



A Week in the Horn

23.02.2024

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva visits Ethiopia

Ethiopia, Kenya Sign MoUs to Further Cooperation in Economic and Social Sectors

Third Ethiopia-Rwanda JMC Held in Addis Ababa

State Ministers for Foreign Affairs Brief the Media on the 37th AU Summit

NEWS IN BRIEF

Africa and the African Union

The 37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union was held on Saturday-Sunday (February 17-18). Speakers at the Summit include, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, AUC Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat, Secretary General of the League of Arab States, UN Secretary General, President of the State of Palestine, President of Brazil, and the Chairperson of the AU. The Summit subsequently launched the theme of the Year 2024 as “Educate and Skill Africa for the 21st Century - Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa.”

On Saturday (February 17), the Union announced the composition of the **Bureau of the Assembly** of AU for the Year 2024. Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Ghazouani, taking over the mantle from Comorian President Azali Assoumani, was elected as the AU Chair for 2024. The Summit also disclosed the First, Second and Third Vices for the period together with the Rapporteur to be Angola, Congo, Ghana, and Comoros, respectively.

African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat on Wednesday (February 21), released a statement on the situation Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo and called upon leaders of DRC and Rwanda “to prioritize dialogue in the framework of the two African mechanisms led by President João Lourenço of Angola and Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya, with the goal of agreeing, in a collaborative and fraternal spirit, on a reasonable pathway to settle political differences, whatever their nature.”

On Wednesday (February 22), a groundbreaking ceremony was held in Bishoftu City, Oromia, for the construction of the new Africa Union Pan Veterinary Vaccine Centre (AU-PANVAC) Laboratory Complex. In his opening speech, AUC Chair Mahamat said, “it is an important day for Veterinary Science and Livestock owners in Africa, as we are embarking-on the construction of the New Laboratory Complex of the African Union Pan African Veterinary Vaccine Centre (AU-PANVAC). He stressed, “This is an expression of the shared commitment by the African Union and the United States of America to addressing common challenges in controlling animal diseases for sustainable livestock production for food security and nutrition and poverty reduction in Africa and beyond.”

Ethiopia

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed on Saturday (February 17) addressed the opening session of the 37th AU Summit. He said, “Africa's rise ... should be important to the entire world! We need to grow! We need to build infrastructures, assure food security, strengthen our health and education systems, and create jobs. All of these require long-term financing.

Brazilian President Lula da Silva made a three-day (16-18 February) state visit to Ethiopia. The historic visit marked a significant moment in further consolidating relations between Ethiopia and the South American country (**See Article**).

The Office of the Prime Minister on Monday (February 19) dispatched a “Joint Declaration for Tripartite Cooperation on the Establishment of Centers of Excellence in Ethiopia” signed in the presence of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed among the Government of Ethiopia, the Government of China and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

Premiere Abiy on Monday (February 19) and Thursday (February 22), convened meetings with zonal representatives from the Amhara and Oromia Regional States, respectively, and listened to the concerns of the public pertaining to peace, security and development that need concerted efforts to materialize.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie on Wednesday (February 21) co-chaired the 36th edition of the Ethiopia-Kenya Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) together with Kenyan Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, Musalia Mudavadi and stressed the need to further expedite cooperation in the economic, social and cultural spheres (**See Article**).

State Minister for Resources and Services Ambassador Birtukan Ayano together with State Minister for Political and Economic Diplomacy Affairs, Ambassador Mesganu Arga on Tuesday morning (February 20) briefed the media on the 37th African Union Summit that concluded over the weekend (**See Article**).

State Minister for Political and Economic Diplomacy, Ambassador Mesganu Arga conferred with South Korean Deputy Minister for Political Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Chung Byung-Won on bilateral and multilateral issues of mutual concern on Wednesday (February 21).

On Tuesday (February), the board of Ethiopian Investment Holdings convened to assess Ethio Telecom's readiness to go public and to evaluate the Ethiopian Capital Markets Authority's (ECMA) progress in operationalizing the capital markets that introduced the Ethiopian Stock Exchange (ESX) market in the country that is poised to be a game-changer, supporting Ethiopia in achieving its growth aspirations and attracting new capital.

Higher government officials and senior experts sourced from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Peace, and Planning and Development, as well as Government Communication, and Immigration and Citizenship services and affiliated parastatals took part in the deliberations on the draft mid-term development and investment plan on Thursday (February 22).

Djibouti

Defence Ministers of Djibouti and Türkiye, Hassan Omar Mohamed and Yasar Guler respectively, on Monday (February 19) signed three key agreements to enhance military cooperation in Ankara, aimed at also further enhancing bilateral relations.

United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) agency said on Monday (February 19) a Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier vessel sustained "superficial damage" after being hit by a drone in the Red Sea, 60 nautical miles north of Djibouti.

Eritrea

A delegation led by the Chargé d'affaires at the Embassy in Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the African Union and Economic Commission for Africa, Biniam Berhe, attended the 37th AU Summit, the Ministry of Information announced on Tuesday (February 20).

Kenya

President William Samoei Ruto on Saturday (February 18) during the 37th AU Summit in Addis Ababa succeeded Rwandan President Paul Kagame as the next African Union Champion for Institutional Reform.

Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, Wycliffe Musalia Mudavadi, in a social media post on Wednesday (February 21) said, Kenya remains committed to working with Ethiopia to address trade barriers,

including tariffs and non-tariff barriers, that hinder the expansion of trade between our two nations.

The Office of the Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs on Wednesday (February 21) published a press dispatch with regards to the 36th Ethiopia-Kenya JMC geared towards enhancing cooperation in foreign affairs, defence, security, economic and social sectors. PCS and CS Mudavadi in the press release stressed the need for Kenya and Ethiopia to resolve trade barriers, including tariff and non-tariff barriers, that stifle expansion of trade between the two partners.

The National Executive Retreat took place in the Rift Valley town of Naivasha in the presence of President Ruto and Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua on Monday (February 19). Cabinet secretaries, senior government officials as well as lawmakers from the ruling coalition, Kenya Kwanza, came together to reflect on the performance of the Government and mull strategies for the upcoming fiscal year.

State Department for Immigration Services announced over the week that the East African country has begun modifying its [Electronic Travel Authorisation](#) (eTA) to accommodate the needs of nationals from Ethiopia and five other African countries to travel with ease into Kenya without being required to pay the USD 30 per traveler charged for the eTA when going into the country. The decision was reached, the agency noted, these are “countries which had concluded visa abolitions agreement or signed bilateral visa waiver agreements with the Republic of Kenya.”

Managing Director of Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC) Joseph Siror during the company’s operational update in Nairobi on Tuesday (February 19) disclosed that, Ethiopia now supplies 11 percent of the electricity consumed by Kenyans daily, growing the Horn of Africa country’s stake in local power supply. According to the MD, data from Kenya Power shows imports from Ethiopia Electric Power beat supply from thermal generators and solar to emerge as the fourth largest source of power supply.

South Sudan

President Salva Kiir Mayardit, the current Chairperson of the East African Community (EAC), on Thursday (February 22) met with Rwandan counterpart Paul Kagame in Kigali and discussed peace in the East African region, particularly in the peace and security situation in Eastern DRC.

On Wednesday (February 21) President Kiir met with a delegation of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) led by the Undersecretary General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, to discuss the peace process and preparations for the upcoming elections.

Sudan

The Expanded Mechanism for the Resolution of the Sudan Crisis, on Wednesday (February 21) convened a meeting at the level of Permanent Representatives to the African Union and introduced to the newly-appointed AU High-Level Panel for Sudan. The meeting was attended by participants from the African Union Commission (AUC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the United Nations, the League of Arab States, the European Union, Mozambique, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, United States, United Kingdom, Norway, Türkiye, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva visits Ethiopia

The President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva made a three-day state visit to Ethiopia from 16 to 18 February 2024. The historic marked a significant moment in further underpinning relations between Ethiopia and the South American country.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed extended an official welcoming ceremony for President Lula at the Prime Minister's office before the bilateral meeting of the two leaders. During the bilateral meeting, the two leaders discussed, among others, trade expansion, cooperation in agriculture and food security and infrastructure development between the two countries. PM Abiy and President Lula also discussed the necessity of reforming the global governance system. In the course of the meeting, President Lula also invited Prime Minister Abiy to participate in the upcoming G20 Summit scheduled to take place in November 2024 in Rio de Janeiro and the PM accepted the invitation.

One of the highlights of the President's visits was the launch of the Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty, a Brazilian initiative championed by President Lula. He sees this alliance as a concrete step towards achieving food security, drawing inspiration from Brazil's successful Bolsa Família (social welfare program of the Government of Brazil) program. This initiative reverberates with the continent's ongoing struggles with food insecurity, exacerbated by conflicts and climate change.

President Lula's presence at the African Union Summit served as a symbolic gesture of solidarity and support for the continent's aspirations. He called for increased African representation in global institutions like the G20, arguing that the voices and concerns of developing nations deserve a louder platform. This resonates with Brazil's recent diplomatic efforts to strengthen ties with BRICS members and other emerging economies, forming a united front on issues of global governance and economic development.

Overall, Lula's visit to Ethiopia signifies a renewed commitment to building stronger ties between Brazil and Ethiopia and Africa at large. By focusing on trade, climate action, food security, and increased representation, President Lula seeks to forge a mutually beneficial partnership that addresses shared challenges and promotes sustainable development for both regions.

President Lula afterwards accompanied by Addis Ababa Mayor Adanech Abiebie and Finance Minister Ahmed Shide, visited the Adwa Victory Memorial in the heart of the City – dubbed *Adwa 00* – commemorating the unequivocal victory of the gallant Ethiopian patriots against the invading Italian aggressors in 1896. During the tour, President Lula laid a wreath of flowers in honour of the heroes, who gave up their lives in defense of the Motherland.

Diplomatic relations between Brazil and Ethiopia were established in 1951. The two countries have since established joint initiatives focusing on agricultural production techniques in semi-arid regions; sharing experiences in biofuels; small-scale agricultural irrigation; school feeding; basic sanitation and sustainable forest management. Currently, there are five cooperation projects underway in the areas of agriculture and food security.

Trade and investment flow between the two countries in 2023 amounted to USD 23 point 8 million, mostly in Brazilian exports, especially of fuels, agricultural machineries and industrialized products. To expand on this, in December 2023 Brazil sent a business mission to Ethiopia, which included representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Apex Brasil and representatives from the private sector.

Ethiopia, Kenya Sign MoUs to Further Cooperation in Economic and Social Sectors

The 36th Ethiopia-Kenya Joint Ministerial Commission was held on Wednesday, 21 February 2024, at the Skylight Hotel in Addis Ababa. The JMC, which was co-chaired by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, Ambassador Atske Selassie and Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs of Kenya, Musalia Mudavadi, deliberated on seven key areas of cooperation between the two east African countries including, culture, tourism, petroleum sector development, wildlife protection, blue economy and fisheries, correctional services, and capacity building in the public sector. The JMC was concluded with the signing of Memoranda of Understanding in the aforementioned fields and reiterating commitment to further advance the historical partnership between Ethiopia and its southern strategic neighbour.

In his opening remarks, Foreign Minister Ambassador Taye said, the people of Ethiopia and Kenya are intertwined through culture, language, geography and history. Ethio-Kenyan diplomatic relations withstood the test of time through the forethought our leaders, Ambassador Taye added. He also stressed the fact that the concerted efforts between the respective governments have been instrumental in bolstering ties and jointly tackling bilateral and regional challenges such as terrorism, transnational organised crimes, drought, climate change and other related concerns. In this regard, the Foreign Minister stated, the JMC platform is crucial to take relations to new heights.

Citing the fact that the 35th JMC was held awhile back, FM Ambassador Taye noted, a lot has been achieved since the last JMC in terms of scaling up down to earth cooperation in the defence, economic, peace and security as well as regional integration and closely working together in multilateral fora on shared interests.

Calling upon respective parties to duly implement newly inked MoUs in close collaboration, Ambassador reiterated Ethiopia's continued commitment and incessant efforts to closely work with its southern neighbour for the peace, development and prosperity of the two countries and the Horn of Africa regional, at large.

Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary Mudavadi, on his part said, the painstaking deliberations at the JMC and senior experts' level are a testament to the sort of special relations Kenya and Ethiopia enjoy and will further consolidate bilateral relations. They also present the unprecedented opportunity to properly assess the state of relations and explore potential areas of future cooperation, Hon. Mudavadi added.

He further stated, the cooperation between Kenya and Ethiopia is that of a longstanding collaboration predicated on the spirit of Pan-African renaissance. Kenya and Ethiopia, as such, are close partners working together to champion region integration in tandem with ensuring regional peace and security, the PCS and CS noted.

PCS and CS Mudavadi also urged the participants to implement the shared interests reaffirmed and captured in the MoUs and to further strengthen existing relations through the JMC mechanism that serves as the nerve centre of the diplomatic relations between the East African sisterly countries.

During the meeting, the heads of respective senior experts' entourage, Director-General for African Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, Ambassador Fisseha Shawl, and his Kenyan counterpart and Director General, Bilateral and Political Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Moi Lemoshira presented a summary of the agreed minutes of the three-day deliberations (19-21 February).

After the signing ceremony FM Ambassador Taye and PCS and CS Mudavadi engaged in a joint press conference with media highlighting the major takeaways of the high-level talks.

The first JMC, the oldest JMC Ethiopia has ever had, between the two countries was held in 1963 and has been defined by the high and consistent political commitment throughout successive governments and strong people-to-people ties forged by blood and boon.

Third Ethiopia-Rwanda JMC Held in Addis Ababa

The Third Ethiopia-Rwanda Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) was held from 11 to 13 February 2024 in Addis Ababa. The Ministerial meeting held on 13 February was preceded by a two-day senior officials and experts meeting on 11 and 12 February 2024.

Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia and the Great Lakes nation, Ambassador Taye Atske Selassie and Dr. Vincent Biruta, respectively led delegations at the JMC and co-chaired the high-level deliberations on bilateral issues of mutual interest.

During the meeting, the participants deliberated on various issues of mutual interest including political, peace and security, economic cooperation, social and cultural cooperation, cooperation in natural resource management, environment and climate change among others.

Both heads of delegations in their opening remarks commended the excellent relations and partnership that exists between the two countries and reiterated their commitments to further enhance the cooperation to greater heights. Ethiopia and Rwanda are strategic partners collaborating each other on regional and international fora since the time the two countries established diplomatic relations.

Ethiopia and Rwanda promote strong stand on the fair and equitable utilization of transboundary resources. Both countries have signed and ratified the Nile Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) and are committed to work in collaboration on the development and management of the basin for the benefit of the peoples of all the riparian states.

At the conclusion of the three days meeting, five Memorandum of Understandings on political consultation, investment cooperation, on trade facilitation, cooperation on sports as well as on cooperation in disaster reduction and risk management were signed by high officials of the respective institutions, expanding the areas of cooperation to further exploit available opportunities. Many other areas have been discussed and are expected to be signed before or during next Joint Ministerial Commission meeting.

State Ministers for Foreign Affairs Brief the Media on the 37th AU Summit

State Ministers for Resources and Services and Political and Economic Diplomacy, Ambassadors Birtukan Ayano and Mesganu Arga, respectively, on Tuesday, 20 February 2024, briefed domestic and various Addis-based media houses regarding the 37th African Union Summit that concluded over the weekend by passing key decisions.

State Minister Ambassador Birtukan, who is the Chair of the AU Summit National Committee, in her presser highlighted the key security, logistical, protocol and hospitality arrangements for the participants of this year continental gathering. Citing the successful completion of the Summit on these accounts, the State Minister commended all stakeholders that worked in synergy for the fruition of the successive Ambassadorial, Ministerial, Leaders as well as First Lady gatherings. Among others, she thanked the Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Foreign

Affairs as focal institution, defence, intelligence, security and law enforcement agencies, immigration and customs agencies, municipal offices of Addis Ababa and Sheger City, hoteliers and the residents of Addis Ababa, at large and media houses for the seamlessly contributing their part throughout the meetings.

State Minister Ambassador Mesganu, on his part, accentuated Ethiopia's participation at various levels on substantive matters during Ambassadorial (Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC)), Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Executive Council) as well as Heads of State and Government levels (Assembly). Special emphasis was given to Ethiopia's historical role as a champion of Pan-Africanism and crucial Continental agenda in tandem with promoting the national interests of Ethiopia, Ambassador Mesganu told reporters. The successful completion of the Summit is a testament to Ethiopia's longstanding contributions to Africa's causes and it being the seat of the Headquarters of the AU since its founding. Apart from the participation at the 44th Executive Council and 37th Ordinary Assembly meetings, of the Ethiopian delegation has been engaged back-to-back bilateral meetings with various leaders from Member States and heads of regional and global organisations to advance Ethiopia's national interest and to promote positive image, he added.

The state minister said, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed as the champion of the "[*The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme \(CAADP\)*](#)" presented the fourth biennial review report of CAADP to the African Union assembly of Heads of State and Government. Both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, Ambassador Taye Atske Selassie, also demonstrated Ethiopia's continued commitment to education, that has been the theme of this year's AU Summit, Ambassador Mesganu stated.

At the end of the briefing, the State Ministers responded to questions raised by the reporters.