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News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

The 4th International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace conference with representatives drawn from more than 40 countries was held in Addis Ababa on Monday (October 28). The Speaker of the House of People's Representatives, Tadesse Chafo led the Ethiopian delegation. The President of the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace, Ahmed Bin Mohamed Ali Jarwan said convening the 4th session in Addis Ababa was intended to support and recognition to Ethiopia's continental and global peace-building efforts. **(See article)**.

A two-day regional conference on "Delivering the Global Compact on Refugees: Local Approaches to Inclusion," opened in Addis Ababa on Thursday (October 31). It brought together government representatives and stakeholders from Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Sudan, and South Sudan. **(See article)**

A Continental Consultative Meeting on "Global Security and Responsibility-sharing to Tackle Root Causes and Find Durable Solutions for Forced Displacement in Africa" was held at the end of last week (October 24-25) in Kigali, Rwanda. **(See article)**

The 18th Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement was held in Baku, Azerbaijan at the end of last week (October 25-26), under the theme "Upholding the Bandung Principles to Ensure Concerted and Adequate Response to the Challenges of Contemporary World." Among those attending were the Presidents of Algeria, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, and State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Markos Tekle, led the Ethiopian delegation to Summit. **(See article)**

The African Union Commission urged member states and stakeholders to speed up efforts to eliminate hunger by 2025 in Africa during the 3rd segment of the ministerial segment of the Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment meeting in Addis Ababa on Thursday (October 24). The AU Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, Ambassador Josefa Sacko, said the bi-annual review was clear about the poor performance of the continent to end hunger, "so, we really need to speed up the move."

The first African Innovation Week, aiming to enhance innovation in different parts of the continent, opened in Addis Ababa on Monday (October 28). In his opening remarks, AU Commission Chair, Moussa Faki, said the Innovation Week was in line with Agenda 2063

and would be an important platform to create new value chains, new markets, address the question of youth unemployment, and attract more investors. The six-day event has drawn African policy makers, researchers, academicians, investors, and international stakeholders to look at the innovation in Africa and some 200 young African innovator startups from Nigeria, Togo, Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia to demonstrate their products during the week. In opening remarks, Dr. Getahun Mekuria, Ethiopia's Minister of Innovation and Technology, said the future of Africa's young population was in innovation; he underlined the need to create an environment that enabled youth to become employers and job creators in service and manufacturing sectors.

The 10th AU High Level Retreat on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa was held on October 29-30 in Djibouti on the theme, “Security Sector Reform and Governance in Africa: Evolving Principles and Practices from Prevention, Peacemaking and Peace-building Interventions.” It reviewed the AU’s existing Security Sector Reform and Governance instruments and partnerships, and effectiveness in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts, and discussed the critical need to ensure the transformation of African defense and security forces into more professional national security institutions subject to civilian oversight.

African Ambassadors and stakeholders met in Addis Ababa on Tuesday (October 29) to discuss cooperation between Africa and the Middle East countries over implementation of the Joint Labor Migration Program. Ethiopia’s Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, Dr. Ergoge Tesfaye highlighted the priority areas of her office regarding overseas employment including ensuring safe, orderly and regular migration for Ethiopians seeking employment overseas. The Program’s strategy focuses on intra-African labor migration and aims to support the achievement of the first ten-year plan (2013-2023) of the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

A three-day international peacekeeping support training forum organized by Embassy of Japan and Ethiopia’s Peace Support Training Institute opened in Addis Ababa on Monday (October 28).The forum brought together participants from different peacekeeping training centers and institutes, in Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana, Egypt, Mali, South Africa, Rwanda, and Japan. Japan has supported Ethiopia’s Peace Support Training Institute since 2012, providing \$2.5 million for the construction of the Institute’s theatre building and the development of curriculum for courses.

The 8th Annual General Meeting of the East Africa Association of Prosecutors and Symposium opened in Mombasa, Kenya on Wednesday (October 30).The event brought together key players in the justice system of Eastern Africa to consider strategies to fight transnational organized crime. Ethiopia’s Ambassador to Kenya, Ambassador Meles Alem, representing Ethiopia at the symposium said “crime such as human trafficking has no boundary” He called for concerted effort to combat the challenges.”

Ethiopia

Dr. Mulatu Teshome, former President of Ethiopia headed the Ethiopian presence at enthronement of the new Emperor of Japan at ceremony held on October 22 at the Tokyo Imperial Palace. **(See article)**

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gedu Andargachew held talks with Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on Wednesday (October 30). The two sides discussed ways to boost cooperation in peacekeeping operations in the Horn of Africa and exchanged views on regional peace and stability. Mr. Lacroix commended Ethiopia's peace-building efforts and its leading role in UN peacekeeping missions. He was hopeful the ongoing role of Ethiopia, as chair of IGAD, to bring peace in South Sudan would bear fruit.

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Gedu Andargachew, met a 17-member delegation of the European Parliament at his office on Tuesday (October 29), to discuss the ongoing inclusive reform in Ethiopia and ways to bolster the strategic ties between the EU and Ethiopia. He briefed the delegation on the home-grown economic reform agenda and the measures being taken to widen the political space and build democracy. He urged the EU to continue its assistance to Ethiopia's development and democracy and to encourage European investment in Ethiopia. Tomas Tobe, a member of the European Parliament and head of the delegation, welcomed the government's initiatives for peace in the region in general and with Eritrea in particular.

In a press conference this week, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesperson gave details of the Ministry's work to ensure the safety of Ethiopians in Lebanon and of refugee returnees from Yemen via Djibouti as well as next week's talks on GERD in Washington. **(See article)**

The Speaker of the House of Peoples Representatives, Tadesse Chaffo met a delegation from the German Parliament (the Bundestag) on Friday (October 25). Their discussions focused on ways to enhance inter-parliamentary and people-to-people relations between the two countries. The Speaker briefed the delegation about government measures to widen the political space. Members of the delegation commended the ongoing political and economic reforms in Ethiopia and assured the Speaker of Germany's support for reform program.

Ethiopia and Ireland signed a €10 million financing agreement for the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP 4) on Friday (October 25). Admasu Nebebe, State Minister of Finance and Patrick McManus, Head of Government Cooperation, signed the agreement aimed to enhance and improve the livelihood of food insecure households', resilience to shocks, food security, and nutrition. The PSNP 4 program runs from 2015 to 2020 and this agreement is for 2019/2020.

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Markos Tekle and Mohamed Moussa, Director General of the Agency for Aerial Navigation Safety in Africa and Madagascar (ASECNA) signed a MoU on Thursday (October 31) to open an ASECNA branch office in Ethiopia. ASECNA is an air traffic management organization based in Senegal.

Ahmed Shide, Minister of Finance held talks with Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok on Wednesday (October 30). The parties discussed ways to further strengthen the relations between the two countries. The discussion focused on improving Ethio-Sudanese economic cooperation and development.

Ambassador Alemayehu Tegenu, Ambassador of Ethiopia to Russia, resident in Moscow, has presented his credentials to President Armen Sarkissian of Armenia. Recalling their historic and friendly relationship Ambassador Alemayehu noted existing agreements to cooperate in ICT, education, culture, and commerce. Ambassador Alemayehu also held talks with officials in the Foreign Ministry and the Chamber of Commerce of Armenia.

The newly appointed Ambassador of Iceland to Ethiopia, Ms. Unnur Orradóttir presented copies of her credentials to State Minister, Dr Markos Tekele this week. They discussed a Iceland-Ethiopia bilateral relations. Dr. Markos extended an invitation to Icelandic investors to apply their expertise in geothermal power and fisheries industry in Ethiopia.

The UN Food and Agricultural Organization has warned that immature and mature locust swarms formed from breeding during the summer are moving into new areas in Ethiopia. It said control operations are in progress against groups of hoppers and adults in the Afar region and along the railway area near Dire Dawa and some swarms had already moved into the Somali regional state. FAO expected swarms to move to the south and possibly invade Kenya; others could move north to Tigray Regional State and into Eritrea, reaching the Red Sea coastal plains in Eritrea and southern coastal areas in Sudan. It urged all affected-countries to be vigilant, monitor the situation regularly, and undertake the necessary control operations.

Djibouti

President Ismail Omar Guelleh held talks with the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev on the side-lines of the 18th Non-Aligned Summit in Baku at the end of last week. They discussed “the importance of cooperation and mutual support between the two countries in international organizations” and exchanged views on the development of economic and trade relations between Djibouti and Azerbaijan.

Eritrea

President Isaias Afwerki held talks with the joint UN-AU delegation led by UN Deputy Secretary General, Ms. Amina Mohammed, on Saturday (October 25) at Adi Halo. The delegation was on a two-day visit to Eritrea to highlight "the critical role of women's meaningful participation in peace, security and development". President Isaias said the visit was testimony to the deepening of cooperation and engagement between Eritrea and the UN. The UN Deputy Secretary General said the UN was ready to support the Eritrea-Ethiopia Peace Agreement which had created a process of transition towards concrete cooperation. The delegation had previously visited Somalia, Ethiopia and Djibouti.

Kenya

Foreign Affairs Cabinet Secretary Ababu Namwamba represented Kenya at the 18th Non-Aligned Summit in Baku, Azerbaijan at the end of last week. In his speech at the Summit he highlighted Kenya’s record in multilateralism and in the promotion of peace and security regionally and globally.

Somalia

President Mohamed Abdullahi has appealed for all Somalis to help those affected by the severe flooding in Hiiraan, Bakol and Gedo regions with over 200,000 people displaced: Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre has called on the international community to aid in the relief effort. **(See article)**

The UN Security Council was given a briefing by the Chair of the Somalia Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Marc Pecsteen of Belgium on Friday last week (October 25). Ambassador Pecsteen stressed that although the long-standing restrictions on the import of weapons had largely prevented weapons falling into the hands of Al-Shabaab, these measures now required updating to reflect the reality on the ground more effectively.

Abdulkadir Ahmed Kheyr Abdi, State Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation met with Suzuki Keisuke, State Minister for Foreign Affairs in Japan last week. Mr. Keisuke promised to strengthen ties with Somalia and join in the debt relief campaign. State Minister Abdulkadir expressed his gratitude for Japan's continued assistance and expressed his hope that "Japan would continue its support for Somalia in areas such as education."

Hassan Ali Mohamed, State Minister of Defense met Uganda's Minister of State for Defense, Colonel Charles Okello Engola on Monday (October 28). They agreed to initiate a Memorandum of Understanding under which Uganda could offer additional support towards building the capacity of the Somalia National Army.

The Somalia Joint Police Program Executive Board met on Tuesday in Mogadishu to detail activities as the program rolls out the new policing model throughout the federal member states and Banadir region. The Joint Police Program is a 5-year program with funding from the European Union, UK Aid, and the German Federal Foreign Office to support increased police visibility, presence, capability and accountability at Federal and Federal Member State level. It is implemented by UNDP and UNOPS, in partnership with AMISOM and UN Police.

The Deputy Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia, Simon Mulongo, praised the professionalism of Ugandan police officers in AMISOM when he met Director of Peace Support Operations in the Uganda Police Force, AIGP Grace Turyagumanawe, on Wednesday (October 30). He said the Uganda police contingent was instrumental in AMISOM's gains against terrorism. AMISOM is authorized to have 1,040 police personnel including five Formed Police Units (FPUs). Uganda, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Zambia provide police officers.

Stakeholders in Somalia's security sector concluded a meeting in Mogadishu on Sunday (October 27) on the threat posed by Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). The two-day counter-IED seminar was supported by AMISOM, the UN Mine Action Service and the British Army. It highlighted the need to build the capacity of Somali security forces to combat the use of IEDs, now a weapon of choice for terrorists. Participants discussed issues relating to pre-deployment and in-mission training, dismantling the IED network within Somalia, and disposal of explosives

South Sudan

President Salva Kiir declared a state of emergency in areas affected by floods across the country on Wednesday (October 30). OCHA said over 900,000 people were affected, including internally displaced people, refugees and host communities (**See article**)

In a joint statement on Monday (October 28), representatives of the EU, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, expressed full

support to the peace process for sustainable peace in South Sudan. The statement said the EU looked to the Transitional Period, which is due to start on November 12 with the formation of a Transitional Government of National Unity. The statement called for more meetings between President Salva Kiir, SPLM-IO leader, Riek Machar and the other signatories to resolve outstanding issues.

Kenya's Special Envoy to South Sudan, Stephen Kalonzo met President Salva Kiir on Tuesday (October 29) to discuss the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement and formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity by the November 12 deadline. South Sudan's Foreign Minister said President Kiir had vowed to ensure a coalition government is formed with all the parties and signatories to the peace agreement.

A meeting of Regional and International Special Envoys to South Sudan in Djibouti (October 25-26) discussed implementation of the pre-transitional tasks in South Sudan, of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) including cantonment, training and redeployment of necessary unified forces, number and boundaries of states, allocation of ministerial portfolios and ratification of the constitutional amendment bill. Those present included Sudan's Special Envoy to South Sudan, Ambassador Jamal El Sheikh; the interim Chair of the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, Lt. General Augustino Njoroge; IGAD's Special Envoy for South Sudan, Ambassador Ismail Wais; and Kenya's Special Peace Envoy for South Sudan, Stephen Kalonzo. They called on the parties to meet again face-to-face before the November 12 deadline, to agree on all-inclusive solutions for the remaining pre-transitional tasks and for regional and international partners to provide political and material support. They agreed to meet regularly.

Sudan

Lt. General Mohamed Hamdan Daglo 'Hemetti', a member of the Sovereignty Council and Commander of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) said on Monday (October 28) that 10,000 RSF troops had been withdrawn from Yemen. They would not be replaced as fighting on the ground had dwindled in recent months. Officials said a few thousand troops remained for training Yemeni government forces. Sudanese officials were quoted as saying that there were over 40,000 RSF troops deployed in Yemen at the height of the fighting in 2016-2017.

The Forces for Freedom and Change, the Sovereignty Council and the Transitional Government agreed on Monday (October 28) to form a coordinating committee to follow up the implementation of the program of the transitional period. This followed FFC criticisms of poor performance and slow implementation of reforms by the transitional authority during the previous two months.

The Chairman of Sovereignty Council, Lt. General Abdul-Fattah al-Burhan, on Tuesday (October 29), met the new US Chargé d'affaires, Brian Shukan to discuss US-Sudan cooperation. General al-Burhan stressed the importance of removing Sudan from the list of states sponsoring terrorism, pointing to the importance of looking positively at the real change brought about by the revolution and the practical measures being made for realizing change in Sudan. Mr. Shukan said there were procedures underway to remove Sudan from the list but the issue needed time.

Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, M. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, told the UN Security Council on Thursday (October 24): “Despite improved bilateral relations between Sudan and South Sudan, no progress has been made in settling the final status of Abyei”, but he insisted there was, currently, “an unprecedented opportunity to resolve border-related issues between Sudan and South Sudan.” M. Lacroix was briefing the Security Council ahead of the mandate renewal of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). He said a positive momentum was being driven by reciprocal visits by the leaders of both countries and their support for each other’s peace processes.

Devastating floods in South Sudan and Somalia

South Sudan and Somalia are suffering from extensive and heavy flooding; leaders of both countries are moving to alleviate the destruction caused by the floods; humanitarian aid agencies have been issuing statements on the gravity of the destruction and appealing to the international community for help.

In a move “to ensure intervention of the government and humanitarian organizations for the people in need,” South Sudan's President Salva Kiir declared a state of emergency in flood-affected areas across the country on Wednesday (October 30). Under the order, 30 counties in Greater Bahr El Ghazal, Upper Nile and Equatoria regions have been declared emergency areas. The United Nations Office for Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said on Friday last week (October 25) nearly a million people in South Sudan have been affected by heavy flooding which had devastated large areas of the country since July, submerging entire communities and forced hundreds of thousands from their homes. An estimated 908,000 people have reportedly been affected, including internally displaced people, refugees and their host communities.

Alain Noudeho, OCHA humanitarian coordinator in South Sudan, said the situation is “extremely” concerning as rains are likely to continue for another four to six weeks and put more people at risk. In addition, the crisis will not be over when the water levels recede because of the considerable damage to crops, arable land and livestock, the UN warned. This will obstruct the ability of families to support themselves for months to come, he said. Floods have also limited access to health facilities, nutrition centers, basic services and markets. OCHA said many affected areas were already facing high humanitarian needs before the flooding started. Across the flood-affected counties in Jonglei, Upper Nile, Warrap, Eastern Equatoria, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Unity and Lakes region, over three million people were already in need of humanitarian assistance even before the rains and more than 60% were classified as having extreme levels of acute malnutrition.

In a statement at the weekend, (October 27), Oxfam warned that approximately 800,000 people are at risk of disease and extreme hunger as a result of the floods. With heavy rains forecast for at least another two weeks, Oxfam said the situation was likely to get much worse before it gets better and the risk of a major outbreak of waterborne diseases including cholera increased by the day. It said: “The scale of these floods is unexpected; at this time of the year in South Sudan, the dry season is usually about to start. The cruel fact is that thousands of people in the areas hardest hit by the floods were already going hungry. People who were struggling to survive have had what little they had washed away by this extreme weather.”

Somalia is also seriously affected by flooding. President Mohamed Abdullahi ‘Farmajo’ has appealed to all Somalis to unite in providing urgent help to those affected by the severe flooding in Hiiraan, Bakol and Gedo regions. Torrential rains across the country has led to the bursting of the River Shabelle’s banks resulting in the destruction of property, mainly farmland, and most seriously in Hiiraan region, but flash flooding was also reported in Banadir region, Jowhar in Hirshabelle and Ceel Cade and Jamame in Jubaland, with some locations in South West State inundated. According to the FAO-managed Somalia Water and Land Information Management (SWALIM), the current high river levels, and ongoing riverine flooding along the Shabelle and Juba rivers, are expected to worsen. More flash floods might also be experienced in low-lying areas where moderate rains are expected.

Prime Minister Hassan Khayre has appealed to the international community to aid in the relief effort. A statement from the Prime Minister’s office on Wednesday (October 30) said the Prime Minister had asked for the help of ‘Somalia’s friendly countries’ and the international community in support of humanitarian efforts in Belet Weyne and other parts of the country. The Prime Minister said the government sent in emergency supplies backed by humanitarian agencies to Belet Weyne where about 180,000 people have been displaced. OCHA said on Monday that 85% of Belet Weyne town had been submerged in water. Pictures show the whole town under water as locals struggle to move to safe areas.

The UNHCR-Protection Return Monitoring Network on Monday (October 28) said farmland, infrastructure and roads have been destroyed, and livelihoods disrupted in some of the worst-hit areas. Save the Children mobile health clinics were urgently needed to manage disease outbreaks which were likely to follow the flooding. Save the Children’s Somalia Country Director said: “If the banks of the Shebelle River overflow, it will devastate children and their families who are already struggling with major food insecurity. Thousands of vulnerable people living along the riverbank have already fled and we are extremely concerned about the welfare of tens of thousands more who are yet to evacuate.” Communities living along the Shebelle River, mainly reliant on crop and livestock production, already face problems. Repeated and successive droughts in the region have led to soil depletion, and the flooding will cause further topsoil erosion and increase the damage to the land.

Ethiopia attends the 18th Non-Aligned Summit in Baku

The 18th Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement was held in Baku, Azerbaijan at the end of last week (October 25-26), under the theme "Upholding the Bandung Principles to Ensure Concerted and Adequate Response to the Challenges of Contemporary World." The Summit brought together Non-Aligned Heads of State and Government as well as senior government officials from 120 member countries, representatives of the 17 observer countries and 10 observer organizations. Among those attending were the Presidents of Algeria, Cuba, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Ghana, Iran, Namibia, Pakistan and Venezuela. State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Markos Tekle, led the Ethiopian delegation to the Summit at which attendees conveyed a congratulatory message to Ethiopia’s Prime Minister Dr. Abiy for the award of the Nobel Peace Prize 2019; and participants from various countries expressed their appreciation for the contributions the Prime Minister was making to the peace process in the region.

Dr. Markos Tekele in his speech stressed the Summit was taking place at a time when the world was facing tremendous challenges and the multilateral organizations, created to help solve those challenges, were themselves being confronted with unprecedented challenges pushing them to a state of dysfunction. He said intolerance, isolationism and injustice had unfortunately become the rule of the day. This was precisely the reason why the theme of the 18th NAM Summit was timely and fitting. Briefing the Summit on recent historic developments in the Horn of Africa, Ambassador Markos said: “All the issues of our region, including those related with borders as well as trans-boundary water resources, will become sources of cooperation and not hostilities if addressed in the Bandung spirit,” adding “This is the spirit with which the Ethiopian Government is engaging and will continue to engage with our immediate neighbors as well as the riparian states of the Nile River.

The Summit adopted four final documents: Baku Final Act, Baku Political Declaration, the Palestinian Declaration and the document of gratitude and solidarity to the government and people of Azerbaijan. Attendees stressed the need to revitalize the UN General Assembly and strengthen its authority "as the most democratic, accountable, universal and representative body of the organization, including in the area of international peace and security". The Declaration also emphasized the need to reform the UN Security Council in order to transform it into a more democratic, effective, efficient, transparent and representative body, and in line with contemporary geo-political realities.

The Heads of State and Government affirmed their commitment to make efforts to strengthen NAM's solidarity in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and relevant international conventions. The Summit expressed concern about "the increased adverse impacts of climate change, particularly on developing countries, which are severely undermining their efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development." It underlined the importance of maintaining freedom of navigation and the free flow of oil and other resources and the security of international commercial navigation, expressing particular concern over negative incidents in the Strait of Hormuz, Sea of Oman, Red Sea and the Strait of Bab-Al-Mandeb. It called for Member States to promote a culture of peace based on political dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation when observing 2021 as the International Year of Peace and Trust, It reiterated that South-South Cooperation was an important element of international cooperation for sustainable development and called on Member States to continue to work towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, leaving no one behind. It underlined the importance of promoting the Movement's founding principles, and coordinating Member States' position to advance the interests of the developing world to build a “fair inclusive, transparent and effective system of global governance,” and underlined its support for multilateralism with the UN at its core.

NAM was founded during the collapse of the colonial system and the independence struggles of the peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America and other regions of the world at the height of the Cold War; and its principles were set out at Indonesian city of Bandung in 1955, They include respect for human rights and the objectives of the principles of the UN Charter and for all nations' sovereignty, recognition of the equality of all, non-intervention and non-aggression, peaceful solution for conflict and promotion of mutual interests and of cooperation.

Ethiopian citizens in Lebanon warned to keep away from protests

The Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, Nebiat Getachew, has emphasized that the Ministry has been working successfully to ensure the safety of the over 400,000 Ethiopians living in Lebanon since the outbreak of the protests there nearly two weeks ago. The Ethiopian consular office in Beirut was issuing warnings to people not to participate in the protests through social media platforms. There had been no casualties reported to the Consular Office, he said. Ethiopia has signed overseas employment agreements with the governments of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Jordan, and it close to completing similar agreements with Lebanon. These will help legalize the status of Ethiopian migrants and protect Ethiopian nationals from abuse.

At a press conference on Thursday this week (October 31), the Spokesperson also noted that the Ethiopian Embassy in Djibouti was working in partnership with the Djibouti Government, regional level administrators and the International Refugee Organization to help Ethiopians in the refugee camps of Tadjoura and Obok return to their country with dignity. He said that a total of 1221 people during the third quarter of the year, July to September, had willingly chosen to be repatriated after being misled by traffickers to cross to Yemen, trying to reach Saudi Arabia.

In covering other issues, Mr. Nebiat said that IGAD member states are closely following the resolution of remaining outstanding issues in the South Sudan peace process over differences between the signatories concerning the formation of the Transitional Government of South Sudan. The Transitional Government of National Unity is due to established on November 12.

Regarding the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, the Spokesperson said that on the basis of the talks between Prime Minister Dr. Abiy and Egyptian President el-Sisi at the Russia-Africa Forum last week in Sochi, the tripartite talks on technical matters will continue. He made it clear that the meeting of Foreign Ministers scheduled to be held in Washington next week will be a matter of discussion and not of negotiation. The negotiations are taking place at the technical level. The Spokesperson added that government officials have been sent to various countries to fully explain Ethiopia's position in connection with the status of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

Mr. Nebiat also provided information about the recent visit of Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen to Italy and France. The visit (October 16-21) had been an example of Ethiopia's economic diplomacy in action, aiming to boost bilateral relations with Italy and France and strengthen trade relations. Business Forums had been held in Rome and Paris and investors from both countries were briefed on Ethiopia's ongoing reforms and hear details of the possibilities for investment.

A UN Security Council briefing on Somalia's arms embargo

The UN Security Council was given a briefing by the Chair of the Somalia Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Marc Pecsteen of Belgium on Friday last week (October 25). Ambassador Pecsteen stressed that although the long-standing restrictions on the import of

weapons had largely prevented weapons falling into the hands of Al-Shabaab, these measures now required updating to reflect the reality on the ground more effectively. He reminded the Council that the Panel of Experts on Somalia two weeks earlier had underlined the continuing threat of Al-Shabaab and confirmed that Al-Shabaab was manufacturing home-made explosives, expanding its revenue base, and was once again responsible for the highest number of attacks against civilians in the region. The Panel Coordinator, he added, encouraged Member States to apply targeted sanctions to deter destructive behaviour by arms traffickers and charcoal dealers, terrorism financiers and political spoilers. The arms embargo imposed on Somalia, he said, had largely prevented entry into the country of heavier weapons that ultimately might find their way into the hands of Al-Shabaab and other armed actors, but it should now be streamlined, simplified and updated to better reflect the current realities of the counter-insurgency in Somalia. He called for enhanced oversight of certain components and chemical precursors that could be used to construct improvised explosive devices.

Ambassador Pecsteen, who warned that the stand-off between the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Member States had peace and security implications, recalled the earlier briefing from the Deputy Director of Operations and Advocacy in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and her conclusion that Somalia was on a positive trajectory with key achievements on the political, economic, humanitarian and security fronts. He pointed out that humanitarian organizations had strengthened their systems for identifying and detecting risks of aid diversion.

Referring to the ban on Somalia's import and export of charcoal, Ambassador Pecsteen said it was clear that Al-Shabaab no longer derived significant revenue from the charcoal trade, though he also noted strong links between Al-Shabaab and crime syndicates, which exploited porous borders to finance their operations, engaged in the smuggling of people, weapons, sugar, tobacco, bomb components and narcotics as well as precursor substances.

In the discussion, a number of Security Council members expressed concern that the Government of Somalia had failed to cooperate with the Panel of Experts, and said this had implications for regional peace and security. Somali engagement with the Panel was critical - the Panel was the "the eyes and ears of the Council" in Somalia. There was general agreement that the partial arms embargo remains essential for countering terrorism and building Somalia's security capacity. It remained crucial because it suppressed the capacity of terrorists, prevented the arms traffic from conflict areas such as Yemen and helps security-sector reform, especially Somalia's efforts to manage weapons stocks. Some members welcomed a review of the ban on the charcoal trade but cautioned that the environmental effects of lifting the ban should be considered.

Emperor Naruhito ascends Japan's Chrysanthemum throne

The world witnessed the enthronement of the new Emperor of Japan in one of the oldest monarchical systems in the world when Emperor Naruhito declared his ascension to the Chrysanthemum throne in a grand ceremony held on 22 October 2019 at the Tokyo Imperial Palace. The ceremony was attended by members of royal families, world leaders and senior government representatives from around the world. Emperor Naruhito inherited the throne after his father Emperor Akihito abdicated, the first such step in 200 years. This marks the end of what is known as the Heisei era in Japan and the beginning of the Reiwa era with the

ascension of Emperor Naruhito. Ethiopia and Japan have longstanding diplomatic relations. The old imperial family in Ethiopia had close affinities with the Japanese Imperial Family. A Treaty of Friendship and Commerce was signed in 1930 and there was talk of a marriage alliance. Former Emperor Akihito, then crown prince, paid a visit to Ethiopia in 1960.

Dr. Mulatu Teshome, former President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, participated at the ceremony and attended a series of events organized to mark the historic occasion including dinners hosted by the Imperial family and the Prime Minister of Japan. Dr. Mulatu Teshome also held talks with Prime Minister Abe on October 24 at the Akasaka Guest Palace. During the meeting, the former President discussed ways and means to further strengthen bilateral relations, including enhancement of Japanese support to Ethiopia's currently home-grown economic reform underway. He also took the opportunity to exchange views on regional and international peace and security issues.

During Dr. Mulatu's visit, the Ethiopian Embassy in Tokyo organized a meeting for Ethiopians residing in Japan, members of the African diplomatic corps in Tokyo, and representatives of Japanese business community and Japanese academic institutions, to celebrate the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Prime Minister Abiy. Speaking at the event, Dr. Mulatu Teshome underlined the meaning and significance of the award to Ethiopia and the sub-region as well as for Africa as a whole. He said there was a new dawn in the Horn of Africa, which had not only rekindled a renewed sense of hope and optimism for the peace and development of the peoples of the region but also opened new possibilities for greater regional economic integration between and among countries of the region.

Dr. Mulatu also noted the successful conclusion of the TICAD 7 Conference in Yokohama in August had provided the opportunity for a dedicated discussion on the Horn of Africa and on ways that Japan could support the encouraging developments in the region. He welcomed the "New Approach for Peace and Stability in Africa (NAPSA)" that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had announced at the Conference to work in cooperation with the AU and Regional Economic Communities in support of conflict prevention and mediation efforts. Ethiopia's Ambassador to Japan, Ambassador Kassa Tekeleberhan, expressed appreciation to Prime Minister Abe and other senior officials of the Japanese government for their messages of congratulation to Prime Minister Abiy. He also thanked members of the diplomatic corps in Tokyo and the representatives of the Japanese business community and academic institutions for their congratulatory messages.

4th Session of the International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace in Addis Ababa

The 4th Session of the International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace, with representatives coming from more than 45 countries, was held in Addis Ababa on Monday (October 28). The International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace is the legislative arm of the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace (GCTP), whose president is Ambassador Ahmed bin Mohamed Al Jarwan, Member of Federal National Council of the UAE, and a former Speaker of the Arab Parliament, the legislative body of the Arab League. The President of the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace, Ambassador Al-Jarwan, said holding the session in Ethiopia would have significant importance in spreading the message of peace and tolerance to the world. He urged the media to play its part as an important tool in spreading the values of tolerance and peace. Mr. Al Jarwan congratulated Prime Minister Dr Abiy on winning the Nobel Peace

Prize 2019 and thanked the Government of Ethiopia for its welcome. He underlined the essential role played by the media in promoting the core values of tolerance and peace, accentuating the importance of employing all possible tools to establish tolerance around the globe.

The objectives of the Council include building international partnerships, to instil values of tolerance and culture, reject extremism, promote preventive diplomacy, and support regional and international youth initiatives. The aim of the parliament, set up in 2017, is to combat terrorism, extremism, racism, violence, and hatred, by adopting a global strategy to raise awareness and promote acceptance, dialogue, moderation, peace, and tolerance. Establishing the parliament was to enable members of national parliaments to cooperate and exchange knowledge and ideas on issues concerning world peace, terrorism, extremism, and violence.

In addressing the session, the Speaker of the House of People’s Representatives, Tagesse Chafo, underlined that Ethiopia was a mosaic of diverse culture, history, religions, where people had lived in peace and tolerance since time immemorial. “In a world which is full of hatred associated with racial religious and various forms of extremism and other forms of difference leading to rivalry,” he said, “living together with imaginable tolerance in Ethiopia is really a blessing for the country.” But in this interconnected world, it was time to work vigorously to maintain and deepen tolerance and peace, adding, “we need to inculcate in our young generation our religious and traditional tolerance” making use of religious or faith-based institutions, traditional leaders, mainstreaming tolerance, ethnics and good moral standards, creating jobs for youth and so on.” He noted Ethiopia was working towards bringing peace in the Horn of Africa: “cooperation and inclusiveness, settling differences through peaceful means” have become the cardinal principles in Ethiopia and were being exported to all neighbours and partners through the initiatives of Prime Minister Abiy. He said: "We should act now to create an ethical society in this new era of globalization and work together for global peace."

A Conference on Delivering the Global Compact on Refugees in Addis Ababa...

A two-day regional conference on “Delivering the Global Compact on Refugees: Local Approaches to Inclusion,” opened in Addis Ababa on Thursday (October 31). It brought together government representatives and stakeholders from Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Sudan, and South Sudan together to take stock of local inclusion of refugees in the region. Eastern African countries and the Horn of Africa are currently hosting some 3.5 million refugees. The aim was to share experiences and identify opportunities to achieve the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees, with a focus on local approaches to the inclusion of refugees within their host communities, and to accelerate actions by governments, the private sector, international organizations, the non-governmental sector, and civil society in implementing the new Global Compact on Refugees.

The conference was organized by the Ministry of Peace, in partnership with the Danish Government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees ahead of the Global Refugee Forum, scheduled to take place in mid December in Geneva, Switzerland. The Forum will be the first Ministerial-level to follow up implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees, agreed at the UN in New York in December 2018. Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Somalia and Djibouti, have committed themselves to implement the Comprehensive Refugee

Response Framework of the Global Compact on Refugees, and have long been committed to the agenda of inclusion of refugees. Denmark has committed an estimated 1.5bn Danish Kroner between 2017 and 2022 to programs aimed at strengthening resilience, building livelihoods, promoting inclusive education and pushing for socio-economic empowerment and gender equality, all key activities under the rollout of comprehensive refugee response.

Opening the meeting, Ethiopia's Minister of Peace, Ms. Muferihat Kamil, stressed Ethiopia was happy to host the conference "as an extension of its long-standing and proud history of hosting refugees for centuries." She said: "Equitable partnerships and responsibility sharing are keys to the success of the Refugee Compact, to ensure refugee and hosts receive the support they need". UNHCR Representative in Ethiopia, Ms. Ann Encontre, applauded Ethiopia's commendable commitment to promote socio-economic inclusion of refugees. Clementine Nkweta-Salami, UNHCR Regional Director said "the regional conference is a timely opportunity to take stock of our achievements in refugee response and identify gaps and challenges where we require additional support."

...and a Continental Consultative meeting on forced displacement held in Rwanda

The High-level Continental Consultative Meeting on "Global Security and Responsibility-sharing to Tackle Root Causes and Find Durable Solutions for Forced Displacement in Africa" was held at the end of last week (October 24-25) in Kigali, Rwanda. The Meeting provided an opportunity for stakeholders to reflect on the significant progress made towards implementation of the humanitarian development nexus, to look at policy developments in Africa that will have a positive impact on refugees and host communities and at the role of the private sector in refugee response. The Ethiopian delegation led by Ethiopia's Ambassador to Rwanda, Ambassador Lulit Zewdie participating in the meeting included officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Peace and the Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA).

In a keynote address Ambassador Lulit highlighted the fact that despite the many efforts to strengthen and enhance the role of Africa in humanitarian activities and the expanding actions of civil society to combat the aftermath of political strife and human displacement, avoidable human tragedies continued to exacerbate human suffering in the continent. Nonetheless, she stressed, Africa should not be discouraged by setbacks but should rather focus on and continue to build on what had been achieved to mitigate the suffering of innocent people through peace building, and on what was underway to address structural causes of conflict and displacement in Africa. She stressed the meeting should come up with an African framework for humanitarian action and development partnership that could sustainably impact on development in the continent.

The deliberations of the Consultative Meeting included a high-level panel on responsibility-sharing, continental and regional solidarity and partnership, international involvement, and the need for people-centered approaches.