Prime Minister Hailemariam Resigns

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn announced on February 15, 2018 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 EPRDF. 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 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 fulfill 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. As per the terms of my resignation letter, the SEPM and EPRDF executive committees have thanked me for
formally tendering my resignation in accordance with the constitution and have subsequently accepted my resignation. This resignation will receive a final decision from the EPRDF Council and it is my hope that this decision will be taken at the soon-to-be-held meeting of the Council. With regard to my post as Prime Minister of the Federal Government, the House of Peoples Representatives has also received my resignation from the premiership and it is my belief that they will subsequently accept my resignation.

“The main reason I have submitted my resignation is because I hold the firm belief that it was necessary for me to tender it as part of a solution aimed at ensuring lasting peace and guaranteeing democracy in our country going forward. The many questions and grievances that have been raised by the public require and demand answers. In the meantime, I will continue to serve in my current position. The EPRDF Congress, at its next meeting, will democratically elect a new chairperson to replace me in accordance with the Front’s rules and procedures. It is also my belief that the Front and the Government will work to ensure the peaceful transfer of power—a first in the history of our country. Accordingly, I anticipate that following this peaceful transition, a time will come when I will be referred to as the former Prime Minister.”

“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 is 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.”

Embassy Celebrates the Nations and Nationalities Day Colorfully

The Embassy of Ethiopia celebrated the 12th Nations and Nationalities Day with Ethiopian Diaspora Members residing in Ottawa and Toronto cities on February 4 and 11, 2018 respectively.

The Nations and Nationalities Day was celebrated colorfully in the presence of the newly appointed Ambassador H.E Aster Mamo, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ethiopia to Canada, fellow Diplomats and the Ethiopian Diaspora members both in Ottawa and Toronto Cities.

During this ceremony H.E. Ambassador Aster Mamo Officially introduced herself to the Diaspora communities and made a remark regarding the Nations and Nationalities Day Celebration and provided further information to the Diaspora members about the current situations of Ethiopia.
Representatives from the Afar, Harari, Ethiopian Somali, Oromo, Amhara and Tigray communities sent their message marking the Nations and Nationalities Day Celebration and the Current situation of the country.

Finally, the participants of the program had a dinner and enjoyed the Nations and Nationalities Music.
UN Secretary-General Welcomes Ethiopia's Intention to Continue Governance Reforms

UN Secretary-General António Guterres commended the Government of Ethiopia for its intention to continue governance reforms in the country following Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn's submission of letter of resignation. The United Nations highlighted the recent decision by Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, to resign, "allows further political reforms to take place in the country that aimed at widening democratic space," while also noting that the step is a prominent element towards governance reforms. The Secretary-General further welcomed the recent release of detainees in the country.

Describing Ethiopia as a valued partner in peace and security, development, humanitarian and human rights issues in the Horn of Africa and the African continent, the United Nations pledged to continue to support the Government and people of Ethiopia in implementing reforms that would enhance governance, stability and development.

The United Nations also took note of the recent declaration of a state of emergency and stressed the importance of avoiding actions that would infringe on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of citizens, the peace, security and stability of the country, or impact on the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

It is to be recalled 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 and this had necessitated the recent declaration of State of Emergency. As Foreign Minister Dr. Workneh underlined during the briefing session to the diplomatic community in Addis on February 23, 2018, 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."

Indeed and of course, 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; and its main duty would be to watch the legality of measures taken and make sure they comply with Human Rights laws.

Former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair Visits Ethiopia

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn received the former Prime Minister of the UK, Tony Blair (1997–2007) on February 12/2018. The Prime Minister briefed Mr. Blair currently the Executive Chairman of the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change (TBlIGC), a non-profit organization that aims to make “globalisation work for the many, not the few”, on the ongoing economic developments in Ethiopia. Despite the ecological
challenges posed by the effects of the Pacific Ocean’s El Niño and La Nina climate cycles, and the droughts such as the one in 2015, caused by these, Prime Minister Hailemariam underlined that Ethiopia continued to expand and keep its track record of fast, double digit, economic growth over the past decade.

Among the topics of discussion between the Prime Minister and Mr. Blair were industrialization through the creation of industrial zones, job creation especially for the youth who make up the majority of the country’s population, and the national effort to provide universal provision of electricity, potable water and quality education.

Extolling the economic strides Ethiopia has been making, in spite of impending climatic challenges, Mr. Blair told Prime Minister Hailemariam that, “Despite all the challenges and issues, Ethiopia’s economy is still growing strongly, still attracting a lot of foreign investment.” Indeed, he said, the Tony Blair Africa Governance Initiative (TBAI), the antecedent of the current Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, had attested to the act of the ambitious development narrative. According to a commentary published in July 2015 by the then country head of the TBAI working on a program for Effective Governance in Ethiopia, Sebastien Frendo, “with the focused work of the Government of Ethiopia’s Industrial Parks Development Corporation (IPDC) investors have begun to get a grip on the opportunity Ethiopia’s ambition presents.”

Acknowledging the effort the Government has put into the creation of jobs through industrial park schemes, the provision of a proper education, and the delivery of basic amenities such as electricity and potable water, and making a significant difference to Ethiopian lives, Mr. Blair reiterated his Institute’s continued backing for these high priority areas of intervention. The discussions with the Prime Minister concluded with agreement on ways of further heightening the ongoing support the TBIGC has been providing Ethiopia since 2014. It was therefore in the light of several years of close monitoring and observation that Mr. Blair made the remark: “For those who watched Ethiopia for several decades, it is always important to remember how far Ethiopia has come today from where it was back in the 1980’s.” Commending Ethiopia’s unremitting efforts to improve the lives of its citizens, he added that, “I think this is important to recognize.”

During his last visit in May 2016, Mr. Blair visited the Bole Lemmi Industrial Park and made similarly encouraging remarks about Ethiopia’s efforts to attract world-class foreign investors and companies into the industrial parks as a springboard to a higher level of development.

Business and Economy

**UK-Ethiopia Solar Energy Co-operation**

An Ethiopian government delegation has visited UK to exchange best practices concerns and information with British companies in renewable energy and increase energy sector investment. Dr. Engineer Seleshi Bekele, Minister for Water, Irrigation and Electricity and Engineer Azeb Asnake, CEO of Ethiopian Electric Power made a joint working visit to the UK from January 31-February 2, 2018. The visit was organized by the UK Department for International Trade to
highlight UK expertise in renewable energy and provide the opportunity for Minister Seleshi to meet relevant UK companies and stakeholders. During the visit, Minister Seleshi signed a Memorandum of understanding with Winch Energy to develop a project to supply off-grid solar energy to 700 villages in Ethiopia.

Minister Dr. Seleshi and Engineer Azeb, accompanied by Ambassador Hailemichael Abera, Ethiopian Ambassador to the UK, met with Mr. Jeremy Lefroy MP, the UK Prime Minister's Trade Envoy for Ethiopia. They also met other UK government officials and British companies in the renewable energy sector, to discuss areas in which the UK and Ethiopia could deepen their energy sector investment relationship. Minister Dr. Seleshi and Engineer Azeb also attended a roundtable chaired by the Trade Envoy and hosted by British renewable energy company Globeleq. A number of other UK companies made presentations covering their areas of expertise. Dr. Seleshi shared Ethiopian Experience on the energy sector including the plans to generate 17,000MW of power by 2020.

Mr. Lefroy said he was delighted to welcome the minister and EEP’s CEO to the UK. He noted that the government of Ethiopia had ambitious plans to increase its generation capacity and expand electrification to provide for the poorest to access energy. He said the UK was already supporting those initiatives through projects such as Corbetti Geothermal, which included significant development and private finance from the UK, he hoped the visit would encourage more British investment into Ethiopia’s energy sector.

Dr. Seleshi emphasized that renewable Energy was at the heart of Ethiopia’s plans to reach middle income status by 2025. He underlined that creating millions of new on- and off-grid connections would ensure better lives for all Ethiopians; improving health and education outcomes; and supporting the creation of new businesses and jobs. Productive and sustainable use of Ethiopia’s abundance of clean energy, he said, would also allow the country to share energy with our neighbors. This would provide revenue for Ethiopia and also to help to bring light and power to millions of people in East Africa. British companies, he emphasized, were key partners for Ethiopia in this.

Engineer Azeb welcomed the level of interest from British companies and developers in Ethiopia’s energy sector. She said there were many challenges to universal access in Ethiopia, but she hoped that recent reforms to the market, including "new PPP provisions and incentives for innovative renewable energy companies” would help Ethiopia develop a world class grid that was 100% clean, reliable and allow millions more people to access power.

**Ethiopian Turkish Manufacturing Consultation Forum**

Machinery manufacturing and importing companies from Ethiopia and Turkey held a consultative forum in Addis Ababa on February 20, 2018. The meeting attracted more than 60 local and 15 Turkish companies, including Turkish agricultural machinery producers and exporters opening the forum, Wube Mengist, Deputy Secretary-General of the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Association, said the event would help the Turkish companies to identify the business and investment potential in Ethiopia. It would also help to encourage technology transfer in machinery and balance the trade volume between Ethiopia and Turkey. Ethiopia imports metals and metal products, electronics, electrical devices and spare parts, machinery and technologies from Turkey while exporting agricultural products, including vegetables, sesame, oil seeds, animal products, leather and leather products, and textiles. Deputy Secretary-General Wube Mengist said: “Thus far, the trade volume favors Turkey”. He noted that Turkey was an important partner for Ethiopia and
the largest private employer, adding "And Ethiopia is working on becoming an industrial hub; this will be an opportunity for both sides." So far, more than 187 Turkish companies have an investment of nearly $3 billion and have created more than 10,000 jobs. According to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the volume of trade between the two countries continues to rise, and "Exports from Turkey to Ethiopia was $439.73 million while imports from Ethiopia to Turkey amounted to $35.31 million in 2016."

The Central Anatolian Exporters' Association Secretary-General, Ozkan Aydin, told the Forum that Turkish machine producers and exporters planned to enter the promising Ethiopian agro-industrial market. Addressing the Ethiopia-Turkey business-to-business meeting, he said the meeting gave an opportunity to explore and expand into new markets in Ethiopia and in Africa. He said: "We are here in Ethiopia with 10 big Turkish agricultural machinery producers and exporters to explore the Ethiopian market and introduce them to the Ethiopian business community." Mr. Aydin also noted, "Ethiopia is a door to Africa and the region's agricultural market, which is developing …and this is why we brought agricultural machinery producers and exporters."

Tourism and Culture

Ethiopia Celebrates the Battle of Adwa: a Stunning Victory for Africa

Ethiopia commemorated the 122nd anniversary of the victory of the Battle of Adwa on March 2, 2018. Adwa, the battle marking the defeat of Italy's efforts to conquer Ethiopia, was not just a victory for Ethiopia but also a victory for Africa, and one with lessons for today. It allows today's new generation to draw lessons for the maintenance of sovereignty, development, commitment to overcome poverty, and achieve Ethiopia's renaissance. It is being celebrated colorfully all across the country and most notably, in the town of Adwa, in the presence of President Dr. Mulatu Teshome, Minister of Culture and Tourism, Dr. Hirut Woldemariam, other high-level government officials, residents and patriots, representatives of the African Union and invited dignitaries. In his key note speech, President Dr. Mulatu Teshome underlined the fact that the Battle of Adwa showcased a timeless lesson that Ethiopians, despite their differences, do not compromise when it comes to defending their country's sovereignty. This, he said, was an important lesson to the current generation in the sense that "We as the sons and daughters of the gallant Ethiopian patriots should prioritize national interest over personal interests." The President further stressed that all things are made possible only when there is peace and stability in the country, further underlining that everyone has a responsibility to promote the country's peace and stability.

The Battle of Adwa is of huge significance for Ethiopia and for Africa. It meant that the age of continental invasion by the then European colonial...
powers could not be completed. Ethiopia remained independent, a sovereign and un-colonized African country, an example and a model for the rest of the continent. It provided an inspiration for African countries in the subsequent struggles for independence, and it was not mere chance that African countries chose Ethiopia to be a permanent host of the African Union.

The war began with the treaty of Wuchale, an agreement signed between Ethiopia and Italy in 1889. Later, a dispute arose over the interpretation of the Italian and Amharic versions of the document. The Italian language version of the disputed Article XVII of the treaty stated that the Emperor of Ethiopia was obliged to conduct all foreign affairs through Italian Authorities. This would in effect make Ethiopia a protectorate of the Kingdom of Italy. The Amharic version of the article, however, stated that the Emperor could use the good offices of the Kingdom of Italy in his relations with foreign nations if he wished. When, the Emperor made it clear he would only accept the Amharic version, Italy decided to impose a military solution to force Ethiopia to abide by the Italian version.

It is a major victory and a turning point not just for Ethiopia but for Africa and for the African peoples in the Diaspora. A victory in which all the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia participated, it allowed Ethiopia to retain its independence and start its own development.

Adwa also compelled Europeans to reconsider their attitudes towards Africans. It forced them to accept Ethiopia's sovereignty and freedom, obliging them to open Embassies in Addis Ababa and become involved in bilateral relations. Most importantly, it became a catalyst for further struggles by other peoples against their white colonizers and Ethiopia became emblematic of African valor and resistance, a bastion of prestige and hope to thousands of Africans who were experiencing the full shock of European conquest and were beginning to search for an answer to the myth of African inferiority. African-Americans saw the victory as justification of their own self-worth. It was one of the primary reasons for the "modern global rise of a Pan-African vision of freedom."

In the final analysis, Adwa symbolized a victory of the African people, both in Africa and in the Diaspora, and underlined the growing sense of unity among Africans and people of African descent. It has always resonated in the heart of black people as a symbol, demonstrating defiance to colonialism, to exploitation and to foreign domination. The first major victory of non-white peoples over a European army, it negated the then widespread belief that Africans were no match for European colonizers. Adwa was a constant reminder of the possibility of defeating the oppressor and a real source of inspiration to oppressed colonial peoples and to the Diaspora of black Africans, struggling to free themselves from slavery and subjugation. It rejected the myth of the 'civilizing mission' of colonizers who claimed it was 'right and proper' to colonize 'savage and barbarous' Africans. Indeed, Adwa showed that these 'savage barbarians' were the true defenders of the virtues of freedom, equality and human dignity.

Adwa was and remains a redeeming moment for black people. It stands with the gallant Zulu resistance by Shaka in the 19th century and the Mau Mau in Kenya fifty years ago as one of the major symbols of resistance. It was a victory that inspired Marcus Garvey, William Du Bois and Martin Luther King and other great freedom fighters that led the Back to Africa and Civil Rights Movements in America. Today, the spirit of Adwa can still provide a springboard for the African Union's "Pan-Africanism for the African Renaissance", for the emergence of a new Africa, an Africa free to decide its own destiny. Adwa certainly belongs to Africa, as well as to Ethiopia where it provides the basis for the youth of the country to develop their own winning spirit drawn from the example of the courage and determination shown by their grandfathers.