

News in brief

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy briefs the international and local media

Germany's Minister for Economic Co-operation and Development visits Ethiopia ...

...after a visit to Eritrea and a meeting with President Isaias

Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta on a state visit to Washington

UK Prime Minister, Mrs. Theresa May, in Kenya for a state visit

Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Summit in Beijing next week

South Sudan's peace process enters its final phase

The International Atomic Energy Agency reviews Sudan's nuclear power program

Africa and the African Union

The Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) is being held on Monday and Tuesday next week (September 3-4) in Beijing. Chaired by China's President Xi Jinping the Summit is being held under the theme of "China and Africa: toward an even stronger community with a shared future through win-win cooperation." The meeting will be attended by many African leaders, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, the UN Secretary-General, and representatives of 27 international and African regional organizations. (**See article**)

Ethiopia

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed gave his first news conference on Saturday last week (August 25) to over a hundred journalists from local and international media. He covered a wide range of issues, law enforcement and internal security, the economy, Ethiopia's external relations with its neighbors and the rest of the world as well as the current political and socio-economic reforms, and underlined the importance of elections in 2020, emphasizing they would be free and fair and held on time. (**See article**)

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy will be leading the Ethiopian delegation to the Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) being held on Monday and Tuesday next week (September 3-4) in Beijing. The Summit being chaired by China's President Xi Jinping is being held under the theme of "China and Africa: toward an even stronger community with a shared future through win-win cooperation."

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy took a phone call from German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Tuesday (August 28). Chancellor Merkel congratulated Dr. Abiy on Ethiopia's economic and political reforms and the recent peace agreement with Eritrea. The Prime Minister accepted an invitation to visit Germany.

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy met Dr. Gerd Müller, German's Minister for Economic Co-operation and Development on Friday last week (August 24). They discussed Germany's continued support for Technical and Vocational Educational Training (TVET) in Ethiopia and other areas of support. During Dr. Müller's visit Ethiopia and Germany signed a grant agreement amounting

100 million Euros as well as a Joint Declaration of Intent on Special Initiative on Training and Job Creation. **(See article)**

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy conferred with an Egyptian delegation led by Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry on Tuesday (August 28). The Prime Minister received a message from President El-Sisi and had a fruitful discussion on issues of mutual interest with the delegation.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene briefed the media on Ethiopia and IGAD's roles in bringing South Sudanese parties to agreement and maintaining peace and stability in the country on Monday (August 27). The State Minister noted that Ethiopia as chair of IGAD has provided leadership and designed strategies to encourage dialogue among the warring parties in a bid to end the suffering of the people of South Sudan.

State Minister Hirut bade farewell to the outgoing Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Somalia to Ethiopia, Ambassador Dr. Mohamed Ali-Nur Hagi, on Thursday (August 30). The State Minister also bade farewell to the departing Tunisian Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ambassador Sahbi Khalfallah on Wednesday (August 29).

State Minister Hirut addressed a one day seminar on the "Impact of the Gulf Dynamic on the Horn of Africa" on Thursday (August 30). The seminar was organized by the Policy and Research Analysis Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with the Institute for Security Studies (ISS). In her keynote address State Minister Hirut congratulated the Department and participants for organizing such a timely topic, which had strongly impacted on Ethiopia in particular and the region at large. Mrs. Hirut recalled that the Ethiopian Foreign Policy document attaches due attention to the geopolitical and geostrategic importance of the Middle East and its immediate and direct impact on "our national security and state existence".

State Minister Hirut signed the Book of Condolence in honor of former Secretary-General, Kofi Annan at the premises of the Embassy of Ghana. Mrs. Hirut noted that Mr. Kofi Annan was the face of the United Nations and represented multilateralism, adding "He made all Africans proud by his tireless service for the causes of peace, sustainable development, the rights of women, and above all by being a staunch vanguard for the principles of the United Nations Charter". She said: "Mr. Kofi Annan is highly remembered in my country as a true friend of Ethiopia. His great works and his remarkable legacy as a global champion for peace, development and human rights will remain a true inspiration for all of us in Africa and in particular in Ethiopia".

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Aklilu Hailemichael met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Singapore, Dr. Vivian Balakrishnana on Monday (August 27) and discussed ways of strengthening bilateral relations. Both sides agreed to work closely to enhance trade and investment ties between the two countries.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Professor Afework Kassu met Indian Deputy Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sanjay Kumar earlier on Tuesday (August 28) to discuss working together on capacity building. They underlined the importance of building on the already increasing fast linkages between the two countries. The State Minister noted that trade was moving fast and there were a lot of Indian Companies working in Ethiopia. People-to-people ties

were also increasing. He also thanked the Deputy Vice-Minister for India's long-term support of education in Ethiopia and the provision of scholarship opportunities. Mr. Kumar said Ethiopia and India cooperated but noted the need to explore other areas of cooperation

State Minister Professor Afework and Mr. Hailemelkot Asfaw, East African Representative for Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) signed a Host Country Agreement on Friday (August 31). Professor Afework said that activities of such private sectors play an important role in the effectiveness of reforms initiated at national and international level. He also welcomed CIPE's decision to open its East and Southern African Regional Office in Addis Ababa. Mr. Hailemelkot remarked that his organization would support the government in building capacity and competitiveness in the private sector. CIPE is a US Trade chamber Affiliated Organization operating in 55 Countries Worldwide.

Ethiopia earned \$110 million from the export of textiles and garments during the last fiscal year which ended on July 8. This was 46 % lower than the target set by the government, The State Minister of Industry, Bogale Feleke said last Thursday that the lower export performance was due to shortage of cotton, lack of trained manpower and social instability affecting most cotton producing regions of the country. Lack of proper market linkage with reliable buyers was also a major challenge, he added. The State Minister noted that the government had begun to implement the National Cotton Development Strategy to resolve the problems. This is a 15-year strategy to significantly boost local cotton production aiming to put Ethiopia at the top of cotton producing countries in Africa. The textile and garment sectors are two of the key industrial sectors, prioritized by the government as major sources of foreign currency earnings.

The Norwegian Tax Administration (NTA- Skatten min) and Norad started a week-long scoping mission in Ethiopia on Monday (August 27) to see NTA could assist Ethiopia in capacity building in tax administration. The Head of NTA's Capacity Building Unit, Fredrik Aksnes met with Nebyou Samuel, Head of Director General's Office at Ethiopian Revenues and Customs Authority (ERCA).

Eritrea

Foreign Minister Osman Saleh Mohammed is making a working visit to the Russian Federation, August 30 to September 1. He held talks on bilateral relations with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Friday (August 31).

German's Minister for Economic Co-operation and Development, Dr. Gerd Müller visited Eritrea on Thursday last week (August 23). He met President Isaias Afwerki and expressed his support to the Eritrea-Ethiopia Peace Agreement, and underlined Germany's readiness to contribute to the "positive developments in the region". He said a decline in migrants from Eritrea could now be expected. He said he hoped Eritrea's system of indefinite military conscription would now be reduced and that the country would move towards "democratic structures." (**See article**)

Senator Yano, President of the Association of African Economy and Development (AFRECO) of Japan, visited Asmara this week (August 28-30).

Kenya

President Kenyatta made a state visit to Washington last weekend, holding talks with President Trump on Monday (August 27). The White House described President Kenyatta's visit as an opportunity to deepen the strategic relationship between the US and Kenya, and to advance mutual interests in trade, security and regional leadership, reaffirming Kenya's position as a cornerstone of peace and stability in Africa. The two Presidents agreed to bolster tourism, trade relations and improve security, especially in the Horn of Africa and to cooperate on defense and security to provide for an efficient war against terror. **(See article)**

UK Prime Minister, Mrs. Theresa May, made a one-day visit to Kenya on Thursday this week (August 30), after visits to South Africa and Nigeria at the head of a business delegation. She held talks with President Kenyatta and agreed a new deal for wide-ranging cooperation on security. **(See article)**

President Kenyatta speaking to VOA in Washington said it was impossible to say when Kenyan troops would leave Somalia. It would depend on the defeat of Al-Shabaab, on the Somali people establishing strong, solid security structures, on a national army and good administrative structures. It would not, he said, be right to pull out and leave a vacuum.

Somalia

Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre chaired a meeting to discuss plans to print a new currency on Tuesday (August 28). The conference, attended by representatives of international agencies and government officials, discussed means to accelerate production of the currency and secure funding. The government needs \$41 million for the printing. Minister for Finance, Abdirahman Duale Beileh, said the government could not afford this and countries and international agencies had previously pledged to help. He confirmed the government now planned to organize another conference to iron out challenges facing the process.

Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre met with the British Ambassador to Somalia, David William Concar on Tuesday (August 28) to discuss strengthening of bilateral relations and enhancing cooperation with regard to security and economy. Ambassador Concar praised the government's efforts in combating graft and improving good governance and security.

Planning Minister Jamal Hassan has told international organizations working in Somalia but based outside the country to set up field offices in Somalia. At a meeting on Wednesday (August 29) he gave the NGOs a four months ultimatum after which their licenses would be revoked. He said, "Those international agencies based in Nairobi and come to Somalia only for a day or two for monitoring should know that will not happen again." He said they must also work directly with government institutions such as ministries and regional governments. Last month, Finance Minister Abdirahman Beyle also issued a notice to all companies working in the airport area and Halane camp (which houses the UN and African Union), notifying them of their tax obligations including registration and income tax requirements.

Sudan's Head of Intelligence Major General Salah Abdalla Saleh arrived in Mogadishu on Monday (August 27) for a working visit and held talks with Hussein Osman Hussein at Intelligence headquarters in Mogadishu.

Troops of the Uganda People's Defense Force with AMISOM officially handed over the National Stadium in Mogadishu to the Government of Somalia on Wednesday (August 28). During the hand-over ceremony, President Mohamed Abdullahi thanked the UPDF for their "sacrifice and patriotism". Deputy Special Representative of the Chairperson of African Union Commission, Simon Mulongo, said the handover was a major step in the AMISOM transitional plan. The stadium was liberated from Al-Shabaab in September 2011 and then used as a base for both Uganda and Nigeria Police serving under AMISOM.

Colonel Zakia Hussein Ahmed, Deputy Commander of Police, has been promoted to the rank of a Brigadier-general in the Somali Police Force, the first woman in the country's police history to attain this rank. Speaking on the occasion on Sunday (August 26) Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre emphasized the need to recognize the role of the women in the country. He said, "I want to encourage Somali women to stop aiming low. Instead, I would like them to focus on becoming the next president and premier in this country."

US Ambassador-designate to Somalia, Ambassador Donald Yamamoto told a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing last week that the US would strive to hold the Somali government accountable to its people, and he pledged to support the building of democratic institutions in the Horn of Africa nation. He said he would advance US national interests in Somalia and pledged to support "building of effective security forces, implementing stabilization and economic recovery programs and delivering humanitarian aid."

The National Independent Electoral Commission with the support of Saferworld organized a one-day workshop on Lessons Learnt from the 2016/17 Somalia Electoral Process in Nairobi on Monday (August 27). It was attended by representatives from the NIEC from the offices of the president, the prime minister, the Ministry of the Constitution, key civil society groups, and the international community. NIEC Chairperson Ms. Halima Ibrahim said the objective of the workshop was to exchange lessons learnt from the 2016/17 elections, and there was a presentation from *SOSCENSA* (Somalia South Central Non-State Actors) and *PUNSAA* (Puntland Non-State Actors Association) Election Observation Missions as well as panel sessions on the 2016/17 electoral process and the preparation of the 2020/21 elections and on the way forward for Somalia Elections.

The Director of International Cooperation of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Dahir Salad Hassan, met with officials from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) on Monday (August 27) in Tokyo to discuss future cooperation between Somalia and Japan.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in its latest report, on Monday (August 7) said food security continued to improve as livestock production had increased substantially. There were still a number of challenges, however, as continued conflict and subsequent displacement disrupted livelihoods and access to key sources of food and income. With the humanitarian situation remaining fragile due to the residual impact of drought,

displacement, conflict and marginalization, OCHA urged sustained aid delivery to support 5.4 million Somalis in need.

The British Security Training Centre in Somalia graduated its 500th graduate this week. UK forces have been providing training to the Somali National Army since January last year, delivering medical, leadership development, logistics, and human rights training.

South Sudan

President Kiir arrived in Beijing on Tuesday (August 28) at the head of a delegation including Foreign Minister Nhial Deng Nhial, several other ministers and his wife. He is participating in next week's Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC).

In a decree released on Friday (August 24), President Kiir relieved General Gathoth Gatkuoth Hothnyang from his position as Minister of Labour, Public Service and Human Resource Development and appointed former army chief General James Hoth Mai to the position.

The IGAD-mediated South Sudan talks in Khartoum resumed this week on Wednesday (August 29) to finalize the implementation matrix and discuss security arrangements. This round of talks is due to be completed on September 2. They follow the three days of talks on other issues which the parties eventually initialed this week. (See article)

The government intends to resume oil production from the main oil wells in Unity and Upper Nile states by September 2, and Oil Minister Ezekiel Lol Gatkuoth has announced that the Tharjiath oilfields in Unity State and Upper Nile will be fully operational by the end of the year. The government hopes to produce about 40,000 barrels per day from the Unity wells to boost the current production of 130,000 barrels, down from the 350,000 the country used to produce before conflict broke out in 2013. Currently, only the Faloi oilfields in Upper Nile are operating at full capacity. The government wants to resume oil production to help revive the economy. Finance Minister Salvatore Garang Mabiordit announced a \$600 million budget on August 20 to be funded largely by oil revenue.

Sudan

The joint Chinese-Sudanese Ministerial Committee will be meeting in Beijing on Saturday (September 1) to discuss ways to push forward all joint projects and agreements between the two countries. The delegation to the meeting, headed by the Foreign Minister, includes the Ministers of Finance, Oil and Bridges and Roads as well as a technical delegation that includes the Under-secretaries of the Oil, Foreign Affairs, Minerals, Agriculture and Animal Wealth ministries besides the Central Bank of Sudan. The meeting was due to be held in Khartoum but was transferred to Beijing because of the FOCAC Summit. President al-Bashir is among those attending.

An International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) delegation has been in Khartoum this week to discuss Sudan's nuclear power program. Last December, the Russian State Corporation for

Atomic Energy (Rosatom) signed an agreement to build the first nuclear power plant to produce electricity in Sudan. (See **article**)

The Joint Sudanese-Russian Ministerial Committee for Economic Trade Cooperation will hold its 6th meeting in Moscow next month. It will discuss a number of economic and political issues, particularly mineral development.

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed briefs the international and local media

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy said elections due in 2020 would be free and fair and would not be delayed by his sweeping reforms. Giving his first news conference on Saturday last week (August 25) to over a hundred journalists from local and international media, he said, “My dream and ambition is for democratic elections to be held, otherwise, what legitimacy can any official have without the mandate earned through elections?” He said the ruling Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front coalition’s focus over the next year would be on preparations for free elections to be held. He said: “EPRDF’s desire at this moment is to conduct a truly democratic election, adding, “If EPRDF wins a truly democratic election it can implement its agenda with full confidence, and if EPRDF loses, it will fulfill its long-held pledge to implement democratic transition.”

In his press conference, the Prime Minister covered a wide range of issues including the political and socio-economic reforms currently underway, the government’s engagement in the areas of law enforcement and in ensuring internal security, as well as issues of the economy and Ethiopia’s external relations with its neighbors and the rest of the World.

Dr. Abiy emphasized that his government was working tirelessly to put an end to bottlenecks in the economy and was aiming to infuse the sector with new energy to ensure the successes being achieved continued. He detailed the measures being taken to resolve problems and expand the economy including the semi-privatization of state owned companies, close attention and investigation of the national mega projects, strict control of foreign currency exchange, initiation of new strategies to engage the Diaspora and increase the volume of remittances, and opening new business sectors to foreign investors as well as cutting government expenditure. Dr. Abiy underlined that the government would continue to work to address structural problems in the economy. He said “economic sabotage” had taken place and “large groups” were hoarding foreign exchange. So, “in cooperation with the stakeholders, the government will make every effort to fight black market activity and increase the volume of exports in order to alleviate the foreign currency shortage”.

The Prime Minister also noted that the World Bank would provide one billion dollars in direct budgetary assistance “to be disbursed in the next few months.” He said it would be the first time the Bank had provided direct budget support for many years. A month earlier World Bank President, Jim Young Kim, told the Prime Minister in Washington that the Bank was ready to provide “robust support” for his administration and “help realize his vision of boosting human capital and to end poverty in Ethiopia”. For 2018, the World Bank pledged 3.3 billion dollars to

Ethiopia, over three times higher than its commitment last fiscal year when its lending was the lowest in five years. This year's budget is US\$12.6 billion, 5.3% lower than the previous fiscal budget. It assigns US\$4.1 billion for capital expenditure, US\$3.3 billion for recurrent spending and US\$4.8 billion for subsidiary appropriation to regional states. The remaining US\$216 million is allocated to Sustainable Development Goals' projects. It includes US\$1.89 billion external aid and grants. The Prime Minister said: "The World Bank's pledge means the country is now stable and inclusive."

In his briefing Dr. Abiy also touched on the reforms underway on social affairs. He said that government would be looking at different initiatives to help scale up the existing social development in the country. He said the new educational roadmap under development would "enable to present quality education for the upcoming generations." This roadmap, which is open for the public comment, in addition to providing quality education, aims to create a multilingual community and allow every Ethiopian to learn at least one more local language in addition to his/her mother tongue. Dr. Abiy said such an approach would provide the nations, nationalities and peoples of various languages and cultures with more familiarity with each other across the country.

Referring to his ongoing political reform plans, Dr. Abiy said his government would continue to move forward. It would continue to address outstanding issues and would create a platform for political parties to argue over ideas and not fight with weapons. It would also empower independent institutions which could serve the interest of the people regardless of governmental appointments or changes, improve electoral laws and conduct free and fair elections. Dr. Abiy reiterated his government's commitment to work for the observance of rule of law. He asserted that the rule of law should be the only and prime source of every activity. This would provide the means to fight any disobedience and bring criminals to justice. He added that preserving the rule of law and ensuring internal security continued to be a priority of his administration. He said there would be zero tolerance for any form of anarchy, and stressed that institutionalizing and building the capacity of independent law enforcing bodies must be the lasting solution to ensure law and order in the country.

The Prime Minister also highlighted the efforts to resolve the humanitarian problems faced by Internally Displaced People (IDPs) due to recent crises in the Oromia and Southern Regional States and in the eastern part of the country. He said that people were now returning to their villages. He affirmed the government was doing its best to settle the situation, extending support for immediate humanitarian needs and helping displaced people reconstruct their former lives. He called on all concerned bodies to support and work with the government in the rehabilitation process for IDPs.

Dr. Abiy said the normalization of relations with Eritrea was the outcome of the good will of the peoples of the two countries. He emphasized that the rapprochement and peace process between Ethiopia and Eritrea provided for numerous socio-economic and political opportunities. Many people had been responsible for the developments now being achieved and he stressed the need to keep up the momentum.

Germany's Minister for Economic Co-operation and Development visits Ethiopia ...

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy took a phone call from German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Tuesday (August 28). The Chancellor congratulated Dr. Abiy on Ethiopia's economic and political reforms and the recent peace agreement with Eritrea, ending two decades of "No peace No war". She also invited him to visit Germany, an invitation the Prime Minister accepted. The Prime Minister, who met Dr. Gerd Müller, German's Minister for Economic Co-operation and Development on Friday last week, underlined his appreciation of Germany's continued support for Technical and Vocational Educational Training (TVET) in Ethiopia and other areas.

During Dr. Müller's visit Ethiopia and Germany signed a grant agreement amounting 100 million Euros as well as a Joint Declaration of Intent on Special Initiative on Training and Job Creation. The agreement allows for support for TVET training and job creation in Ethiopia, financially and technically. The main purpose of the Joint Declaration of Intent is to complement the Government's effort towards creating more job opportunities. The cooperation will also provide for a conducive environment for an appraisal mission for job partnerships to visit Ethiopia to identify the potential activities to be implemented under the initiative.

German Development Minister Gerd Müller, who was on the second day of a trip to seven African countries (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Chad and Ghana), met Prime Minister Dr. Abiy in Addis Ababa. He said: "Ethiopia is a country on the move: just a few months ago, with the conclusion of peace, Ethiopia and Eritrea made history. At the same time, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed presents an impressive pace of reform. Since my last visit in 2017, there have been changes hardly imaginable previously: the state of emergency has been lifted and thousands of political prisoners have been released. State-owned enterprises are to be opened up to foreign investors.", and he added, "To further support this reform momentum, we aim to deepen our cooperation towards a reform partnership."

Dr. Müller noted that Germany this year would launch its special initiative, 'Education and Employment', introducing a vocational training system, which is based on the German model together with Ethiopia and providing incentives for private investment. At Ethiopia's request, a practical system of vocational training with company-based training is currently being developed with the support of the Economic Co-operation and Development Ministry (BMZ). Germany is also supporting Ethiopia in the textile and clothing industry, as well as being prepared to invest more in climate-adapted production methods in agriculture.

...after a visit to Eritrea and a meeting with President Isaias

Prior to arriving in Ethiopia, Dr. Müller and his delegation visited Eritrea where they met President Isaias Afwerki. Dr. Müller, who expressed support to the Eritrea-Ethiopia Peace Agreement, underlined Germany's readiness to contribute to the "positive developments in the region". He said a decline in migrants from Eritrea could now be expected. He said he hoped Eritrea's system of indefinite military conscription would now be reduced and that the country would move towards "democratic structures."

At the meeting, at Adi Halo, President Isaias briefed Dr. Müller on the peace and friendship accord reached between Eritrea and Ethiopia and the opportunity the two countries will have to integrate their human and material resources for the benefit of their two peoples. Dr. Müller stressed the objective of his visit to Eritrea was to convey a message of congratulations for the peace agreement signed between Eritrea and Ethiopia and said the new era of relationship would have an important contribution for the development of cooperation and stability in the region. He expressed Germany's readiness for positive engagement in the region.

In a press release, Dr. Müller's office said the historic agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea ended a decade-long conflict that had claimed nearly a hundred thousand lives and forced many people to flee. Now, it was time for a reliable peace process and Germany offered its support, for example for vocational training. It said Eritrea urgently needed to open up new perspectives for its young people as this could send a signal to the many Eritreans who had fled to Germany. This was an issue that Dr. Müller had raised on his first visit to Eritrea in December 2015 when he noted that "we can help Eritrea stop the exodus of the youth by improving the living conditions in the country and by providing options for return."

During his visit, Dr. Müller also met and held talks with Foreign Minister Osman Saleh on Thursday (August 23) on the development of bilateral relations and other issues of interest to both countries. He praised the joint declaration of cooperation signed between Eritrea and Somalia and expressed the expectation that the new political scenario in the Horn of Africa would influence implementation of Eritrea's development programs.

In an interview with Deutsche Welle, after his meeting with Dr. Müller, Foreign Minister Osman Saleh Mohammed said "there is now full understanding on both sides about the current situation." He said that both Ethiopia and Eritrea had created a very conducive atmosphere for investment and trade. "We are going to use the resources of both countries for the development of our nations. For this reason, we are working toward an integrated economy of the two countries. For example, port maintenance and road maintenance are areas where we could invest. There are other areas like agriculture where we could have what we call "integrated community projects. We also raised the issue of what we call 'water projects' infrastructure." He said the German government might participate in supporting Eritrea's agriculture, road construction and water and energy infrastructure.

The Foreign Minister said migrants were not coming to Germany at the same rate as was previously. The numbers were very much on the decrease. He emphasized that the government had "a full understanding that Eritreans can come back voluntarily at any time, [and] there is a comprehensive government policy. Eritreans who want to come back voluntarily, they can come. There's no problem."

Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta on a state visit to Washington

President Kenyatta and First Lady Margaret were formally received by President Trump and his wife Melania at the White House on Monday (August 27), and after discussions in the Oval

Office, they were joined by the respective delegations for bilateral talks. The White House described President Kenyatta's visit as an opportunity to deepen the strategic relationship between the US and Kenya, and to advance mutual interests in trade, security and regional leadership, reaffirming Kenya's position as a cornerstone of peace and stability in Africa.

During their meeting, President Uhuru Kenyatta and President Donald Trump agreed to bolster tourism, trade relations and improve security, especially in the Horn of Africa. President Kenyatta said the US has been instrumental in the fight against terrorism and seeks to partner with it in streamlining other sectors. They agreed to deepen cooperation in defense and security to provide for an efficient war against terror. President Kenyatta said: "We have had very strong and excellent cooperation with the US in security and defense, especially in the fight against terrorism. Most importantly, we are here looking to enhance our partnership in trade and investment." President Trump said: "We do a lot of tourism; we do a lot of trade and defense. And we are working very hard to improve security right now. We appreciate your being here with us very much." He described the relationship "as tremendous" and pointed to the construction of Kenya's first high-speed expressway by an American company as an example of the two nations' economic cooperation. The discussions also covered the benefits of direct Kenya Airways flights from Nairobi to New York which will begin in October, and they agreed the African Growth and Opportunity Act was one of the key initiatives whose effect would be enhanced through this milestone. Security issues focused on regional security, including South Sudan, where the US would like to see Kenya continue to play a constructive leadership role and help guarantee the peace process, and on Somalia.

During President Kenyatta's visit to Washington agreements were signed with the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and Kipeto Wind Energy Company for a \$232 million deal to finance the construction and operation of a 100-megawatt wind power plant near Nairobi to provide a more reliable source of energy to the national grid; and for a \$5 million letter of commitment to expand the distribution network of Twiga Foods and improve food security and agricultural wages in Kenya. The President also met with executives of leading US companies from the Business Council for International Understanding which has 200 member companies. He underlined that "Kenya is open for business and all we want to do is package our partnership in a way that is mutually beneficial to you as a private sector and the people of Kenya." He also emphasized that his "Big Four agenda" projects (boosting manufacturing industry, promoting food security, providing affordable housing and universal healthcare coverage) offered major opportunities for local and foreign investors. He said Kenya intends to more than double the manufacturing sector's contribution of 8.4% to the Kenyan economy by 2022.

Before meeting President Trump, President Kenyatta told VOA that the talks would be largely centered on security cooperation, but more importantly on how to boost trade and investment. He said: "Given the fact that the United States is one of our biggest trading partners, we have had a long, solid foundation of partnership that stretches all the way back to our independence [in 1963], and I think our objective is to see how we can strengthen that, how we can deepen that for the mutual benefit of our two countries." He said he wanted to see more American investment in Kenya, to take advantage of the reforms made, especially over the last four years, and the infrastructural development, adding, "We want Americans to come and take advantage of these

activities, encourage more companies to come in, to take advantage not just of the reforms and the infrastructure development, but also Kenya's location."

Speaking about issues relating to Kenya's neighbors, President Kenyatta said Kenya was committed to working together with any peace loving nations to ensure that peace and stability returned to South Sudan, adding "we will try everything...and continue to pressure on the leadership of South Sudan to ensure they come together and find a framework that works to restore peace and stability and ultimately human dignity to the people of South Sudan". He said Kenya wanted to work very closely together with Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed. He said Kenya was "very happy with the rapprochement of power between Ethiopia and Eritrea. All this works for peace in our region."

President Kenyatta's visit to Washington is another indication that President Trump is taking more of an interest in Africa. In April, President Trump welcomed Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari. Last month, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed met with Vice President Mike Pence who praised the reforms made in Ethiopia since Dr. Abiy took office in April. Ambassador Tibor Nagy was confirmed by the Senate in June as Assistant Secretary of State for African affairs, a key specialist role, and Kyle McCarter, an Illinois state senator who has worked with aid groups operating in Kenya, has been nominated as U.S ambassador to Kenya and is awaiting confirmation. Former acting assistant secretary for Africa, Ambassador Don Yamamoto has been nominated as ambassador to Somalia. First Lady Melania Trump will travel to Africa to examine "issues facing children throughout the continent" in October. The Pentagon is reportedly planning to draw down US forces in Africa as part of a broader strategic realignment and place more emphasis on advisory missions, though details of how this would differ from current policy have yet been detailed.

UK Prime Minister, Mrs. Theresa May, in Kenya for a state visit

UK Prime Minister, Mrs. Theresa May, arrived at Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport early on Thursday (August 30) for a one-day state visit in Kenya. It is the first visit by a UK prime minister to Kenya since Margaret Thatcher thirty years ago, and also the first to Sub-Saharan Africa by a British leader since David Cameron attended Nelson r Mandela's memorial service in 2013.

Mrs. May met with President Kenyatta at State house, Nairobi, and at a subsequent press conference, she stressed that Kenya had a "special place in the hearts of British people" because "it was here that our monarch learned she would become queen". She said she and President Kenyatta had agreed a new deal for wide-ranging cooperation on security. This will provide support to Kenyan police in dealing with violence against girls and women, plus legal expertise on pursuing complex terror and organized crime cases. The UK is to build a cyber centre in Nairobi to help stop child abuse images being shared online. Linked to Kenya's existing anti-human trafficking and child protection unit, which was set up in 2016 with input from the UK's National Crime Agency, it will also assist efforts to identify potential victims and access data from tech firms to catch offenders. In addition Mrs. May announced a "new package of funding"

to support AMISOM in its fight against al-Shabaab. Earlier in her visit to Africa she said the UK would support Nigeria to confront “violent Islamist extremism and human trafficking”.

President Kenyatta said Mrs. May’s visit would hopefully be the first of many more visits in the future. He said, "We are looking forward to strengthening the ties we already have”, adding there have "always been constant high-level engagement between our two countries and governments". The President said Kenya wants to "improve" its trading relationship with Britain" and he didn’t believe Brexit was going to dent Kenya’s ability to strengthen and deepen trade and investment between the two countries, adding, “I don't see Brexit meaning anything detrimental towards the strong ties we already have."

The President said he had asked for Britain's support in a bid for a seat on the UN Security Council, saying the country's "commitment to peace-keeping is well-known across the globe". Mrs. May said the UK never reveals how it votes on these matters, but she did say she had discussed how Britain and Kenya could work closer together in the run up to the vote. She said she wanted to strengthen trade links with Kenya and hailed the chance to negotiate a new trade deal led by the UK, not the EU, after Brexit. President Kenyatta sent a message to British investors, telling them that "any investment here is guaranteed to benefit both the investors and ourselves".

Mrs. May was heading a 29 strong business delegation and she visited a business school as well as meeting British troops based in Kenya to help in the fight against Al-Shabaab, before attending a state dinner hosted by President Kenyatta.

Kenya was the third and final stop on her three-nation tour. She had earlier visited South Africa and Nigeria on a tour aimed to deepen UK economic and trade ties with growing African economies ahead of Britain leaving the EU in 2019. She made it clear she wants the UK to overtake the US to become the G7's biggest investor in Africa by 2022. She announced an ambitious new approach to the UK's aid spending in Africa, by using it to help British private sector companies invest on the continent, emphasizing private sector investment as the key to driving growth and "unleashing the entrepreneurial spirit" in Africa. She stressed that creating jobs in Africa, where many countries have young populations, is in the world's interest. It is also the best way to tackle extremism, instability and migration to Europe. Mrs. May has made it clear she sees a huge economic potential to tap in Africa and that she is keen to support economic stability in the region in order to stem the flow of migration.

During her visit to Africa, Mrs. May announced £4bn of extra financial support for African economies, linked to the refocusing of the UK's aid spending, She made it clear she wanted to ensure young people had the skills to launch job creation booms. The UK's overseas aid budget totaled £13.9 billion in 2017, an increase of £555 million over the previous year. In 2016, the UK’s direct investment in Africa was £42.7 billion. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development this compared to £44.3 billion from the US, £38 billion from France and £31 billion from China.

Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Summit in Beijing next week

The next Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) is being held on Monday and Tuesday next week (September 3-4) in Beijing, under the theme of "China and Africa: toward an even stronger community with a shared future through win-win cooperation." China President Xi Jinping is chairing the Summit and will hold meetings and carry out other activities on the sidelines. Leaders and representatives of more than 50 African countries are expected to participate in what will be the largest diplomatic event held by China this year, attended by the largest number of foreign leaders. They will include the Chairman of the African Union Commission, as well as the United Nations Secretary-General as the special guest and 27 international and African groups as observers. The Forum will allow for high-level dialogue between Chinese and African leaders and business representatives, and events will include the sixth China-Africa entrepreneurs' conference, and a round table meeting between Chinese and African leaders, as well as various bilateral meetings and fourteen sub-fora. The sub-fora of FOCAC cover a variety of aspects including industry, agriculture, law, education, culture, and art, and have continuously pushed China-Africa relations to new heights.

State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said last week that the Beijing Summit aimed to build a stronger community with a shared future between China and Africa. He said: "During the summit, we will adopt the Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Action Plan, and a number of bilateral cooperation agreements will also be signed, laying out a plan for China and Africa cooperation in the next three years and beyond." It would produce important outcomes in four areas. The Summit, he said, would make a renewed call for a stronger community with a shared future between China and Africa." This would come through the close dialogues between Chinese and African leaders, creating a stronger strategic guidance for cooperation and adding new substance to the community in the new circumstances, which would also contribute to the building of a community with shared future for mankind. It would also usher in a new era for the Belt and Road Initiative and for Africa's development. China would "engage with Africa in equal consultation, plan together, work together and benefit together." It would connect the Belt and Road Initiative with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the UN 2030 Agenda on sustainable development and launch new strategies and new measures to push cooperation between the development strategies of various African countries and China to a new level.

China-Africa relations have set a model for the solidarity and cooperation between China and developing countries, as well as an excellent example of South-South cooperation. The Summit, aimed at opening new opportunities and new horizons for development of the China-Africa comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership while building "a closer community of a shared future between China and Africa," will provide a new opportunity to align China/Africa development strategies. The principle of upholding justice while pursuing shared interests and the principles of sincerity, real results, affinity and good faith was proposed by President Xi Jinping in 2013 for China's relations with Africa, and Xu Jinghu, Special Representative of the Chinese Government on African Affairs, says these concepts serve as the guiding philosophy for China in its endeavors to strengthen solidarity and cooperation with developing countries. China will continue to uphold its African policy featuring sincerity, concrete results, affinity and good faith, and the policy of upholding justice and pursuing shared interests. Among those results has been the increase of Chinese companies investing in Africa, driven by the boom in China-Africa

cooperation. China has been Africa's biggest trading partner every year since 2009, and China's investment in Africa has risen to more than 100 billion US dollars. Trade volume between China and Africa has increased by 17 times between 2000 and 2017.

Over the past 18 years since the establishment of the FOCAC, the Forum mechanisms have steadily expanded to deeper levels and broader directions and become an important platform for collective dialogue and pragmatic cooperation between China and African countries. Since its first meeting in 2000, FOCAC has gradually evolved from a transactional and regional forum into one that deals with strategic and global issues, while also sticking to the principle of "seeking shared benefits through extensive consultation and joint contribution" and persisting in equal, pragmatic and efficient cooperation. It has grown into a flagship of China-Africa cooperation, promoting South-South cooperation and bringing tangible benefits to both the peoples of Africa and to China.

Indeed, FOCAC has witnessed a process of mutual consultation, joint construction, and benefit sharing between China and Africa. Zhou Yuxiao, China's Ambassador for Affairs of the FOCAC, says new policies to be introduced at the Beijing Summit will effectively align the Belt and Road Initiative with the African Union Agenda 2063, to promote deep integration of the Chinese dream and the African dream, building a closer China-Africa community of common destiny. He said the construction of the Belt and Road had provided a broader platform for China-Africa cooperation in achieving infrastructure and financial connectivity, and the upcoming summit would attract more countries to join the construction of the Belt and Road. He said the Summit would formulate priority areas and key directions for China-Africa cooperation with special considerations given to meet the needs of Africa's economic transformation and the policies to be worked out would help Africa nurture its capacity for independent development, accelerating its march towards industrialization and modernization.

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy, who will be leading Ethiopia's delegation to the Forum next week, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu is already in Beijing for the FOCAC ministerial meeting. Prime Minister Dr. Abiy has described China as "a very good partner for Ethiopia ... supporting us in human capital development, which is a priority for my government." He was speaking at a ceremony awarding scholarship to 220 Ethiopians to study in China on Friday last week (August 24), and he thanked the Chinese government for all that it had done for Ethiopia, noting that Ethiopia was the biggest beneficiary of the human resources cooperation under China-aid framework globally. By the end of 2017, the Chinese government had trained 5,655 participants of different professions for Ethiopia under the framework, covering over 20 fields including education, health and medical services, agriculture, tourism, manufacturing industries, public administration, business management, urban development and poverty reduction. The Prime Minister called for further strengthening of the support from China's government for Ethiopia's human development endeavors. He said: "Nothing is impossible. Especially for Ethiopia and China, the sky is the limit," adding, "We can go far to develop next generation to take responsibility and to work for their country." Ethiopia has been able to send more than 1,000 students to study in China this year alone, and this latest batch of scholarship students, drawn from 40 Ethiopian federal and regional government academic institutions and industries, will pursue graduate studies in Chinese universities both in social and natural science disciplines. 54 of the recipients will pursue doctoral studies and the remaining

166 will study for their masters. The Prime Minister called on the group embarking on their further education in major Chinese universities to learn from "China's experience and wisdom" in the development and other sectors and he urged them to serve as connecting bridges between Ethiopia and China in strengthening ties once they returned from their studies.

South Sudan's peace process enters its final phase

The IGAD-mediated South Sudan talks in Khartoum resumed this week on Wednesday (August 29) to finalize the implementation matrix and discuss the security arrangement. These are due to be completed on September 2. This followed three days of talks on the bracketed issues, which included the number of states, the role and functions of the First Vice President, the creation of new five ministers, the National Constitutional Review Commission and preparatory commission for the national constitutional conference. The final document has yet to be approved by the IGAD leaders before being formally signed by the parties.

Following the joint statement released by IGAD at the beginning of last week signed by the South Sudanese Government, SPLM-OI, SSOA, SPLM-FDs, Other Political Parties (OPP) and Civil Society organizations, the South Sudanese parties reiterated their commitment to implement a deal ending the five-year conflict. The joint statement said, "We do acknowledge that the war and fighting has caused indescribable suffering to all our People and has deeply fractured our society." It added that they pledged to continue discussions on the remaining issues adding "today we affirm our joint commitment to full implementation of this Agreement, the Khartoum Declaration and Agreements on the Outstanding Security and Governance Issues".

The final document on the bracketed governance issues was initialed on Tuesday (August 28) by the South Sudanese government, the SPLM-FDs, Other Political Parties (OPP) and the civil society representatives. However, the SPLM-IO's acceptance to initial the final revitalized peace agreement was delayed. Nor was it clear whether the South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA) might reconsider its position on the document. The group leader Gabriel Chang Changson in his joint statement with the SPLM-IO said they "shall remain on the negotiating table".

The SPLM-IO-along with the SSOA at first refused to sign the final document. They demanded their reservations on governance issues be guaranteed in the document. It was only later, that SPLM-IO leader, Riek Machar, said he would initial the final document of the revitalized peace agreement. Sudan's Foreign Minister El-Dirdeiry Ahmed said, "After intensive negotiations, Machar has agreed to initial the final document on August 30", adding that in return, the Sudanese mediation had pledged to raise he points that Dr Machar requested with the IGAD.

The SPLM-IO's concerns in the final document were related three issues. One was the quorum for the cabinet or the legislative assembly meetings as these were unchanged though the numbers of the cabinet members had increased to 55 ministers. In a joint statement the SPLM-IO and the SSOA also called for the permanent constitution-making process to be implemented through the National Constitutional Assembly not the government-controlled National Constitutional Review Commission. Another unresolved issue in the talks on governance was the contested number of states.

The Sudanese and IGAD mediation proposed a compromise on Sunday (August 26) to settle the difference over article 4 on the number of states and boundaries. This suggested that if the parties fail to reach a consensus on the number of states, a referendum, maintained as the default option, should give people the possibility to choose between different choices including the current number 32, or any other alternative set by the Independent Boundaries Commission (IBC). The mediation said the Technical Boundary Committee should settle this issue first through drawing a map of the "tribal boundaries of 1.1.1956". Once the mapping was done, the IBC could propose rectifications for the boundaries of the 32 states found as violating tribal boundaries of 1.1.1956. "The IBC should agree by consensus, and on the basis of its already set guidelines, on number and boundaries of states."

Sudan's Foreign Minister, El-Dirdeiry Ahmed also pointed out that the issues raised by the SPLM-IO were not part of the mandate of Khartoum Round of talks. The mediation could not open a discussion on these topics unless all the parties agreed. Minister El-Dirdeiry said the issue would be referred to the IGAD Heads of State and Government.

Ever since the conflict in South Sudan broke out in December 2013, IGAD under the Ethiopian Chairmanship has shown remarkable effort and very considerable patience, based on considerable study of risk propensity, to work to ensure stability in South Sudan. A significant milestone in this was IGAD's championing of the signing of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict on South Sudan in August 2015. Although there has been very little progress on peace or on improving the continuing untold suffering of the people of South Sudan since then, nevertheless this agreement has now served as a basis for the recent final peace deal.

The International Atomic Energy Agency reviews Sudan's nuclear power program

A delegation from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been meeting this week in Khartoum with Sudan's officials to discuss an integrated review of Sudan's nuclear power program infrastructure. The IAEA is reviewing the preparation to establish Sudan's first nuclear power station, to cross-check whether it will be built in accordance with the IAEA standards. In a statement, the IAEA said its mission aimed at getting acquainted with Sudan's preparations for the necessary infrastructure and operations of a nuclear power station. The Director of the Nuclear Reaction Department at the Sudan Ministry of Water Resources, Irrigation and Electricity, Nasser Al-Mustafa, said the two sides reviewed a report about the way the infrastructure of Sudan's nuclear program should be held in line with IAEA criteria.

Sudan informed the IAEA of its intention to pursue nuclear technology to generate electricity to meet the growing demand of its population by 2030, back in 2012. In November last year, President Omar al-Bashir met President Putin at the Black Sea coastal town of Sochi. He also held talks with Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev during his visit to the Russian Federation. During the visit a number of agreements and memoranda of understanding were signed including an Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of the Sudan on Cooperation in the Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy.

This agreement was the starting point for an active dialogue between the two countries in the nuclear sphere and allowed for the beginning of practical implementation of cooperation projects. Signed by the Director General of Rosatom, Alexei Likhachev, and the Minister of Water Resources, Irrigation and Electricity of Sudan, Mutaz Musa Abdul Salim, it provided a legal framework for cooperation between Russia and Sudan in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in a wide range of areas. These included: assistance in creating and improving the nuclear infrastructure of the Republic of Sudan in accordance with international recommendations; regulation in the field of nuclear and radiation safety, control over physical protection of nuclear materials, radiation sources and storage facilities for nuclear and radioactive materials; systems for control of nuclear and radioactive materials and waste; research in the field of the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes; production of radioisotopes and their use in industry, medicine and agriculture; cooperation in the field of application of radiation technologies and nuclear medicine; and education and training of specialists for the nuclear industry.

Rosatom said that in order to implement these areas of cooperation, “the Agreement embraces the establishment of joint working groups for the implementation of specific projects and scientific research.” It also allowed for the exchange of experts, arrangement of seminars and conferences, assistance in education and training of scientific and technical personnel, exchange of scientific and technical information, provision of equipment, materials and components.

A month later at the fifth Joint Sudanese-Russian Ministerial Committee for Economic Trade Cooperation meeting in Khartoum, Sudan signed a “roadmap” agreement to build the first nuclear power plant to produce electricity in Sudan. The deal was signed by Rosatom Overseas, a branch of Rosatom, and Sudan’s Ministry of Water Resources, Irrigation and Electricity. Rosatom said, “The development of nuclear technology will allow Sudan to tackle its energy security problem. It is a strategic project that will define the nature of the relations between our two countries for a long time”. It noted that, “As part of a feasibility study for the nuclear power plant construction project, the choice of site will be examined, and the key parameters will be defined,” including timing and funding.

Earlier this year, Water Resources, Irrigation and Electricity Minister, Muataz Musa, said his ministry was working to complete technical studies to build Sudan’s first nuclear power plant under the supervision and follow-up of the IAEA. He said the construction of the nuclear plant would take a year and a half after the signing of the contract. The project, he added, was part of the government plans to generate more than 5000 megawatts by 2020.