

# **A Week in the Horn**

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## **News in Brief**

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## **Africa and the African Union**

On Sunday, the African Union Commission announced the launch of African Union Election Observation Mission (AUEOM) for the June 4, 2023 Parliamentary Elections in the Republic of Guinea Bissau. The short-term election observation mission comprises forty (40) members drawn from various AU Member States comprising AU Organs, notably, the Permanent Representatives Committee, Pan African Parliament, as well as Representatives of: Election Management Bodies, Civil Society Organisations, Independent Experts, Women and Youth. Former Mozambiquan President Joaquim Alberto Chissano is the head of the observer mission.

To mark *World Environment Day*, the African Union peace mission in Somalia (ATMIS), the United Nations and the Federal Government of Somalia, on Monday launched a joint campaign to protect the environment and reduce the effects of climate change in the country.

AUC Chair Moussa Faki Mahamat congratulated Algeria and Sierra Leone following their elections as non-permanent members of the UN Security Council, representing the continent for the period 2024-25.

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni on Saturday afternoon released an official statement on the discovery of the bodies of 54 Ugandan soldiers under the auspices of the African Union Peacekeeping mission in Somalia, killed due to an attack on their military base by the Al Shabaab terrorist group.

Chinese telecom giant Huawei in collaboration with African Telecommunication Union (ATU), the IPv6 Forum and Arab Information and Communication Technology Organization (AICTO) organised Africa's first-ever IP GALA in Marrakech, Morocco on 05 May to expedite technological advancements on the Continent.

## Ethiopia

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed on Thursday morning oversaw the launch of the second phase of the *Green Legacy Initiative* in Afar under the theme “Let us plant our future today”, following a successful first phase, in which the nation planted 2.5 billion seedlings. During the second phase, he noted, 25 billion seedlings will be planted.

Over the weekend, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demekene Mekonnen spoke to CGTN’s Li Dongning on the “High-Talk” show on Sino-Ethiopian bilateral relations, the Belt and Road Initiative, China-Africa cooperation, and the significance of Africa’s development **(See Article)**.

Speaking at the opening of the ministerial meeting of the *Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS* taking place in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on 08 June, DPM and FM Demekene Mekonnen urged the international community should deny ISIS, Al-Shabab and other terrorist groups, the opportunity to recruit fighters & mobilize funds. He said that Ethiopia stands firm in the global effort to eliminate terrorism.

On Monday Brazilian Foreign Minister Ambassador Mauro Vieira paid official visit to the Capital. He met with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and DPM and FM Demekene and exchanged views on further enhancing cooperation on bilateral and multilateral issues of mutual interest **(See article)**.

The Government Communication Service released a statement containing responses to the litany allegations detailed in the June 01 report by Human Rights Watch with regards to human rights violations during the conflict in Northern Ethiopia. The statement dismissed the unfounded allegations as sensational, extremely parsimonious and ill-motivated.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Mesganu Arga, on Tuesday received US Special for the Horn of Africa, Ambassador Mike Hammer and held a constructive discussion on bilateral, regional and multilateral matters of mutual interest. The state minister also met with visiting Brazilian counterpart Carlos Duarte and discussed on ways of bolstering Ethio-Brazilian ties particularly in the areas of agriculture, environmental protection, aviation, agriculture, sports and culture.

A high-level delegation led by State Minister at the Ministry of Urban Development and Infrastructure, Fenta Dejene, is taking part in the ongoing UN-Habitat Assembly (05-09 June 2023) in the Kenyan Capital, Nairobi. At the opening, the state minister delivered Ethiopia’s national statement stressing major policy matters pertaining to structural transformations the Government is undertaking to modernize Ethiopian cities and the continued commitment of to effectively implement *The New Urban Agenda* and corresponding SDGs.

This week, as part of its measures to build a diversified and vibrant economy, Ethiopia has embarked on a roadshow to sell shares in the Ethiopia Securities Exchange (ESX). The unprecedented exercise is aimed at transforming the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest economy and the largest in the East African region.

The Council of Ministers, on Tuesday announced that, it has approved budget of about USD 14.7 billion for the upcoming 2023/2024 fiscal year, which will commence on July 08. the proposed new fiscal year budget will be used to rehabilitate destroyed infrastructure, support citizens affected by manmade and natural calamities, and expedite Ethiopia's commitment to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

An Ethiopian delegation took part in the 88<sup>th</sup> Council of Ministers of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) in Lusaka, Zambia (05 June). The theme of this year's COMESA Summit was *“Economic integration for a thriving COMESA, anchored on Green Investment, Value Addition and Tourism”*.

Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mesfin Tassew disclosed to Reuters during IATA Annual General Meeting (AGM) and World Air Transport Summit in Istanbul, Türkiye (04-06 June), the largest African carrier is mulling possible Airbus and Boeing wide-body plane orders and is expecting to make a decision by the end of the year. The carrier is looking at Airbus A350s, Boeing 787s and 777xs, he said.

## **Eritrea**

On Sunday, President Isaias Afwerki concluded his Russia trip and returned to Asmara. During his tour, the head of state of the Horn of African nation met with President Vladimir Putin and senior Russian government officials and discussed bilateral and global issues of interest.

## **Kenya**

Speaking during the opening of the Second Session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly in Nairobi on Monday, President William Ruto urged the correction of what he described as “systemic injustice” in contemporary for effective achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

During a thanksgiving service in honour of Environment Cabinet Secretary Soipan Tuya in Narok County, the President made remarks soliciting support from MPs to back the *Finance Bill 2023*. While defending the importance of the bill towards ameliorating challenges facing ordinary Kenyans and appealing to MPs not to bow to pressure from the Opposition to vote against the interests of the people, he noted that, the legislation will stimulate the economy, create jobs and boost earnings.

In a related development, hundreds of protesters on Tuesday thronged to a place near the Kenyan parliament to oppose the proposed Finance Bill, that according to some would hike taxes on fuel and housing. Police fired tear gas to disperse about 500 protesters who marched to parliament to present a petition against the bill.

Foreign Affairs Principal Secretary Korir Sing'oei in a tweet on announced the closure of the Kenyan Embassy in Khartoum to protect staff as they were facing risks, forcing the government to close the mission. "We continue to receive disturbing news of the targeting of diplomatic officials by armed groups in Khartoum, Sudan," he wrote.

The second session of the UN-Habitat (Human Settlements Program) Assembly has commenced in Kenya's capital Nairobi, attracting over 5,000 representatives and ministers from many nations. The five-day assembly was inaugurated on Monday by Kenyan President William Ruto, who emphasized the significance of enhancing UN-Habitat's capacity to support member countries in advancing sustainable urbanization.

Kenya Flower Council CEO Clement Tulezi speaking at the International Floriculture Trade Exhibition (IFTEX) in Nairobi on Tuesday said "Our flower sector is experiencing higher demand this year as the economies of our key export markets continue to recover". According to the CEO, Kenya's flower exports are expected to hit about 247,500 tons in 2023, up 10 percent compared with the figure of the previous year.

The Government of Kenya on Tuesday launched a strategic plan, *NCD Alliance Kenya's Strategic Plan 2023-2027*, to tackle non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the country. During a presser, Head of Family Health Department at the Afya Annex, Issak Bashir told reporters, the document will provide a roadmap towards contributing to the reduction of the preventable burden of morbidity, mortality and disability due to NCDs in Kenya.

## **Somalia**

Deputy Foreign Minister Isaak Mohamud, on Sunday hosted visiting German State Secretary at Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, Jochen Flasbarth and discussed on enhancing bilateral ties and development cooperation.

Somalia National Army (SNA) acknowledged the surrender of Al-Shabaab militants on Monday and said Somalia Government granted amnesty to defectors.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) on Monday announced the death of two aid workers in Somalia between January and March 2023. The Agency said, a total of 112 access incidents were reported across the country during the period of the first quarter.

## **South Sudan**

South Sudanese Minister of Finance and Planning, Dier Tong Ngor, on Monday announced that his country received a USD 7.12 million grant from the African Development Bank (AfDB) to enhance food security. The funding, under the Africa Disaster Risk Financing Program, will also support refugees and host communities in the country's northern state of Upper Nile to set up small businesses, according to the Minister.

On Tuesday, Scores of tribes recently gathered at a cultural peace festival in Torit, South Sudan, to renew their united commitment to harmonious coexistence. The fete was organised by the state's Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports in partnership with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

## **Sudan**

Nabila Massrali, Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union on 05 June released a statement of the Union hailing the unanimous decision of the UN Security Council to extend until December 2023 the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) to assist the political transition, progress towards democratic governance, the protection and promotion of human rights, and sustainable peace. The statement also reaffirmed EU support for the *African Union's Roadmap for the Resolution of the Conflict in Sudan* and we are pleased that the extension of the UNITAMS mandate will help ensure inclusive and coordinated regional and international action, under African leadership, to secure a viable peace process, and the resumption of the transition to civilian government and democracy in Sudan.

June edition of *UNHCR Protection Brief* emphasised the detrimental effects of the clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) that entered its second month, on civilians and on the humanitarian space.

## **DPM and FM Demeke Exclusive Interview on CGTN's "High-Talk"**

A High-Level Delegation led by the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Mr. Demeke Mekonnen, embarked on a five-day (from May 24 to 28, 2023) official visit to the Peoples' Republic of China at the invitation of State Councillor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang. On the conclusion of his diplomatic tour, Mr. Demeke, sat down with China Global Television Network (CGTN) anchor Li Dongning for an exclusive interview for the "*High-Talk*" show to reflect on the state of Ethiopia-China relations. The DPM and FM, among others, spoke about bilateral ties, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China-Africa Cooperation, and the perennial significance of Africa's development.

Speaking of bilateral diplomatic relations, Mr. Demeke said, Ethiopia and China enjoy longstanding ties that commenced in the 1970s, gradually becoming more consolidated and

stronger over the course of time. In this regard, the Deputy Premier said, the recent visit of Foreign Minister Gang to Ethiopia is timely and crucial to further enhancing Sino-Ethiopian relations. Reciprocating the diplomatic gesture with an official tour of China, Mr. Demeke noted, Ethiopia is working towards keeping the momentum of relations to address various issues of mutual interest and urging for an ever-growing and stronger engagements between the two countries. He said, current Ethio-Chinese relations are squarely predicated on multifarious economic activities on top of periodic high-level political consultations among leaders.

The BRI, Mr. Demeke emphasised, is crucial to further expedite the connectivity and economic integration mechanisms between the two States. He added, Ethiopia is very keen and committed to be part of this transcontinental integration project that would be augmented by emerging fast-track logistical and transport corridors such as the Ethio-Djibouti Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) railway line. Regional projects such as the latter are instrumental in the realisation of the broader BRI imperative that would serve as a springboard towards good connectivity model to enhance bilateral economic cooperation and to diversify engagements even further, Mr. Demeke told the anchor-woman.

Sino-Ethiopian diplomatic relations as longstanding and historical as they are an epitome of a typically comprehensive and utterly strategic scheme founded on a burgeoning cooperation. The uniquely exemplary nature the bilateral ties in turn lay the basis for cooperation on regional, continental and multilateral venues. The logically aligned nature of Chinese initiatives such as the BRI with Ethiopia's national economic development policies and infrastructural integration projects within and in the region also boost continental mechanisms such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to unlock the untapped potentials not only of Ethiopia but also Africa.

Recalling the recent recognition event held in Addis Ababa in honour key stakeholders that played pivotal roles by supporting the peace process in Ethiopia, Mr. Demeke lauded China's support to our country to effect this big achievement and an historic milestone testimony to the Pan-African dictum "*African Solutions to African Problems*". He also called on the East Asian Nation to continuously support the peace consolidation efforts of the Ethiopian Government.

While addressing China-Africa Cooperation under the rubric of high-level platforms such as Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), the DPM and FM reiterated the bigger picture in the relations between the two. He told the journalist, the basis and potential of the symbiotic relationship between China and Africa is immense as Africa is a "*rising continent*" that has huge potential sourced from many emerging economies such as Ethiopia. China-Africa cooperation is a practical demonstration of *South-South Cooperation* among developing economies based on a *win-win* principle of strategic-level engagement, Mr. Demeke concurred. While taking note of the current apogee of Sino-African ties, Mr. Demeke urged stakeholders, it is high time to further bolster ties as it provides ample opportunity to exert global influence.

And contemporary Ethiopia-China relationship is model that would turbocharge cooperation between China and the Continent, he maintained. It can safely be said that it serves as a benchmark for further cooperation by other emerging economies in Africa. The realisation of a more peaceful and prosperous Africa, on the other hand, should be buttressed by initiatives that champion good governance and cleanse the bureaucracy of malpractices and insidious graft that could derail the creation of a robust, inclusive economic development in Africa that would in turn help entrench democracy, the Deputy Premier stated.

### **Ethiopia keeps its doors open for the People of Sudan**

The conflict that erupted in Sudan on April 15, 2023 continues to cause immense civilian casualties and extensive destruction of property. As the primary victims of this conflict, Sudanese people are already paying unimaginable price, at times, their dear lives. Hundreds of thousands have also been displaced.

As a good neighbour, a peaceful Sudan has served Ethiopia and its citizens in many ways. The strong people to people relations have made Sudan to be a go-to place for Ethiopians in times of need. The two countries have also enjoyed excellent bilateral relations and have taken significant steps towards enhancing regional integration.

Recognizing this longstanding and multifaceted interconnectedness, Ethiopia has been urging the warring parties in Sudan to agree to a permanent cease-fire and resolve their differences peacefully. Nevertheless, while Ethiopia always urges for a Sudanese led solution to the conflict, it never hesitates to respond to Sudanese request, as the active mediation role the country played in 2019 illustrates. Ethiopia has always been steadfast to help Sudanese resolve their differences peacefully.

Moreover, Ethiopia also keeps its doors open to the brotherly people of Sudan in times of need. Since the eruption of the conflict Ethiopia as expected has kept its borders open for the thousands of displaced Sudanese fleeing for their life. So far, more than 35, 0000 Sudanese have entered Ethiopia. In so doing, Ethiopia is working in close cooperation with international partners to accommodate those who wish to stay in refugee camps set up in Metema. More than 50 thousand quintals of food aid have been delivered and a medical team has been dispatched to the area. In addition, all visa related fees have been waived for all Sudanese coming to Ethiopia.

Residence permits have been extended for those already in Ethiopia and facilitated the travel of those interested to depart to another destination. State institutions, such as, the Immigration and Citizenship Service, Refugee and Returnees Services, the Government of the Amhara Regional State as well as other relevant stakeholders are working closely to provide all the necessary support to our Sudanese brothers and sisters arriving at the border. In fact, what has been done

so far is a testament to Ethiopia's determination to be on the side of the people of Sudan in times of adversity.

Nevertheless, such endeavours could only ease the misery of the Sudanese people temporarily. Bringing sustainable peace and normalcy back to Sudan requires solving the current conflict in an enduring manner. Long-term solution solely depends on solving the Sudanese conflict through the process owned by the Sudanese themselves. Ethiopia stands ready to help such efforts in every possible way while continuing to provide shelter to the brotherly people of Sudan.

### **Brazilian Foreign Minister's Official Visit to Ethiopia**

On June 5, 2023, the Foreign Minister of Brazil, Mauro Vieira, visited Ethiopia to discuss strengthening ties between the two countries and fostering cooperation on various multilateral issues. During the visit, FM Vieira held meetings with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen. The discussions focused on enhancing bilateral relations and exploring opportunities for collaboration in trade, investment, science and technology, climate change, sustainable development, and other sectors.

During the talks, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali, emphasized the importance of strengthening ties between Ethiopia and Brazil. The discussions between the two leaders aimed to enhance cooperation on both bilateral and multilateral fronts.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen also met with Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira, covering various aspects of strengthening bilateral relations. The importance of political dialogue and official visits were highlighted as key elements to enhance cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, science and technology, climate change, and sustainable development. Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen expressed Ethiopia's desire to elevate bilateral relations to a strategic partnership level and welcomed the proposal to conduct bilateral political consultations in Brazil.

The discussions between the two ministers also addressed development cooperation, with a focus on Brazil's support in areas such as sustainable forest management, coffee and cotton productivity improvement, and explored opportunities for collaboration in other sectors. Both sides emphasized the need for agreements to combat drug trafficking, with negotiations underway for the transfer of sentenced persons and cooperation between the federal police of both countries.

Trade and investment were prominent topics, with Ethiopian Airlines and the Brazilian aircraft manufacturer Embraer being discussed. The meeting also touched upon cooperation in multilateral issues, including Ethiopia's request for membership in BRICS and Brazil's



candidacy for a position in the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Both sides expressed their willingness to support each other's initiatives in these areas.

During the visit, it was emphasized that the reopened Ethiopian Embassy in Brasilia would further bolster the relations between the two countries. Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira expressed his government's readiness to support sectors aligned with mutual interests in both bilateral and multilateral venues.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Ambassador Mesganu Arga held discussions with Brazil's State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Carlos Duarte, focusing on the value of developing the bilateral relationship, particularly in agriculture, environmental protection, aviation, sports, and culture. Ambassador Mesganu, through FM Vieira, invited Brazilian investors to participate in Ethiopia's economic activities and explore untapped business opportunities in the country. State Minister Carlos Duarte expressed Brazil's interest in expanding the current state of cooperation between the two nations.

In conclusion, the visit of Brazil's Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira to Ethiopia was significant in strengthening diplomatic ties and cooperation between the two countries. The discussions covered various aspects of bilateral relations, including trade, investment, science and technology, climate change, and sustainable development. Both sides expressed their commitment to enhancing longstanding diplomatic relations and agreed to work together to strengthen Ethiopia-Brazil relations in the future.