

A Week in the Horn 8.3.2019

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News in Brief

Africa and the African Union

Representative Karen Bass, Chair of the U.S House Subcommittee on Africa, and Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, together with Representatives Ilhan Omar of Minnesota and Joe Neguse of Colorado, visited both Eritrea and Ethiopia at the weekend. (See article)

Ethiopia

President Sahle-Work Zewde attended the commemoration of the 123rd anniversary of the victory of the Battle of Adwa over Italy in 1896, on Saturday (March 2) in the town of Adwa. The occasion was celebrated colorfully all across the country and, most notably, in Addis Ababa at Menilek II Square, under the theme: “Adwa is the Emblem of Our Unity”.

In a series of diplomatic meetings and visits at the end of last week and this week, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, held talks in Addis Ababa with Kenya’s President Kenyatta who made a two-day state visit to Ethiopia at the end of last week, and with Somalia’s President Mohamed Abdullahi. He also visited Asmara for a tripartite summit with President Kenyatta and President Isaias Afwerki on Sunday (March 3); and Juba for a meeting with President Isaias and President Salva Kiir on Monday (March 4); and then accompanied President Mohamed Abdullahi to Nairobi for a meeting with President Kenyatta on Wednesday (March 6). (See articles)

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed and visiting President Uhuru Kenyatta opened the Ethiopia-Kenya Trade and Investment Forum on Friday last week (March 1) in Addis Ababa. (See article)

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu met the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain, Joseph Borrell on Thursday (March 7). They agreed to further strengthen trade and investment ties between their two countries.

Finance Minister Ahmed Shide told a joint Economic Commission for Africa-World Bank Roundtable Workshop on Jobs and Economic Transformation on Tuesday (March 5) that unemployment remained an issue in Ethiopia despite the country managing to sustain rapid growth for more than a decade and a half. He said the government had been implementing strategies that focused on job creation, including micro, small and medium enterprises, industrial parks development and construction of integrated agro-industrial parks. Speaking of the need to create two million new jobs, he said: “we believe we are moving in the right direction to spur further economic growth, increase the role of private sector in the economy, and harness the talents and skills of our predominantly young population.”

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene met with U.S Congresswoman Karen Bass, Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Congresswoman Ilhan Omar (D-Minnesota), and Congressman Joe Neguse, Representative (D-Colorado) on Monday (March 4). Mrs. Hirut expressed appreciation for the commitment and continued support of the Government of the U.S to Ethiopia's development endeavors, in areas including democratization, capacitating building, development assistance, as well as strengthening of democratic institutions as core pillars of inclusive and sustainable development. **(See article)**

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Markos Tekle met Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece, Terens-Ninkolaos, on Wednesday (March 6) to discuss ways to bolster bilateral trade and investment ties between Ethiopia and Greece. A Greek business delegation arrived in Addis Ababa on Thursday (March 7).

State Minister Dr. Markos Tekle bade farewell to the departing Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Ethiopia, Ambassador Vsevolod Tkachenko on Thursday (March 7).

Addressing the 2nd Ethio-Greek Business Forum on Thursday (March 7), State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Akililu Hailemichael noted the two countries' long-standing diplomatic relations, which he said, should also be strengthened in areas of trade and investment. He also attached great importance to the interest of Greek investors to tap the vast investment opportunities in agriculture, tourism, energy and food-processing, while noting his government's readiness to support the investors.

Ato Assefa Kumssa State Minister of Mines and Petroleum led the Ethiopian delegation to the PADC Convention held in Toronto, Canada, this week (March 3-6). He also participated in the

Africa Mining Breakfast, the Investing in Africa Mining Seminar, the panel discussion on Africa's Mining Industry and the AU's Diaspora Minerals Forum.

Ethiopia officially inaugurated its second Consulate General Office in the United States in Saint Paul, Minnesota on Saturday (March 2). The ceremony was attended by Lemma Megersa, President of the Oromia Regional State and Ambassador Birtukan Ayano, State Minister of Foreign Affairs. **(See article)**

The Ethiopian Consulate General Office in Istanbul together with the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce organized an investment promotion event on Monday this week (March 4).**(See article)**

The Ethiopian Tour Association, Ethiopian Airlines and a number of individual tour operators are participating in the four-day 53rd Berlin International Tour and Travel exhibition which opened in Berlin on Wednesday (March 6).

A Federal Justice and Legal Research and Training Institute built by the European Union Commission at a cost of 3.3 million Euros in Addis Ababa was inaugurated on Friday last week (March 1). The occasion was attended by Mrs. Meaza Ashenafi, President of the Supreme Court and Ambassador Johan Borgstam, Head of the European Union Delegation to Ethiopia.

The Trustees of the UK's National Army Museum have decided to return locks of hair removed from the head of the Emperor Tewodros II after he chose to commit suicide rather than surrender to the British Expeditionary Force at the battle of Maqdala in 1868. The Ethiopian Embassy on London held discussions this week on details of the return of the relic.

Addressing the UN Human Rights Council on Wednesday (March 6), U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Michelle Bachelet commended the political and economic reforms in Ethiopia. She said: "The depth and pace of Prime Minister Abiy's political and economic reforms, and the appointment of women to senior positions, could open the path to a more inclusive and effective development model, providing hope for Ethiopia's young population". She expressed her commitment to extend support to the Government of Ethiopia in such areas.

Eritrea

President Isaias held talks with President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya and Prime Minister Dr. Abiy of Ethiopia on Sunday (March 3). **(See article)**

Together with Ethiopia's Prime Minister Dr. Abiy, President Isaias held a tripartite summit with President Salve Kiir in Juba on Monday (March 4).**(See article)**

Foreign Minister Osman Saleh, met a delegation from the Sverdlovsk region of the Russian Federation on Thursday last week (February 28) to discuss investment opportunities and cooperation prospects in manufacturing, energy, water infrastructure, health, pharmaceuticals as well as culture and sports. The delegation also met with the Ministers of Health and Tourism as well as the Director General of Mines and visited development and tourism sites in Keren, Massawa and Segeneiti during its visit.

Kenya

President Kenyatta made a three-day state visit to Ethiopia at the end of last week. He also visited Eritrea and met with President Isaias Afwerki on Sunday (March 3). **(See article)**

President Kenyatta met with President Mohamed Abdullahi on Wednesday (March 6) to discuss bilateral relations. **(See article)**

President Kenyatta officially opened the 6th Annual Devolution Conference in Kirinyaga University on Tuesday (March 5). The 5-day conference brings together Governors from across the country to celebrate the gains made by devolution, and allows the government and key stakeholders to discuss what they have been able to deliver, changes during the last year and progress in President Kenyatta's key development pillars, the Big Four Sectors – Trade and Manufacturing; Agriculture; Affordable Housing; and Universal Health Care. The conference also provides a forum for members of the public to interact with both the local and national government. Some 6,000 delegates are expected to attend.

Somalia

President Mohamed Abdullahi made a one day official visit to Addis Ababa for talks with Ethiopian Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed on Wednesday (March 6). He then accompanied Dr. Abiy to Nairobi for talks with President Kenyatta. **(See articles)**

Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre attended the Youth Empowerment Summit in Geneva this week. The Prime Minister also attended a session of the UN Human Rights Council.

Foreign Minister and International Cooperation Minister Ahmed Issa Awad met with Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry on Tuesday (March 5) in Cairo to discuss bilateral relations, regional affairs of mutual interest, and Egyptian support to Somalia to rebuild state institutions and achieve security and stability.

Foreign Affairs Minister Ahmed Issa Awad has taken over as chair of the Arab League Ministerial Council, chairing the meeting in Cairo this week.

The newly appointed UK Ambassador to Somalia, Ben Fender, presented his credentials to President Mohammed Abdullahi on Sunday (March 3). President Abdullahi thanked the UK for its continued support of Somalia and his hope for strengthened relations.

Qatar Airways announced this week that it will be adding seven new destinations to its global network this year, two in Africa, Rabat in Morocco, and Mogadishu in Somalia.

South Sudan

President Salva Kiir held talks with Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed and President `Isaias Afwerki of Eritrea on Monday (March 4) in Juba. (**See article**)

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) said this week that over 33,100 South Sudanese refugees arrived in Sudan in 2018, the lowest rate of new arrivals per year since December 2013. The total number of South Sudanese refugees in Sudan reached 852,080 by the end of 2018.

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy's diplomatic marathon...

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed has been undertaking a highly active diplomatic initiative over the last few days, in implementing his intention to advance regional peace and security and economic integration in the Horn of Africa. He hosted Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta for a two-day state visit at the end of last week and then Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi for a one-day visit on Tuesday (March 5). The Prime Minister and President Abdullahi flew to Nairobi for talks with President Kenyatta on Wednesday. Prime Minister Abiy also held tripartite

summits with President Kenyatta and Eritrean President Isaias in Asmara on Sunday; and with South Sudan's President Salva Kiir and President Isaias in Juba on Monday (March 4).

The following day (March 5) the Prime Minister Dr. Abiy held bilateral talks with President Mohamed Abdullahi of Somalia. And through the leadership of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, President Uhuru Kenyatta and President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed met on Wednesday (March 6) to discuss extensively on the source of the two countries dispute. As an outcome of the discussions, both parties agreed to work together towards and peace and to take measures in addressing particular issues that escalated the tensions.

Overall, the Prime Minister's approach has paved the way for the creation of a positive momentum throughout the Horn of Africa, laying the groundwork for increased regional economic integration and the promotion of regional peace and security.

...President Kenyatta on a state visit to Ethiopia...

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta made a three-day state visit to Ethiopia at the end of last week (March 1-3), setting off a flurry of diplomatic activity between Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.

President Kenyatta was accompanied by a substantial delegation of a hundred people including government officials as well as Kenyan corporate and business leaders. On arrival, he was welcome by Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, at Bole International Airport. The two leaders held talks on a range of bilateral and regional issues. They also opened the Ethio-Kenya Trade and Investment Forum at the new Skylight Hotel in Addis Ababa, a Forum aiming to strengthen trade and economic ties between the two countries which attracted several hundred business leaders, investors and officials from both countries. **(See below)**

Speaking at the official opening of the Forum, President Kenyatta and Prime Minister Dr. Abiy promised to deepen trade and economic ties. They renewed their commitment to implement joint infrastructure projects to help enable the two economies. President Kenyatta and Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed underlined that Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET) was central to the unlocking of the economic potential of the entire East African

region; President Kenyatta said: “the LAPSSET project has great promise of transforming our countries and improving the living conditions of our people.”

During their discussions, President Kenyatta and Dr. Abiy noted the potential opportunities of cooperation between Ethiopia and Kenya, and agreed to work further to strengthen the existing partnership in trade, investment and tourism. They took note of the aspirations of the peoples and governments of Ethiopia and Kenya towards development, integration, regional peace and security, describing these as exemplary and commendable. They also agreed to build peace and stability in the Horn of Africa. They approved on working together to rehabilitate their capital cities of Addis Ababa and Nairobi through the exchange of knowledge transfer

President Kenyatta also met President Sahle-Work Zewde; and speaking at a state dinner at the National Palace, he called on African leaders to prioritize and fast-track integration processes for Africa to achieve faster development. He said: “There is need for our people to be allowed to travel throughout the African continent freely without any hindrances, since we are all brothers and sisters with a common heritage as Africans.” He urged African leaders to follow the legacies of the founding fathers of African countries by uniting people across the continent and called for the removal of all systemic barriers that hinder people-to-people relations in Africa. Africans, he said, must work together “as good neighbors and loving brothers” to defeat the challenges to the continent.

President Kenyatta also visited the Hawassa Industrial Park where 22 leading manufacturers in textile and apparel are currently operating, employing some 25,000 people. He and Dr. Abiy went to Arba Minch where they saw a crocodile farm and visited the Nech Sar National Park, bordering Arba Minch and the Lakes of Chamo and Abaya. They also inaugurated another Industrial Park at Debre Berhan with Amhara Regional President Gedu Andargachew.

...Prime Minister Dr. Abiy and President Kenyatta go to Asmara...

Following his visit to Ethiopia, President Kenyatta flew to Asmara, where he and Prime Minister Dr. Abiy were accorded a warm welcome on arrival by President Isaias Afwerki and senior government officials accompanied by a guard of honor at Asmara International Airport on Sunday (March 3).The three leaders held a

tripartite summit on “timely regional issues”. President Isaias also held separate talks on bilateral issues with both Prime Minister Dr. Abiy and President Kenyatta. President Kenyatta then returned to Nairobi.

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed and his delegation which included Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, General Seare Mekonnen, Chief of Staff of the Ethiopian Defense Forces and General Adem Mohammed, Director-General of the National Intelligence and Security Service, accompanied by President Isaias, visited development sites, including the Logo and Misilam dams and a dairy farm as well as a solar power system under construction.

...Prime Minister Dr. Abiy and President Isaias in Juba...

The following day, Monday (March 4), Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed and Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki flew from Asmara to Juba where they were received by President Salva Kiir. The Office of the Prime Minister said their talks covered regional peace, economic ties and infrastructure development, as well as ways to develop joint capacities and work together in an integrated manner. The visit was said to come within the “framework of the regional efforts to consolidate economic and political integration of the East African region which has been initiated by Premier Abiy”.

A joint statement after the visit said the three leaders had held extensive discussions on a broad range of issues. They emphasized the need to continue working together to consolidate peace in South Sudan “in all ways possible”. They also sought to coordinate their positions on both regional and global issues. Their discussions focused on the need to advance the cause of regional integration. They agreed “to task their Foreign Ministers and other relevant government agencies in the three countries to work out common projects that will facilitate the attainment of the goal of Regional Economic integration and shared prosperity.” These shared projects would accelerate the commitment to regional economic integration.

South Sudan Foreign Minister Nhial Deng Nhial, noting President Isaias and Prime Minister Dr. Abiy had been playing a constructive role in steering South Sudan toward peace, stressed that the visiting leaders had reiterated their commitment to encourage smooth implementation of the revitalized peace agreement. The talks had also focused on the need to advance the cause of

regional integration, and on ways for the three countries to support each other on regional matters.

...President Mohamed Abdullahi on a visit to Addis Ababa...

Following his short visit to Juba, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy returned to Addis Ababa to meet Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi who arrived for an official visit on Tuesday (March 5) for talks on aspects of bilateral and regional issues. The Prime Minister's Office said that the visit was part of Prime Minister Dr. Abiy's initiatives for regional peace and security and economic integration in the region. President Abdullahi was met at Bole airport by Prime Minister Dr. Abiy and other senior officials including Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu.

Their talks focused on a number of key issues including the strengthening of regional peace according to agreements signed previously; continuation of joint port developments; and ensuring that relations with the administration of Somaliland would support regional peace. Somaliland President Moussa Bihi held talks with Dr. Abiy in Addis Ababa last month.

...Prime Minister Dr. Abiy and President Abdullahi in Nairobi

Following their talks in Addis Ababa on Tuesday, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy and President Abdullahi flew to Nairobi. Dr. Abiy, who had previously held long consultations with each leader to encourage them to hold their first face to face discussions for a long time, chaired a meeting between President Kenyatta and President Abdullahi on Wednesday (March 6).

Indeed, the meeting offered opportunities to ensure Kenya-Somali relations could be strengthened. In the last few weeks, the longstanding Somali-Kenyan offshore dispute over their maritime boundary led to diplomatic issues between the two countries. The Office of the Prime Minister, said Dr. Abiy, as current Chair of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), had been making special efforts to reconcile any differences between Somalia and Kenya, as part of his determination to achieve economic integration on the continent.

Following the discussion, the two parties agreed to work together towards peace and to take measures to address any particular issues that had escalated tension.

Ethiopia celebrates the Victory of Adwa: a stunning victory for Africa

Ethiopia commemorated the 123rd anniversary of the victory of the Battle of Adwa over Italy on Saturday (March 2) under the theme: “Adwa is the Emblem of Our Unity”. It was celebrated colorfully all across the country and most notably, in Addis Ababa at Menelik II Square and in the town of Adwa, where President Sahle-Work Zewde attended the commemoration.

President Sahle-Work underlined that the victory of Adwa was a reminder that despite differences Ethiopians stand together, united, when it comes to defending their country and safeguarding their national interest. It offered lessons for today. The President said the victory of Adwa could be a lesson and an inspiration for today’s generation, further calling on all Ethiopians to stand united today to achieve more successes and hand on a stable and prosperous nation to the next generation. Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed in a statement, similarly called for today’s generation to repeat the victory of Adwa by overcoming current challenges and barriers.

The Battle of Adwa was of huge significance for Ethiopia and for Africa. It meant that the age of continental invasion by the then European colonial powers could not be completed. Ethiopia remained independent, a sovereign and un-colonized African country, an example and a model for the rest of the continent. It was a turning point not just for Ethiopia but for Africa and for the African peoples in the Diaspora. It provided an inspiration for African countries in the subsequent struggles for independence; it was not mere chance that African countries chose Ethiopia to be the permanent host of the African Union.

The conflict that led to Adwa began with the Treaty of Wuchale, an agreement signed between Ethiopia and Italy in 1889. A dispute arose over the interpretation of the Italian and Amharic versions of the document. The Italian language version of the disputed Article XVII of the treaty stated that the Emperor of Ethiopia was “obliged” to conduct all foreign affairs through Italian Authorities. This would in effect make Ethiopia a protectorate of the Kingdom of Italy. The Amharic version of the article, however, stated that the Emperor could use the good offices of the Kingdom of Italy in his relations with foreign nations “if he wished”. When, the

Emperor made it clear he would only accept the Amharic version, Italy decided to impose a military solution to force Ethiopia to abide by the Italian version.

Forces came together from all over Ethiopia in response to the Italian invasion and to Emperor Menilek's declaration: "Enemies have now come upon us to ruin our country and to force us to change our religion. Our enemies have begun advancing and digging in to the country like moles. With the help of God, I will not give away. Today let the strong fight on my side; and let the weak pray in our favor!" The Empress Taytu was equally determined to resist Italian claims, telling the Italian envoy, Antonelli, "you wish Ethiopia to be presented before the other powers as your protectorate – this shall never be."

It was truly national army that fought at Adwa. The battle itself was brief. It had been preceded by several other clashes over the previous few months, with Ethiopian forces winning a victory at Amba Alagie in December 1895 and forcing an Italian garrison at Mekelle to surrender in January 1896. The fighting at Adwa itself, however, barely lasted a morning. It started at dawn and by 12 noon it was all over, with over 7,000 Italians killed and 2,000 or so wounded and 3,000 prisoners; Ethiopian losses were estimated at 4,500 killed and 8,000 wounded.

It was a major victory and a victory in which all the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia participated, with the invasion uniting all Ethiopia against the attempted colonizers, allowing Ethiopia to retain its independence and launch its own development. It was a scenario that was to be repeated again in 1935 when fascist Italy tried to reverse the defeat of Adwa. That invasion, once again, brought all Ethiopians out to fight their common enemy. The way the generation which won Adwa, protected the country from foreign invaders and gave their lives to realize their vision of a free and sovereign Ethiopia, has continued to offer a lesson for future generations. Their success provides an object lesson for the current generation, and remains an appropriate lesson for younger generations to put aside their differences and cooperate to fight poverty and backwardness. This may not demand the sacrifice of lives; but it does demand every effort to maintain fast and sustainable economic growth, to realize the renaissance of the country. It calls on everyone, regardless of age, gender, religion or ethnic origin, to stand together for national interests.

Adwa also compelled Europeans to reconsider their attitudes towards Africans. It forced them to accept Ethiopia's sovereignty and freedom, obliged them to open

Embassies in Addis Ababa and become involved in bilateral relations. It became a catalyst for the struggles across the continent by other peoples against their white colonizers. Ethiopia became emblematic of African valor and resistance, a bastion of prestige and hope to thousands of Africans who were beginning to search for an answer to the myth of African inferiority. African-Americans in particular saw the victory as justification of their own self-worth. It was one of the primary reasons for the “modern global rise of a Pan-African vision of freedom.” Adwa symbolized a victory of the African people, both in Africa and in the Diaspora. It underlined the growing sense of unity among Africans and people of African descent. It resonated in the heart of black people as a symbol, demonstrating defiance to colonialism, to exploitation and to foreign domination. The first major victory of non-white peoples over a European army, it negated the then widespread belief that Africans were no match for European colonizers. Adwa has been a constant reminder of the possibility of defeating the oppressor and a real source of inspiration to oppressed colonial peoples and to the Diaspora, struggling to free themselves from slavery and subjugation. It was a total rejection of the myth of the ‘civilizing mission’ of colonizers. Adwa, indeed, demonstrated the ‘savage barbarians’ were the true defenders of freedom, equality and human dignity.

Adwa was and remains a redeeming moment for black people. It stands with the gallant Zulu resistance by Shaka in the 19th century and the Mau Mau in Kenya fifty years ago as one of the major symbols of resistance. It was a victory that inspired Marcus Garvey, William Du Bois and Martin Luther King and other great freedom fighters that led the Back to Africa and Civil Rights Movements in America. Today, the spirit of Adwa can still provide a springboard for the African Union’s “Pan-Africanism for the African Renaissance”, for the emergence of a new Africa, an Africa free to decide its own destiny. Adwa certainly belongs to Africa; but it also provides the basis for the youth of Ethiopia to develop their own winning spirit, a spirit drawn from the example of the courage and determination shown by their grandfathers.

The Ethio-Kenya Trade and Investment Forum

The Ethiopia-Kenya Trade and Investment business forum attended by more than 300 Ethiopian and 150 Kenyan business leaders and representatives opened

on Friday last week (March 1) in Addis Ababa. The Kenyan delegation, led by President Kenyatta, included senior government officials, captains of industry, representatives of the business community and CEOs of major Kenyan parastatals including Safaricom and Kenyan Airways. The Forum was officially opened by Prime Minister Dr. Abiy and President Kenyatta.

In his keynote address, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy highlighted the opening up of Ethiopia and said the ongoing economic reforms would serve as a catalyst for boosting trade relations between the two neighboring countries. He noted that over past years Ethiopia had taken significant steps in enhancing bilateral relations in the fields of cross-border trade, infrastructure and energy development. He said Ethiopia planned to transform the Moyale border region to become a commonly administered economic hub for East Africa. President Kenyatta said Kenya would agree to the establishment of a Moyale-free trade zone to benefit both counties. He said business leaders from both countries must work together for mutually beneficial cooperation.

President Kenyatta, appreciating the unprecedented sweeping reforms that had been happening in Ethiopia, commended Dr. Abiy's vision of bringing the countries of the Horn of Africa closer, and his efforts to initiate the reconciliation process to resolve the long dispute between Ethiopia and Eritria as well as bring peace and stability to the region at large. He emphasized the importance of integrating the region through infrastructure, trade and investment, and he expressed his commitment to bring the LAPSSET project to reality.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, acknowledged the efforts of the two governments to strengthen their diplomatic and economic ties. He referred to the relationship as something concrete and real, built on solid history, a common culture and a shared destiny that had survived against all odds. The Minister commended the decision of President Kenyatta to lead such a high-powered business delegation to Ethiopia. It would, he said, contribute positively and bolster the economic relations between the two counties

Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Monica Juma, also welcomed the tremendous development of the relationship in recent years, and said it had reached unshakable levels. She encouraged Forum participants to identify the challenges that had been stifling trade and business and any

impediments affecting the flow of investment between the two countries. She challenged the business community to come up with inputs and policy recommendations to assist policy makers and legislators to put in place the necessary legislation and policy framework to provide the necessary catalyst to advance economic relations between the two countries.

Officials from the Ethiopian Investment Commission presented details of the business potential and opportunities available in Ethiopia and the overall economic condition of the country. Representatives from Kenya's Investment Agency also presented particulars of the potential and opportunities in their country. A panel of experts, including representatives from the respective Ministries of Trade and Industry, the Kenyan Reserve Bank, and the private sector, chaired by Ambassador Misganuaraga, Ethiopia's State Minister of Trade and Industry offered detail of the respective trajectories of current economic development, the trends in trade, existing challenges, and future projects intended to ameliorate the hurdles hampering trade and investment between the two countries.

During the discussion Forum participants unequivocally agreed that the two countries had yet to exploit properly the potential available in their respective countries. They called for urgent amendments to the trade and investment spheres in line with the framework of the Special Status and the Continental Free Trade Agreements. They wanted to see a series of practical measures to develop the necessary sense of urgency to provide a platform of cooperation and partnership to ensure both countries would be better off and benefit from their potential and the huge possible markets. Participants spoke of the dire condition of the Moyale border post and poor procedures of immigration and custom clearance at the border; they called for urgent action by both governments to synchronize and standardize the practices and regulations for customs clearance in order to ensure a fast and reliable service at border posts.

Panelists commended the efforts of the two governments in infrastructure construction and enhancement of the connectivity between the two countries. They welcomed the development of the Mojo-Hawassa-Moyale road and said it would provide a game-changing role for economic integration. They called on regional airlines to expand their networks and connect more destinations in both countries to facilitate the flow of goods, services and capital. Overall, participants welcomed the Forum as a positive step to strengthen the economic

relationship of the two countries, and to help deal with “policy inconsistencies, bureaucracy and lack of information.” Those were manageable issues that cost no money, they said, but which business people were particularly keen to see resolved. Once that happened, there was widespread agreement there would be a massive and unprecedented turn around in the Ethiopia-Kenya trade relationship.

After the opening session of the Forum, President Kenyatta and Prime Minister Dr. Abiy visited Hawassa Industrial Park. President Kenyatta praised Ethiopia’s efforts to industrialize and transform the economy and expressed his readiness to learn from, and emulate, Ethiopia’s approach to such projects. Forum participants also visited development projects around Addis Ababa including the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange, ELICo leather processing and the Yeka condominium site. They were able to network extensively and a number of deals and partnership agreements were signed during the Forum.

A US Congressional delegation visits Eritrea and Ethiopia

A U.S. Congressional delegation visited Eritrea for the first time in 14 years at the end of last week. Headed by Congresswoman Karen Bass, Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa; the delegation included Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, born in Somalia, and Congressman Joe Neguse came from Eritrea. Eritrean Information Minister, Yemane Gebremeskel said the delegation had met Foreign Minister Osman Saleh, Presidential Adviser Yemane Gebreab, and other officials. The delegation’s members welcomed the regional thaw in East Africa after the historic rapprochement between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Following their visit to Asmara, the US Congressional delegation visited Ethiopia where it met President Sahle-work Zewde and several of the new female cabinet members. The delegation also held talks with State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene on Monday (March 4) to exchange views on bilateral and regional cooperation of mutual interest. Representative Bass reiterated US support for the economic and political reforms underway in Ethiopia. She

commended the rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea and its dividend for regional peace and security. She also welcomed Ethiopia's commitment to advance democratic reforms, widening the political space, and undertaking justice and electoral reforms. She noted ongoing efforts to tackle poverty and address youth unemployment.

Mrs. Hirut expressed appreciation for continued support of the Government of the U.S for Ethiopia's development endeavors, including in democratization, in capacity building and development assistance, and the strengthening of democratic institutions, all core pillars of Ethiopia's inclusive and sustainable development.

On return to the US, Representative Bass said: "It was important the first Congressional Delegation trip of this Congress was to the Horn of Africa because of the change the region is going through following the historic peace agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea that ended 20 years of conflict." She said that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed had come into office with a serious reform agenda aimed at ending political repression. He had freed thousands of political prisoners, opened the media, and appointed women to half of the cabinet posts. "The delegation wanted to send the signal that we support Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's reform agenda and to encourage the new peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea".

An Investment Promotion Event in Istanbul

The Ethiopian Consulate General Office in Istanbul together with the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce organized an investment promotion event on Monday this week (March 4). It was organized to underline and promote Ethiopia's conducive environment for investment and to encourage members of the Chamber of Commerce to invest; and was attended by both Ethiopia's Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, Ambassador Girma Temesgen and Consul General Wondimu Gezahegn. During the event, a presentation was made detailing the investment opportunities available, the wide-ranging incentives in priority areas, the Industrial Parks' development and the commitment of the Government towards Foreign Direct investment.

Mr. Dursun Topçu, Vice-President of the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce opened the event, attended by over 70 members of the Chamber representing various sectors. He emphasized the longstanding political and economic relations between the two countries and the growing investment and trade volume between the two countries.

Ambassador Girma underlined the factors encouraging Foreign Direct Investment in Ethiopia and discussed the Government's commitment towards investors. He emphasized the ongoing liberalization of the economy and the Public Private Partnership projects which, he stressed, provided opportunities for the private sector to engage in additional investment sectors, including telecom, transport, logistics and energy. He called on members of the Chamber of Commerce to take the opportunity to invest in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia opens a second Consulate-General Office in the United States

Ethiopia officially inaugurated its second Consulate-General Office in the United States in the city of Saint Paul, Minnesota, on Saturday (March 2), to add to its Consulate-General Office in Los Angeles, California and the Embassy in Washington, DC. The inauguration of the new Consulate was carried out by Ato Lemma Megersa, President of the Oromia Regional State and State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Birtukan Ayano. The ceremony was also attended Mr, Benjamin Dille, Executive Director of African Affairs at the US State Department, as well as Senators and representatives of various Ethiopian communities.

Ato Lemma reiterated the commitment of the Government of Ethiopia to promote and protect the rights and interests of the Ethiopian Diaspora communities residing in Minnesota. Reaffirming the determination of the regional and federal governments to engage with the Ethiopian diaspora in the United States or elsewhere, he underlined the need to forge unity among the different communities so they could contribute meaningfully to bring about peace and development in Ethiopia. He expressed his appreciation of the active role they were playing in the economic, social and civic life of their host state.

The new Consul-General of Ethiopia in Minnoseta, Ewunetu Belata, emphasized that Minnesota was home to tens of thousands of Ethiopians, who were doing

remarkably well in all areas of life, including running their own successful businesses. He noted that the opening of the Consular Office would pave the way for the Diaspora community to play a major role in the development of their home country. The Mayor of Saint Paul City expressed St Paul's readiness to support the activities of the Consulate-General in every way possible; and he declared March 2 as Ethiopian Day. Ethiopia is the first African country to open a Consular Office in Minnesota.

The decision to provide a Consular Office in Minnesota follows Prime Minister Dr. Abiy's highly successful visit to the US in July last year, to meet members of the Ethiopian Diaspora and brief them on the reforms taking place in Ethiopia. He traveled to Washington, DC and then Los Angeles, finishing his US visit on Monday (July 31, 2018) in Minneapolis, Minnesota.