

A Week in the Horn **28th September 2018**

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News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

A Presidential statement from the United Nations Security Council on Friday (September 21) welcomed recent diplomatic developments in the Horn of Africa. (See article)

President Kagame of Rwanda, current Chairman of the African Union, addressing the 73rd United Nations General Assembly on Monday (September 24), praised the peace and friendship achieved in the Horn of Africa. He called on the international community to support the peace initiative and economic integration in progress. He expressed his satisfaction at the recent rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the region at large and called on the UN Security Council and the African Union to work together to consolidate the gains so far and advance them to a higher level.

The United Nations-African Union Joint Task Force on Peace and Security, holding its 15th Consultative Meeting in New York on Saturday (September 22) commended “the bold and strategic leadership displayed by regional leaders” to resolve issues among the countries of the region. It said this set a great example for the broader continental endeavours to resolve challenges. The meeting said the AU and UN stand ready to support the Horn of Africa in consolidating these developments as appropriate. The AU proposed the setting up of a UN-AU Working Group on the Horn.

Evan Atar Adaha, a 52-year-old doctor who runs the only hospital in north-eastern Maban county, awarded the 2018 Nansen Refugee Award for his “humanity and selflessness”, often risked his safety to serve others, the U.N. said on Tuesday (September 25). Dr Atar has been running Maban hospital in Bunj since 2011 and has treated tens of thousands of people forced

to flee from violence and persecution. His 120-bed hospital serves around 200,000 people living in Maban county, 70% of whom are refugees from Sudan, and carries out about 60 operations weekly, under very difficult circumstances.

Ethiopia

Prime Minister Dr Abiy told a delegation from the International Monetary Fund, IMF that his major priority was to sustain the country's rapid and stable economic growth. The Prime Minister met the IMF delegation in Addis Ababa for the annual Article IV Consultations on Monday (September 25). The IMF team presented their findings on Ethiopia's economic and financial developments. (See article).

Italy's Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte is expected to visit Ethiopia in the second week of October for talks with Prime Minister Dr Abiy and will then visit Eritrea to meet President Isaias.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Workneh Gebeyehu headed a high-level Ethiopian delegation to the 73rd United Nations General Assembly in New York which started on September 18. The delegation included State Ministers of Foreign Affairs Mrs Hirut Zemene and Professor Afework Kassu, and other high-level officials from different sectors are participating actively in different summits, meetings and consultations. (See article)

Addressing the UN General Assembly, during a discussion on refugees on Tuesday (September 26), Dr Workneh said that Ethiopia would strengthen its support and assistance to refugees who came from neighboring countries. "To this end", he emphasized, "Ethiopia will enhance its working relationship with UNHCR and other concerned agencies to uplift and improve their conditions". In his remarks, the Minister also underlined that in dealing with refugees it was crucial to address the root causes of their flight from their homeland. He also stressed the need for the international community to share the burden of the hosting countries while the hosting countries themselves should also, of course, perform their duties. (See article)

Dr Workneh addressed the high-level briefing on non-proliferation on Wednesday (September 26), underlining the importance of this "timely and relevant" meeting. He noted that a few days earlier the world had paid tribute to the late Kofi Annan who in his final speech to the UN in 2006 had said: "Can there be any threat more alarming, in today's world, than that of a nuclear or biological weapon falling into the hands of terrorists, or being used by a State, as a result of some terrible misunderstanding or miscalculation? The more States have such weapons, the greater the risk. And, the more those States that already have them increase their arsenals or insist that such weapons are essential to their national security, the more other States feel that they too must have them, for their security". (See article)

Dr Workneh participated in the high-level ministerial meeting on Action for Peacekeeping (A4P), convened by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday (September 25). While noting the fact the world is passing through enormous difficulties, Dr Workneh shared the view of the Secretary General that "the challenges and threats to our collective peace and security are becoming much more complex." These challenges, he said, could only be effectively addressed through a multilateral approach. The importance of the UN was, therefore, crucial (See article)

Dr Workneh attended a working breakfast on Wednesday (September 25) with the Chairperson of the African Union, Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the three African members of the Security Council (A3), Cote D'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea and Ethiopia. The Minister highlighted the efforts of Ethiopia, together with Cote D'Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea, to champion African common interests and positions within the Security Council. (See article)

Dr Workneh also met and held discussions with United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. They exchanged views on developments in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa region and on the way forward to resolve the remaining challenges in the region. Dr Workneh said that a new era of peace was being ushered in across the Horn of Africa following Ethiopia and Eritrea's decision to close decades of antagonism and start a new chapter of friendship and cooperation. He noted that the peace dialogue between Eritrea and Djibouti was another success story contributing a lot towards peace in the region. (See article)

Dr Workneh addressed the General Debate of the 73rd Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on Friday (September 28).

Dr Workneh met with French President, Emmanuel Macron on Wednesday (September 26) on the margins of the 73rd United Nations General Assembly in New York. President Macron underlined his country's commitment to support the new chapter of peace and friendship between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Dr Workneh met Tibor P. Nagy, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, in New York on Wednesday (September 26), and underlined that Ethiopia is committed to transforming itself into a strong democracy. Tibor said the USA will work together with the government of Ethiopia to support the smooth transition to democracy and stability. He also lauded the ongoing positive development of peace in the Horn of Africa.

Minister Workneh held discussions with Harriett Baldwin, UK Minister of State for Africa on Monday (September 24). They exchanged views on bilateral affairs, promoting mutual benefit, and regional issues including development and security to maximize the interests of both their peoples, they agreed to further strengthen bilateral collaboration, praising the peace and friendship agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Dr Workneh met with his Sudanese counterpart, Al-Dirdiri Ahmed on Thursday (September 27), and discussed matters relevant to strengthen bilateral, regional and international cooperation between the two sisterly countries.

Dr Workneh held discussions with Swedish Foreign Minister, Margot Wallström on Wednesday (September 26). The Swedish Foreign Minister expressed her government's support to the momentum of peace and comprehensive cooperation in the region and particularly the recent rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Dr Workneh also met with his Belgian counterpart, Didier Reynders on Wednesday (September 27), and exchanged views on bilateral and regional issues.

Similarly, Dr Workneh met Ecuadorian Foreign Minister José Valencia on Wednesday (September 27), and the two sides signed bilateral agreements on the waiver of Diplomatic and Service visas as well as on the establishment of political consultations.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Mrs Hirut Zemene co-chaired a high-level meeting with Italy, Somalia, and the United Kingdom on Thursday (September 27) in New York and in her opening address underlined recent progress on the political and security fronts in Somalia. She said that it was indeed encouraging to note how far Somalia had come in the past couple of years. This had certainly created an opportunity for promoting greater stability and reconciliation as well as peace-building and post-conflict recovery. It had also made it possible for Somalia to strengthen its federal structure and prepare for upcoming elections, as well as advance economic recovery and development. (See article)

Speaking at the launch of a statue of Nelson Mandela at the United Nations to commemorate the 100th anniversary of his birth, on Monday (September 24), State Minister Mrs Hirut Zemene praised the freedom fighter and former South African President ‘Madiba’ for his dedication to ensuring freedom and justice. The State Minister mentioned his struggle to liberate Africa from apartheid and colonialism. She described Mandela as “a brilliant African, and icon of world diplomacy and leadership” noting that Ethiopia and Mandela had a special connection. Representing her country, Mrs Hirut also welcomed the unanimous adoption of the Nelson Mandela Political Declaration, declaring 2019 as the start of the Nelson Mandela Decade of Peace. (See article)

State Minister Hirut participated at the high-level event organized by the United States on next steps on the path to peace in South Sudan later on Wednesday (September 26). The meeting was attended by IGAD member States, members of the African Union Ad-Hoc Committee as well as the Partners. Following the signing of the Revitalized peace agreement by South Sudanese parties, the meeting was focused on how to support the implementation of the peace process. (See article)

State Minister Hirut also held discussions with the President of South Africa, President Ramaphosa, when the two sides discussed a range of issues to strengthen their already flourishing bilateral and multilateral cooperation at regional and international fora.

State Minister Professor Afework Kassu participated in the Annual Ministerial Meeting of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) on Wednesday (September 26). He noted that Ethiopia has continued to register encouraging results in sustaining broader and rapid economic growth. The State Minister also stressed that the international community should strengthen its partnerships and extend concrete financial, technological and capacity building support for LDCs according to national development plans and priorities. (See article)

Professor Afework participated at the G77 Ministerial meeting on Friday (September 28) and delivered remarks underscoring the importance of accelerating the integrated implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement in order to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path of inclusive growth.

Professor Afework took part in the High-Level Ministerial meeting on Central Africa Republic on Thursday (September 28), and delivered remarks highlighting the need for the international community to continue to support the strengthening of the central authority and conducting inclusive political dialogue in the context of African Union Initiative.

State Minister Professor Afework Kassu also participated at the High-Level Ministerial meeting on the situation in Mali and the Sahel on Wednesday (September 26) and delivered

remarks highlighting the need for the international community to continue supporting Mali and the region in overcoming the multiple and complex challenges they face.

Professor Afework met and held discussions with Mr Sven Mikser, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia on Thursday (September 28), and exchanged views on bilateral and multilateral issues.

The Ethiopian Diaspora Association has finalized preparations to organize a day-long **Diaspora Mobilizing Conference on Investment** at the end of this week (September 29). More than a 1,000 people are expected to attend the conference aimed at encouraging the engagement of the Ethiopian Diaspora in industry, hotel and tourism and other investment and development efforts. It is expected to stimulate the interest of the Diaspora, provide an opportunity to make participants aware of the various possibilities and improve their participation in development programs. It will also discuss ways and means to help create a favorable environment for enterprising Ethiopians in the Diaspora. The conference is organized by the Association together with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ethiopian Customs and Revenue Authority, and the Ethiopian Investment Commission.

Kenya

Cabinet Secretary for Defence Raychelle Omamo and the Commander of the Kenya Air Force Major-General Francis Ogolla received nine Fennec helicopters provided by the United Arab Emirates last week. Ms Omamo said the aircraft would be used “to support combat operations, search-and-rescue and medical evacuations, and escort heavy lift helicopters.” The helicopters are also capable of anti-tank operations, air-to-air combat, ground support, utility transportation role and training missions. The acquisition is part of the Government’s enhanced security measures following increased threats from al-Shabaab.

Somalia

Russia has pledged support for the Somali government in its reinforced fight against terrorism. Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, expressed support for the steps taken in the anti-terrorism war by the federal authorities and by AMISOM. In a meeting with Foreign Minister, Ahmed Awad Issa, on Tuesday (September 25) Mr Lavrov also reaffirmed Russia’s commitment to enhancing political, trade and economic cooperation.

An International Monetary Fund staff team led by Mohamad H. Elhage visited Nairobi last week (September 15–20) to discuss Somalia’s recent macroeconomic developments, progress under the Staff-Monitored Programs, and the economic outlook. (See article)

The World Bank Group’s Board of Directors has endorsed the first four-year Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for Somalia and approved two investment programs worth \$80 million. It outlines the Bank’s strategy to support the government’s goal to expand service delivery, build resilience to climatic shocks, and boost economic opportunities in Somalia. As the country’s first development strategy since the early 1990s, the CPF for 2019-2022 reflects the progress of economic reform and institution building since 2013 when the Bank reengaged with Somalia. It focuses on institutions and services and economic inclusion and sustainable growth.

A high-level meeting on Somalia took place on Thursday (September 27) in New York, sponsored by the government and by Britain, Ethiopia, and Italy. Insecurity linked to the al-Shabaab activity, coupled with prolonged drought, has left some 5.4 million people in

Somalia in need of food assistance and 2.6 million internally displaced. The UN Secretary-General's most recent report emphasizes that the overall security situation remains "volatile and unpredictable."

Ahmed Eissa Awad, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation and Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of the Board of the Qatar-based organization Silatech, witnessed the signing of three agreements to empower Somali youth on Monday (September 24) in New York. One agreement covered provision of housing and energy solutions for 1,000 families, development of local youth-owned enterprises and creation of around 3,000 jobs for returning refugees and IDPs in Kismayo. The second is for Silatech to support Al Amal bank in financing youth enterprises to create 63,414 jobs; and the third, in partnership with the Somali Institute for Development and Research Analysis (SIDRA), is to train 9,000 graduates with the required skills for job placement.

The Federal Ministry of Internal Security and Benadir Regional Administration hosted a three-day consultation in Mogadishu last week, to present Government's security initiatives and hear people's views and concerns on security and justice in the Benadir region. Federal Minister for Internal Security, Mohamed Abukar Islow Duale highlighted the importance of public cooperation with security forces to ensure safety for all. He said the outcome of the meeting would be reviewed by the Ministry and the Banadir Regional Administration and included in a comprehensive Banadir Security Strategy. Recommendations included strengthening coordination, accountability, and transparency of justice institutions and their capacity to adhere to human rights' law and strengthening community policing initiatives for better community outreach and collaboration. Among participants were officials from federal members states, religious leaders, academics, young people and representatives from women's groups.

Sudan

Army Chief of General Staff Lt. General Kamal Abdel-Marouf Sunday has been invited to a counterterrorism conference organized by the US administration in Washington. The invitation was extended by the US Embassy in Khartoum and General Abdel Maaouf stressed the importance of continued exchange between the two countries to develop bilateral relations through dialogue and joint action.

A statement from the Foreign Ministry last weekend said the third and final phase of the exit strategy of the UN/AU hybrid peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID) would be completed within two years. The statement said Darfur's five states had become safe and it was now hosting large numbers of refugees from other countries. Darfur, indeed, had moved from emergency phase to reconstruction and development, underlining that the region was safe and stable. Sudan would, of course, continue to support the Mission to carry out its tasks until UNAMID left. A tripartite working group of the Sudanese government, African Union and the United Nations was set up in February 2015 to develop the exit strategy for UNAMID. In July, the UN Security Council unanimously decided to extend the mandate of UNAMID for one year while reducing the number of troops in line with an exit strategy aiming to close the operation in two years.

As a High-level Ethiopian delegation attends the 73rd UN General Assembly...

The high-level Ethiopian delegation attending the 73rd United Nations General Assembly, which started on September 18, is led by Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Workneh Gebeyehu. The delegation which includes State Ministers of Foreign Affairs Mrs Hirut Zemene and Professor Afework Kassu, and other high-level officials from different sectors is participating actively in different summits, meetings and consultations.

Addressing the UN General Assembly, during discussion on refugees, Dr Workneh said that Ethiopia would strengthen its support and assistance to refugees who came from neighboring countries. “To this end”, he emphasized, “Ethiopia will enhance its working relationship with UNHCR and other concerned agencies to uplift and improve their conditions”. In his remarks, the Minister also underlined that in dealing with refugees it was crucial to address the root causes of their flight from their homeland. He also stressed the need for the international community to share the burden of the hosting countries while the hosting countries themselves should also, of course, perform their duties. The President of the World Bank, Mr Jim Yong Kim, thanked Ethiopia for its provision of education and job opportunities to refugees. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, has himself underlined the responsibilities of the international community to receive and extend unreserved support to refugees.

On the sidelines of the 73rd UN General Assembly, Dr Workneh met and held discussions with United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. They exchanged views on developments in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa region and on the way forward to resolve the remaining challenges in the region. Dr Workneh said that a new era of peace was being ushered in across the Horn of Africa following Ethiopia and Eritrea’s decision to close decades of antagonism and start a new chapter of friendship and cooperation. He noted that the peace dialogue between Eritrea and Djibouti was another success story contributing a lot towards peace in the region. Commending the support and the positive roles the UN has played for the realization of peace in the Horn of Africa, the Minister reaffirmed Ethiopia would continue to work diligently to achieve sustainable peace across the region. Secretary-General Guterres welcomed the rapprochement between Eritrea and Ethiopia as a positive development for regional peace and stability. He reiterated the United Nations’ full support to these efforts and for Ethiopia’s facilitation of the dialogue between Djibouti and Eritrea. Dr Workneh also met with the Under Secretary-General in Charge of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, Mr Vladimir Voronkov. The two sides had a fruitful discussion concerning ways of enhancing cooperation between Ethiopia and the United Nations in the fight against terrorism. During their meeting, Dr Workneh asserted that Ethiopia valued the support of the UN Office of Counter Terrorism in its fight against terrorism, which he described as a global threat. “Ethiopia,” he said, “is adamant about containing terrorism in the region and beyond in tandem with other stakeholders both governmental and non-governmental.”

On Monday (September 24) Minister Workneh had discussions with **Harriett Baldwin**, UK Minister of State for Africa. They exchanged views on bilateral affairs, promoting mutual benefit, and regional issues including development and security to maximize the interests of both their peoples, they agreed to further strengthen bilateral collaboration. Praising the peace and friendship agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea, Ms Baldwin said that the rapprochement between the two was critical for peace and development in the region.

Minister Dr Workneh Gebeyehu met Tibor P. Nagy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs in Network on Wednesday (September 26), and underlined that Ethiopia is committed

to transforming itself into a strong democracy. Tibor said the USA will work together with the government of Ethiopia to support the smooth transition to full democracy and stability. He also lauded the ongoing positive development of peace in the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia remains a priority to the administration in its endeavor for peace and stability in the region, he added. The Minister also met with his Belgian counterpart, Didier Reynders, and exchanged views on bilateral and regional issues. Similarly, Dr Workneh met Ecuadorian Foreign Minister José Valencia and the two sides signed bilateral agreements on the waiver of Diplomatic and service visas as well as on the establishment of political consultations.

State Ministers Mrs Hirut Zemene and Professor Afework Kassu also attended various meetings and held bilateral discussions. South Africa's President Ramaphosa and UN Secretary-General Guterres unveiled a statue of Nelson Mandela at the United Nations to commemorate the 100th anniversary of his birth, on September 24, 1918. President Ramaphosa said: "This morning, with the Political Declaration adopted by the Summit, we have declared the next 10 years as the Nelson Mandela International Decade for Peace. We should seize the opportunity of this decade to rally behind a common agenda for peace." Mrs Hirut, taking part in this event to honor Nelson Mandela, praised the freedom fighter and former South African President 'Madiba' for his dedication to ensure freedom and justice. The State Minister mentioned his struggle to liberate Africa from apartheid and colonialism. She described Mandela as "a brilliant African, and icon of world diplomacy and leadership" noting that Ethiopia and Mandela had a special connection. Representing her country, Mrs Hirut also welcomed the unanimous adoption of the Nelson Mandela Political Declaration, declaring 2019 as the start of the Nelson Mandela Decade of Peace.

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Dr Workneh addresses a high-level briefing on non-proliferation in New York...

Dr Workneh addressed the high-level briefing on non-proliferation on Wednesday (September 26), underlining the importance of this "timely and relevant" meeting. He noted that a few days earlier the world had paid tribute to the late Kofi Annan who in his final

speech to the UN in 2006 had said: “Can there be any threat more alarming, in today’s world, than that of a nuclear or biological weapon falling into the hands of terrorists, or being used by a State, as a result of some terrible misunderstanding or miscalculation? The more States have such weapons, the greater the risk. And, the more those States that already have them increase their arsenals or insist that such weapons are essential to their national security, the more other States feel that they too must have them, for their security”.

“This, Dr Workneh, said was the reality we face today”. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction posed grave threats to global peace and security. From the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the Iranian nuclear issue to chemical attacks in Syria and the Salisbury incident in the UK, proliferation risks have become one of the most serious challenges of our time. The international non-proliferation regime was now under serious challenge and as Secretary-General Guterres said, “global anxieties about nuclear weapons are at the highest level since the end of the Cold War”.

Dr Workneh said it was absolutely vital to address the risks of proliferation comprehensively, and the only option was to work for a negotiated solution, through political and diplomatic means. He said everyone had been following the developments following the recent Summit meeting between President Trump and President Kim Jong Un, and the outcome had given some sense of hope for progress towards the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the advancement of peace in north east Asia. He said: “We earnestly hope that you will maintain the momentum generated recently to find a comprehensive, peaceful, diplomatic and political solution to the DPRK issue in line with the relevant security council resolutions.” He welcomed the outcome of the Third Inter-Korean Summit in Pyongyang and hoped this will lay the foundation for concrete action towards sustainable peace, security and complete and verifiable denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula in accordance with relevant Security Council Resolutions.

Referring to Iran, Dr Workneh said Ethiopia was convinced that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was a significant achievement for multilateralism. He said, “We, however, understand the challenges and difficulties in the broader implementation of Resolution 2231. While we recognize the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA presents a serious challenge, the commitment of the remaining participating countries is critical for the full implementation of the JCPOA. We hope they will continue to exert every possible effort in addressing the prevailing challenges and contribute to the full implementation of this agreement, which still remains vital for the global non-proliferation architecture”.

Addressing the proliferation risk posed by non-state actors, Dr Workneh said the 1540 Committee continued to have a significant role, and strengthening the assistance framework of the Committee to Member States continued to be important in addressing the proliferation risk posed by non-state actors, including terrorists.

Dr Workneh noted that multilateral agreements, such as the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Non-Proliferation Treaty, contributed immensely to the prevention and elimination of the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. It was therefore in everybody’s best interest to preserve these important multilateral agreements to guarantee collective safety and security and to ensure their full and effective implementation. He concluded by reaffirming Ethiopia’s unwavering commitment to continue fulfilling its international obligations by taking all necessary measures to prevent the

proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction or their means of delivery into the hands of states and non-state actors, including terrorists. Ethiopia would, he stressed, be implementing the relevant Security Council Resolutions in this regard.

...And participates in the UN Security Council's A3 breakfast meeting

The President of the Republic of Angola and current Chairperson of the African Union Peace and Security Council hosted a working breakfast on Wednesday (September 25) with the Chairperson of the African Union, Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the three African members of the Security Council (A3), Cote D'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea and Ethiopia. Foreign Minister Dr Workneh Gebeyehu attended the meeting and highlighted the efforts of Ethiopia, together with Cote D'Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea, to champion African common interests and positions within the Security Council.

The meeting heard a progress report from Donald Kaberuka, the African Union's High Representative for the Peace Fund, about operationalization of the Peace Fund, the financing of the African Union and ways and means of getting the support of the United Nations. The meeting underlined the need to continue high-level engagement in supporting the effort being undertaken by the three African Members of the Security Council towards securing the support of the Security Council on the issue of predictable and sustainable financing for African Union-mandated and authorized peace support operations. The meeting was attended by the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Moussa Faki, the President of Rwanda and current Chair of the Union, Paul Kagame, and the President of Equatorial Guinea, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo.

Ethiopia participates in the high-level event on Action for Peacekeeping...

Foreign Minister Dr Workneh Gebeyehu participated in the high-level ministerial meeting on Action for Peacekeeping (A4P), convened by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday (September 25). While noting the fact that the world is passing through enormous difficulties, Dr Workneh shared the view of the Secretary General that "the challenges and threats to our collective peace and security are becoming much more complex." These challenges, he said, could only be effectively addressed through a multilateral approach. The importance of the UN was, therefore, crucial.

The Foreign Minister emphasized the need for the United Nations to be made fit for purpose in order to effectively respond to these challenges. In this regard, the reform of UN peacekeeping operations, in all their aspects, is considered to be one of the core pillars of the reform of the United Nations Peace and Security Architecture. The Foreign Minister commended the Secretary General's Initiative in taking concrete action with regards to the reform of the Peacekeeping Operations. The Minister reiterated Ethiopia's close interest and involvement in the development of the Declaration of Shared Commitments on Action for Peacekeeping. Ethiopia, as a major troop contributing country to the UN Peacekeeping Operations, was among the first countries to have endorsed the Declaration, he said.

Highlighting Ethiopia's track record in UN peacekeeping over the past 70 years, **Dr Workneh assured the ministerial meeting of his Government's commitment in supporting "the ongoing reform efforts to strengthen UN Peacekeeping, which continues to play a significant role in advancing our collective security."** In this regard, he highlighted Ethiopia's active engagement in discussions on the reform of UN

peacekeeping and in working closely with other like-minded countries. Ethiopia, he said, has been facilitating informal discussions among key stakeholders on the various facets of the reform exercise through the Informal Group of Friends of Peace Operations, that it co-chairs with Norway and the Republic of Korea.

Dr Workneh underlined the importance of enhancing partnerships with other regional and sub-regional groupings in the spirit of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. He noted the Declaration emphasized the need to enhance the predictability, sustainability and flexibility of financing for AU-led peace support operations authorized by the Security Council, and under the Security Council's authority consistent with Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.

Ethiopia co-chairs a high-level meeting on Somalia in New York

Ethiopia co-chaired a high-level meeting with Italy, Somalia and the United Kingdom on Thursday (September 27) in New York and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Mrs Hirut Zemene in her opening address underlined recent progress in the political and security fronts in Somalia. She said that it was indeed encouraging to note how far Somalia had come in the past couple of years. This had certainly created an opportunity for promoting greater stability and reconciliation as well as peace-building and post-conflict recovery. It had also made it possible for Somalia to strengthen its federal structure and prepare for upcoming elections, as well as advance economic recovery and development.

Nevertheless, there were still enormous challenges. Al-Shabaab remained a potent threat; Somalia's nascent institutions of governance needed to be strengthened; its security apparatus was being built from scratch; the humanitarian challenge was still vast; and its peacebuilding and reconstruction needs are massive. Political, economic, and security reforms were needed to ensure that the benefits of recent and future progress could be embedded across Somalia's institutions. There was "an absolute need to sustain the momentum generated over the past couple of years and the continued engagement of the international community in support of Somalia is very critical."

Mrs Hirut noted that economic recovery would make an important contribution to building peace and stability. Somalia's government efforts to normalize its relations with international financial institutions and to work towards debt relief were commendable and should be supported. At the same time, economic recovery required improving public financial management and creating a better enabling environment for business and investment. It was essential for donors to sustain their engagement and support to Somalia. International financial institutions, jointly with the donor community, must do their part to support the Somali Government in improving the business climate.

The State Minister also noted the continuing volatility of the security situation and underlined that swift implementation of the National Security Architecture and the Somalia transition plan were essential to dictate when and how Somalis could successfully assume security responsibilities and provide protection to the people. She said partners appreciated the commitment of the government of Somalia to progressively shoulder the lead role in providing security and to implement reforms to ensure that the security gains made so far were not reversed. Equally, the role of AMISOM, in close cooperation with the Somali National Security Forces, continued to be significant. More predictable support by the international community was important to implement AMISOM's mandate effectively and support Somalia's path towards peace and stability. However, she stressed, this needed

streamlined and coordinated supports for the Somalia National Security Forces with clear distribution and definition of roles and responsibilities among stakeholders, including AMISOM.

In conclusion, State Minister Hirut insisted, the IGAD region would continue, along with the AU, as well as UN and partners, to assist Somalis to continue making progress in stabilizing and rebuilding their country. The peace and security of Somalia, she said, was linked with the region's peace and security and "we will continue to cooperate with the government and people of Somalia in assisting them overcome their challenges."

State Minister Professor Afework addresses the LDC Ministerial meeting in New York

State Minister Professor Afework Kassu represented Ethiopia at the Ministerial Meeting of the Least Developed Countries group. There are currently 47 countries in the LDC list which is reviewed every three years by the Committee for Development. LDCs are classified as low-income countries with severe structural impediments to sustainable development and as highly vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks low levels of human assets. The LDC has been chaired by Bangladesh for the last three years and Malawi is now taking over the chair. Among those present were also Ms Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the 73rd Session of the General Assembly; Ms Inga Rhonda King, President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC); Neven Mimica, European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development; Ms Fekitamoela Katoa Utoikamanu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS); and Tegegnetwork Gettu, Associate Administrator of the UNDP.

The Istanbul Program of Action for the LDCs for the Decade 2011-2020 was adopted, along with the Istanbul Declaration, by the 4th UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries held in Istanbul, in May 2011. It laid out the international community's vision and strategy for the sustainable development of LDCs for the next decade with a strong focus on developing their productive capacities. A principle objective of the Istanbul Program of Action has been poverty reduction through sustainable structural transformation, and the 2030 Agenda recognized the importance of addressing the specific challenges of LDCs with its call to leave no one behind. And, in this regard, as Professor Afework noted in his address to the meeting, LDCs have registered some progress in implementing the IPOA and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He underlined that 12 LDCs had met the graduation criteria this year. It was a very significant development, considering that over the past 47 years only five countries have graduated from the Group. This, the State Minister emphasized, [is] what LDCs could do to achieve internationally agreed development goals with the support of international partners; and he congratulated them.

Equally, Professor Afework stressed, progress remained insufficient and uneven. LDCs continued to face multiple structural challenges, including poverty, unemployment and the adverse impacts of climate change. He said: "We must recommit to accelerate the pace of implementation of the 2030 Agenda to ensure its full and timely execution, with particular emphasis to the special needs of LDCs", adding that the international community should strengthen its partnerships and extend concrete financial, technological and capacity building support for LDCs according to their national development plans and priorities.

Professor Afework noted that Ethiopia continued to implement the IPOA and the SDGs by integrating them into its current national development plan and had registered encouraging results in sustaining its rapid economic growth, still one of the fastest in the world. By expanding rural development programs, it was working to achieve food security and promote sustainable agriculture. To achieve structural transformation, Ethiopia was investing in social and physical infrastructure, including renewable energy. It was also implementing an industrial strategy together with an enabling business environment which included the establishment of eco-friendly industrial parks. Other top priorities included building a climate resilient economy, preventing and managing disasters, including implementation of productive safety-net programs.

Equally, Professor Afework pointed out, there were still serious challenges, including poverty, youth unemployment, a sluggish export sector, shortage of foreign currency, rising public debt and climate change. To address these, the government had started introducing integrated economic reforms to respond to people's "legitimate demands". The reforms, which included opening up state-owned firms to local and foreign investment, were being undertaken as the government renewed its commitment to ensuring inclusive and sustainable development for all. He added that the road to reform would not be easy and took the opportunity to invite the UN development agencies to extend their technical and capacity building assistance in line with Ethiopia's national priorities. He said the ongoing UN development reform could provide a timely opportunity to further strengthen existing cooperation and partnership between Ethiopia and the UN development system. He also stressed that national efforts, like those of Ethiopia, should be supported by international partners on the basis of their commitments to the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the Paris Climate Change Agreement.

AU Peace and Security Council welcome positive developments in the Horn of Africa

A Ministerial Level meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council was held in New York on Monday (September 24), on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly, to discuss the State of Peace and Security in Africa and the Initiatives and Steps for Promoting African Solutions to African Problems. At the end of the meeting the Council adopted a communique which welcomed "the recent positive developments in the Horn of Africa marked by the improved diplomatic relations between and among the countries of the region, particularly between Eritrea and Ethiopia, and the signing of the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation between Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea in Asmara, on September 5, 2018, as well as the visit undertaken by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and other senior officials of these three countries to Djibouti, on September 6, 2018, as part of the efforts to normalize relations and promote good neighborliness, enhance peace, security, stability and advance regional integration."

The Council also commended the leaders of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia for their steadfast efforts and commitment to promote the interests of their people and the region as a whole. In particular, it commended: "the courageous and groundbreaking steps taken by Dr Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Isaias Afwerki, President of the Republic of Eritrea, towards ending the 20 years of conflict between their two sisterly countries, including the signing, on July 8, 2018, of an agreement that led to the full restoration of their diplomatic relations."

The Council encouraged all stakeholders in Somalia to take advantage of the new regional dispensation in the Horn of Africa to safeguard the hard-won political and security gains that the AMISOM presence there had helped to secure since 2007. It requested that the AU Commission, working in close cooperation with the countries of the region, take “necessary steps with a view to supporting the new dispensation, towards promoting peace, security and development in the Horn of Africa”.

It also welcomed the signing of the Final Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan during the 33rd Extra-Ordinary Inter-Governmental Authority on Development Assembly of Heads of State and Government on September 12, in Addis Ababa. This had been preceded by the Khartoum round of the High-Level Revitalization Forum between the Government of South Sudan and the opposition groups, as well as the face- to-face talks since June, between President Salva Kiir Mayardit and Dr Riek Machar Teny under the auspices of Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed, President Omar Hassan Al Bashir of Sudan, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya. The Council commended the efforts of the leaders of the region and “strongly urged all South Sudan political actors to commit to the full implementation of the Revitalized Agreement.”

In conclusion, the AU Peace and Security Council emphasized that these regional efforts demonstrated the efficacy of “African solutions to African problems.” It commended the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development and reiterated the AU’s commitment to continue to support IGAD’s efforts to promote peace, security and stability across the entire Horn of Africa region.

The UN Security Council welcomes recent diplomatic developments in the Horn of Africa

Members of the United Nations Security Council have welcomed the recent diplomatic developments in the Horn of Africa, noting that the Eritrea’s normalization of relations with Ethiopia and Djibouti would have “far-reaching consequences”. In a Presidential statement issued at the end of last week (September 21), the members of the Security Council welcomed the recent Agreement on Peace, Friendship and Comprehensive Cooperation between Ethiopia and Eritrea, signed by Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed and President Isaias in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The Council also recognized the role played by Saudi Arabia in resolving the hostility between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

The Agreement on Peace, Friendship and Comprehensive Cooperation between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the State of Eritrea, underlined the historic bonds between the peoples of Ethiopia and Eritrea, Recognizing the “close bonds of geography, history, culture and religion between the two countries and their peoples”, and respecting “each other’s independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity”. It stressed their desire “to achieve lasting peace and cement their historical ties” as well as their determination “to establish comprehensive cooperation and “contribute actively to regional and global peace and security. The agreement also reiterates the commitment of the two sides to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Agreement is also another step confirming the commitment of Ethiopia and Eritrea to bring a full closure to decades of hostility and herald the new era of friendship and cooperation launched just six months ago. It was on April 2, during his inaugural speech to

the parliament, that Prime Minister Dr Abiy set the process in motion, making it clear that Ethiopia would resolve issues with Eritrea and bring lasting peace and prosperity to the Horn of Africa. Following President Isaias's very positive response, the two countries signed the initial Declaration of Peace and Friendship during Dr Abiy's historic visit to Asmara on July 9. This was further complemented by President Isaias's visit to Addis Ababa on July 14, and rapidly followed by the reopening of embassies on both sides and other measures to push the rapprochement forward at high speed.

In the statement, the members of the Security Council also welcomed Eritrea's normalization of relations with Djibouti that took place in Jeddah on September 16. Members expressed the hope that this meeting would open a new chapter in the relations between Djibouti and Eritrea and encouraged the two countries to continue to engage in meaningful dialogue. The statement also noted that these developments represented historic and significant milestones with far-reaching and positive consequences for the Horn of Africa and beyond.

Overall, members of the Security Council commended the leaders of the region for their wisdom and courage in the continued effort to resolve disputes. They called on them to sustain these recent efforts with the view to opening a new chapter of cooperation thereby ensuring greater peace, stability and prosperity in the region. The members of the Security Council expressed their readiness to support countries of the region in their endeavors. The US is this month's president of the Security Council.

IMF praises Ethiopia for cutting current account deficit; projects 8.5% GDP growth

An IMF delegation in Addis Ababa for the annual Article IV Consultations presented their findings on Ethiopia's economic and financial developments, after two weeks of consultations with Ethiopian officials at the beginning of this week. They praised Ethiopia for cutting its deficit in the current account down to 6.4% of the GDP, in 2017/18, and the team attributed the reduction to measures taken to limit imports by the government: improving infrastructure, reducing borrowing, containing inflation and a tight monetary policy. Prime Minister Dr Abiy, who met the delegation members on Monday (September 24), told them that his major priority was to sustain the country's rapid and stable economic growth.

The IMF suggests that Ethiopia will see an impressive expansion in its economy in 2018/19, with GDP estimated to grow by 8.5%. Although not in the double-digit figures of recent years, there are few countries in the world growing at this rate.

The IMF team, led by Julio Escolano, was in Addis Ababa in mid-September 2018. They met with senior government officials, including Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed; Dr Abraham Tekeste, Minister of Finance & Economic Cooperation; and Dr Yinager Dessie, Governor of the National Bank of Ethiopia. The statement issued by the team, pending a more extensive report to be submitted to the Board of Directors, described Ethiopian authorities' decision to tighten budget expenditure as "prudent." However, although lower than expected, the federal government ran a budget deficit of 3.7% of GDP, higher than the 3% fiscal deficit advised by the European Union economic zone.

The IMF foresees the political uncertainty of last year receding soon and an increase in domestic and foreign investment. It calls Prime Minister Dr Abiy's desire, to shift the engine of economic activities to the private sector while the public sector consolidates, an "appropriate" measure to maintain steady growth. Indeed, the IMF said: "The mission

supports the ambitious reform agenda announced by the Prime Minister aimed at opening up important parts of the economy to competition and encouraging private sector investment.” The IMF sees mounting external debt and imbalances as a risk to macroeconomic stability. It urges the administration to reduce public sector borrowing and bring inflation back to target, while recommending tight monetary and fiscal policy stances. It also emphasizes the importance of Ethiopia introducing a more flexible exchange rate regime, as well as introducing reforms in the financial system and markets. The statement said: “These macroeconomic policies, combined with the announced reforms, will improve competitiveness, reduce external imbalances and rebuild buffers while raising the growth potential of the economy over the medium term.”

IMF Staff concludes a visit to Nairobi to meet Somali authorities

An International Monetary Fund staff team led by Mohamad H. Elhage visited Nairobi last week (September 15–20) to discuss Somalia’s recent macroeconomic developments, progress under the Staff-Monitored Programs, and the economic outlook. The team met with Finance Minister, Mr Abdirahman Duale Beileh; Central Bank Governor, Bashir Issa Ali; and other officials. They also met with representatives of bilateral and multilateral donors in Nairobi and updated them on performance under the Staff-Monitored Program and coordinate efforts on capacity building activities, as well as to support the authorities’ efforts to raise the funding for Phase I of the currency reform.

At the end of the visit, Mr Elhage issued a statement stressing that despite a difficult economic and political environment, the Somali authorities were building a good track record of policy and reform implementation; and they were also completing the preparatory steps for the launch of the new national currency, a high priority in the country’s reform agenda. The statement noted that the Federal Government of Somalia had successfully completed two consecutive 12-month Staff-Monitored Programs since May 2016. In June this year, the Managing Director of the IMF approved a third 12-month Staff-Monitored Program (SMP III) covering May 2018–April 2019: “This third program will continue to lay the foundation so that Somalia obtains debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) Initiative as soon as feasible once established benchmarks are met.”

The statement said that, despite recent efforts to further solidify economic stability, security and peace, challenges were significant, adding that the problem is compounded by its vulnerability to natural disasters. The 2016–17 drought, which was followed by floods in some regions in 2018, has led to large humanitarian needs. Due mostly to an increase in internally displaced persons, demand for humanitarian assistance remained elevated in 2018. To address the security challenges in the country, the Federal Government, jointly with the international community, has renewed its focus on building the capability of Somalia’s security forces and institutions as the country prepares for elections in 2020-21. It noted: “Economic activity is recovering slowly from the 2016–17 drought aided by favourable rains and continued strong remittance inflows. For 2018, growth is projected to recover to 3.1% from 2.3% and inflation to ease to 3.5%, down from 5.3% in 2017. Fiscal performance through July was strong. This was driven by strong domestic revenue collection which largely offset the slow disbursement of grants.

A Staff-Monitored Program provides for the performance of both structural benchmarks and indicative targets. The statement said the requirements for the end of June had been met and

those for September were on track. In addition, “progress has been made to advance on the December 2018 and March 2019 benchmarks.”

The IMF said expenditure needed to be contained and it therefore made several recommendations to keep the fiscal framework on track for the rest of the year. To continue to improve revenue collections from recent tax measures it suggested a sales tax on imports of goods; a corporate profit tax; sales taxes and license fees from telecommunication companies; and the continued transfer of revenue collection from ministries, departments, and agencies to the Ministry of Finance. This could include visa charges, and passport and labour registration fees. It called for strengthening revenue collection by the Large-and-Medium-Taxpayers’ Office, fully functional since June and fore the government to ensure that grant projections were consistent with confirmed pledged grants.

The IMF team also commended the authorities’ strong resolve to successfully complete the preparatory steps for the launch of the new national currency, which it said remained a high priority in the reform agenda: “Given the difficult economic and political environment, there are downside risks to the program”, it said, “however, the authorities’ continued strong commitment to the program, donor support, and efforts to strengthen relations with Federal Member States should mitigate those risks.”

The IMF in an assessment letter to the Central Bank of Somalia in May said that Somalia had fulfilled the requisite measures to proceed with issuance of new currency following the completion of the first and second Staff-Monitored Programmes. It said then that the Somali government was making progress in building institutions and improving economic performance: “Budget execution, the treasury and cash management frameworks, and domestic revenue collection are improving. Efforts to lay the foundation for sustainable financial sector development and strengthen compliance with anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism standards are underway and preparatory work to launch a new national currency is well advanced...The drought hurt economic activity last year but sustained international community support and remittances helped Somalia avoid a severe humanitarian crisis. For 2018, growth is projected to increase to 3.1 percent from an estimated 2.3 percent in 2017, and inflation is expected to ease to under 3 percent from around 5.2 percent in 2017.”

The letter to the Bank said the authorities would need the support of the donor community to raise the needed \$41 million for the issue of new currency. This budget would cover the entire operation of Phase I which includes all aspects of the issuance and distribution on the new currency. It would provide for the replacement of the existing counterfeit notes in circulation with genuine notes. The letter advises that in phase one, the CBS will only issue new small-denominations (i.e., 1,000; 2,000; 5,000; and 10,000) of Somali shilling banknotes to replace the counterfeits currently in circulation. It said the injection of new Somali shilling banknotes including larger denominations, should only take place during phase II which would require significant further preparatory work, including the strengthening the Central Bank of Somalia’s institutional capacity and developing independent monetary policy instruments and reserve management guidelines. This would be the first issue of new notes since 1991 and would be a major milestone towards the debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. Clearance of arrears owed to the IMF and World Bank is a mandatory step in the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative.

The International Day of Peace

The International Day of Peace is observed around the world on September 21. The UN General Assembly has declared it as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples and this is far more than just an absence of conflict. A peaceful society is one where there is justice and equality for everyone. Peace enables a sustainable environment to take shape and a sustainable environment will help promote peace. In other words, the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including, as they do, the effort to remove poverty and hunger, expand health and education, respond to the necessities of climate change, gender equality, water, sanitation, energy, environment and social justice, are part of the necessary framework for building a peaceful world.

This year's theme for the International Day of Peace was "The Right to Peace – The Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 70". The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is, of course, a milestone document in the history of human rights, and as UN Secretary-General António Guterres said: "It is time all nations and all people live up to the words of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognizes the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human race."

Today the world continues to slide ever deeper into violence. A record 68.5 million people have been forced to flee war or persecution worldwide; more people are being killed in conflict; more civilians, especially women and children, are dying than ever before. Peacebuilding, indeed, is needed more than ever before, not least because only US\$10 billion is spent every year on peacebuilding. This is to be compared with an extraordinary US\$1.7 trillion spent on global military expenditure every year.

Since the creation of the UN in 1945, Ethiopia has firmly and fully supported the principle and policy of maintaining peace and collective security. It has a long history of participation in United Nations peace operations dating back to the 1950s. It has participated in peacekeeping missions in Korea, Congo, Ivory Coast, Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia, Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia. It has effectively and repeatedly demonstrated its commitment, frequently participating in peacekeeping operations since it first contributed 6,000 soldiers to the UN peacekeeping forces in Korea (1951–1954). A few years later it sent three brigades, consisting of 10,000 personnel to the Congo in the 1960s, following the official request from the UN to intervene in the crisis to stabilize the country. Ethiopia has also sent forces to the UN peacekeeping mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) with the troops arriving in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide of 1994. More recently it has provided forces to Darfur and also to Abyei where it supplies almost the entire military personnel of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei, with over 4,400 personnel. Ethiopia also contributes significantly to the AU peacekeeping force in Somalia (AMISOM), providing 4395 uniformed personnel to that operation.

With over 8,000 uniformed personnel currently serving in UN missions, Ethiopia is currently the top contributor to UN peacekeeping operations, supplying 8% of the UN's total peacekeeping force. Of these 624 are women and Ethiopia is also the leading contributor of female peacekeepers to UN missions. Women have always had a role in peacekeeping, but the Secretary-General is now committed to ensuring that women play a far more active role in peace operations. In all fields of peacekeeping, women peacekeepers have proven that they can perform the same roles, to the same standards and under the same difficult conditions, as their male counterparts. Having women involved in peacekeeping missions makes the force more approachable to women in the community, and the UN has called for women's

involvement in peacekeeping missions to reach 20% percent by 2020. Ethiopia has already reached 16% percent.

Ethiopia's involvement in international peacekeeping has been welcomed, and it will continue, adapting, like UN Peacekeeping itself, to adapt to meet the demands of different conflicts and a changing world political landscape. It is equally dedicated to peacebuilding, inseparable from peacekeeping. Today's multidimensional peacekeeping operations are called upon not only to maintain peace and security but also to facilitate the political processes, protect civilians, disarm combatants, support elections, protect and promote human rights and restore the rule of law. In fact, to assist in peacebuilding. UN Peacekeeping now is far from static. The UN is currently carrying out a reform of its peace and security architecture, initiated by the Secretary-General. It will ensure that UN will end up stronger in prevention, more effective in mediation, and more cost-effective in operation, in peacekeeping and in providing the basis for peace building.

The Ethiopia Railway Summit in Addis Ababa

The Ethiopia Railway Summit took place in Addis Ababa last week (September 17-18). It was the first such meeting, dedicated to the development of Ethiopia's railway sector.

Organized by the Ethiopian Railways Corporation in partnership with China Africa Advisory and RDN Global, it provided a unique platform for international railway technology companies, investors and financial institutions to engage with Ethiopian officials, decision-makers and technical experts on possibilities for cooperation in the sector. Participants obtained first-hand information on Ethiopia's railway transportation and investment policies, national and international priority projects and related procurement, financing and investment opportunities. The meeting came at a most appropriate time as recent developments to encourage public-private partnership and possible partial privatization of an expanding railway sector offer substantial possibilities to interested parties. The Ethiopian Railways Corporation is offering opportunities for Public Private Partnership to engage in railway, with the aim of expanding public services, reducing project delays, and increasing resource utilization.

In his opening remarks at the Railway Summit, the CEO of the Ethiopian Railways Corporation, Dr Berhanu Beshah, noted Ethiopia had successfully completed East Africa's first Light Rail Transit (in Addis Ababa) and the Addis Ababa-Djibouti cross-border electrified standard gauge railway. However, despite these great achievements, he said, the country still had significant challenges including lack of capacity. He said: "We need to further strengthen our capacity in planning, implementation, and maintaining various projects as well as expanding existing projects, and building new partnership to realize our ambitions." He said that support from partners would not only serve the Ethiopian people in realizing their vision for a modern national railway, but also contribute significantly to East Africa's regional transport and communication networks. Dr Berhanu pointed out that the Railways Corporation had "performed feasibility studies, alignment selection and verification, detailed design, final design integration, and related environmental and social impact assessment works for some 2,300 km of standard gauge electrified railway," as well as developing plans for Transit Oriented Development in Addis Ababa and logistics' parks and railway tourism projects throughout the country.

The State Minister for Public Enterprises, Ms Simegn Wube, told the Summit that the government had recently announced privatization or partial privatization of some of public

enterprises, including the railway infrastructure, and/or the engagement of such enterprises in joint ventures with national and international investors. She said: “The summit, therefore, takes place at an opportune moment as we are moving towards privatization of major enterprises and new forms of partnership in the railway sector.” The State Minister urged participating companies at the Summit to consider partaking in Ethiopia’s fast-growing railway sector.

The Director of China-Africa Advisory, Moritz Weigel, said the aim of the summit was to create new opportunities for realizing Ethiopia’s railway vision in railway development by bringing together international railway technology companies and international financial institutions. Mr Weigel encouraged the government to engage in creating international awareness about the real opportunities in the country. Ethiopia, he underlined, had an expanding economy and available opportunities that should be promoted. Some 40 railway and railway technology companies took part in the two-day summit.