



A Week in the Horn

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Africa and the African Union

African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat on Thursday (February 29), dispatched a communique on the situation in Chad and called for the peaceful settlement of disputes and the urgent need for Chad to reconnect authentically with the inclusive dialogue of all political forces, social, civil and military for a future of stability, democracy and shared prosperity.

On Thursday (February 29), the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment of the AU released the [Fourth Biennial Review \(BR\) Report on the progress of the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program \(CAADP\)](#).

The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) on Thursday (February 29) dispatched a press release announcing an extended partnership between Africa CDC and UNICEF to enhance primary healthcare, supply chain management, pooled procurement and local manufacturing, and emergency response. The collaboration builds on the *2022-2024 Partnership Framework Agreement between Africa CDC and UNICEF*, which aims to achieve the goals outlined in the African Union *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*.

The new contingent commander of Kenyan Defence Forces troops serving under the umbrella of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), Brig. Seif Salim Rashid, has officially assumed duty taking over from Brig. William Kamoiro, ATMIS announced on Thursday (February 29).

The African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL), in partnership with the German Federal Police (*Federal Police Bundespolizei* (GFP)), held a Capacity Building Workshop focused on introducing and effectively implementing smartphone technology within the police departments of African Union member states from February 27 to 29, 2024, in Tunis, Tunisia.

President of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Omar Touray during a media briefing on Thursday (February 29) said, achievements of the regional economic community are overshadowed by political developments in the region.

Ethiopia

President Sahle-Work Zewde on Sunday (February 25) attended the State Funeral Service of the late Namibian President Hage Geingob in the Capital Windhoek and the body of the former head of state was later laid to rest in the South West African Country's Heroes' Acre cemetery. In her speech during the Service, Madame Sahle-Work eulogised President Geingob as a someone who "fought the right fight for the freedom of his country, the rights and well-being of his people. This is what makes a person with vision and leadership skill a hero. Let us honour the heroes while they are alive."

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed embarked on a two-day (27-28 February) State Visit to Kenya together with First Lady Zinash Tayachew, to discuss bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of shared interest. Upon arrival in Nairobi, the high-level delegation was accorded a warm welcome by Kenyan President William Samoei Ruto (**See Article**).

Premiere Abiy and his entourage on Thursday (February 29) made another East African tour in Dar es Salam, Tanzania for a State Visit accompanied, among others, by Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Taye Atske Selassie.

Chief of General Staff of the Ethiopian National Defence Forces, Field Marshall Berhanu Jula accompanied by Ethiopian envoy to Kenya, Ambassador Bacha Debele, visited the Headquarters of Kenyan Defence Forces (KDF) in the Capital Nairobi. During the visit, the Field Marshall conferred with KDF Chief General Francis Ogolla on regional peace and security, defence cooperation as well as conducting joint training exercises in tandem with jointly combatting the scourge of terrorism.

Ethiopian Airlines Group inaugurated a state-of-the-art e-commerce logistics hub in the Capital built by China National Aero-Technology International Engineering Cooperation and poised to meet the increasing demands of online shoppers and retailers on Thursday (February 29). Speaking at the inaugural ceremony Minister of Transport and Logistics Alemu Sime said the facility aims to facilitate

streamlined operations and inventory management prior to dispatch of packages to clients.

The National Steering Committee on Ethiopia's Accession to the World Trade Organisation led by Chief Negotiator and Minister of Trade and Regional Integration, Gebremeskel Chala, and accompanied by Deputy Chief Negotiator and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Ambassador Mesganu Arga participated at the 13th Biennial WTO Ministerial Conference (MC13) in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates from, 26-29 February (**See Article**).

A delegation headed by Minister of Planning and Development including the Director-General of Environmental Protection Authority, Lelise Neme, took part in the 35th African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) Bureau Meeting and the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) at UNEP HQ Nairobi that was underway from 26 Feb 2024 to 1 Mar 2024 under the theme "effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

The National Committee on the African Summit led by Chairperson and State Minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Birtukan Ayano, on Thursday (February 29), appraised the undertakings of the host country during the recent African Union Summit including the 37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly and the 44th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the AU.

State Minister for Resources and Services at the Foreign Affairs Ministry Ambassador Birtukan Ayano gave a press briefing at the Ministry on Thursday morning (February 29) regarding the conclusion of the *Diplomacy Week Exhibition* that was underway at the Science Museum, which garnered tens of thousands of visitors.

Djibouti

President Ismail Omar Guelleh on Thursday (February 29) addressed the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) at the Headquarters of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi, Kenya.

On the margins of UNEA-6, President Guelleh met with Somalia and Kenya counterparts, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and William Ruto, to discuss bilateral and regional issues of mutual interest.

Eritrea

President Isaias Afwerki paid a three-day (24-36 February) official visit to Egypt upon the invitation of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, the Ministry of Information disclosed on Tuesday (February 24).

The Embassy of the State in the UK, in a right of reply dispatched on Wednesday (February 28) entitled Eritrean Troops are on Sovereign Eritrean Territories! stated that “false accusations of the presence of Eritrean troops in Tigray Region in fact refer to, and are literally a euphemism for, the sovereign Eritrean territories that the TPLF had illegally occupied for two decades with impunity. Eritrean troops are otherwise inside Eritrean sovereign territories with no presence in Ethiopian sovereign land.”

Kenya

President William Samoei Ruto on Thursday (February 29) addressed UNEA-6 and said that UN Member States must work together to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. He stated, “No economy, community or nation can tackle these challenges single-handedly with any hope of success.”

President Ruto on Thursday (February 29) hosted at the State House Nairobi visiting Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry and discussed the deployment of a multinational security mission in the country backed by the United Nations in the Caribbean nation. “Kenya associates itself with the people of Haiti because of our common heritage. We are offering the experience and expertise of our police officers in the Multinational Security Support Mission in Haiti as mandated by the United Nations Security Council and as guided by our courts”, President later announced on social media dispatch.

Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, Musalia Mudavadi, in a social media on Wednesday (February 28) said, “The enduring friendship between Kenya and Ethiopia is key to our joint success and stability in the region.” He added, “Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali's State Visit is indeed a catalyst to strengthen our bond.”

Members of European Parliament (MEPs) on Thursday (February 29) voted in favour of the [Economic Partnership Agreement \(EPA\) with Kenya](#). European Parliament rapporteur Alessandra Mussolini (EPP, Italian) later stated, “This agreement is a catalyst for economic growth, job creation and sustainable development” while opening up completely the European market for Kenyan exports.

President Ruto's Special Envoy on Climate Change, Ali Mohammed, on Thursday (February 29) took over the mantle from Zambian Ephraim Mwepya Shitima becoming the next chair of the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) on Climate Change.

The International Vaccine Institute (IVI), an international organization with a mission to discover, develop, and deliver safe, effective, and affordable vaccines for global health, announced on Wednesday (February 28) that it will open a Country and Project Office in Kenya dedicated to the operations of its *Advancing Vaccine*

End-to-End Capabilities (AVEC) initiative in Africa as well as other collaborations with Kenyan partners such as Kenya BioVax Institute across vaccine research, development, and training.

The Ministry of Health, in partnership with Development Partners hosted the 3rd *Kenya National Food Fortification Summit* on Thursday (February 29) under the theme “*Celebrating a Decade of Food Fortification in Kenya: Shaping the Future through Innovation and Partnership*” with the aim of assessing achievement, tackle current challenges and chart a roadmap for future innovations for food fortification. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), food fortification is the practice of deliberately increasing the content of one or more micronutrients including vitamins and minerals in a food or condiment to improve the nutritional quality of the food supply and provide a public health benefit with minimal risk to health.

Somalia

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud addressed UNEA-6 on Thursday (February 29) and spoke of the drastic effects of climate change and the risks associated with it for the world and the people of Somalia, in particular.

President Mohamoud on Friday (March 1) arrived in Antalya City, Türkiye to take part in *Antalya Diplomacy Forum* that will take place on March 1-3 2024. The President is expected to meet on the margins, his Türkiye counterpart to discuss bilateral cooperation.

The Government of Somalia on Wednesday (February 28) divulged, it has formally commenced lobbying AU Member States to rally behind ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs Fawzia Adam to serve as the next Chairperson of the AU Commission after incumbent Moussa Faki Mahamat. She is the second East African candidate after Kenyan Raila Amolo Odinga.

South Sudan

President Salva Kiir Mayardit on Monday (February 26) discussed with a team led by Chairperson of the South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA) Josephine Joseph Lagu regarding the upcoming general elections in the country due to be conducted in December 2024. The President also met the leaders of the Other Political Parties (OPP) and United States Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Africa, Sudan, and South Sudan in the Bureau of African Affairs, Peter Lord, to discuss the same.

President of the Republic and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Kiir, on Thursday officiated the inauguration of the 22nd and 23rd batches of the South Sudan National Police Service at Dr. John Garang Mausoleum in the Capital Juba.

Sudan

Minister of Finance during a press conference in Port Sudan on Monday (February 26) revealed that the Sudanese economy has shrunk by 40 percent since the outbreak of the fighting in the country. He added, it is anticipated to continue shrinking by about 28 percent for the rest of the year.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's State Visit to Kenya

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali embarked on a two-day (27-28 February) State Visit to Kenya together with First Lady Zinash Tayachew, to discuss bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of shared interest with President William Samoei Ruto. The high-level diplomatic tour of the East African country came after an invitation President Ruto.

During their arrival in Nairobi, the delegation was warmly received by President Ruto and other high-ranking Kenyan government officials, and Ethiopian Ambassador to Kenya, Ambassador Bacha Debele Buta. During the visit, Prime Minister Abiy and the First Lady accompanied by President William Ruto and the First Lady Rachel Ruto visited various development projects including the ICT Park in Nairobi during which they took part in the commencement of the Sama Source Kenya EPZ Limited, and the Suswa Substation, which facilitates the cross-border transfer of electricity between Ethiopia and Kenya.

The two leaders also exchanged views on bilateral, regional, and international issues of mutual importance. During the discussion, they agreed to strengthen their cooperation in the fields of Trade and Investment, Agriculture, fisheries, transport, ICT, health, tourism, forestry, and culture to achieve socio-economic growth and actualize the African Union 2063 Agenda. They also emphasized the importance of enhancing the people-to-people interaction between the two sisterly countries.

To enhance the trade and investment relations in particular, the two sides reached a consensus on the need to revitalize the *Special Status Agreement* that was signed between the two countries in 2012. On issues of regional peace and security, the two countries agreed to work closely to maintain peace, stability, and security in the Horn region. The two countries also agreed to continue their collaboration and partnership on the multilateral fora, particularly to realize the long-awaited reforms of the UN and other multilateral institutions.

Ethiopia and Kenya have long-standing relations, and as they are bonded by geography, history, and culture, their strategic partnership is natural and nurtured over the years irrespective of change of governments and ideologies in both countries. A week ahead of the visit, the two countries also held the 36th Joint Ministerial Commission meeting on 19-21 February 2024 and signed seven memorandums of Understanding on the field of Tourism, Culture, Petroleum sector, blue economy and fisheries, correctional services, wildlife conservation, and capacity building on public services. Ethiopia and Kenya are also being integrated through road and other infrastructure projects like the LAPSSE. They were able to sign a *Power Purchase Agreement* in July 2022 and electricity transfer from Ethiopia to Kenya has already started. There are commitments from both sides to further enhance the electric transfer. The One-Stop-Border-Post started at Moyale at the

common border is also facilitating cross-border and enhance people-to-people relations.

The East African countries have also worked closely to maintain peace and security in the region. The two countries' forces have been serving together in Somalia under the AMISOM now ATMIS. Their counter-terrorism efforts have yielded fruit in the fight against the Al-Shabaab terrorist group. Their current and future coordination regarding the post-ATMIS situation in Somalia is key in maintaining regional peace and stability.

The coordination and cooperation of the two countries in regional and multilateral fora is key in the attainment of continental goals. Among others, working towards reforming the international financial architecture is critical that is prioritized by the two countries. For Africa to get its rightful place in the world stage, such kinds of bilateral coordination would be of great importance for the continent and in working towards a more just world.

The Premiere's State Visit is timely undertaking and will further enhance the already existing brotherly relationship between the two countries at all levels. It will give an impetus for the various government agencies of the two countries to diligently work towards enhancing the bilateral relations of the two sisterly countries in realizing the aspirations of the brotherly peoples of Ethiopia and Kenya.

Ethiopia's Critical Role as an Anchor of Peace, Development, and Prosperity in the Horn of Africa

Ethiopia is keen to ensure the continuity of its role as a linchpin of stability in the Horn of Africa region. Over the years, Ethiopia has continuously been playing a significant role in maintaining peace, achieving development, and prosperity in the Horn of Africa region. Ethiopia's foreign policy and economic orientation is founded on shared prosperity, cooperation and regional integration. These key principles continue to inform and guide Ethiopia's foreign policies and decisions and guide its bilateral and multilateral engagements.

Ethiopia relentlessly places itself at the forefront of the efforts of regional peace both singularly, and in the framework of IGAD, the African Union, and the United Nations. Ethiopia's diplomatic efforts have aimed to foster dialogue and peaceful resolutions to conflicts, contributing to stability in Africa specifically the Horn of Africa. Evidence abounds in this regard. In 2006, upon a request by the Federal Government of Somalia, Ethiopia supported Somalia in its war against the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC). Ethiopia collaborates with regional and international partners to counter the threat of terrorism in Somalia.

Ethiopia's notable role in peace and tranquility in the sub-region were also displayed in addressing the Sudanese civil war, in facilitating a peace agreement between South Sudanese warring parties and in playing a central role in mediating the dispute between the two Sudanese sides following the 2019 revolution in the country facilitating a smooth transition in the Country.

True to its longstanding belief, Ethiopia also contributed to the peace and stability of the continent and the region under the auspices of IGAD, the African Union, and the United Nations at different times. Ethiopia has been the center of regional diplomatic peace efforts playing an active role in regional peace and security concerns through diplomatic engagement, mediation, and peacekeeping activities which in turn earn the country a credential of reliable mediator. Ethiopia has long been the biggest peacekeeping troop contributor to peace support operations. Its troop contribution to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), United Nations Interim Security Force (UNISFA), African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), and United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) are notable examples.

Ethiopia is convinced that the peace and security of the Horn could greatly be enhanced with strong regional integration. In this regard, Ethiopia plays a central role in initiating and implementing critical regional infrastructural developments and signing agreements that enhance the integration process among the states in the region. Regional infrastructural developments such as hydroelectric power supply, potable water supply, transport corridors, railway lines, port developments, and roads have all contributed to the growing regional integration.

One notable example in this regard is the recent MoU signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland. This deal made between the two parties would have significant regional benefits. First of all, it addresses the significant challenges Ethiopia's landlocked status presents to its economic development and security. Beyond this, the deal would create employment opportunities for the youth in the region and further enhances the infrastructural links among the states in the region. Above all, Ethiopia would be able to help in addressing threats to peace and security of the region. This would no doubt ensure the peace and security of the region and makes the trade routes more secure. This development has indeed attracted reactions. In some circles, it was criticized, baselessly, as a development that risks peace and security in the region.

Ethiopia vouches for its quest for access to the sea to expedite integration in the Horn of Africa and secure the peace and stability of the region while contributing towards the achievement of African integration as per the African Union *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*. This quest for access to the sea should be heeded and entertained on the principle of reciprocity and win-win approach that result in dividends for Ethiopia's economic development as well as for the coastal neighbors. It is with this spirit that Ethiopia sought the understanding and

constructive engagement of neighboring countries. In short, in its foreign relations, Ethiopia will continue to be guided by the firm and longstanding principles that its national interests are better protected with strong relations with neighboring countries.

Ethiopia Participated at the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference

A high-level Ethiopian delegation led by Minister of Trade and Regional Integration and Chief Negotiator on Ethiopia's accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Gebremeskel Chala took part in the thirteenth Ministerial Conference of the WTO that was underway in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates from 26-29 February 2024. The delegation also included Deputy Negotiator and State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Mesganu Arga and Member of National Steering Committee and State Minister of Finance Eyob Tekalign.

The 13th WTO Ministerial Conference was held with the theme *"Delivering for people through trade"*. Over 7000 participants from various countries in attendance, MC13 aims to achieve agreements on crucial matters, foster collaboration for a more inclusive and prosperous global economy, advance tangible progress for all member states and developing nations, strengthen the WTO's pivotal position in the trading system, focus on WTO reform, enhance living standards, generate employment opportunities, and prioritize sustainable development as key topics deliberated during the conference.

Comoros and Timor-Leste, which have been in negotiations to join the WTO since 2007 and 2016, respectively, officially became members of the organization during the MC13. This has reduced the number of countries awaiting WTO membership from 24 to 22. Ethiopia has previously reaffirmed its commitment to conclude negotiations before the upcoming Ministerial Conference and become a member during the subsequent MC14 in 2026.

The WTO Director-General, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, delivered the opening speech focusing on the role of the multilateral trading system for economic development and the necessity for the WTO reform agenda. The MC13 was chaired by Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, Minister of State for Foreign Trade of the UAE. Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Khalid bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, also honored the Conference by attending the opening session.

The Chief Negotiator held bilateral talks with Chair of MC13 and State Minister for Foreign Trade of the UAE, Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi. The Ethiopian delegation briefed the UAE side on its WTO accession negotiations and the progress made so far, and it also requested the UAE's support in Ethiopia's efforts to conclude the negotiations.

Furthermore, the Ethiopian delegation met and discussed with the Minister for London and State Minister for Trade Policy of the UK, Mr. Gregory William Hands, and Ethiopia's WTO accession Working Party Chair and Deputy Ambassador of the UK to Geneva, Ambassador Rebecca Fisher Lamb.

Ethio-South Korea Cooperation: Deputy Foreign Minister Chung Byung-Won Visits Ethiopia

State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Mesganu, on 21 February 2024, hosted at his office visiting First Deputy Foreign Minister of South Korea, Chung Byung-won, for bilateral talks on further enhancing cooperation between the two countries.

During the meeting, the State Minister Ambassador Mesganu noted that Ethiopia and Korea have long standing and enduring historical relations highlighting the need to further strengthen their relations across various sectors. He stressed the importance of fostering a robust and comprehensive partnership that reflects the blood-bonded, emotional, and deep-rooted history shared by the two countries. Ambassador Mesganu underlined that this enhanced relationship and mutual goodwill should be translated to tangible economic cooperation, political collaboration, trade and investment opportunities, technology transfer, development financing, among others.

Ambassador Mesganu added that Korea has potential to play its constructive roles in supporting Ethiopia's transformation efforts. He also stressed the need for exchanging views on national, regional, and global issues of mutual interest as well exploring newer fields of cooperation and add synergy of efforts to strengthen the relations. To achieve this, he remarked, it is imperative for the sisterly countries to constantly hold political consultations and ministerial joint commissions to build on the past accomplishments, define future direction, and facilitate further development of the two brotherly countries.

The State Minister also reflected on the Ethiopia's development potentials with initiatives aimed at improving the business environment to attract more foreign direct investments in key sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, ICT, mining, and tourism. In this regard, he underscored the need for Ethiopia and Korea to further explore additional collaboration opportunities to strengthen their partnership, particularly in the realms of trade and investment.

Referring to Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) and loans offered by Korea to Ethiopia, Ambassador Mesganu expressed gratitude for the growing support, highlighting Ethiopia's position as a priority partner for South Korea.

On multilateral fora, in connection with the upcoming Korea-Africa Summit, Ambassador Mesganu said that the Summit presents a valuable platform for

African nations to engage closely with Korea. He indicated Ethiopia's significant commitment to the Summit, ensuring its representation at the highest level and providing full support. He reiterated that the foundation for the success of the Summit hinges on addressing the genuine interests of member countries and fostering and charting substantive cooperation in economic areas like trade and investment to enhance bilateral relations.

Deputy Minister Chung Byung-won, on his part, highlighted the momentous occasion of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Korea. He said, his visit mainly focused on promoting and updating preparations for the upcoming Korea-Africa Summit and to express his country's unwavering commitment to supporting Ethiopia's development efforts.

While discussing the 2024 Korea-Africa Summit, he emphasized the increasing importance of partnership with Africa in addressing global challenges collaboratively. The Deputy Minister stated that the Summit aims to establish a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship with Africa and called for Ethiopia's essential support for its success.