

# **A Week in the Horn**

25.08.2023

*UAE President's Historic Two-Day Official Visit to Ethiopia*

*BRICS Summit Endorses Ethiopia's Entry in to the Group*

*Home-Grown Economic Reform Agenda II (HGER 2.0)*

## **News in Brief**

### **Africa and the African Union**

The African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) announced on Tuesday (22 August) that it decided to suspend with immediate effect the participation of Niger from all activities of the AU and its organs and institutions until the effective restoration of constitutional order in the country.

The BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) group of countries on Thursday (24 August) welcomed and affirmed their support for the inclusion of the African Union as a member of the Group of Twenty (G20) at the upcoming G20 Summit to be held in New Delhi. The announcement came during Johannesburg II Declaration adopted following the 15<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit.

The AU Commission issued a statement on the occasion of *World Humanitarian Day* on Saturday (August 19) acknowledging the tireless efforts and sacrifices of humanitarian workers, volunteers, and organizations, who uphold the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence. It also recognised the importance of strengthening partnerships at the regional, continental, and global levels to enhance humanitarian effectiveness.

### **Ethiopia**

United Arab Emirates' President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan paid an official visit to Ethiopia from 18-19 August. He held discussions with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed on ways to strengthen the historical bilateral ties between the two countries. The two leaders discussed regional and international developments and emphasised the importance of cooperation and effective partnerships (**See Article**).

A high-level delegation led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed participated in the 15<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa on Wednesday (23 August). On the margins of the Summit, PM Abiy held bilateral talks with Chinese Premier Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and discussed the need for enhancing cooperation in bilateral and multilateral venues.

Leaders of the BRICS, on Thursday (24 August), endorsed Ethiopia's entry into the group. Ethiopia will become a full member of the bloc beginning 01 January 2024. Prime Minister applauded the historic decision and expressed Ethiopia's readiness to cooperate with all for an inclusive and prosperous global order.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement on Tuesday (22 August) regarding the alleged mass execution of Ethiopian nationals at the Saudi-Yemeni border recently reported by the [Human Rights Watch](#). The Government pronounced, in tandem with Saudi authorities prompt investigations will be conducted into the gruesome incident.

The Government of Ethiopia and the UN Country Team issued a joint statement on Tuesday (22 August) in which they expressed their determination to deepen their partnership and continue working for inclusive and sustainable development in Ethiopia following their constructive and productive deliberations

## **Eritrea**

President Isaias Afwerki attended the BRICS-Africa Outreach and BRICS Plus Dialogues as part of 15<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit. At the sideline of the summit, President Isaias was expected to meet and hold talks with various Government and State leaders. The presidential delegation includes Mr. Osman Saleh, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

On the margins of the BRICS Summit, President Isaias held a series of bilateral meetings with South Sudanese President Salva Kiir Mayardit, Chadian PM Saleh Kebzabo and the Foreign Ministers of Belarus and Venezuela, Sergei Aleinik and Yvan Gil Pinto, respectively, on bilateral ties.

## **Djibouti**

A delegation headed by President Ismail Omar Guelleh took part in the Johannesburg BRICS Summit.

US Department of Defence official Mara Karlin on Monday (21 August) upon the conclusion of her visit to the country highlighted the strong ties between the US and Djibouti pointed as well as the contributions of the bilateral partnership to regional security and stability.

On Saturday (19 August), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that more than 24 migrants missed following a shipwreck off Djibouti coast. The tragic incident occurred on Thursday (17 August) in Godoria, near the coastal town of Obock, northeast Djibouti.

## **Somalia**

The newly appointed Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, George Conway, on [World Humanitarian Day](#) (19 August) called for the protection of aid workers and facilities and the respect for the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and operational independence that underscore humanitarian action globally.

The East African Community (EAC) on Tuesday (22 August) began talks in Nairobi to admit Somalia into the regional economic bloc. The talks are reported to be the final stage before Somalia can join the EAC.

Senior officials of the AU, the Federal Government and the UN on Tuesday (22 August), jointly deliberated on the upcoming phase of the troop drawdown by the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS).

## **South Sudan**

On Saturday (19 August), President Salva Kiir and his Kenyan counterpart, President William Ruto met in Nairobi to discuss bilateral relations on trade and regional security. The meeting also aimed at exploring strategies to achieve a lasting resolution to the ongoing conflict in Sudan.

President Salva Kiir participated in the 15<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The Governments of Malawi and South Sudan, on Monday (21 August), launched [Presidential Compacts on Water and Sanitation](#) at the [Stockholm World Water Week](#) by the Government of the Netherlands, IRC WASH, the UN-hosted Sanitation and Water for All global partnership (SWA) and UNICEF as part of the [Heads of State Initiatives](#) that aims to advance water and sanitation services worldwide.

Information Minister Michael Makuei, on Monday (21 August), said the country's cabinet is in the process of setting up a technical committee to follow up on the implementation of the recent Russia-Africa Summit in St. Petersburg.

## **Kenya**

Indonesian President Joko Widodo made a State Visit to Kenya on Monday (August 21) and pledged to work with Kenya for shared prosperity, to ensure the partnership with Kenya benefits the People and to ensure the partnership with Kenya benefits the people. The two sides have signed a deal with to manufacture and distribute medicines and vaccines as the country revamps its pharmaceutical industry, alongside six deals on food security, mining and renewable energy.

Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen held talks with President William Ruto and his counterpart Alfred Mutua in Nairobi on Monday (21 August) on issues of bilateral and regional issues of mutual interest such as peace and security, trade, investment and renewable energy.

The meeting of aviation professionals kicked off on Tuesday (22 August) in Nairobi, Kenya on to examine methods to improve security and safety for Africa's airlines and airports. Salvatore Sciacchitano, the President of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), said Africa must prepare for increased air traffic in the coming months, hence the need to improve the safety of airports and passengers.

## **Sudan**

Martin Griffiths, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, on Tuesday (22 August), urged parties to the Sudanese conflict to cease hostilities and allow aid delivery.

Jagan Chapagain, the Secretary-General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), on Sunday (20 August), urged the international community to provide more funds to help Sudanese citizens trapped by a months-long conflict.

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## **UAE President's Historic Two-Day Official Visit to Ethiopia**

The President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Sheik Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan made a historic two-day (18 to 19 August 2023) official visit to the most populous Horn of African country. The visit signified the ever-growing importance of collaboration, exploration of opportunities for mutual cooperation and strengthening the existing cordial bilateral relations.

The Middle Eastern country and Ethiopia share a long-standing history of diplomatic and economic relations. The UAE has been a significant investor in Ethiopia, particularly in sectors such as infrastructure, agriculture, manufacturing, energy, hospitality and tourism. The visit, in this regard, provided ample opportunity for both countries to reaffirm their commitment to existing partnerships and to explore new avenues for collaboration.

The official trip encompassed a wide range of engagements and meetings to address various areas of cooperation. The President, among others, held productive discussions with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and other prominent Ethiopian government officials, on boosting cooperation between the two nations, as well as regional and international issues of mutual concern.

At the end of the talks, the leaders presided over the signing several agreements and memoranda of understanding, paving the way for increased trade, investment, and collaboration in key sectors such as energy, infrastructure, agriculture, industry, logistics and capacity building and experience sharing. The visit highlighted the UAE's commitment to deepening diplomatic relations and contributing to Ethiopia's development.

On the other hand, the visit provided an opportunity for leaders of the two countries to address regional security concerns. Talks centred on shared challenges such as terrorism, security, and conflict resolution in neighbouring countries. In this case, they exchanged views and pledged to work together to promote stability and peace in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East region.

Furthermore, the two leaders discussed the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP-28) that will be hosted by the UAE from 30 November to 12 December 2023.

The Emirati Presidential-visit, the first ever by an incumbent President, marked a significant milestone in the bilateral relations between the two countries. The discussions, agreements, and commitments made during the visit also resonate the shared aspirations for progress, mutual cooperation, and long-term partnership. The outcomes of the visit will in due course pave the way for deeper engagements, economic growth, and collaborative development between Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates.

### **BRICS Summit Endorses Ethiopia's Entry in to the Group**

The South African city of Johannesburg hosted the 15th BRICS Summit from 22 to 24 August 2023. Leaders of Member States including Chinese President Xi Jinping, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva attended the Summit while Russian President Vladimir Putin was represented by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Ethiopia was among the six countries that were invited to join the bloc. The others were Argentina, Egypt, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia. The Summit has unequivocally endorsed the Ethiopia's entry into the Group, while its full membership will commence on 01 January 2024.

The inclusion of Ethiopia into the BRICS family holds the immense potential to reshape geopolitical and economic landscapes. On top of this, Ethiopia highly appreciates the strong leadership and continued commitment of BRICS founding countries to build a perennial bridge

between the bloc and Africa in trade, investment and infrastructure development. Inarguably, BRICS is an indispensable forum to advance the interests and augment the voices of developing countries in a fair, inclusive and balanced manner. Ethiopia as an ardent advocate of effective multilateralism and Pan-Africanism, shares the core values of the group.

Welcoming the decision, Prime Minister Abiy said, Ethiopia stands ready to cooperate with all members for an inclusive and prosperous global order. In joining hands with the BRICS, the Premiere noted, Ethiopia aspires to build the bloc to champion understanding and work towards a shared future that benefits all.

The Group was formed in 2009 by Brazil, Russia, India and China and South Africa joined the bloc one year later. BRICS represents around 42% of the world's population, contributes more than a quarter of the global GDP and shares 18% the global trade.

### **Home-Grown Economic Reform Agenda II (HGER 2.0)**

The second phase of the Homegrown Economic Reform (HGER 2.0) like its predecessor, HGER 1.0, was domestically initiated by the leadership of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed with core objectives of sustaining rapid growth, maintaining stable macroeconomic environment by reducing debt vulnerabilities and creating adequate and sustainable job opportunities in the country.

The economic reforms are being translated into action through policy that enhances the supply side of the economy. The main aim and focus of the HGER is the enhancement of productivity and competitiveness of the overall economy, and a gradual transition from public to private sector-led growth. As a result, stable macroeconomy will be ensured and the economy would be able to generate adequate jobs to arrest the rampant unemployment and the inflationary pressure. The HGER plan was classified into macroeconomic reforms, sectoral reforms, and structural reforms.

**Macroeconomic Reforms:** In order to eliminate macroeconomic imbalances and create a stable macroeconomy, strict macroeconomic management has been put in place over the past two years. In regards to the overall macroeconomic management, strict monitoring has been put at work, and the following key focus areas have been identified in the macroeconomic reform plan.

**Sectoral Reforms:** The country will follow a multi-sectoral growth approach by diversifying sources of economic growth and job creations by undertaking necessary and substantive policy reforms across the different sectors. In this context, particular attention has been given to the agricultural sector, manufacturing sector, mineral sector, tourism sector and the ICT sector as sources of growth.

**Structural Reforms:** Although the role of government in the economy shall continue, adjustments and reforms will be made based on strategic policy performances and prevailing conditions. It is, in fact, very important that the government plays a role in the economy, and in particular, through public investments and lead the overall economy to a desired direction based on market principles. In order to ensure an efficient government intervention, thorough studies would be conducted to see if there are failures that calls for government interventions, and also to evaluate the feasibility of any government interventions in order to make sure that the necessary capacity and resource is available to implement the identified public project. It should also be noted that any public development projects, whether they are still at inception phase or even after completion, could possibly be handed-over to the private investors through fair and transparent approach, as long as the private investor has the necessary capacity and resources to take the projects forward.

HGER is part and parcel of the *Ten Years Development Plan: A Pathway to Prosperity (2021-2030)* that was instituted by the Ministry of Planning and Development. As clearly stipulated in the foundational roadmap, the ten-year development plan lays a long-term vision of making Ethiopia an “**African Beacon of Prosperity**” by creating the necessary and sufficient conditions. Ensuring high per capita income through rapid economic growth is one of the sources of prosperity, but not a measure of prosperity on its own. Prosperity is largely defined in terms of happiness, improvement in standard of living and quality of life, and the level of complete satisfaction created by the overall capability we build through economic gain, human and social development by harnessing tangible and intangible wealth, including social capital and natural resource wealth.

Seen through a diplomatic lens, the Peace Building and Regional Development Cooperation imperatives of Ethiopia, as per the 10 Year Development Pan, is designing and implementation of a grand strategy that will enhance sustainable regional peace, social interaction, and economic integration with the view to ensure economic development and shared prosperity. In this sense, a founding member of and host to the African Union, Ethiopia will play crucial role to support the success of the continental integration and to create various platforms that would make the Union to continue as multi-faceted support and partner; to reinforce diplomacy that will ensure sovereignty through diplomatic relations based on national interests and equality; to create infrastructural and economic linkages with neighbouring countries; to enhance the country’s profile and protect national interests; to tie cultural relations and linkages with neighbours; to create and strengthen a public diplomacy team in order to build the profile of the country and to ensure our relevance; to increase the participation of Ethiopian Diaspora in development activities; to attract more foreign investment; to increase the volume of export; to increase tourist inflows; to increase the number of development partners; and to transfer knowledge and technology to the benefit of the economy.