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Sana'a Forum Expresses Commitment for Peace, Security, Sustainable Development

The Fifth Summit of the Sana'a Forum for Cooperation expressed its sincere desire and full commitment to attain durable peace, security and sustainable development in the Horn of Africa and Red Sea Region.



In a joint communiqué released, the leaders of Ethiopia, the Sudan, Transitional Federal Government of Somalia and Yemen, expressed their collective commitment to restore peace and stability in Somalia.

The Summit reiterated its commitment to a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the situation in Somalia and the respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and unity of the country.

Leaders of member states of the Sana'a Forum

The leaders welcomed the initiative of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia for national reconciliation and dialogue involving all stakeholders. It also called upon all Somalis to renounce all forms of violence and acts of terrorism.

This is the first Summit since the legitimate government of Somalia has been able to preside over the official duties of the nation from Mogadishu in over fifteen years.

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in his opening speech said even though the Forum has already accomplished much, the future is even more promising.

Meles said, the fate of the countries is linked, adding that necessary step is taken in economic and social cooperation as well as in related sectors.

He said addressing the security concern of the region was the driving force behind the creation of the Sana'a Forum.

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French Entrepreneurs Commend Ethiopia's Investment Environment

French investors are enjoying favorable investment climate in Ethiopia, a senior French diplomat said.

Economic and commercial counselor of the French Embassy in Ethiopia, Mr. Pierre Boedoz told MoFA Newsletter that the investment environment in the country is on the whole conducive for investors.

"We hear only few complaints with regard to the business conditions, and the issue of corruption is not a concern," he said.

According to Mr. Boedoz, French investors are among the principal ones in the country, and their presence sends message to other investors to come and engage in investment endeavours.

He said that the floriculture sector is significantly expanding and that some French flower growers are developing interest to invest in this area.

Speaking on the trade relations between Ethiopia and France, Boedoz explained that their bilateral trade relations have enormously improved over the past three years.

Ethiopia's export items to France include coffee, leather articles and flowers while it imports machinery and pharmaceuticals, among others.

IMF Commends Ethiopia's Economic Progress

The International Monetary Fund /IMF/ appreciated the economic progress Ethiopia registered in its recent history.

In a statement released after the conclusion of a visit by IMF Deputy Managing Director, Takatoshi Kato, it said the economy rebounded with an annual average growth rate of 11 percent during 2003/04 - 2005/06.

It said "This relatively strong growth has meant that real per capita income has increased at about 7 percent per annum over the past three years."

Mr. Kato said that he held successful and cordial discussions with senior government officials including Prime Minister Meles Zenawi.

In his discussion with the authorities, Kato expressed the Fund's support for the government's overall strategy to strengthen the foundations for the growth.

There are important challenges ahead for Ethiopia to sustain rapid growth, so that it can reduce poverty says the Fund.

In a related news, Afronews website indicated that the growth is extremely robust in this potential African powerhouse, comparable only to the oil-driven economies of Angola and Equatorial Guinea.

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It also said contrary to oil-booming states, much of the economic growth reaches the poor mass.

The agricultural sector is contributing to the rapid economic growth where massive road construction and rural education schemes have been equally important to boost production.

The strong growth has helped the per capita income to increase by about 7 percent per annum over the past three years.

Afronews quoted analysts as saying that Ethiopia's boom could continue during the next few years.

Ethiopian Ambassador Calls on People, Gov't of UK to Enhance Dev't Assistance

Ethiopia's Ambassador to Britain called on partners, the people and government of the UK to increase and enhance development assistance as well as provide market access to Ethiopian export products.



Ambassador Brehanu Kebede

Ambassador Berhanu Kebede said the country would particularly appreciate support for the efforts to trademark its prime products, such as coffee.

The Ambassador made the remark at the seventh annual Ethiopian Cultural Event held in the House of Commons Jubilee Room.

"I also call on our partners in the UK to join us in the Ethiopian millennium celebrations, especially by assisting our efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals," the ambassador further stated.

He said: "The millennium is an event where Ethiopians will make a new pledge to intensify their efforts more than ever to change the image of the country. "

In this regard, Ambassador Berhanu expressed his appreciation to the London Millennium Celebrations Committee which has devised the noble objective of building schools and clinics in commemoration of the millennium.

He noted that the event is taking place when the cooperation between the peoples and governments of the UK and Ethiopia are gaining momentum.

The new code of conduct and the rules of procedure for the parliament, he said, formulated by taking into account the experience of Britain and other countries as well as the press law under consideration by the parliament and stakeholders are the outcomes of the good relations between the two nations.

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Ambassador Tadelech Requests UNESCO, LORIAL to Support Female Students in Developing Countries

Ethiopian Ambassador to France, Tadelech Woldemichael appealed to UNESCO and LORIAL to increase support to women in developing countries.



Speaking at a ceremony that took place in the Ethiopian Embassy in Paris, Ambassador Tadelech pointed out that the contribution of the UNESCO - LORIAL fellowship to promote gender equality while underlining the need to assist women in developing countries with their problems.

The meeting was held to honour Wr/o Mestawot Taye's success, who won the UNESCO-LORIAL 2007 Fellowship award.

Wr/o Mestawot won the annual international fellowship award entitled "Women on Science" as one of the 15 winners from among 120 women scholars drawn from 165 countries.

The winners of UNESCO-LORIAL fellowship award were selected by a team of internationally recognized scientists.

Ambassador Tedelech H/Micheal

US Ambassador Says Ethiopian Troops Disciplined

The US Ambassador to Ethiopia, Donald Yamamoto said that Ethiopian troops are some of the best disciplined peace keepers around the world.

In an interview with The Enquirer, Yamamoto said Ethiopian troops proved themselves very good in civil affairs in last year's flood in different parts of Ethiopia.

US helped stabilize Burundi by bringing troops from Ethiopia and South Africa.

Yamamoto said US is committing resources to developing the economy, sustainable agriculture, expanding trade and job creation.

A career diplomat, Yamamoto, was assigned to China, Japan, Eritrea and Djibouti before being accredited to Ethiopia.

The Situation in Somalia Said Promising

The current situation in Mogadishu is much better than ever, president of the Transitional Federal Government /TFG/ of Somalia, Abdulahi Yousuf said.



In an interview with the press in Mogadishu, Somalia, the president announced that the TFG is establishing its seat in Mogadishu.

The president also indicated that the rest of the cabinet will arrive in Mogadishu within few days.

Even if there are some terrorist groups which are bent on committing criminal acts in the city, Yousuf confirmed the TFG will pacify the city once and for all.

TFG President Abdulahi Yousuf

Regarding the AU's peace keeping force, Abdulahi said that the first batch of the Ugandan troops has arrived in Mogadishu and presently secured the Mogadishu International Airport.

Apart from the Ugandan forces, the president announced that contingents from Nigeria, Burundi, Malawi and Ghana are expected to arrive soon in the country.

The Transitional Federal Government is bracing to secure the whole of Somalia through training security forces, launching reconciliation process and combating terrorists, he said.

Mohammad Hassan Ali, Mayor of Mogadishu City, on his part described as "quite good" the attitude and acceptance of the people towards the TFG.

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All the people need peace, Mohammed said, and they are helping AU Peace keeping and Ethiopian forces.

According to the Mayor, the TFG gives priority to secure, pacify and stabilize the country while giving due attention to build and reconstruct public utilities.

Somali Reconciliation Conference to Kick off Soon

The Somalia reconciliation conference will kick off on 16 April, 2007.

In an interview he gave to MoFA Newsletter in Mogadishu, Interior Minister Mohammad Mohammud, said the TFG is working on the security matters before the conference begins.

The conference will convene in Mogadishu, the minister said, and the TFG is working to make it a success.

According to the official, the TFG wants every stakeholder to participate in the conference and whoever wants to participate through its clan can have the chance.