take all necessary steps towards its establishment.

It also decided that South Sudanese stakeholders should implement all necessary required measures to build strong, accountable, inclusive and efficient institutions. There should be adequate devolution of resources, decision-making power and guarantees against undue interference in the states by the center, and establishment of a well-balanced system of separation of powers and the implementation of a comprehensive security sector reform program. This should include a diverse national army under effective centralized command and a modern and streamlined police service. The process should also involve development of a national strategy for resource management, taking into account environmental issues and community needs.

The Council called for the parties to ensure the return of refugees and internally displaced persons and facilitate their resettlement, reintegration and rehabilitation, as well as allow full humanitarian access in accordance with the Agreement. It also welcomes the establishment of the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation, and Healing provided for in the Agreement.

In addition, the Council requested the Chairperson of the Commission to “significantly enhance the AU Liaison Office in South Sudan and to upgrade it to a Mission” so it can monitor political, security, humanitarian and human rights, as well as socio-economic developments in South Sudan, support implementation of the relevant provisions of the Communiqué, and assist implementation process of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan.

The UN Summit was attended by South Sudanese leaders including the first vice-president designate, Riek Machar, the incumbent vice president, James Wani Igga and Pagan Amum, representative of former detainees. President Salva Kiir addressed the meeting through video teleconference link. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, who welcomed the PSC decisions over a Hybrid Court for South Sudan, called on all parties to demonstrate a genuine commitment to the peace agreement signed last month by immediately halting military operations and forming the Transitional Government of National Unity. He said, “When the parties signed the peace agreement last month, they created a new window of opportunity.” South Sudan’s leaders now have “a chance to correct their grave mistakes and focus on the well-being of those who entrusted them with this role – the people of South Sudan.” He stressed the UN was ready to support implementation of the Agreement and would continue to protect civilians and provide humanitarian assistance. He called on the international community to remain engaged in every step of the implementation of the Agreement.

Concluding the UN Summit, UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson welcomed the orders issued by President Kiir and Riek Machar last month to halt all military operations but said both sides “must make sure that their forces disengage and freeze their movements in their areas of deployment”. He said IGAD and UNMISS must be given unfettered access to all areas of the country, to monitor and report on the situation, and to help resolve any disputes that might arise, adding that one of the most difficult issues remained the lack of trust among South Sudan leaders although the parties have issued statements committing them to implement the peace Agreement. Mr. Eliasson emphasized that the formation of the Government of National Unity would be the next crucial step and he urged the parties to make swift progress to restore a sense of normalcy and instill confidence among the people of South Sudan. He underlined the importance of making sure that humanitarian actors were given safe access to those in need.

A High-Level meeting on Somalia reiterates: no extension for the Government

Another High-Level meeting in New York this week was on Somalia on Monday (September 28), co-chaired by President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of Somalia, Dr Nkosazana Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Iyad Ameen Madani, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Nabil Elarab, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, and Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

A communiqué at the end of the meeting said the discussions focused on the political process in Somalia, ways to comprehensively address the threat of Al-Shabaab, the precarious humanitarian situation and the path to economic recovery. The meeting commended the Federal Government of Somalia for leading the significant progress made towards the creation of a sovereign, secure, democratic, united and federal Somalia and welcomed recent political advances including the development of interim regional administrations and the creation of the Boundaries and Federation Commission and the National Independent Electoral Commission. The discussions looked forward to the establishment of the remaining constitutionally mandated bodies, especially the Human Rights Commission and Constitutional Court, and urged timely support from international partners to enable all these commissions to fulfill their mandates. The importance of establishing the last remaining interim regional administrations by the end of the year and advancing the review of the Provisional Federal Constitution was underlined. The leaders emphasized the importance of engaging Somali society in all these efforts, in particular women, youth and marginalized communities.

The meeting recognized the challenges in Somalia that prevented a “one person, one vote” national election in 2016, but it strongly reaffirmed the importance of respecting the constitutionally mandated terms of the legislature and executive, which expire in August and September 2016, respectively. It, therefore, welcomed the launch, on 19 September, of the National Consultative Forum, to oversee the development of an electoral process for 2016 that will result in enhanced representativeness and legitimacy. The meeting stressed the importance of adhering strictly to the timetable and reaching a final decision in December. It urged all Somali stakeholders to engage constructively in the consultations, as outlined in the federal Government’s “Action Plan for Reaching Agreement on the 2016 Electoral Process.”

The leaders expressed concern at recurrent political crises in the federal institutions and urged all parties to put aside partisan interests and work together in a spirit of national unity. They said that the Federal Government of Somalia and its international partners would have “no tolerance for those that hinder or delay peace building and state-building, including the electoral process in 2016.” They strongly condemned all acts of terrorism perpetrated by Al-Shabaab, and paid tribute to the Somalia National Security Forces, AMISOM and their partners, for their courage and sacrifice. They urged continuation of the joint Somalia National Army/AMISOM offensive operations to recover the remaining priority areas, degrade Al-Shabaab’s military capability, secure main supply routes for movement of people, goods and humanitarian relief and create space for state-building. They called for urgent provision of enhanced support to enable AMISOM to more effectively discharge its mandate, and create conditions for the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation at the appropriate time. The leaders recognized the urgency of developing the Somalia National Army, including the necessary military capability and stipends, in line with the *Guulwade* Plan. We acknowledged the support already being provided by international partners, including the European Union, and commended the work of the National Integration Commission to advance troop integration across Somalia.

The meeting also agreed on the urgent need for a comprehensive approach to counter violent extremism in Somalia and to establish a law enforcement presence in areas liberated from Al-Shabaab. They agreed on the need for increased support to Somali police forces. It welcomed the Federal Government of Somalia’s intention to undertake an effective communication strategy to undermine *Takfiri* and extremist ideology. It urged enhanced support for rehabilitation and reconciliation initiatives and pledged to work together to foster educational and employment opportunities. The meeting also expressed alarm at the fragile humanitarian situation in Somalia, recognizing that almost 3 million Somalis were dependent on humanitarian assistance, that malnutrition rates were rising and that spillover effects of the conflict in Yemen and the potential impact of El Niño were creating new pressures. It commended the Government of Somalia and the Somali people for welcoming refugees and returnees from Yemen and neighboring countries, while noting that more than 1.1 million Somalis were still internally displaced. It also commended countries hosting Somali refugees for their hospitality. It called for formulation of a longer-term, strategic approach to address the underlying causes of displacement and find durable solutions for refugees and displaced populations. It also appealed to all responsible entities to contribute to easing the flow of legitimate remittances from the Somali Diaspora.

The meeting underlined the importance of infrastructure for economic recovery, and welcomed the steps taken by the Federal Government to implement more effective and transparent public financial management and looked forward to the finalization and adoption of the Public Finance Management, Procurement and Audit Bills. The meeting called on all Somalis to work together in the interests of peace building and state-building and pledged continued support to Somalia within the framework of the Somali Compact. The meeting said “the international community remained fully committed to supporting the Federal Government and the people of Somalia in their pursuit of Somali-led and owned peace, stability, security, human rights and development.” Meanwhile, Ethiopia’s Foreign Minister Dr Tedros, the Foreign Minister of Italy, Paolo Gentiloni, and Somalia’s Foreign Minister Abdisalam Hadiye Omer also met in New York this week. Ethiopia is Current Chair of IGAD and Italy is Chair of the IGAD Partners Forum. Dr

Tedros shared his optimism about the recent developments in security and political levels in Somalia, with the gains of AMISOM steadily expanding and regional state formation making progress. He said, “The regional state formation is slowly taking shape with formation of Jubaland South West and Central Regional state,” and pointed out that the formation of Jubaland state, following the Addis Ababa Agreement, had improved security in Kismayo significantly. Dr. Tedros said the challenge for newly liberated areas was to provide basic social services and local administrations. He regretted that failure to honor pledges by donors was holding back the provision of services which would have made progress in winning the confidence of the people and sustain the peace and security. He said IGAD and IGAD partners, along with the Government of Somalia, should work on obtaining the finance needed for the reconstruction of Somalia. He said it was important to organize a Somali business forum to change “the failing Somali narrative “and said IGAD and its partners should work to promote the view that Somalia is “open for business”. Paolo Gentiloni also praised the idea of hosting a business forum in Somalia and said Italy would support it. He added that IGAD should work on the integration of militias including the Ahlu Sunna wal Jama’a.

Foreign Minister Omer said there were encouraging gains both at political and security levels, and he described the resolution of the disagreement over the formulation of the Jubaland administration as a praiseworthy achievement. He noted the discussion over the issue of conducting the election in 2016 was taking shape and affirmed the Government’s firm position to hold to the timeframe of the election and of Vision 2016. He raised concerns over the impact of the crisis in Yemen on Somalia, noting the possible return of 700,000 to 900,000 Somalis. This could create havoc, he said. He agreed on the importance of integrating the various militias into the Somali National Army and institutionalizing federal and regional relations. These were challenges that needed to be addressed in due time, he said. He also welcomed the idea of hosting a business forum to encourage investment flows, and expressed his hope that investment would increase with the passing of the new investment law.

The visit of Pope Tawadros II, Pope of Alexandria to Ethiopia

Pope Tawadros II, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark, visited Ethiopia during the last week. He came to attend the Feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross, Meskel, which is celebrated widely every year in Ethiopia. During his visit, His Holiness met and held talks with his Holiness Abune Mathias I, the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, Archbishop of Axum and Echegue of the See of St. Tekle Haimanot, with the President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Dr. Mulatu Teshome, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos, and members of Ethiopia’s Public Diplomacy Delegation which visited Egypt last year. The Patriarch visited a number of Ethiopian monasteries and museums, including the National Museum and the Patriarchal Museum, as well as led a mass held at the Church of St. Mary of Zion at Axum.

The Meskel Festival, the Feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross, is celebrated by Ethiopian Christians throughout the country every year on September 26/27, in honor of the finding of the

True Cross of Christ. The main Demera pyre built up in Meskel Square in Addis Ababa was lit at the climax of the celebration by His Holiness, Abune Mathias, in remembrance of the discovery of the Cross.

Speaking on the occasion, His Holiness, Abune Mathias, Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, Archbishop of Axum and Echeque of the See of St. Tekle Haimanot, said that Meskel festival in Ethiopia was celebrated as a festival of love, prosperity and fraternity. This year's celebration, he said, was unique as it was graced by the presence of His Holiness, Abune Tawadros II, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark. Abune Mathias underlined that longstanding relationship of the peoples of Ethiopia and Egypt, linked by the Nile River. This would remain the case, he said. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam would have no significant impact on Egypt or on Ethiopia's relationship with Egypt. Abune Mathias said the visit of His Holiness and his delegation would deepen and lift Ethiopia and Egypt's longstanding historic, cultural and religious ties to a higher level. He called on the Church to do its best to look for resolution and reconciliation of all those involved in violent conflict and of all who had been forced to flee their homes, were starving or facing other difficulties.

Pope Tawadros II expressed his wish that the two churches, the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt and the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, should work together for the creation of a prosperous, stable and peaceful region and provide for a bright future. On behalf of the people of Egypt, the followers of the Coptic Orthodox Church and of himself, Pope Tawadros wished the people and Government of Ethiopia a happy and prosperous New Year. He reminded his listeners that the Feast of the Holy Cross was also celebrated in Egypt and he congratulated the people of Ethiopia for UNESCO's decision to inscribe it as an "intangible heritage of humanity.. The Mayor of Addis Ababa City, Ato Deriba Kuma, said that the Ethiopia Orthodox Church, in addition to its spiritual functions, played an important role in maintaining the national interest of the country and ensuring peaceful coexistence among the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia.

President Dr. Mulatu met with His Holiness, on Wednesday, (September 30) and welcomed the Patriarch and his delegation to Ethiopia, noting that the visit was very significant both for the two Churches and for relations between Egypt and Ethiopia. The President emphasized the importance of deepening the relationship through economic, trade, investment and energy connections. He said Ethiopia was striving to ensure development and eradicate abject poverty. Its development would benefit the people of Egypt just as Egypt's development benefits the people of Ethiopia. He stressed that the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam would benefit both countries as well as assist in regional economic integration and beyond. Pope Tawadros said he had been deeply impressed by his visits to the sanctuaries of Lalibela and Axum, ancient sites of Ethiopian Christianity. He underlined Egypt's support to Ethiopia's development efforts and its fight against poverty. Pope Tawadros also expressed his thanks for the warm welcome given to his delegation to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Abadula Gemedo, who held talks with Abune Tawadros II on Wednesday, (September 30). The Speaker, noting the agreement reached by Prime Minister Hailemariam and President el-Sisi to use the Nile waters equitably for the benefit of their respective peoples, said the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam would ensure sustainable and accelerated development

for both countries. Pope Tawadros described the visits he had made and the meetings he had had with Church and Government officials as successful and interesting.

On Saturday (September 26) His Holiness, Abune Tawadros II met with Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos, State Minister for Foreign Affairs. Ambassador Berhane emphasized the long-standing historic, cultural and religious relationship between Ethiopia and Egypt, and the additional and extra link of nature – the River Nile, the Gift of God to all the peoples of the River basin. Ambassador Berhane further underlined that Ethiopia was committed to make sure that construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam would cause no significant harm to Egypt and its people. Ethiopia wanted, he said, to see a prosperous, peaceful and stable Egypt to play its deserved and important role in the region and beyond. Abune Tawadros underlined his support to Ethiopia's efforts to overcome poverty and to develop the country. Abune Tawadros II said as the two nations drink their water from the same source, they should strive for their mutual benefit; he expressed his hope for a bright future for both nations. Ambassador Berhane noted that cooperation between the two countries was growing significantly, pointing to the agreement reached by their two leaders who had signed the Declaration of Principle to use the Nile waters equitably and resolve problems through dialogue and negotiations. Ambassador Berhane also underlined the need to widen the relationship between Egypt and Ethiopia to cover other areas, including socio-economic relations, trade, and investment and people-to-people relations. Following the meeting with the State Minister, Pope Tawadros II, met with members of Ethiopia's Public Diplomacy Delegation which visited Egypt last Year.