

A Week in the Horn

30.06.2023

MFA Commemorates “International Day of Women in Diplomacy”

AFRIRUN-2: A Forum Promoting Equitable and reasonable Utilization of Transboundary Watercourses

News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on Tuesday (27 June) adopted a resolution to extend the authorization for the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) for six months, till Dec. 31, 2023.

In a press statement dated 27 June, Heads of International Election Observation Missions present in Sierra Leone including the African Union, ECOWAS, Commonwealth, and the West Africa Elders Forum expressed concerns by the inflammatory language circulating on social media in the country. The Missions appealed to Sierra Leonians to continue exercising patience and restraint as they await the final declaration of results of the 24 June presidential elections by the Electoral Commission.

A Quadripartite Summit of Heads of State and Government on the pacification of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, took place in Luanda, Angola, on Monday (June 26). Burundi, Zimbabwe, Gabon, DR Congo, Rwanda, Comoros, Namibia, representatives of the AU and the United Nations and high-level representatives of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the East African Community (EAC), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICRGL) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) participated in this summit.

Africa Platform on Children Affected by Armed Conflicts (AP CAAC) on Tuesday (June 27) joined African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat in strongly condemning the heinous and shocking terrorist attack by suspected Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) militia on the Lhubiriha secondary school in Western Uganda, in which at least 42 students were killed, more were injured, and other students remain missing. According to the applicable international human rights legislation and international humanitarian law, the Platform further urges Member States to take practical steps to prevent assaults on schools.

FemWise held a consultative meeting with representatives from Cameroon, Uganda, Morocco, Malawi and Zimbabwe on Wednesday (June 28), to discuss the FemWise-Africa decentralization process and develop a roadmap for establishing national chapters in these countries in 2023. Decentralization of the Network will be instrumental in promoting the role of women in peace

processes at regional, national and local levels, and harnessing their comparative advantage to support mediation, dialogue & conflict prevention efforts by RECs/RMs and Members States. The Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation, officially referred to as FemWise-Africa, is a subsidiary mechanism of the Panel of the Wise, one of the critical pillars of the Peace and Security Architecture of the African Union (APSA).

Ethiopia

On Tuesday (27 June) Addis Ababa hosted the *First Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly of the Organisation of Educational Cooperation (OEC)*. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Demeke Mekonnen Hassen chaired the Assembly. In his opening remarks, he underlined the significance of a reinvigorated international order that upholds the interests of the Global South as a whole while responding to the concerns of developing countries. During the Heads of State and Government Summit on 29 June, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed made remarks, in which, he reaffirmed the fact that by investing in education, we equip our youth with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate an ever-changing world. He noted, in Ethiopia's efforts towards cultivating inclusivity in education provision, we are undertaking activities to ensure that the gender gap is closed and that students with special needs are considered. The High-Level Policy Dialogue was conducted under the theme "*Building the Organization We Deserve: Shaping the Multilateralism We Want*".

Minister of Planning and Development Fitsum Aseffa received Stefan Lock, Head of Cooperation of the EU Delegation to Ethiopia, at her office on Thursday (June 29), to discuss continued cooperation in development undertakings. The Head of the Cooperation reaffirmed that the European Union will continue to deepen its development cooperation with Ethiopia and disclosed that the EU is preparing and finalizing a framework for medium-term development cooperation.

On Thursday (29 June), the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, Ambassador Meles Alem delivered the *Bi-Weekly Press Briefing* of the Ministry to local and Addis-based international media corps.

Ethiopia's investment forum was held in Tokyo, Japan, on Wednesday (June 28) as a result of the collaboration between the Ethiopian Embassy and UNIDO ITPO TOKYO. The conference provided the attendees from various firms situated in Japan with an overview of Ethiopia's investment potentials and prospects.

The German Development Cooperation, the Bavarian Office for Africa, and Menschen für Menschen (MfM) handed over medical equipment valued at 1.2 million euro to the Ethiopian Ministry of Health to strengthen the health system, Wednesday (June 28). The medical equipment will support health facilities including in conflict-affected Amhara, Afar and Tigray regions, assisting in the enhancement of health care services and facilities in these areas, ultimately benefiting local communities and individuals in need.

The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) called on Ethiopians in the Diaspora to actively participate in the upcoming national consultation. In a message communicated to the Ethiopian Diaspora on Tuesday (June 27), the Commission noted that there are differences in opinion and misunderstanding among various political and ideological leaders and members of

society in Ethiopia on the most basic national issues. ENDC emphasized the importance of resolving such differences and misunderstandings and reaching a national consensus through dialogue.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs inked a Memorandum of Understanding with Horn Review on Tuesday (June 27) to promote a research and development based foreign relations along with enhancing the publications of the Ministry geared towards raising awareness on Ethiopian foreign policy imperatives, near and far.

Tuesday (June 27) marked the graduation of the Ethiopian Navy's personnel who had spent two years receiving training both domestically and overseas, in a variety of professions, including navigation, engineering, electrical, communication, and the weaponry department. Field Marshal Birhanu Jula, the Army's chief of staff, Rear Admiral Kindu Gezu, the commander in chief of the Ethiopian navy, as well as other top military officers and military attachés from other countries, attended the graduation ceremony.

Ethiopia and China launched a joint research and extension centre supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to hasten Ethiopia's development of renewable energy on Monday (June 26). It is anticipated that the Joint Research and Extension Centre will act as a research, training, and demonstration platform to improve access to renewable energy technology and assist the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

A consultative forum on Ethiopian diplomacy took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on Saturday (June 24). Organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Institute for Foreign Affairs, the event attracted senior government officials, parliamentarians, and scholars. The forum concluded with Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen expressing gratitude for the fruitful discussions and setting a precedent for future fora on Ethiopian foreign relations and diplomacy.

In press briefing on Saturday (June 24), Minister of State for Government Communication Service, Selamawit Kassa stated a joint technical committee consisting of government institutions and international partners has been established so as to address issues related to suspension of aid by WFP and USAID. Selamawit reaffirmed government's commitment to ensure rule of law and take all the necessary legal measures against parties involved in the mishandling of the aid delivery.

The Embassy of France in Ethiopia has announced on Saturday (June 24) that it will provide EUR 944,000 (57 million birr) to support independent media in advance of Ethiopia's national dialogue. The lion's share of the funds will be split between the state-run Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) and the Ethiopian Media Council (EMC), an umbrella group representing private media outlets to strengthen the media sector.

Djibouti

Leadership from Camp Lemonier and Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, along with host nation officials, and local coalition military leadership, attend a Djiboutian Armed Forces military parade to commemorate the 46th Djiboutian Independence Day, Tuesday (June 27). The annual celebration hosted by President Ismaïl Omar Guelleh, offered an opportunity for militaries from various nations to show support for shared goals of security and stability in the region.

Somalia

The African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) handed over two more Forward Operating Bases (FOBs), on Tuesday, bringing to four the number of FOBs that have so far been handed over to the Somali National Army (SNA). Another FOB, Marka Ayub has been closed, the African Union disclosed.

The Council of the European Union has on Monday (June 26) approved conclusion reaffirming the EU's commitment to its long-standing partnership with Somalia, focusing on joint implementation of the EU-Somalia Joint Operational Roadmap. The Council commends Somalia for its efforts in building a stable and peaceful country, ensuring a security transition, and promoting reforms. The EU will continue to support Somalia through various means, including NDICI-Global Europe, the Global Gateway, humanitarian assistance, and EPF and CSDP missions and operation.

Despite gains made in tackling terrorism and advancing the electoral process in Somalia, top UN officials warned the Security Council on last Thursday (June 22) that extra effort and funding are needed to address multiple threats, from climate shocks to spates of violence amid a looming food crisis.

South Sudan

The President Salva Kiir Mayardit held talks on Wednesday (June 28) with his South African counterpart on the ongoing conflict in Juba's northern neighbour and the fragile peace process at home.

Uganda and South Sudan have signed a power sales agreement (PSA) to boost electricity trade between the two neighbouring countries and socio-economic development in the border towns of Oraba, Elegu, Kaya and Nimule, in Juba on Tuesday (June 27).

Sweden announced on Monday (June 26) its commitment of 90 million Swedish Krona (\$8.4 million) to UNFPA, the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency, to implement its fourth Country Programme on sexual and reproductive health and rights, in support of the Government and people of South Sudan.

The Government of South Sudan, through the Ministry of Finance and Planning, has donated \$5 million in assistance to the International Organisation for Migration to support the South Sudanese returnees arriving from Sudan. Speaking at the signing ceremony, the First Undersecretary Minister of Finance and Planning, Daniel Ayulo, said, "This is the little contribution that we are providing in regard to supporting our people who are suffering from the situation that is happening in our country.

Kenya

President William Ruto insisted that the country will emerge victorious in the fight against Al-Shabaab, noting that the militants will not be allowed to continue making infiltration into the country due to ongoing crackdown in Somalia where the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) is directly

involved. “We are going to send a compelling message to Al-Shabaab that they are not going to reverse the gains we have made.” His remarks came as Kenya, Djibouti and Ethiopia expected to deploy Non-ATMIS troops to Somalia to take part 2nd phase of military Operations aimed to root out the terror group. (Monday, June 26)

President Ruto unveiled Digital Government services at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC). The inauguration is predicated on the *Kenya National Digital Master Plan 2022-32*, that among others, aims to digitise all government services by the end of June this year. In the same token, the President presided over the signing of the *County Allocation Revenue Bill and Equalisation Fund Appropriation Bill 2023* at the State House Nairobi.

On 29 June, the President hosted Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) at the State House. According the State House, they discussed building of a secure, peaceful, equitable and climate-resilient Africa and agreed on the urgent need for a peaceful Sudan and to working together in reforming AU.

Foreign Affairs Principal Secretary partook in a roundtable event on *Artificial Intelligence (AI) Governance and Ethics* hosted by Arizona-based Thunderbird School of Global Management and called for called for AI literacy targeted at policy makers necessary for the evolution of responsive AI regulations on the continent.

Sudan

41 African women groups issued a plea to the President of the United Nations Security Council on Wednesday (June 27) for action to protect the civilian population in Sudan, particularly women and girls. In a letter addressed to Lana Nusseibeh, UAE Ambassador and current Security Council President, the groups highlight the UAE’s dual role as the leader of the Security Council and a member of the Women, Peace, and Security Shared Commitments initiative.

The United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) has confirmed new attacks by the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/North (SPLM-N) – Al Hilu on the Sudanese Armed Forces in the Blue Nile region. Reports indicate that violence broke out on June 25 and 26 in Deim Mansour, Abu Nezir, and Korabody villages in the Kurmuk locality, Blue Nile Region. As a result of the fighting in the Blue Nile Region, hundreds of civilians have sought refuge in Ethiopia, while others are preparing to move towards Ed Damazin.

MFA Commemorates “International Day of Women in Diplomacy”

The *International Day of Women in Diplomacy* serves as a reminder of the significance of women's voices in diplomacy and the imperative for increased gender equality in the field. In 2022, the United Nations General Assembly declared the 24th of June as the *International Day of*

Women in Diplomacy. A resolution was adopted by consensus, advocating the need for increased representation of women in key decision-making positions as essential to shape and implement multilateral agendas.

By acknowledging the importance of commemorating the International Day of Women in Diplomacy, on Friday 23rd of June 2023, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia organized a celebration in collaboration with Addis-based diplomatic corps and representatives of international organisations. The event was attended by the chief guest of honour, President Sahle-Work Zewde, women ministers, state ministers, women ambassadors, diplomats, high commissioners, and representatives from the African Union (AU), United Nations (UN), and other international organizations based in Addis Ababa.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Demeke Mekonnen welcomed the honourable guest, President Sahle-Work. He spoke about the importance of women in diplomacy. He said that women diplomats are playing an increasingly important role in promoting peace, security, and sustainable development.

In her keynote address, President Sahle-Work stated that diplomacy is a demanding career that requires passion and commitment. She shared her own experiences in diplomacy and leadership, providing participants with valuable insights into the field. She also encouraged women to pursue careers in diplomacy and utilize their skills and talents to make a positive impact in the world.

Ergoge Tesfaye (Ph.D.), the Minister of Women and Social Affairs of Ethiopia made the opening remarks and urged an ever-stronger commitment of the Government to promoting gender equality in the field of diplomacy and emphasized the importance of ensuring that women have equal opportunities to participate in diplomacy and have their voices heard.

Similarly, Foreign Affairs State Minister, Ambassador Birtukan Ayano, shared her experience with participants of the times she served as an Ethiopian ambassador and chairperson of the Women Ambassadors Association and Africa Women Diplomat Forum in Canada. She stated that these experiences were incredibly rewarding and taught her a great deal about diplomacy, leadership, and the importance of women's voices in international affairs.

A panel discussion on the state of women's role in diplomacy and foreign relations was also part of the high-level celebratory event. Moderated by State Minister of Economic Cooperation at the Ministry of Finance of Ethiopia, Semereta Sewasew, the consultative panel was conducted under the theme "*Why Women Matter in Diplomacy*". AU Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko; Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, Hanna Tetteh; veteran Ethiopian diplomat and Ambassador, Konjit Sine-Giorgis and; acting director of the Office of Women and Social Affairs of the MFA, Lula Nur, were the panellists that discussed the opportunities and challenges faced by women in diplomacy, shared their personal experiences, and explained how women can support each other in their work.

Afirun 2: A Forum Promoting Equitable and reasonable Utilization of Transboundary Watercourses

Addis Ababa hosted the second Afirun conference, a forum that promotes equitable and reasonable utilization of transboundary watercourses in Africa, mainly the Nile, on the 22 and 23 of June 2023. Demeke Mekonnen, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, officially opened the annual High-Level Forum, which was also attended by Ministers and Vice Ministers, the Executive Director of the NBI Secretariat, Ambassadors as well as scholars, researchers, experts, youth representatives and media personalities from the riparian states. The high-level attendance is a clear testament to the commitment of riparian states in ensuring equitable and reasonable use over the Nile.

This was echoed in the remarks heads of delegation made during the opening session. The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Ethiopia, Demeke Mekonnen, in his opening remarks, underscored that the gathering is reflective of *“the desire and commitment we have to ensure a fair regime in our basin”*. Invited Ministers from the riparian states, in their remarks, alluded for an equitable and reasonable use of trans-boundary resources.

The forum, through the high-level roundtable and the four panel discussions, focused among other things, on the equitable and reasonable utilization of transboundary watercourses. They underlined the need to revisit the age-old tendency of monopolizing the use of the Nile River. Experts from riparian countries delved at length into key issues pertaining to the management and utilization of the shared water resources.

Among others, the challenges the ecosystem is exposed to; mainly climate change was discussed. In this regard, Demeke underlined the importance of shared vision and common approach to deal with the man-made and natural challenges the basin is facing. He stated that, *“as one Nile family, we shall complete the journey by transforming the NBI into a permanent river basin organization- the Nile River Basin Commission as envisaged in the CFA. To this end, we shall finalize the ratification of the CFA and realize the wish of our people. The entry into force of the CFA would ensure the equitable and reasonable use of our resources and enhance our cooperation through joint projects.”* The panels concluded that basin-wide cooperation for a collective vision as a way forward.

Those ideas were further developed in the high-level roundtable conducted among Ministers and vice-Ministers. The roundtable is in fact a new addition introduced, according to Mr. Demeke Mekonnen, *“in line with the mounting challenges and urgency to jointly secure equitable and reasonable use of the shared water resources”*. This was also reflected during the panel discussions.

Against this backdrop, the participants endorsed an outcome document that reflects the key themes and conclusions of the conference. The event recognized that countries in the basin will have growing needs owing to increased demographics as well as consequences of climate change. Those factors should not necessarily lead to detrimental confrontation and should rather be the basis for a regime that accommodates everyone’s interests and aspirations in an equitable and reasonable manner. Participants further agreed that it was not too late to have such a mechanism in place with all stakeholders included.

Besides, understanding was reached to set an appropriate narrative on the equitable and reasonable utilization of the waters of the Nile that corrects the discourse set by the sense of victimhood narrated inappropriately with the intention of monopolizing the Nile. Discussants stressed that experiences could be shared among states in the basin such as hydropower project in the Nile Equatorial Lakes-Subsidiary Action Program(NELSAP).

As part of the conference, Ministers and Vice-Ministers representing the riparian countries visited the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). Following the visit, they underscored that it is a colossal project with implications for the betterment of livelihoods across the region. And as has been discussed in the panels, the project was one such instance where cooperation and collective vision were enshrined in. Visitors were also able to see that the project was near completion and all were eager to see what the project holds for the future of Ethiopia and Africa, at large. The dam was dubbed by the visitors as the Grand African Renaissance Dam owing to its continental significance and symbolism.

Afrirun as a common platform of the Nile Basin countries is becoming crucial to promote equitable and reasonable utilization of the shared watercourses. Future editions of the Afrirun conference, will continue with more vigor and determination to ensure all the Nile riparian states are beneficiaries of the bounty of the Nile.