

# A Week in the Horn

16.06.2023

***Ethiopia at the 14th Ordinary Session of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government***

***Ethiopia to Commemorate its First International Day of Family Remittances***

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***Ethiopia to Celebrate Centenary of its Membership to ILO***

***Ministerial Conference on Durable Solutions for Refugees in Kampala***

## News in Brief

### Africa and the African Union

Leaders from IGAD member states have convened in Djibouti City, Djibouti, for the 14<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government on Monday (June 12). The summit is expected to serve as a platform for leaders from IGAD member states to deliberate on critical issues affecting the region's peace, security, and development. The Assembly, which has drawn leaders from Kenya, South Sudan, Somalia, and other IGAD member states, also hosted representatives from the African Union, the United Nations, the European Union, and the diplomatic community (**See article**).

The IGAD issued the *Final Communiqué of the 14<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government* (12 June). The communique, among others, commended the Government of Ethiopia for the *Agreement on Permanent Cessation of Hostilities and Silencing of the Guns* in Northern Ethiopia signed on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 as well as the *Declaration of Senior Commanders on Modalities for the Implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities* signed on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2022. It also appealed to the peace partners to maintain the momentum towards full and timely realization of the provisions of the agreement.

On 15 June the African Union Peace Fund and the World Food Programme signed an Agreement on strategic engagement on Peace and Security Intervention activities. The Agreement was signed by Dagmawit Moges, Director, AU Peace Fund Secretariat, and Dr. Hameed Nuru, WFP Country Director.

*Blue Future Conference: Ministerial Conference on the Blue Economy and Climate Action in Africa: Island and Coastal States at the Forefront* was concluded on 14 June. The conference was jointly organised by the African Union Commission (AUC), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the International Union for Conservation of

Nature (IUCN), the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and hosted in Moroni, Comoros from 12 to 14 June 2023.

From 14 to 15 June Addis Ababa hosted *Validation Workshop for the Second Africa Bi-Ennial Report on the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) in Africa*, organised by the AU.

The Algerian Capital hosted a two-day event (14-15 June) on the launch of the *Temporary Site of the Great Museum of Africa (GMA)*, at the Boulkine villa located Hussein-Dey district. The Great Museum of Africa (GMA) is a flagship project of the African Union (AU) *Agenda 2063: The African We Want*, in the culture sector aiming to showcase Africa and its culture, heritage, history and natural beauty to its people and to the world.

## **Ethiopia**

Leaders and high-level officials of IGAD member states including Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Abiy Ahmed have planted tree seedlings in Djibouti city as part of the *Green Legacy Initiative*. IGAD member states have continuously faced the harsh effects of climate change, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed noted. The tree planting session took place following the conclusion of the 14<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Djibouti on Monday (June 12).

On Tuesday, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen hosted at his office Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs Dr. Alfred Mutua and conferred on bilateral and regional issues of mutual interest.

Ambassador Mesganu Arga, State Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia also hosted at his office Canadian Ambassador to Ethiopia, Stéphane Jobin and conferred on bilateral and multilateral issues of mutual interest.

On Thursday, the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Meles Alem, gave the *Bi-Weekly Press Briefing* to local and Addis-based international correspondents on current affairs, the region and miscellaneous issues pertaining to the diplomatic activities of the Ministry and its missions overseas and foreign relations.

The 7th Innovation Africa Digital Summit 2023 kicked off in Addis Ababa under the theme “*Digital Africa*” on Wednesday (June 14). High government officials including the Innovation and Technology Minister, Belete Molla, industry leaders, representatives of innovation and technology institutions of African countries and international stakeholders are participating in the Summit.

State Minister of Finance, Semereta Sewasew, and the Netherlands’ Minister for Development Cooperation and Trade, Liesje Schreinemacher, visited the *Livelihood Improvement for Women and Youth (LIWAY)* program on Wednesday (June 14). During the visit, the Minister commended the recent progress in the country after the peace deal and assured that Ethiopia remains one of Netherland’s priority countries and further confirmed that Netherlands will to continue support for Ethiopia’s development endeavours.

Wingu Africa private data centre built in Ethiopia at a cost of 50 million USD was inaugurated in Addis Ababa on Tuesday (June 13). Present at the inaugural ceremony, among others, were Minister of Innovation and Technology, Dr. Belete Molla, other senior federal government and Wingu Africa officials. During the event, Anthony Voscariades, Group CEO, Wingu Africa, stated that Wingu Africa data centre provides affordable and secure data services to any public or private institution.

Over the week, Ethiopia repatriated 80 Ugandans, who were fleeced of their money with a promise to meet Jesus. Internal Affairs ministry spokesperson of Uganda, Simon Peter Mundeyi says when the group arrived in Ethiopia, they revealed that they were there to meet Jesus on a journey to heaven. Ethiopian Authorities then decided to gather all the people who were arriving in separate groups, confined them in one place, and later contacted their Ugandan counterparts who processed documentation for the repatriation.

Ethiopian Airlines Group has confirmed the appointment of Lieutenant General Yilma Merdassa, the Commander of Ethiopian Air Force, as board chairman of the Ethiopian Airlines Management replacing veteran aviation executive Girma Wake. The group said in a statement that it wishes success to Lieutenant General Yilma Merdassa who has been serving the Airline Group as board member for the last two and half years, adding that the appointment was made by the Ethiopian government without stating the reason why the leadership change is needed.

Ethiopia has criticised the suspension of food aid to the country by the United States and the UN World Food Program (WFP). Government spokesman Legesse Tulu, on Saturday (June 9) called the decision "political" saying the suspension "punishes millions of people". More than 15% of the country's population depends on food aid.

World Bank Group members, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), have announced plans to make an equity investment in Safaricom Ethiopia, as well as providing loans for the cellco. Under the deal, the World Bank Group will reportedly provide equity, debt and insurance facilities to support the construction and operation of Safaricom Ethiopia's 4G and 5G mobile networks. (June 12)

## **Eritrea**

Eritrea re-joined the East African bloc, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), nearly 16 years of hiatus during the 14<sup>th</sup> IGAD Summit in Djibouti (June 12).

## **Djibouti**

International service provider Sparkle and the UAE-based Kush Investments firm sign off on virtual fibre solution connecting Djibouti with Europe and India on Wednesday (June 14). The deal will help provide a virtual fibre solution in the upcoming Blue and Raman submarine cable systems to serve the East Africa region, connecting Mumbai and Djibouti with Europe (via Palermo, Genoa, Marseille and Milan) and with India.

## **Somalia**

The National Intelligence Security Agency (NISA) recognized the patriotism of a man in Somalia following his heroics in helping avert a deadly Al-Shabaab attack, with Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre rewarding him with \$20,000 for sharing intelligence information over plot to attack a busy point in Mogadishu. The citizen was rewarded on Tuesday (June 13) after helping security forces avert a bomb attack on Beerta Nabada (Peace Park) in Mogadishu last month, in what the government termed a significant breakthrough in the fight against terrorism within the country.

Police in Somalia say nine people, including three soldiers, were killed in Friday night's extremist attack on a beachside hotel in the capital, Mogadishu. The police statement said 10 other people were wounded while 84 people were rescued from the hours-long assault that ended early Saturday (June 10) morning. Al-Qaida's East Africa affiliate, al-Shabab, claimed responsibility for the attack. The Somalia-based extremist group is known for carrying out attacks on hotels and other high-profile locations in Mogadishu, usually starting with a suicide bombing.

## **South Sudan**

IGAD Executive Secretary, Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu during at the 14<sup>th</sup> IGAD Summit called on the international community to channel material support to South Sudan for the smooth implementation of the peace process.

South Sudan becomes the 44<sup>th</sup> country to ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, known as the Maputo Protocol. Aya Benjamin Warille, South Sudan's Minister of Gender, Child and Social Welfare deposited the instruments of ratification with the African Union Commission on June 2023. This latest ratification coincides with the 20th anniversary of the Maputo Protocol, which will be celebrated this year on July 11, 2023.

## **Kenya**

On Wednesday, President William Ruto sworn in Noordin, Haji, as the new Director of the National Intelligence Service (NIS) at an event hosted by State House Kenya. In his remarks at the swearing-in ceremony, President Ruto pointed out terror, insecurity, economic constraints and climate change as some of the challenges facing the world. He also appealed to relevant institutions to furnish decision-makers and legislators with credible information to enable them to execute their duties. Haji previously served as the Director of Public Prosecutions of Kenya.

Kenya and Djibouti on Sunday (June 11) signed four memoranda of understanding. President William Ruto said they have signed an MoU to facilitate cooperation in the field of energy

development, on Technical Cooperation in the Development of Youth Affairs and the Arts, on mutual cooperation in the Foreign Service Academy and on collaboration in the field of tourism.

Emirates and Kenya Airways (KQ) announced on Monday (June 12), an interline partnership that will allow customers of both airlines access to new destinations on the two airlines' networks within a single itinerary.

## **Sudan**

Kenyan President William Ruto will lead three other leaders in the Horn of Africa in an attempt to have direct talks with warring Sudanese generals, signalling the most concerted efforts yet to resolve the conflict in Sudan. The decision was reached on Monday (June 12) after the Ordinary Summit of the regional bloc, IGAD, which created a quartet of countries to seek Sudanese peace. The quartet is an expansion of three countries; South Sudan, Kenya and Djibouti which had been attempting to have direct sittings with Sudanese warring parties to no avail.

IGAD Executive Secretary of Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu on Monday (June 12) called on conflicting parties in Sudan to cease hostilities and resolve the situation through dialogue. The ES made the urgent call in his address at the 14<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Assembly of the IGAD Heads of State and Government, which was held in the Red Sea nation of Djibouti.

## **Ethiopia at the 14<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government**

The 14th Ordinary Session of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government on Monday, June 12, 2023, saw the participation of a high-level Ethiopian delegation led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. The delegation included Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen.

The session was chaired by Malik Agar, the Deputy Chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council of the Republic of Sudan representing Lt. General Abdel Fatah al Burhan, the Chair of the IGAD Heads of State and Government. Heads of State and Government of Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, South Sudan, and Kenya and as well as Foreign Ministers of Uganda and have attended the meeting.

The IGAD Assembly, as a prominent forum for high-level dialogue and decision-making organ, in its 14th ordinary session convened to address a diverse array of crucial subjects. Of notable significance were the discussions that centred on the peace and security landscape in the region, humanitarian situations and impacts of climate change. Institutional issues pertaining to revitalization of IGAD were also discussed. To this end, the new treaty establishing IGAD was signed by the heads of state and government on attendance. The adoption of the IGAD Treaty was a significant development, in fulfilment of the decision of

the 13<sup>th</sup> Ordinary IGAD Summit to replace the 1996 Agreement and provide a stronger legal framework to foster cooperation among member states and enhance the foundation of IGAD.

Foremost among the accolades was the Assembly's congratulatory message to the Government of Ethiopia for its pivotal role in securing the *Agreement on Permanent Cessation of Hostilities and Silencing of the Guns* in Northern Ethiopia signed on 02 November 2022. The Assembly called upon all stakeholders to uphold the momentum and diligently implement the provisions outlined in the agreement. In recognition of Ethiopia's tireless efforts, the African Union, the AU High-Level Panel, the African Union Commission, and the IGAD Executive Secretary received commendation for their instrumental support in facilitating the successful implementation of the Ethiopian-led peace process. This collaborative approach, rooted in Ethiopia's ownership of the process and facilitated by the AU upholding "African solutions to Africa's problems" has served as a model for fostering peace and stability within the region.

Ethiopia's commitment to transitional justice was also highlighted, with the Assembly commending the country's design and implementation of a nationally owned transitional justice policy which is developed through extensive nationwide consultations, emphasizes accountability, truth, healing, and reconciliation. The Assembly appealed to the international community to provide support for Ethiopia's efforts in this regard, recognizing the importance of sustained assistance in achieving lasting peace and reconciliation.

Furthermore, the Assembly praised Ethiopia's proactive stance in combating climate change and environmental degradation through its pioneering Green Legacy Initiative. Ethiopia's dedication to climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies was commended, and the Assembly urged greater experience-sharing among IGAD Member States to develop a comprehensive and coordinated regional response to the global environmental challenge. It is to be recalled that Ethiopia has been tirelessly working towards expanding the *Green Legacy Initiative* to neighbouring countries by sharing hundreds of thousands of seedlings to almost all its neighbours.

The IGAD Assembly's acknowledgment of Ethiopia's remarkable contributions underscores the country's pivotal role in regional peacebuilding, transitional justice, post-conflict rehabilitation, and environmental preservation. Ethiopia's leadership and commitment to these vital causes have positioned it as a beacon of hope and progress within the East African region.

On peace and security related issues the assembly also discussed with emphasis on the current situations in Sudan and Somalia. While commending the considerable gains of the Federal Government of Somalia, the Assembly stressed the need to continue the fight against Al Shabab. The Assembly has also commended the wisdom of the leaders of the Republic of South Sudan in resolving their differences amicably.

Of all the issues discussed, the Assembly took time to discuss the current situation in Sudan. Fully cognizant of the gravity of the situation, the Assembly expressed profound concerns regarding the deteriorating security and humanitarian conditions witnessed in the country. In response, a pivotal step was taken as the leaders unanimously adopted the IGAD Roadmap for the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of Sudan.

Furthermore, Ethiopia's vital contribution to the peace process was acknowledged by including the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia as the fourth member of the IGAD High-Level Delegation for the Peace Process in Sudan. The Quartet of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan is, therefore, expected to facilitate the peace process in Sudan. This is a step on the right direction as it will reinforcing the need for coordinated regional approach in finding a sustainable solution to the conflict in Sudan based on the principle of subsidiarity.

During the IGAD Assembly Djiboutian President Ismail Omar Guelleh was appointed as the new Chair of the IGAD Assembly, while his South Sudanese counterpart, Salva Kiir Mayardit was designated as the Deputy Chair. Additionally, Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu's term as the IGAD Executive Secretary was renewed for another four years, ensuring continuity and leadership stability within the organization.

Upon the conclusion of the Summit continuing Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali, alongside Heads of State and Government from IGAD member states, and the Executive Secretary, Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu planted seedlings to underscore the significance of addressing the impacts of climate change in a collective manner.

### **Ethiopia Participates in the Ministerial Meeting of the International Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ISIS in Saudi Arabia**

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Ethiopia, Demeke Mekonnen, took part in the 4th ministerial meeting of the International Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ISIS on June 4, 2023, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. US Secretary of State Blinken and Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia, co-hosted the meeting.

The meeting heard reports from various task groups on measures taken against ISIS remnants in Iraq and Syria, as well as measures taken against ISIS in Africa and elsewhere. The repatriation of former ISIS fighters from Iraq was also emphasised. The ministers discussed ways to maintain pressure on ISIS remnants in Iraq and Syria, as well as counter-ISIS networks in other parts of the world, including Africa.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen said the international community should deny ISIS, Al-Shabab, and other terrorist groups the opportunity to recruit fighters and mobilize funds. He said that Ethiopia stands firm in the global effort to eliminate terrorism. Ethiopia is fighting terrorism at home and abroad, Demeke said, adding that Al-Shabaab remains a threat to the Horn of Africa and the rest of the world, continuing to claim lives and disrupt livelihoods. It is critical that we join forces to stop such groups from

resurging, expanding, and networking in Africa and other places, Demeke said. We must all share the pain these groups inflict in other countries, not just ours, he stressed.

The Coalition, which now has 85 members and was established in 2014, seeks to combat Daesh from all angles, from destroying its networks, stymieing the organisation's propaganda, and preventing the movement of foreign terrorist combatants across borders, to seriously harming its infrastructure on the economic front.

### **Sidelines Meetings with Secretary Blinken and Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud**

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Ethiopia, Demeke Mekonnen, met and discussed with US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken and Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia, in Riyadh on the margins of the ministerial meeting of the International Coalition to defeat ISIS/Daesh.

During the discussion with Blinken, Demeke highlighted the progress of the implementation of the Pretoria Peace Agreement, with the understanding that the process requires support and cooperation. Anthony Blinken acknowledged the progress made and said that he is preparing to deliver his determination that there is progress so that the restriction against Ethiopia will be lifted. He said this will include bilateral financial aid, the IMF, and the World Bank.

When discussing allegations of aid diversion, both parties emphasized that the issue is of mutual concern, necessitating accountability measures based on a thorough investigation. The State Secretary welcomed the fact that the Government of Ethiopia is committed to investigating the diversion and taking corrective measures.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen also had a discussion with Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia, on bilateral and regional issues of mutual concern. In line with the objectives of the Coalition meeting, they highlighted the importance of cooperation to completely weaken and eradicate terrorist groups such as ISIS and al-Shabaab.

Demeke also explained the efforts of the Government of Ethiopia to scale up bilateral relations with Saudi Arabia. In this regard, the two sides talked about restarting the bilateral commission, reworking the modalities of the repatriation of Ethiopian citizens, and the implementation of labour agreements between the two sides, among others.

On the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), Demeke Mekonnen expressed Ethiopia's concern that the Arab League passed a hostile resolution, that it is counterproductive to the trilateral negotiations, and that it is divisive and would negatively affect African and Arab harmony. Demeke also described Ethiopia's commitment to consolidating peace, following the Pretoria Peace Agreement.

### **Ethiopia to Commemorate its First International Day of Family Remittances**

The issue of family remittances has gained momentum and global significance since 2015 following the United Nations General Assembly adoption of International Day of Family



Remittances (IDFR) celebration on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2023. After the decision, countries across the world are commemorating the day with events that galvanize policy makers, financial institutions, development partners and relevant stakeholders.

The day recognizes the contribution of over 200 million migrants who send money to improve the lives of their 800 million family members back home thereby creating a future of hope for their children. Half of these remittances go to rural areas, where poverty and hunger are concentrated and remittances count the most. The observance also aims to bring greater awareness of the impact that these contributions have on millions of households, communities, countries and entire regions. The Day also calls upon governments, private sector entities, as well as the civil society to find ways that can maximize the impact of remittances through individual and/or collective actions.

The IDFR is now not only a fully recognized global level event, is also included as one of the key initiatives to implement the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (Objective 20), which calls for the reduction of remittance transfer costs and greater financial inclusion through remittances. The Day also promotes achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and furthers the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This year's celebration will have a special attachment with Africa more than ever as it will be held on the African continent. It will be held within the framework of the Global Forum on Remittance, Investments and Development (GFRID) Summit 2023, hosted by The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the custodian of the IDFR, at the UN Office of the Special Adviser for Africa and the World Bank from 14 to 16 June. This year's observance will take place at the UN Office at Nairobi on the last Summit Day, on Friday, 16th June. The high-level plenary will be followed by thematic sessions, focusing on the benefits that digital and financial inclusion bring when linked to remittances in helping one billion people achieve their own SDGs.

As we observe this year's IDFR in Africa, we celebrate what the continent under the auspices of the AU has been doing to increase remittance inflows to the continent by giving a special attention to diaspora issues. We also need to acknowledge IGAD's efforts to harmonize remittance policies in the sub region. As a member country, Ethiopia's endeavours to open up the financial sector to achieve global, continental and regional goals in the area are commendable too.

According to World Bank sources, in 2022 alone, international remittances to low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) amounted to US\$626 billion. Out of which remittances to Sub-Saharan Africa were US\$53 billion. Remittances as a share of GDP to countries in the region were significant in the Gambia (28%), Lesotho (21%), and Comoros (20%). Such average monthly transfers of US\$200-US\$300 sent by migrant workers support many basic

households and prove transformational for both households and local communities, enabling many families to achieve their own Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

However, the sources also indicate, the cost of transferring US\$200 across international boundaries to LMICs is still high averaging 6% in the second quarter of 2022. Mobile providers offer the best rates (3.5%), but less than 1% of transactions are made through digital channels. Remittance services are now much quicker and less expensive thanks to digital technologies.

Cognizant of these facts, this year's observance theme focuses on the benefits that digital and financial inclusion bring when linked to remittances in helping remittance families achieve their own SDGs. IFAD, as custodian of the IDFR, aims at ensuring support of the observance and dissemination of resulting actions in the framework of the decennial #FamilyRemittances Campaign 2020 2030: Support one billion people reach their own SDGs.

*International Day of Family Remittances* will also be celebrated for the first time nationally here in Ethiopia on 20<sup>th</sup> June, four days after the IDFR in collaboration with GIZ-Ethiopia. Family remittances and their contribution toward poverty alleviation and FinTech options and opportunities in Ethiopia will be among the issues to be dealt during the event. Policy makers and regulators, financial institutions and money transfer agents, diaspora organizations and coordination offices, international organizations and invited guests are expected to attend the event.

## **Ethiopia to Celebrate Centenary of its Membership to ILO**

An Ethiopian tripartite delegation composed of government, workers, and employers is participating in the 111<sup>th</sup> session of International Labour Conference (ILO) which is being held from 5-16 June 2023 in Geneva.

The delegation is led by Assegid Getachew, State Minister of Labour and Skills of Ethiopia. The state minister, in his statement, focused on Ethiopia's commitment to advance social justice with the aim of fighting the growing inequality challenges of the time.

The state minister also highlighted the labour and works policy and *Ten-Year Development Plan* of the government which is designed on the basis of the *Home - Grown Economic Reform Agenda* and the *Green Legacy initiative* towards sustainable Green Economy that are in line with the UN *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*, *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* of the African union, and other global initiatives.

The state minister added, "Ethiopia has been taking steps towards ensuring inclusive and fair labour ecosystem, skills development through technical and vocational training, demand

driven job creation and employment through the promotion of public entrepreneurship, innovation and business ideas by and for the youth.”

On the sidelines of the conference the state minister met with Gilbert F. Hounbo, Director General of the International Labour Organization and discussed on ways to further strengthen cooperation on areas of mutual interest. During the discussion, the state minister briefed Ethiopia’s preparation to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its membership to the International Labour Organization (ILO). He also pointed out that the Ministry of Labour and Skills is engaged in reforming the structure and functions of labour administration to promote decent employment for the improvement of social protection as well as sustainable development and poverty reduction.

The Director General on his part applauded Ethiopia’s preparation to celebrate the 100th anniversary of its membership and assured the state minister of ILO’s support.

The celebratory conference will bring together workers, employers and government delegates from 187 ILO Member States in person for the first time since 2019.

The conference is expected to address a wide range of issues that have a long-term impact in relation to Labour and works in the world, and will urge the international community to look for options to help bridge the financing gap for social protection in low- income countries, including through largely unmet official development assistance commitments, increased concessional lending and budget support, or a new international financing mechanism to complement and support domestic resource mobilization efforts.

### **Ministerial Conference on Durable Solutions for Refugees in Kampala**

The first IGAD- EAC High-Level Ministerial Conference on durable solutions for refugees in the Horn and East Africa was held in Kampala, Uganda from 13 -16 June 2023, in collaboration with the Ugandan Government.

A high-level Ethiopian delegation led by Binalf Andualem, Minister of Peace accompanied by Ethiopian Ambassador to Uganda, Etsegenet Bezabih, took part in the conference. The entourage includes delegates from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence; Refugees and Returnees Service.

During the conference, both the experts and the High-Level Ministers of the respective member countries of IGAD and EAC presented their individual countries' experiences on durable solutions for refugees. Minister Binalf highlighted Ethiopian Government’s various policies and programs aimed at providing durable solutions for refugees and addressed the questions raised by the participants of the conference. He stressed the need for the

international community to balance humanitarian and development aid through the spirit of “burden and responsibility sharing.”

The conference identified recurring violent wars in the region as a critical source of forced displacement and an increasing number of refugees, international displaced peoples (IDPs), and asylum seekers. Currently, the area has a humanitarian caseload of 5.5 million Refugees, over 12 million IDPs, and millions of mixed migrants, including economic migrants, victims of the adverse effects of climate. Participants of the Conference reiterated the need to sustain peace and economic development in the region is a panacea for a lasting solution to address the ever-growing refugees and displaced people in Africa.

Harmonizing and enhancing IGAD and EAC coordination of regional approaches to the refugee situation in the East and Horn of Africa was also discussed. In addition, develop joint guidelines on the inclusion of the forcibly displaced and stateless populations, in particular women and youth, in national peace and electoral processes as well as conflict resolution, reconciliation, and transitional justice processes in the Region were also deliberated.

To this effect, the participants called upon the international community to support IGAD and EAC Member and Partner States through increased responsibility sharing in refugee responses and emergencies. At the conclusion of the conference, IGAD and EAC member states are expecting to pass a resolution to reflect a common voice on the forthcoming Global Refugees Forum that will be held in December 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland.