



ETHIO NEWS

Politics

PRIME MINISTER HAILEMARIAM DESALEGN ANNOUNCES RESIGNATION



PM Hailemariam Desalegn

Photo: mfa

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn announced on February 15 that he had submitted his resignation as Prime Minister and Chairman of the ruling Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) and of the Southern Ethiopian Peoples' Democratic Movement (SEPDM), one of the four members of the ERPDF. In a televised address to the nation, he said, "Unrest and a political crisis have led to the loss of lives and displacement of many," adding that he saw his resignation "as vital in the bid to carry out reforms that would lead to sustainable peace and democracy." He said he would stay as prime minister in a caretaker capacity until the ruling EPRDF and the House of People's Representatives accept his resignation and name a new prime minister. The 180-member EPRDF Council is the body that will choose the party's new chairperson and will name the party's nomination as Prime Minister for endorsement by the House of Peoples' Representatives, all of whose members are from the EPRDF.

Prime Minister Hailemariam took over as Prime Minister in September 2012 following the unexpected death of the former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. He had previously served as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister and held the position of Chairman of the African Union in 2013.

In his televised address, Prime Minister Hailemariam said: "Respected peoples of our country, in an effort to address the challenges currently facing the country in light of the public's legitimate demands for development, democracy and good governance, the EPRDF and the government have commenced a number of reforms; reforms that are currently underway and that we are striving to successfully implement.

"On my part, in an effort to fulfil my responsibilities as a party to these reforms, I have officially tendered, of my own volition, my resignation from the leadership of both the EPRDF and the Government. I wish to take this opportunity to urge the public, and especially our young people, to work towards the maintenance and advancement of our rapid economic development, the strengthening of our nascent democracy and party-system. For this, it is my firm belief that the reforms commenced by the EPRDF and the Government, which are currently underway, must be strengthened and advanced. Additionally, as poverty is the primary cause of the many problems we currently face, it must be confronted at every turn by continuing the good work we have started across the country. The situation our country currently finds itself in is cause for concern but in order to alleviate these concerns, I call on the public-at-large to maintain the togetherness of our society as has been practiced across generations and to continue to play their part in the development of our country.

"Once the peaceful transition of power receives a final endorsement by the House of Peoples' Representatives, I will provide a further statement. However, at this juncture, it was necessary to keep the public updated of the current situation as it develops, in order to ensure the public's stake in the resolution of these challenges and to emphasize its critical role in guaranteeing lasting peace, democracy and good governance in our country. I remain prepared to play my part in all ongoing reforms and processes for the time that I have left in office. I wish to again respectfully ask the people of Ethiopia for their continued efforts to safeguard the peace and advance the development of our country. Thank you."

EQUATORIAL GUINEA'S STATE VISIT TO ETHIOPIA



Meeting with the delegation from Equatorial Guinea

Photo: mfa

The President of Equatorial Guinea, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo arrived in

Addis Ababa for a three-day official visit on February 21. Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn, Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu and other ministers and senior government officials, welcomed President Teodoro Obiang Nguema on arrival at Bole International Airport. The high-level visit was primarily aimed to strengthen bilateral ties between Ethiopia and Equatorial Guinea in the fields of education, agriculture, tourism, trade and investment. Three cooperation agreements and one agreed minute were discussed and signed during the visit.

During the first day of his visit, President Dr. Mulatu Teshome received President Teodoro Obiang Nguema at the National Palace. During their discussions, the leaders deliberated on bilateral and issues of common interest. Dr. Mulatu underlined that the visit of the President of Equatorial Guinea to Ethiopia would expand bilateral relations between the two countries and certainly have a momentous impact on trade, investment and other relationships. President Mulatu also urged the importance of working in close collaboration to further strengthen bilateral ties. On this note, President Teodoro Obiang Nguema expressed Equatorial Guinea's desire to have strong cooperative relations with Ethiopia.

Prime Minister Hailemariam held talks with President Teodoro Obiang Nguema on the second day of the visit. Ministers and high-level officials of the Ethiopian government were also present. The Prime Minister noted that Ethiopia and Equatorial Guinea had long standing diplomatic relations based on the principles of Pan-Africanism and their sense of brotherhood. Ethiopia and Equatorial Guinea established diplomatic relations in 1970. Prime Minister Hailemariam underlined that as both countries were currently serving as non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council representing Africa, both had a responsibility to promote and defend African common interests and positions on peace and security issues at UN Security Council.

The Prime Minister expressed his hopes that Ethiopia and Equatorial Guinea would further bolster their bilateral relations in a wide range of areas including investment, trade, tourism and agriculture. President Teodoro Obiang Nguema expressed Equatorial Guinea's strong desire to have robust cooperative relation with Ethiopia. The two sides agreed to augment their existing bilateral relations and cooperation. They signed three agreements on bilateral relations, the defense sector and workers recruitment.

Earlier, Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu opened the Ethio-Equatorial Guinea Joint Ministerial Commission Meeting. The Equatorial Guinea delegation was headed by Simeón Oyono Esono Angüe, Minister of



Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea. Other Ministers, senior government officials, Ambassadors and experts drawn from both countries also attended the meeting. Dr. Workneh emphasized the strong and longstanding relations of the two countries and their shared insights on various areas of mutual concerns. He extended his appreciation on behalf of the Government of Ethiopia to Equatorial Guinea for the close collaboration achieved in numerous areas, underlining that Ethiopia attached a great deal of importance to the relationship between the two countries. He said Ethiopian Airlines' daily flights to Equatorial Guinea would help to further strengthen the relations between the two nations. The Minister, who noted that President Teodoro Obiang Nguema's visit would help implement the agreements previously signed between the two countries, said, "This Joint Ministerial Commission meeting is a historic one since it further advances the ties between our two countries to a higher level." Referring to multilateral issues, Dr. Workneh also noted that the two countries should continue to promote and defend African positions at the United Nations.

Ambassador Simeón Oyono Esono Angüe, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Equatorial Guinea agreed with Dr. Workneh that Ethiopia and Equatorial Guinea could now move to a higher level in further strengthening the two countries' bilateral relations. He emphasized Ethiopia and Equatorial Guinea should continue to work together further in the areas agreed at the experts' meeting: trade, investment, agriculture, education and air services. He emphasized that Equatorial Guinea wanted to emulate Ethiopia's experience so as to diversify its economy.

An Ethiopia-Equatorial Guinea Business Forum was also held on Wednesday (February 21) at Hilton Hotel, aiming to strengthen trade and investment ties between the two countries and highlight key investment opportunities in a range of sectors. Speaking at the opening of the Forum, Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations President, Melaku Ezezew said the forum would help to explore a number of important issues that affect the relations between the two sides. It could be considered as opening a new chapter for economic relations between the two countries, he added. Chamber of Commerce of Equatorial Guinea President, Gregorio Boho Camo said the Equatorial Guinea delegation was there to see the business opportunities in the country and to work with Ethiopian business people. The cooperation between the two sides needs to be developed to continental level, he said, adding that they could learn a lot from Ethiopia as it is one of the biggest countries in Africa. The Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations and the Chamber of Commerce of Equatorial Guinea have signed MoU that would enable them to implement the previous several agreements

signed to enhance cooperation in the fields of air transport services, trade, agriculture, investment, and experience sharing.

DR. WORKNEH BRIEFS THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY ON THE CURRENT SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA



Dr. Workneh at the briefing

Photo: mfa

Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu briefed resident Ambassadors and other invited guests on the current situation in Ethiopia on February 20. Dr. Workneh opened his remarks by extending his gratitude to distinguished members of Diplomatic Corps in Addis for their "concerns and your desire to engage with us at this critical time."

Dr. Workneh provided a general overview of the current state of affairs in Ethiopia together with the recent declaration of a State of Emergency by the Council of Ministers. He assured the diplomatic community that "the Government is undertaking reforms and concrete measures in a bid to move the country forward in terms of ensuring sustainable peace, national security, and widening of the political space." Speaking of the recent declaration of the State of Emergency, Dr. Workneh underlined that security disruptions in some parts of the country had posed "threats to the constitution and the constitutional order" that "could not be contained through the regular law enforcement mechanisms". This had necessitated the State of Emergency. Underlining the detailed and rigorous procedures and methods employed, including principally a series of consultations and evaluations of the security situation in the country, before taking such a decision, Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh said the State of Emergency was targeted at "maintaining the wellbeing of the public, protecting the economic installations from destruction and safeguarding the country's peace and security" as well as "protecting the constitution and the constitutional order, ensuring security and stability of the country and protecting the freedom of movement of citizens."

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hirut Zemene, provided the details of the State of Emergency, particularly the powers and

functions of the Command Post established to supervise its orderly execution. The Command Post, which is headed by the Prime Minister, will have a presence at all levels of the government through ancillary organs it will establish on an ad-hoc basis. State Minister Hirut underlined that "The overall implementation of the State of Emergency Proclamation as well as the measures taken for its implementation will be monitored by the Inquiry Board established under the Proclamation." The Inquiry Board will be composed of Members of Parliament and legal experts appointed by the House of People's Representatives. The State Minister said that its main duty would be to "watch the legality of measures taken and make sure they comply with Human Rights laws." Mrs. Hirut reassured the Diplomatic Corps in Addis that during the months where the State of Emergency would be in effect, "The privileges and immunities of the diplomatic missions will continue to be observed as per the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations."

Speaking at the briefing session, Ambassador Kwesi Quartey, the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission and representative of AUC Commissioner Moussa Faki Mahamat, voiced the position of the AUC on the current state of affairs in Ethiopia. Ambassador Quartey stressed that the African Union was confident in the ability of the Ethiopian authorities and people to overcome the challenges at hand and to consolidate the remarkable progress made in the socio-economic development of the country." Ambassador Quartey underlined "The Government of Ethiopia, like any other Government in Africa and elsewhere in the world, has the responsibility to protect citizens and their property, as well as public infrastructure." He laid emphasis on the fact that "it is up to the Government of Ethiopia, on the basis of its own analysis of the situation, to take the measures it deems appropriate" and that "the international community should act in manner that strictly respects the sovereignty and the independence of African countries". Ethiopia is no exception. After the briefing, Dr. Workneh responded to questions raised by various Ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps.

Details of the State of Emergency have now been released. The State of Emergency Command Post, as stated in the Proclamation, has preventive and corrective powers and functions. Under its preventive duties, the Command Post is authorized to prohibit the preparation, publication and circulation of materials and symbols and gestures that are meant to agitate and cause an atmosphere of baseless suspicion and proclivity for disturbance among people. Apart from that, the Command Post is legally sanctioned to arrest without warrant individuals suspected of committing gross misdemeanor such as initiating, leading, organizing, violating, or in any way participating in crimes against the constitution and the constitutional order. If need be, the Command Post also has the author-



ity to search a residence, land, and vehicles in order to seize suspicious items that might be used to commit crimes. Depending on the security situation in a particular region, the Command Post can also invoke its power to determine the circumstances whereby a curfew may be decreed, designate locations where weapons (guns, blades and incendiary devices) are prohibited in the interest of public safety, unless and otherwise stated.

Under the corrective powers provided to it, the Command Post has the primary duty of reinstating the damage caused during the prevailing unrest in different parts of the country. That being the case, the Command Post undertakes measures that are meant to indemnify those who suffered damage, by re-establishing administrative structures that were destroyed due to ongoing conflict; facilitating the return and rehabilitation of displaced populations and provide security for businesses, service delivery establishments and other public institutions; as well as ensuring the safety, security and proper distribution of basic goods and services.

Meanwhile, the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, Moussa Faki Mahamat, issued a statement on Wednesday emphasizing that he was closely following the situation in Ethiopia. He recalled that Ethiopia was not only home to the African Union Headquarters, but also an important member of the Union. As such, Ethiopia played a key role in promoting regional peace and security, as well as in the pursuit of the continental agenda. The statement said the Chairperson was confident in the ability of the Ethiopian authorities and people to overcome the challenges at hand and to consolidate the remarkable progress made in the socio-economic development of the country. Last month, he welcomed the steps taken by the Ethiopian authorities to widen the political and democratic space. He was encouraged by the Government's willingness to persevere on this path. He stressed the need for all concerned stakeholders to display a spirit of responsibility and refrain from any acts likely to undermine peace and stability. He said these were precious and without these neither prosperity nor democracy was conceivable. The Chairperson also stressed that the African Union was, as always, at the disposal of its Member States to assist them, whenever necessary and in the manner deemed to be most appropriate, to address the challenges that necessarily arise in any endeavor to deepen democracy and advance development. He concluded by looking forward to the strengthening of the steps taken to respond to the concerns expressed by segments of the population in a spirit of dialogue, mutual tolerance and commitment to Ethiopia's best interests that transcend all political and other differences. The stability of Ethiopia, he said, was crucial for the well-being of its people, the region and Africa as a whole.

DR. WORKNEH AT THE UN



Dr. Workneh with Nikki Haley (right)

Photo: mfa

Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu held a meeting with Ambassador Nikki Haley, US Permanent Representative at the United Nations on February 16. The two exchanged views on bilateral and multilateral issues. The Minister briefed Ambassador Haley on the recent developments in the region. The two discussed about the political dynamics in Ethiopia. Ethiopia is set to host the Regional Nile Day event on February 22, 2018 under the theme, The Nile – Shared River, Collective Action. This will be the third time for Ethiopia to host the regional event, the first one being in 2008 and 2013.

Culture

NILE DAY 2018 IN ETHIOPIA



Nile Day is an annual event held to commemorate the establishment of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) in 1999. This is an important day on the NBI calendar, as it marked a major milestone in the history of Nile Cooperation since prior efforts such as the Hydromet of the 1960s and the TECCONILE of the 1970s, were beset with lack of inclusivity and absence of an institutional framework. Among other things, Nile Day provides an opportunity for Basin citizens and friends to come together to celebrate the benefits of Nile cooperation, and exchange experiences, views and ideas on topical issues related to the cooperative management and development of the shared Nile Basin water and related resources. This is in addition to enhancing stakeholders' appreciation of the importance of and commitment to Nile Cooperation while at the same time enhancing

awareness of the results and visibility NBI. On a lighter note, the Day provides an opportunity to celebrate the rich and varied cultures which exist within the Nile Basin.

The inaugural event was held in 2007 and it has since continued to attract various stakeholders including Ministers in charge of Water Affairs in the Nile Basin countries, Development Partners, officials from ministries in charge of Water Energy, Agriculture, Environment and Foreign Affairs respectively, and Members of Parliament. Others are researchers, academia, civil society, private sector, media, youth, children as well as the general public.

The Nile Day event brings stakeholders and Policy makers from the Nile Basin member states which are Burundi, DR Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, The Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

Nile Day is a commemoration of the establishment of the unprecedented Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) on February 22, 1999 by Ministers in charge of Water Affairs in the Nile Basin countries. The day marked a major milestone in the history of Nile Cooperation. It was the very first time that the countries jointly agreed to establish an all-inclusive basin-wide institution, to provide a platform for consultation and coordination among themselves. Nile Day provides an opportunity to increase awareness of the importance of basin-wide Nile Cooperation in jointly taking good care of and utilizing the shared Nile Basin water and related resources for win-win benefits. This is in addition to enhancing awareness about the consequences of non-cooperation as well as the challenges of Nile cooperation. On a lighter note, the day serves to expose participants to the rich and varied cultures, which exist within the Nile Basin.

Tourism

ETHIOPIA ON THE ITB



We would like to invite you to visit the Ethiopian pavilion at The World's Leading Travel Trade Show ITB 2018, Hall 21A booth 129, and meet our higher officials delegation and tour operators from Ethiopia from 07.-11.03.