

A Week in the Horn

23.06.2023

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News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

On Wednesday (June 21), The African Union Commission through the Peace Fund Secretariat has signed an Agreement with the World Food Programme of the United Nations (WFP), to scale the existing technical and financial support to various peace and security activities in the thematic areas of operation under the AU Peace Fund.

The 9th Continental Africa Public Service Day (APSD23) celebration under the theme “The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) will require a fit for purpose African public administration to succeed” has kicked off on Wednesday (June 21), in Victoria Falls. This 3-day APSD23 celebration is jointly organised by the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) of the AUC and the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

The former Ethiopian Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, has arrived in Sierra Leone on Wednesday (June 21), to lead the African Union’s short-term Election Observation Mission (AUEOM) ahead of the June 24, 2023, general elections in the country. At the invitation of the Government of Sierra Leone and the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat approved the deployment of short-term African Union Election Observation Mission to assess and report on the conduct of this election.

During a two-day retreat in Bishoftu (June 17), the AUC-PAPS, under the direction of Commissioner Bankole Adeoye, addressed structural inconsistencies and misalignments within the Department, strengthened a change and systems culture, and enhanced teamwork in order to deliver services and produce outcomes efficiently. This initiative is part of the AUC_PAPS efforts to ensure the effective implementation of Agenda 2063, particularly Aspiration 3 for an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice & the rule of law; and Aspiration 4 towards a peaceful & secure Africa.

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat strongly condemns the heinous and shocking terrorist attack carried out by suspected Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) militia on Saturday (June 17), that targeted a secondary school in Western Uganda, that left at least 42 students dead, more injured and others unaccounted for.

Ethiopia

PM Abiy Ahmed participated on the roundtable entitled “*Evolving the model of multilateral development Banks to address the 21st century challenges*” at the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact in Paris, France on Thursday. During the session he emphasized the need to: (1) Implement past pledges with resolve; (2) boost concessional financing facilities; (3) create a robust mechanism to finance the transition to a Green Future and (4) end the debt crisis.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has launched the national health exhibition at the Addis Ababa Science Museum on Tuesday (June 20). The Prime Minister stated that public and private institutions, organizations engaged in health technology and research institutions will participate in the forum. It is learned that the National Health Exhibition is organized by the Ministry of Health and Ethiopian Healthcare Federation.

Addis Ababa hosted the *2nd Afri-Run High-Level Forum on Equitable and Reasonable Utilisation of Transboundary Watercourses in Africa* from 22 to 23 June 2023. **(See Article)**

Ethiopia and the UK have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen their partnership in trade and investment on Tuesday (June 20). The MoU was signed by Ethiopia’s Minister of Trade and Regional Integration, Gebremeskel Chala, and UK’s Minister for International Trade, Nigel Huddleston. During the MoU signing ceremony, Gebremeskel said that the agreement mainly helps Ethiopia financially and technically in its comprehensive bid to become a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Ethiopia and South Sudan signed a bilateral air transport service agreement on Tuesday (June 20) to replace the existing temporary service between the two countries with a permanent and comprehensive air transport service, the Ethiopian Civil Aviation Authority (ECAA) said.

With the conclusion of consultation on the second Home Grown Economic Reforms Agenda with the executive committee of the Development Assistance Group (DAG), Ethiopia moves a step closer to securing the much-needed foreign currency from the Bretton Woods Institutions. Chaired by Eyob Tekalign, State Minister for Finance, the consultation, which kicked off at the beginning of this week, focused on the economic reforms expected to be implemented in the next three years. The reforms under discussion include a more extensive liberalization of key economic sectors, such as the financial industry.

Ethiopia accords special attention to the unique relations with the State of Kuwait, said Demeke Mekonnen, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Ethiopia during a meeting held on Tuesday (June 20) with Ambassador Bader Saleh Al Tunaib, Kuwaiti Assistant Foreign Minister of African Affairs. They deliberated on bilateral and regional issues of mutual interest. During the meeting, Demeke commended the development cooperation through the Kuwait Fund. He also called on Kuwaiti businesses to invest in the fields of energy, logistics and agriculture. Ambassador. Al Tunaib, on his part, expressed his country's keen interest to bolster ties with Ethiopia.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen participated in the 1st IGAD Quartet Ministerial Meeting on the Situation in the Republic of Sudan conducted virtually on Monday (June 19). (See Article)

Amb. Dessie Dalkie received the "2023 Best Ambassador Award" from the Korea Ambassador Culture & Friendship Association for making significant contributions to Ethiopia-South Korea friendship and cooperation while serving as Ethiopian Ambassador in Seoul, South Korea on Tuesday (June 20).

UK International Trade Minister Nigel Huddleston launched a new trade scheme from Bole Lemi Industrial Park in Ethiopia's capital on Monday (June 19), that will eliminate tariffs on Ethiopian exports to the UK, reducing costs for Ethiopian exporters. The Developing Countries Trading Scheme will cut tariffs for products from 65 developing nations including Ethiopia. Zero tariffs will be applied to all Ethiopian exports to the UK under the scheme.

WFP hopes to resume some food aid distribution in Ethiopia as soon as next month once it has received greater control over how beneficiaries are selected, a senior WFP official said on Monday (June 19). According to Valerie Guarnieri, WFP Assistant Executive Director for Programme and Policy Development, assistance in Tigray and to refugee camps could resume by the second half of July after the WFP received positive feedback from the relevant authorities. Other WFP programmes, including nutrition assistance to children, pregnant and breastfeeding women have not been affected by the aid pause.

Visa has reinforced its commitment to expanding digital payments in Ethiopia by announcing two new initiatives on Monday (June 19), to help advance fintech innovation and support women-led small and medium businesses (SMBs). During a visit by Regional President for Central and Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa (CEMEA) Andrew Torre to Ethiopia, Visa unveiled plans to hold a second edition of the Visa Everywhere Initiative (VEI) fintech competition and launch its She's Next women's empowerment initiative. Visa's She's Next program is a global advocacy program that supports women-owned small businesses through funding, training and mentorship.

Eritrea

The Ministry of Agriculture marked *World Desertification and Drought Day* (June 16), under the theme “*Her Land, Her Rights*” at its headquarters in Asmara with the objectives of raising awareness of the disproportionate impact of desertification, land degradation and drought on women and girls and the barriers females face in decision-making on land issues; highlighting women’s contributions to sustainable land management and broader Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and mobilizing global support to advance land rights for women and girls around the world.

Somalia

The African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) has started to drawdown (June 21) in compliance with the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 2628(22) and 2670(22) which mandates ATMIS to drawdown 2000 soldiers by the end of June 2023. Supported by the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS), ATMIS, has handed over the first Forward Operating Base (FOB) at Xaaji Cali in the Hirshabelle State to the Somali National Army (SNA). The FOB was under the Area of Responsibility (AOR) of ATMIS Burundi National Defence Forces (BNDF).

At least eight people were killed on Tuesday (June 20) in clashes outside parliament in the semi-autonomous northern Somali state of Puntland between local security forces and armed militiamen loyal to the opposition, police and witnesses said. The violent clashes in the state capital, Garowe, occurred during a parliamentary session to debate amendments to the local constitution, which the opposition sees as an attempt by the President of Puntland to extend his term of office.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Somalia and King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KS Relief) announced on Sunday (June 18) the launch of a ground-breaking project to improve access to quality maternal and reproductive health for vulnerable and displacement-affected populations in Somalia.

South Sudan

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and several government ministries have signed a 270 million US dollar deal to implement a project on resilience and development on Wednesday (June 21). Speaking during the signing ceremony, Meshak Malo, the FAO country representative in South Sudan, said the three-year agreement will further cooperation between the FAO and South Sudan through the resilience project.

Speaking at a UN Security Council briefing on Tuesday (June 20), Dai Bing, China's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, said the international community should be more patient with the political process in South Sudan, the youngest country in the world. The envoy

noted that South Sudan has continued to promote the implementation of the revitalized agreement, steadily advanced the constitution-making electoral processes and reached an agreement on the sharing ratio of unified forces.

South Sudan has thrown its support behind a peace proposal advocating direct talks between the rival leaders of Sudan, proposed by IGAD. The Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of South Sudan emphasised on Tuesday (June 20) that his country is not concerned about who should mediate the talks but rather with addressing the security and humanitarian situation in Khartoum and other war-affected regions since the conflict erupted in April 2023.

Speaking during the Oil and Power Conference in Juba (June 16), the technical advisor of South Sudan's Ministry of Petroleum, said the war in Sudan is affecting the supply of essential materials required for oil production. The advisor said the government is considering an alternative oil export route through Ethiopia to Djibouti.

Kenya

The top U.N. official for refugees praised Kenya's plans on Tuesday (June 20), for an integration program that would aim to make refugees self-sufficient, as he met with the Kenyan president on World Refugee Day. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, who met with Kenya's President William Ruto, said that \$200 million was pledged to the program and more was needed. However, no clear timeline for its kick-off.

Kenya on Monday (June 19) signed a trade deal with the European Union that will guarantee duty-free access for its farm produce to its biggest export market. The pact comes as Brussels seeks stronger economic relations with Africa in attempt to fend off China. Kenyan President William Ruto presided over a ceremony in Nairobi to formally recognize the Economic Partnership Agreement.

Sudan

Heavy clashes broke out between rival military factions in several parts of Sudan's capital as a 72-hour ceasefire that saw several reports of violations expired, witnesses say. Shortly before the truce ended at 6am on Wednesday (June 21), fighting was reported in all three of the cities that make up the wider capital around the confluence of the Nile: Khartoum, Bahri and Omdurman.

The Ethiopia Resilient Recovery and Reconstruction Planning Framework (2023–28)

In March this year, the Government of Ethiopia with technical assistance from the World Bank and other development partners launched a report on recovery and recovery roadmap in the aftermath of a devastating war in Northern Ethiopia mainly focusing on the situation between

November 2020 (the inception of the war) and December 2021. The report entitled *Ethiopia Resilient Recovery and Reconstruction Planning Framework (2023–28)* (3R, among others assiduously highlighted the extent of damage and consequent needs, the genesis of the conflict and patterns of internal displacement as well as the purpose, scope and guiding principles with regards to engagements guided by it, including but not limited to macroeconomic stabilization as a foundation for resilient recovery and reconstruction. As envisaged in the document, it is Ethiopian Government’s stratagem reflects on what has been lost and destroyed and presents a structured framework of how to build back better, cleaner, and smarter. The signing of the November 2022 *Peace Agreement* for Northern Ethiopia paves the way for an inclusive and sustainable recovery.

While emphasizing the inadequacy of a good policy to effectively deal with the matter, the strategy asserts that it is complemented by pivotal roadmaps, *Ethiopia’s Ten Years Perspective Development Plan* and *A Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda: A Pathway to Prosperity*. In this regard, it claims to provide a clear path towards recovery and reconstruction by providing what it dubs “a common response plan” to commendably meet the critical needs of the Ethiopian people while serving as a ‘living’ document, to be reviewed, adapted, and updated as circumstances demand and as progress is achieved, priorities are met, and additional resources become available. It also draws on the *Ethiopia Damage and Needs Assessment (DaNA), December 2022*, to address not only the localized recovery and reconstruction needs in the conflict-affected regions, but also the overall macroeconomic issues facing the country, at large. For the purpose of this edition, we will briefly highlight the rationale, the leitmotifs and the scope of the *Framework*.

Purpose

The rationale behind the *Framework* is to enable and inform programming and financing responses by the Government of Ethiopia and international partners to the needs identified in the the *DaNA*. Principally, it is the overarching framework for use by the government and national and international partners to plan, coordinate, finance, implement, and monitor Ethiopia’s resilient recovery and reconstruction through efficient, timely, and well-coordinated efforts with the involvement of all stakeholders and support from the international community. Equally, it also outlines the overall options for implementation, financing, and strategic communication to enable these investments. All are underpinned by an institutional proposal for effective coordination and implementation oversight as the recovery and reconstruction efforts are rolled out, for a period of five years, 2023 to 2028.

In this regard, the *3RF* outlines three strategic imperatives that it aims to achieve: **(1) a renewed social contract; (2) strengthened economic, social, and climate resilience;** and **(3) building back cleaner, better, and smarter.** On the other hand, it has identified *macro-financial stability, an enabling business environment, and national security,* as key enablers for its successful implementation of recovery and reconstruction efforts.

In particular, the *3RF* aims to assist Ethiopia in achieving three central goals in response to the recent conflict:

- *People-centered recovery* that returns sustainable livelihoods to the affected populations; provides sustainable solutions for internally displaced people; improves social justice for all, including women, the poor, and other vulnerable groups; and helps restore people's trust, improve governance, and harness the necessary conditions for reconstruction based on an inclusive approach.
- *Reconstruction of critical assets, infrastructure, and social services* to provide equal access for all to quality basic services.
- *Economic stabilization measures and interventions* for boosting the investment environment to enable sustainable economic recovery.

Scope

In Geographic terms, the *3RF* purports to consider six conflict-affected as *DaNa* assessments, including regional states of Afar, Amhara, Tigray, as well as parts of Benishangul-Gumuz, Oromia, and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (Konso Zone) on a backdrop of concerted recovery interventions at the national and federal levels.

Temporally, it will be applied for an initial five-year period (2023-28, apportioned into three phases: **(1)** *early recovery* (up to one year); **(2)** *short term* (up to three years); and **(3)** *medium term* (up to five years).

Social, infrastructural, productive and cross-cutting sectors have been capitalised for exclusive intervention, while encompassing the needs of the 18 affected sectors assessed under the *DaNa*. Each sector is broken down as follows:

- *Social sectors*: Housing; health; education; social protection and jobs; and cultural heritage and tourism
- *Infrastructure sectors*: Energy; information and communication technology; transport; water, sanitation, and hygiene; and municipal services
- *Productive sectors*: Agriculture; trade; industrial; and financial
- *Cross-cutting sectors*: Governance; environment; disaster risk management; and gender

Guiding Principles

The *3RF* is grounded in five key guiding principles (leitmotifs) to ensure its effectiveness, which comprise:

- (1) government ownership and leadership of resilient recovery and reconstruction;
- (2) planning and prioritization through a conflict-sensitive lens;
- (3) adoption of a programmatic, flexible, and adaptable process;
- (4) transparency and accountability through broad consultation and communication; and
- (5) a focus on building back cleaner, better, and smarter.

Way Forward

Taking this noble initiative of the Government into careful consideration, the international community more than ever before needs to back the full implementation of the *3RF*. Institutional and implementation arrangements at the heart of the *Framework* should prodigiously be supported by partners near and far to bring to fruition Ethiopian Government’s paragon in terms of establishing an effective, transparent, and accountable mechanism—including appropriate institutional arrangements—for an efficient recovery. In this regard, the appeals of the Government to the international community to solicit domestic and international assistance that can bolster its own resources to produce results on the ground in terms of restoring basic services and livelihoods and recovering economically from this genuine conundrum should be heeded if a durable solution is to bring about a thorough yet a single point of coordination and management at the federal and regional levels.

Virtual IGAD Quartet meeting on Sudan: Quest for Peace

On the morning of Monday, 20 June 2023, the Committee of Ministers of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Quartet group of countries including Ethiopia, Djibouti, South Sudan and Kenya, held its meeting to mull solutions to the Sudanese crisis that threatens to conflagrate. The ministerial meeting was conducted in the aftermath of the 14th Ordinary Assembly of the IGAD Heads of State and Government the previous week. As per the decision of the 14th IGAD Summit, the ministerial deliberation was chaired by Dr. Alfred Mutual, Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs of Kenya.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen Hassen, Foreign Ministers Mahamoud Ali Youssouf and Deng Dau Deng, represented Ethiopia, Djibouti and South Sudan, respectively. The Executive Secretary of the IGAD, Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu and African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Amb. Bankole Adeoye, also took part in this meeting.

Upon the conclusion of the ministerial talks, the Quartet group through the IGAD released a *Press Statement* charting a ten-point agreement to bring about peace between warring parties in the Horn

of African nation that neighbours Ethiopia in the West. Among others, their historic consensus in their collective quest for peace in Sudan as presented as follows:

- (1) Faithfully implement the decision of the leaders in the 14th Ordinary Assembly of the IGAD Heads of State and Government IGAD-led process as elaborated in the IGAD Roadmap for peace in the Republic of Sudan presented to the IGAD Heads of State and Government and in close coordination and collaboration with the African Union and Sudanese parties and stakeholders in a manner that upholds the principle of subsidiarity and to ensure Sudanese-ownership and leadership of the peace process and further to this end, facilitate the participation of the African Union in all meetings and deliberations of the IGAD Quartet group of countries;
- (2) Report to the IGAD Heads of State and Government on the progress made regarding preparations for the face-to-face meeting of the leaders of the two sides of the conflict in the Republic of Sudan in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in accordance to the stipulated timelines set out by the 14th Ordinary IGAD Assembly;
- (3) Work in the spirit of collective leadership, trust and transparency and ensure that all the concerns and requests of the Sudanese people are duly considered and addressed, called on the facilitators to coordinate and work closely with IGAD;
- (4) Adopt a step-by-step approach towards the resolution of conflict in the Sudan, and in this regard to prioritize the realization of a face-to-face meeting as a means of unlocking key issues namely the cessation of hostilities and delivery of humanitarian aid;
- (5) Welcome the *Jeddah process* and the recent *72-hour ceasefire Agreement* facilitated by the Saudi Arabia and the United States and the opportunity it has created to allow humanitarian access for the delivery of aid to affected civilian populations;
- (6) Launch an all-inclusive political process aimed at achieving sustainable peace and peaceful transition to democracy and civilian rule to be hosted by Kenya in mid-July or the first week of August 2023;
- (7) Designate Senior Officials to coordinate the IGAD Quartet group of countries work and provide technical and advisory support;
- (8) Appoint an IGAD Special Envoy for the Republic of Sudan as presented by the IGAD Executive Secretary and approved by the IGAD Council of Ministers to coordinate and lead mediation efforts;
- (9) Channel all official communications regarding the work of the IGAD Quartet group of countries through the IGAD Secretariat; and
- (10) Regularly update the Heads of State and Government of the IGAD Quartet group of countries on the work of the Committee

While commending the incessant efforts of the Quartet to bring about progressively sustainable peace in the Sudan, it is of utmost importance to pay attention to the fact that supporting initiatives

to help peace reign in the country should be conducted under the umbrella of the IGAD in close coordination and collaboration with the African Union and Sudanese parties and stakeholders in a manner that upholds the principle of subsidiarity and to ensure Sudanese-ownership and leadership of the peace process. In other words, bringing about a Sudanese-owned peace under the rubric of the Pan-African principle of *African Solutions to African Problems* as practically evidenced with the signing of the Pretoria Peace Agreement in Ethiopia is paramount to birthing an all-inclusive political process aimed at achieving sustainable peace and peaceful transition to democracy and civilian rule in Sudan, while forging a conducive milieu for the cessation of hostilities and delivery of humanitarian aid. Beyond repetitive yet transient ceasefires, backing the parties to the conflict on both sides reach a compromise in the cause of peace and normalcy, is hitting two birds with one stone: the cessation of belligerence by Parties will provide an unprecedented opportunity to provide desperately needed humanitarian assistance to civilians while paving the door for negotiations and the establishment of civilian rule considerate of the needs and aspirations of the Sudanese People.

Ethiopia's position towards achieving peace in Sudan, in this regard, singularly focuses on a Sudanese-owned and led peace process and avoidance of proliferation efforts detrimental to process while actively advocating for maintaining neutrality by external actors and beyond Sudan, mastermind regional stability in the perennially restive Horn of Africa. As affirmed by the Government of Ethiopia time and again, Ethiopia firmly stands in solidarity of the Sudanese people and strives continuously for peace and stability to return to Sudan and the region, by extension. The international community, in this respect, should support positive, non-interventionist and neutral quest for peace such as this one for the betterment of peace and security but also the continuation of regional integration and shared development aspirations to benefit fellow Horn of Africans.

DPM and FM Demeke Urges Equitable and Reasonable Use of the Nile

During the “*2nd Afri-Run High-Level Forum on Equitable and Reasonable Utilisation of Transboundary Watercourses in Africa*” held 22 June 2023 at the Skylight Hotel in Addis Ababa, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen Hassen urged riparian states for an equitable and reasonable use of the Nile River. The Forum was conducted under the theme “African Resources for African Prosperity in the New Age”.

In his keynote address DPM and FM Demeke noted, lack of political will and hegemonic tendencies over shared resources immensely contribute to little or no cooperation. He added, these challenges will continue to stand against our shared aspirations of ensuring sustainable development.

He said, it is high time that we redouble efforts to deal with the challenges building on the great strides we have made in the past to ensure equitable and reasonable use of transboundary resources. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is an exemplary initiative that champions equitable and reasonable use, he added.

Speaking at the Forum, South Sudanese Foreign Minister Deng Dau Deng Malek said, “we all are bound together by one river – the Nile” and he stressed cooperation on shared water resources as a means to climate change mitigation. He further noted, his country is committed to work with riparian countries for shared development.

Tanzanian Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Mbarouk Nassor Mbarouk also reaffirmed the commitment of his government to expedite cooperation on transboundary water resources. He added, Nile riparian countries should cooperate to develop their shared water resources.

While addressing the high-level forum Uganda’s State Minister of Foreign Affairs in charge of regional Affairs, John Mulimba reiterated the right approach for mutual gains for countries especially in the Nile Basin is to aim to address the underlying concerns of all Parties, and renew our commitment to negotiations on transboundary resources under the auspices of the African Union.

The Executive Director of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), Eng. Sylvester Anthony Matemu also stated that Nile riparian countries should work together to use their shared resources for shared development aspirations.