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Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

August 18, 2022
Addis Ababa

Press Briefing Transcript of August 18, 2022

Good morning and welcome to today's briefing.

As usual I'll begin by key highlights of the Prime Minister's engagements over the past week.

I) Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's Engagements

1. GERD

- August 11th and 12th were monumental days for Ethiopia where Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed initiated the beginning of power generation of the second Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam turbine on the 11th and announced the successful 3rd filling of the dam on the 12th.
- The two early generator units have a combined capacity of 750 MW. And currently over 540 MW is being generated and injected to the grid
- Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, during the commissioning of the Second Unit, once again has called upon Egypt and Sudan to continue the trilateral negotiations and work towards forging results through cooperation and mutual growth, reiterating that while work that that has been done to hold up to 22 billion metric cubic of water and generate power from two units, there has been no harm caused to the lower riparian countries as the bottom outlets are clear demonstrations of Ethiopia's "no harm" principle.

2. Green Legacy Closing

- August 14th marked the official closing of this year's Green Legacy program with a ceremony held in Dire Dawa.
- The closing ceremony marked the conclusion of the four-year target of planting 20bil seedlings initiated in 2019 by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed
- As we recall, it is for the first time in Ethiopia's history of afforestation and reforestation, that such a largescale landscape restoration initiative was launched and achieved more than what has been planned.
- Some remarkable results over the past four years include:
 - Mushrooming of nurseries throughout the country from around 40,000 when the initiative was launched to 121,000 by 2022
 - Raising different species of seedlings in these nurseries with increasing emphasis on indigenous and high value types, like bamboo

- Aimed at making the GII improve access to food and nutrition - this year alone, more than 270 million seedlings of important fruit species (mainly avocado, mango and papaya) have been raised in different nurseries
- Average survival rate of 84% for planted seedlings
- In 4 years, a total of the 767K jobs that were created so far were for youth and women; many youths have established their own business in tree seedling production, site management and other activities;
- Last but not least, increased public awareness on climate change, natural resources degradation, loss of biodiversity and its consequences have contributed to a burgeoning green culture

3. Free Trade Zone Launch

- On August 14th you would recall that the Prime Minister inaugurated the Dire Dawa Free Trade Zone.
- Prior to the inauguration, the Council of Ministers put into effect the draft policy document of the National Special Economic Zone which emphasizes that the contribution of international and regional trade links to the economic development of a country is important.
- The Council in its decision recognized that it is important to create enabling conditions for our country to be an active participant and beneficiary as trade relations are rapidly expanding and developing.
- In this regard, in order i. to improve the export trade system of our country, ii. to increase the attractiveness of foreign direct investment, iii. to enhance our export trade capacity and iv. to create wide employment opportunities in the sector, it was found important to establish a system for the expansion of dry ports and smooth logistics services in the main trade corridors of Ethiopia;
- Hence the importance of the policy that allows for the establishment of special economic zones.
- The Dire Dawa Free Trade Zone inaugurated by the Prime Minister last Sunday:
 - Covers an area of 150 sq. m in phase one and 4,000 sq. m land for future expansion
 - Has a dedicated 20MW electric power supply
 - Has a dedicated water supply
 - Within close proximity to the Dire Dawa-Addis Ababa highway
 - Is situated adjacent to the rail line connecting Addis Ababa and Djibouti
 - Dire Dawa Dry port is within a 2.8 km distance
 - Dire Dawa International Airport is within a 25.2km distance
 - Has a locational advantage with two major port corridors of 348 km and 507 km, respectively, from the ports of Djibouti and Berbera.
 - The services offered at the free trade zone range from value added logistics services to industrial & logistics estate rental which are complemented with public services and Government services at One stop service

II) Overall Peace and Security

- On overall national peace and security, multifaceted efforts are being made by the security sector to address outstanding issues as a key priority
- We recall the National Security Council's statement issued last week evaluating its operational activities nationwide.

- As it pertains to terrorist activities in the Oromia region, through the concerted efforts of three command posts and joint deployments of Federal and Regional security forces, key progress is reported to have been made on apprehending members of terrorist cells
- In the Amhara region, rule of law measures taken against irregular forces has yielded results
- Similarly, the evaluation of the National Security Council of its peace and security efforts in Benishangul region, SNNP region, Somali and Afar regions as well as Addis Ababa city indicates progress in apprehending criminals, curbing criminal activities, and cleaning the structures of the security sector.
- The National Security Council has set forth a direction to continue its operations:
 - To diminish the capabilities of terrorists and irregular forces to a level where they are not a threat
 - To conduct activities that ensure lasting peace by mediating across various groups and involving youth in peace activities
 - To strengthen the judicial bodies and enable them to perform what is required for national peace and security
 - To take decisive action against economic exploitation, corruption, smuggling, illegal money transfer and other forms of economic sabotage
 - To refine the leadership at every level and establish accountability; creating qualified, active and ready leadership at every level;

III) Humanitarian Response Updates

Tigray

- From July 20th to August 9th, 2022:
 - 29,942 MT of food and 31,940 MT of non-food items
 - 300 Million Birr;
 - 66,8567 liters of fuel;
 - 23.63 MT of medicine;
 - 2,096 MT of fertilizer have reached Mekelle

Amhara & Afar

- Also, from July 20th to August 9th, 2022:
 - 7,543 MT of food to Amhara Region beneficiaries dispatched
 - 2,761 MT of food to Afar Region beneficiaries dispatched

IV) Peace Process

- The Peace Committee has yesterday unveiled a peace proposal that it has deliberated upon and adopted
- The peace proposal is three-pronged:
 - Firstly, it proposes for peace talks to happen within the coming weeks towards an agreed ceasefire
 - Secondly, it proposes to undertake an in-depth political dialogue between leading towards a lasting settlement
 - Thirdly, it proposes for other pending issues to be addressed through a national dialogue

- This proposal by the peace committee of the Federal Government is another demonstration of the Government's continued commitment to peace and for a peaceful resolution of the conflict
- It puts into perspective that the people of Tigray and affected communities in Afar and Amhara region as a result of the devastations need respite
- It establishes that talks must be without pre-conditions because Ethiopians in the Tigray region need not continue being prisoners of TPLF's own political interests
- It is cognizant of TPLF's continued forced conscription of youth in the Tigray region
- It is cognizant of TPLF's accumulation of weaponry through channels masquerading as humanitarian assistance and through other means;
- It is cognizant of the illegal flow of foreign and local currency being funneled into TPLF's coffers to finance another altercation
- It is cognizant of the siphoning of humanitarian assistance and fuel reserves towards combatants instead of intended beneficiaries
- It is cognizant of the actors that are aiding and abetting the TPLF's affront to peace
- INSPITE of all this, the posture of the Government remains that of peaceful engagement;
- This agenda for peace has been at the forefront by the Government before the war broke out; the call for peace was being made by the Government during the war; and the calls for a peaceful resolution continue to be made to this moment despite there being not a shred of interest for peace by TPLF.
- Despite this, there are still those for whom the image of TPLF as an underdog is compelling and who continue to propagate this misleading narrative.
- The issue of restoration of services comes up again and again as if there is an on and off switch centrally located
- This is an erroneous and dangerous view of how service that is disrupted due to conflict and related damage is administered
- The Government has made it clear on several occasions that the security and administrative arrangements need to be cleared and put in place to facilitate technical repair work on the ground in Tigray region to restore said services
- Hence an operable and enabling environment is essential for such technical work to be undertaken on the ground
- And at the moment with a vocally belligerent and illegally armed group operating at its own whim and refusing to accept peace talks the required enabling and secure environment is lacking
- If TPLF genuinely care for the wellbeing of Ethiopians in the Tigray Region, then they should be publicly asked by various international community actors to accept the peace agenda and sit for talks instead of looking for excuses to avoid peace
- The Government of Ethiopia affirms it is ready at any time and at any place suggested to engage in peace talks under the auspices of the AU led process.

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