

News



Amb. Dina Mufti

Gov't demands TPLF to fully respect humanitarian truce

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA - Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia (MoFA) asked terrorist TPLF to fully observe humanitarian truce in a bid to deliver the needed aid to Tigray.

Addressing media yesterday, MoFA Spokesperson Dina Mufti said that there are limitations by the side of TPLF in implementing the enacted humanitarian truce and the government will continue to support the needy people.

"International community needs to pressure TPLF to obey by the truce," he said.

Humanitarian flights are being made to Mekelle, the delivery of aid to Tigray has been facilitated via road transport, and over the past week about 50 trucks of the WFP and the UN reached Tigray, it was learnt.

Refusing Ethiopian government's declaration of a unilateral humanitarian ceasefire on June 28, 2020, TPLF invaded Amhara and Afar states and committed severe atrocities on civilians and vandalized public services, including schools and health facilities. TPLF destroyed 82 government health offices, 40 hospitals, 453 health stations, 1,850 health posts, four blood banks, and an oxygen plant in Amhara state alone, and 17 hospitals, health centers, and 42 health posts during its invasion of the Afar State.

Meanwhile, he said that Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen discussed with Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs Peace and Security and briefed peace-building initiatives the government of Ethiopia has been undertaking so far.

He mentioned release of some prisoners, lifting of the state of emergency, and the establishment of the national dialogue commission which is a showcase of government's commitment towards ensuring lasting peace in the country.

The government of Ethiopia encourages and supports the peace initiatives of the AU High Representative for the Horn of Africa (HoA) region, Olusegun Obasanjo. Besides, Ethiopia would remain committed to the peace initiative of the former Nigerian President under the auspices of the AUC, he indicated.

In another story, the second round of tree planting was held in Djibouti as part of expanding Ethiopia's Green Legacy initiative to neighboring countries. Ethiopia has delivered 200,000 seedlings so far and upon the request of the government of Djibouti 40,000 more seedlings will be provided, Dina noted.

Terrorist TPLF continues invading Afar breaching truce: Writer

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA - TPLF leftovers have launched new attack and occupied Barahle, Konnaba, and Magaale of Afar State instead of withdrawing from the state, so stated a Writer and Political Researcher.

In his article entitled: "On the misleading narratives of the TPLF on evacuations of troops from Afar," the writer and political researcher Nur Tahir said that the terrorist TPLF's behavior doesn't allow it to obey laws, agreement and peaceful move; that is why they didn't withdraw from Afar.

According to Nur, the terrorist TPLF forces are still in control of Abala, Magaale, Konnaba and Barahle districts and some kebeles of Erebti slaughtering civilians and looting private and public property. In this regard, the terrorist TPLF group committed unbelievable atrocities and extrajudicial killings on civilians in all occupied districts



Writer and Political Researcher, Nur Tahir of the Afar State.

The intention of the TPLF to permanently impoverish Afar can easily be observed

in what it did in the Erebti town, he said adding that the Afar forces have found the bodies of eight individuals who were killed and left on the streets by the criminal gangs.

Currently, out of the occupied areas in Afar State, merely the central part of Erebti is free from the invaders by the Afar force. On this part, the terrorist group recently agreed to withdraw its force from Afar to provide humanitarian assistance in the Tigray State, Nur remembered.

He further stated that if the international community believes the rhetoric of the TPLF withdrawals from Erebti for humanitarian reasons, they have to be logical via asking the group's rationale to stay in occupied Afar areas and launch fresh attacks to claim more territories.

Nur stressed that the international community should hold the TPLF accountable and must pressure it to end aggression, withdraw forces, and halt atrocities.

TPLF-ravaged health institutions resume operation: Ministry

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - Ministry of Health stated health institutions ranging from health posts destroyed by terrorist TPLF have resumed various activities after being reconstructed in an organized manner.

Briefing journalists yesterday, Health State Minister, Dr. Ayele Teshome said that out of the 42 hospitals and numerous health institutions destroyed, 36 and 467 health centers have started providing the public with service. The other six hospitals and health centers have not been reconstructed since they are still found near war corridor.

These hospitals and health centers have been reconstructed and rehabilitated by the help of various development partners, universities and hospitals encircled in health minister's coordination campaign, he said.

Totally 42 hospitals and other 3,000 health institutions were damaged by the terrorist TPLF rebels. Besides, of the damaged health institutions, some 40 hospitals and 414 health centers in Amhara and 2 hospitals and 24 health centers in Afar states have resumed serving people.

Some 6 hospitals and 21 health centers in Oromia and 15 health centers in Benishangul

Gumuz have interrupted serving people due to conflict related matters, he added.

Moreover, ambulances were targeted and destroyed across the nation following TPLF leftovers attack. For instance, some 131 in Amhara, 39 Afar, 52 Oromia and 40 Benishangul-Gumuz ambulances were made out of services or stolen.

In this regard, the ministry has distributed 13 ambulances to the states damaged during the war.

The government has planned to raise fund to help states run health facilities taking advantage of 'from Eid to Eid' homecoming Diaspora program.

Ministry underlines sustainable support to war, drought victims

BY MULATU BELACHEW

ADDIS ABABA - Providing sustainable support is indispensable to rehabilitate people affected by war and drought in various parts of the country, the Ministry of Justice said.

Justice State Minister Fekadu Tsega made the above remark here yesterday during the recognition and second-round fundraising program that Authority for Civil Society Organization (ACSO) made to people affected by drought and unrest in various parts of the country.

Noting the conflict has severely damaged Tigray, Amhara, and Afar states, the state minister highlighted that the restoration of damaged infrastructure will take up to 10 years. Ethiopians have a kind heart to help each other and though the support is not enough, it is vital for the needy.

ACSO Executive Director Jimma Dilibo said for part that the authority has supported over 430 million Birr to the war and drought-affected people in the country between December 2021 and April 2022. Of this support, 1 million Birr cash was distributed

to affected peoples in Oromia, Afar and Amhara regions.

This achievement is an outcome of collaboration of civil society organizations and their unreserved response to the call made by ACSO to support the people affected by the war in the northern part of the country and drought.

For the Civil Society Agency Deputy-General Director Fasikaw Molla, civil society organizations have shown strong solidarity to the disfavored during the time of difficulties. The agencies not only mobilize and solicit funds from various sources but also contribute from employees' salaries.

The support helped alleviate the looming challenges that the people faced particularly food, clothing, medicine and education. They showed unwavering commitment to standing with affected people by



Photo: Tsehay Niguse

responding to the call made by ACSO. Ethiopia has about 3,800 active civil society organizations out of which only half have participated in this support.

Fasikaw called on actors and organizations to share their valuable contributions in the second round of fundraising aimed to help and rehabilitate the affected people from drought and northern conflict in Oromia, Afar, Amhara, Tigray, Somali and other states. "Challenges would strengthen the people when they stand together and help each other," he said, calling actors to sustain the ongoing support for the drought and war victims in the country to rehabilitate sustainably."

News

Independent journalist debunks WHO head's lies

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA - Unlike WHO's Director biased and constant claim that said all the suffering is happening in Tigray, there is tremendous amount of pain in the camps around Sekota Town, so said Ann Garrison. During her interview with local media, American Independent Journalist, Ann Garrison noted that she has witnessed the sufferings of IDPs in Amhara State during her visit to the area and the camp.

She stressed that IDPs in camps in Sekota Town kept saying that TPLF took everything they had and they fled. They also said that they want peace, and want to go back home. There was one who said 'I want peace more than anything. I want to go back home but if we can't have peace then I want to put on a uniform and join the army to fight the TPLF,' she reminded.

It is undeniable that people might be suffering in Tigray, however the reality is not as the WHO Director Tedros Adhanom (PhD) keep talking about since Tigray State is not the only State with humanitarian crisis in the country, according to the Journalist. She emphasized that she has witnessed so



American Independent Journalist, Ann Garrison

much pain in Amhara State and could not visit Afar State as more fighting had broken out.

Ann never hides that some UN

organizations and NGOs showed up in the state; nonetheless it was not nearly enough, as to her.

Though U.S., NGOs and all kinds of western policy makers' complaints with the government of Ethiopia was absence of unfettered access, it is absurd that once the access becomes available, WHO Director is still complaining that insufficient aid is going in to Tigray.

As to her, it makes it questionable why they were demanding this access when they really don't have the capacity to use it.

Noting that that the challenge that Ethiopia facing is to build a sense of citizenship that supersedes ethnicity, she noted that Ethiopia has the potential to become powerful nation especially now with the GERD is coming online. Thus, the National Dialogue would makes progress towards the goal of creating a sense of citizenship that supersedes ethnicity, she stressed.

Regarding the H.R 6600 and S.3199 bills which have been put on hold for some time, she noted that no room should be left for complacency.

She said she is putting efforts in her U.S airwaves radio programs by letting her

audiences know that the U.S has been backing its long-term puppet in this punishing war and now it's going to punish Ethiopia with sanctions. Therefore, she advises people to call to their house representatives, and their senators and ask them to not vote for H.R 6600 and S.3199 bills.

"The U.S has sanctions on a third of the world at this point but I've never heard of anything like this where they are making way for interference with social media particularly twitter and Facebook to try to limit discourse about Ethiopia and that's just very disturbing because it enables us to talk to one another."

She further underlined that U.S. should not pass the sanctions as it would allow the World Bank, the IMF and bilateral lenders to punish Ethiopia adding that the U.S is actually in control of the IMF and World Bank and has veto power in these institutions.

In this regard, she stressed that the institutions have no reason to be punish Ethiopia and WHO Director should not be biased in his constant claims that the suffering is all happening in Tigray.

Finance Minister...

value. "There is no doubting that Ethiopia will prevail by the effort of all citizens. As a Muslim Committee, you are engaging in constructive steps that could result in rescuing the nation. So, we would like to thank you for this effort."

Ahmed also appraised the Diaspora to continue through such motivations of supporting their home country.

Approached by local media, facilitators and participants of the *Iftar* noted that they will continue to support Ethiopia's economy.

Accordingly, a member of the organizing committee Jemal Beshir pointed out that the homecoming challenge is an opportunity to pull Diaspora investors to Ethiopia. "They would have a time to access the whole environment that could help them to open new businesses in Ethiopia,"

One of the participants also said he will pay contributions to help needy people in Ethiopia. "I know there is insufficient humanitarian access in war-hit areas following the past year's war. So, it is our responsibility to back needy people during this Ramadan season."

Commission highlights...

to continue their cooperation in order to make the commission more effective in the future to discharge its mandates properly and to make the overall activities of the Commission accessible to the general public.

As to him, all types of media – print, broadcast, and online – have an irreplaceable role to play for the success of the National Dialogue.

In his closing remark, EMA Director-General Mohammed Edris stated that media institutions need to be more responsible than ever to enable the commission to be effective.

humanitarian agencies and civil society organizations have been making unreserved efforts to address the heightened needs of the affected people.

"We believe, Mr. President that HR6600 and S 3199 are not the proper means to address the current hostile situation in the country. They shall not play productive role in addressing the problems at hand,



Photo: Gebabo Gebre

He further insisted that media organizations' contribution to the successful completion of the sixth general national election should also be repeated for the success of the Nation al Dialogue.

He also urged the media to refrain from

anything that could negatively affect the much-expected National Dialogue.

The Director-General urged the Commission to use all types of media options to make its works accessible to the general public and to achieve its goals.

Ethiopian CSOs...

do nothing good to the people they intend to help; rather they will profoundly affect their daily lives negatively. Also sanctions and unilateral coercive measures are inconsistent with UN and AU leading principles and mottos. It is also against the core values that the U.S. is advocating."

The new political reality requires

consistent support from countries like the USA in helping the Country's economy in order to lead to sustainable democracy and development, it added.

"We urge you and your honorable administration to recognize the interest and aspiration of the people of Ethiopia and to support the country in all developmental ventures."

Diasporas decry...

legally designated terrorist group."

The intention of some senators is to bring TPLF back to power, divide the country and take away Wolkait (West Tigray) to TPLF. Therefore, we and all Ethiopians

are against S.3199 as it hurts the country and its poor innocent people. It will kill the children, displace people and make all Ethiopian people bring a lot of hostages, they said.

They requested Senator Menendez to stop the bill. The protesters coming together urged the senator to stop ignoring constituents.

"We will continue or not stop protesting and campaigning the bill until the Senators

cancel the bill. The reason why Senator Bob Menendez and his colleagues are supporting TPLF is to weaken the country and bring back TPLF to its prior power," the protesters added.

Opinion

Xi Jinping's thought on diplomacy injects strong impetus into China-Africa cooperation

BY ZHAO ZHIYUAN

Despite the long distance between us, China and Africa boast of a long history of friendly people-to-people exchanges. Ever since the establishment of diplomatic ties more than 60 years ago, China and Africa have stood the test of times, sharing weals and woes together. China has provided support to the development of Africa to the best of its ability and has been grateful for the strong support and selfless help African countries and their peoples have extended to China for a long period of time.

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics has steadfastly forged ahead and China-Africa relationship has made strong progress under the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy, building a closer China-Africa community of shared future. China-Africa relationship is at its best now with fruitful results of China-Africa cooperation seen across the African continent, improving conditions for economic and social development in Africa and bringing tangible benefits to people in both China and Africa. China-Africa cooperation has stood as a model of South-South cooperation, and a fine example of international cooperation with Africa.

It has been more than a year since I assumed my post as the 15th Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia. As a witness to the opportunities and changes China-Ethiopia cooperation has brought to Ethiopia, I personally felt the sincere friendliness of the Ethiopian government and people towards China and was deeply moved by the unbreakable fraternity between China and Africa. Today, I wish to share my views on the vivid practices of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy in China-Africa relations.

Guidance of the Leader

China always attaches great importance to Africa in its overall foreign policy, in which developing solidarity and cooperation with African countries is the cornerstone. This is our longstanding and firm strategy. As the chief architect of China's distinct major-country diplomacy, President Xi Jinping has placed high values on China-Africa relationship, and personally drawn a blueprint for China-Africa cooperation. He put forward the principles of China's Africa policy – sincerity, real results, amity and good faith, and the concept of pursuing the greater good and shared interests, which won wide acclaim from African friends. These principles chart the course and provide fundamental guidelines for China's cooperation with Africa.

During the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2018, President Xi emphasized that China respects, loves and supports Africa and firmly follows a "five-no" approach in our relations with Africa: no interference into African countries' pursuit of development paths that fit their national conditions; no interference into African countries' internal

affairs; no imposition of our will on African countries; no attachment of political strings to assistance to Africa; and no seeking of selfish political gains in investment and financing cooperation with Africa. He also made proposals on building a China-Africa community of shared future characterized by joint responsibility, win-win cooperation, happiness for all, cultural prosperity, common security, and harmony between humanity and nature, which has been the overall framework of China-Africa cooperation in the new era.

Last year, during the 8th FOCAC Ministerial Conference, President Xi summarized the history of China-Africa relations and proposed the Spirit of China-Africa Friendship and Cooperation for the first time, which features sincere friendship and equality, win-win cooperation for mutual benefits and common development, fairness and justice, and progress with the times and openness and inclusiveness, enriching China-Africa cooperation in the new era.

President Xi also personally planned, oversaw and engaged in head-of-state diplomacy. In March 2013, he visited Africa, which was his first official overseas visit after assuming the office of the Chinese President. To date, he has made four visits to countries across the African continent. During the 2018 FOCAC Beijing Summit, he had one-on-one meeting with more than 50 African leaders, and attended nearly 70 bilateral and multilateral events. Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, he presided over the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity Against Covid-19 and attended the 8th FOCAC ministerial conference via video link. President Xi has also maintained close communication and coordination with his African counterparts. Head-of-state diplomacy has guided China-Africa relations on the path of steady progress.

Since 2017, Ethiopian leaders have conducted three visits to China, attending the first Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF) in 2017, the FOCAC Beijing Summit in 2018 and the second BRF in 2019. Leaders of the two countries renewed friendship, explored ways of cooperation and discussed future development for the two countries. We will never forget that at the critical juncture of the Chinese people fighting against the COVID-19, Prime Minister Abiy expressed support to President Xi via letter and telephone call. All this attests to the mutual support between China and Ethiopia as comprehensive strategic cooperative partners and constitute vivid examples of the profound friendship between the two leaders, injecting confidence into and chart the course for China-Ethiopia cooperation.

Responsibility of the Times

Five years ago, the world came to a crossroads with sluggish global economic growth plaguing, the process of economic globalization encountering headwind, and international political uncertainty being on

the rise. Against this background, President Xi put forward the concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind, which is China's answer to the epochal question of "what happened to the world and what shall we do". This great vision calls on the people of all countries to work together and build an open, inclusive, clean and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security, and common prosperity, which pointed out the right direction of international cooperation, and also has been a characteristic flag of China's diplomacy in the new era.

At present, our world is going through a pandemic and changes unseen in a century, with rapid evolution of the international landscape and profound transformation of global governance. Certain big power is reviving the Cold War mentality and stoking confrontation between blocs. It willfully undermines international rule of law, and stirs up antagonism. It gets zealous about decoupling and building walls, and glorifies hegemony and bullying. Indeed, our world faces once again the danger of division and confrontation, which should not be allowed to continue.

China is the largest developing country in the world while Africa is the continent with the largest number of developing countries. Similar historical experience and common aims and goals have brought China and Africa together. China and Africa have always been a community of shared future and two major forces for world peace and development. China always holds that Africa should be a big stage for international cooperation, not an arena for competition among major countries. We will firmly honor the commitment that China's vote in the United Nations is always for the well-being of developing countries. We will stand firmly with our African partners to jointly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries, advocate common values of humanity such as peace, development, democracy and freedom and uphold world fairness and justice.

Blueprint of Hope

For the world, the year ahead continues to be full of challenges. The current Ukraine crisis has a huge spilling over effect especially on developing countries. Many African countries are facing acute food and energy crisis and their economic recovery remains a persistent challenge.

Development is all that matters in resolving a myriad of issues. China firmly supports African countries in realizing lasting peace and prosperity. We firmly believe that the more turbulent the international situation is, the more attention we should pay to the voice of African countries and the more support and assistance we should provide to Africa.

During the 8th FOCAC Ministerial Conference, President Xi proposed four proposals on building a China-Africa community with a shared future in the new era, namely fighting COVID-19



with solidarity, deepening practical cooperation, promoting green development and upholding equity and justice, which received warm responses from African leaders. Meanwhile, China is appreciative of the welcome and support from African countries for the Global Development Initiative proposed by President Xi. On top of cooperation in traditional fields, China will aim at the most urgent development needs of African countries, promote high-quality cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative and implement the Nine Programs with Africa. In so doing, we will transform and upgrade China-Africa cooperation in such fields as health, people's well-being, green development, digital economy, and capacity building, supporting Africa in achieving economic recovery.

The world will be better if China and Africa are more developed. China-Africa cooperation in the new era is the sure way for us to realize common development. It will also lay a more solid foundation for building an even stronger China-Africa community of shared future as well as build up a strong momentum for the rise of developing countries as a whole and for a more balanced international landscape. Under the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era and Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy, China will adhere to the principles of sincerity, affinity, good faith and practical results, uphold the values of shared interests and the greater good, and promote the Spirit of China-Africa Friendship and Cooperation. We will stand with African countries including Ethiopia in the implementation of the outcomes of the 8th FOCAC Ministerial Conference, make greater contributions to the fight against the pandemic, build up solidarity and cooperation, and achieve common development and prosperity. We will continue to cooperate with Africa and work tirelessly for building an even stronger China-Africa community of shared future.

China will always be the most reliable friend and faithful partner for Africa's development and rejuvenation. We are fully confident that China-Africa cooperation will have an even brighter future.

The author is Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

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Editorial

Int'l community must pressure TPLF to withdraw fully from occupied areas

Despite the boosted morale of its troops and military advantages over the terrorist TPLF group on the heels of the strings of battlefield victories, the Ethiopian government ordered its troops not to enter Tigray State and disband the rogue group. The rationale behind the government's courageous decision was to give peace a chance and provide the terrorist group a moment of contrition.

Doubling down its good gesture, the government lately declared an indefinite humanitarian truce to allow unhindered humanitarian assistance to Tigray State. The government's commended move is meant to address the plight of the Tigray people affected in the conflict and ensure the people are able to receive aid in their localities.

In what could be better described as a promise fulfilled, the government has kept all modes of transportation open for aid providers to reach the needy. The government's words have been translated to action with more trucks carrying humanitarian items arriving at Tigray regional capital.

On the heels of the humanitarian truce, a convoy consisting of some 20 trucks

arrived in Mekelle on 1 April with 500 tons of food aid. Trucks carrying medical items, emergency food, and water treatment supplies along with essential household items arrived in Mekelle.

More recently, a convoy of 60 trucks carrying humanitarian aid and fuels has reached Tigary, the humanitarian agencies to cross-check whether the aid reaches the target communities though.

The incumbent is hell-bent to facilitate the movement of aid to the state and also reaffirmed its commitment to partner with the international community and other stakeholders to ensure the flow of aid continues.

Dejectedly, the government's responsible acts have gone unreciprocated by the irresponsible criminal enterprise. The peace spoiler clique is still lurking in the backyards of Afar and Amhara states disrupting the provision of relief to both communities and causing the dislocation of thousands of people.

Sad as it may sound, the global community has been dragging its feet in bringing the

terrorist TPLF group to justice and calling the latter's brutal actions by their names. The impunity however is begetting further cruelty.

TPLF is diehard when it comes to keeping on fanning the flames with the aim of holding the government accountable and extending its existence at the expense of innocent civilians.

The international community should put pressure on TPLF to withdraw fully from the areas it occupies in the Afar and Amhara states to pave the way for a smooth aid delivery for those in need.

The terrorist group should only withdraw from the occupied areas; it should also disarm itself and act in good faith so that aid reaches the conflict-torn areas.

For humanitarian assistance to reach the whole war-affected communities in the country, relief agencies and countries should also increase assistance and redouble efforts to improve the situation on the ground.

Opinion

On the misleading narratives of the TPLF on evacuations of troops from Afar

BY NUR TAHIR

The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) has continued to trumpet its withdrawal from the Afar districts bordering Tigray region, which it has recently occupied. The group claimed that its soldiers withdrew from the areas they had occupied in Afar for facilitating unimpeded flow of humanitarian assistance into the Tigray region.

The truth on the ground portrays a different picture from the TPLF's deceptive statement. Out of the occupied areas only the central part of Erebti is currently free from the invaders. And the group, contrary to its claims, was forced to leave Erebiti center by Afar forces.

To put the records straight here, the TPLF forces are still in control of Aba'la, Magaale, Konnaba and Barahle districts and some kebeles of Erebti, slaughtering civilians and looting property. Not surprisingly given the TPLF's deceptive nature, its soldiers are still launching fresh attacks from the occupied Barahle,

It has also tried to desecrate Islam as a religion by destroying the town's Mosque and burning the Holy Qur'an.

Konnaba and Magaale side to occupy more territory. If the international community believes the rhetoric of the TPLF withdrawals from Erebti for humanitarian reasons, then it will be logical to ask the group's rationale to stay in occupied Afar areas and launch fresh attacks to claim more territories.

The intention of the TPLF to permanently impoverish Afar can easily be observed in what it did in the Erebti town. It literally destroyed all infrastructures. The group looted almost all public and private property. It didn't even spare the mill which gives

services to the people. It has also tried to desecrate Islam as a religion by destroying the town's Mosque and burning the Holy Qur'an.

The inhabitants of Erebti have just begun to narrate appalling stories regarding the TPLF's atrocities during its stay in the town. According to Erebti inhabitants, the TPLF committed extrajudicial killings of civilians, even mentally infirm people were also killed under various pretexts. When liberating parts of Erebeti, the Afar forces also reported that they have found the bodies of eight individuals who were killed and left on the streets by the criminal gangs. The TPLF group committed unbelievable atrocities and extrajudicial killings on civilians in all occupied districts of the Afar region under various pretexts and the total number of civilians killed by the TPLF is unknown and will be announced after all districts are liberated.

It should be noted that the TPLF has failed to reciprocate the humanitarian truce declared by the Federal government of Ethiopia and has continued aggression on Afar. The

700,000 displaced people are fasting under critical situation in this holy month of the Ramadan, while some of the inhabitants who were unable to get out of the occupied districts have continued to being held hostages in their own villages. The terrorist TPLF is starving them deliberately.

The international community should hold the TPLF accountable for its crimes, and must pressure it to stop aggression, and withdraw its troops unconditionally and immediately from the Afar territories.

Otherwise, neither delivery of unrestricted humanitarian assistance nor a peaceful conclusion to the conflict would be easily achievable.

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Editor's Note: The views entertained in this article do not necessarily reflect the stance of The Ethiopian Herald



Business & Economy

Local manufacturing: Enabling sector not to step twice in the same river of poverty

BY LAKACHEW ATINAFU

It has been years since various industries were established to create medium and large enterprises, from micro and small ones.

In addition to creating job opportunities for many, they are also contributing to the country's economy. Although many are successful and continue to grow, many others are found left behind for a variety of reasons.

According to Yared Estifanos, General Manager of Yared Metal and Spare Part Machinery Productions, which has been in operation for many years, the workaholic attitude and innovative idea have kept him in the industry.

He started working in 2011 and said to have been involved in car repair before the manufacturing was established. According to Yared, the company was set up in the past realizing the lack of spare parts due to the limited production of cars in the country. The work was begun to solve the problem of making modify spare parts and has grown into a complete production of spare parts for the past eight years. He produces car parts including chairs.

Various financial institutions, such as South Global Bank and other individuals have shown interest to use the products. Besides, institutions also require the products like hall chairs for their customers and machineries, for example, bread machines, mills, soap manufacturer, paper machines, small household appliances, coffee dryer, as well as construction machineries. He explained that any coffee machine that can be used by coffee customers for the general purpose of operation is in operation.

"When we receive orders for each job, we understand the customers' needs and carefully design and enter the product accordingly," he said.

According to Yared, most of the products that can be used to replace imported products can be supplied to customers in large quantities and in pieces. Yared further said that he uses a variety of raw materials such as aluminum to produce the spare parts. He claims to produce machinery for wood work and other purposes.

He said that he uses new raw materials and by melting recycled metals. These discarded items are collected from outdated car parts and the metals from caterpillars. According to Yared, he receives these by-products of the metal purchasing from collectors paying per kilograms and melts them together.

Born and raised in Hawassa, Yared received training in automotive education before starting this innovative company. According to him, he is an expert in car repair. "I was created to be creative," Yared said and adding he enjoys trying different things from an early age. "When I see something, I think, 'How can I do better than this?'" he remarked.

In addition to addressing the current focus on domestic products, Yared said that he further plans to produce export standard items. He pointed out that in view of the current situation in the country; the stagnant financial situation becomes bottleneck to his activities. However, despite the lack of capacity, he will be able to produce various products and export them quickly.

He explained that the enterprise has not only established to save foreign exchange reserves but also plans to bring in more foreign exchange to support the country's economy.

Yared further said that he does not follow a single mechanism in the production process. He added that when a number of orders come to the company, it will be possible for other local and professional partners to supply raw materials according to the quality standards required by the company.

Recipients will receive adequate pay for their knowledge and machinery, and their organization will not have to worry about overwork. In addition to this, it will provide an opportunity for more qualified professionals in the area, he said.

Adding he said that there are currently 54 employees in the company who are working on the basis of job created for them. Among the problems he facing, there is a barrier to assign the right person on the right position when competing for a job.

He pointed out that this has made all producers less competitive. The solution, he said, is to encourage the emerging industries by leveling up the competition. "If the government is to grow its products; if our products are to save foreign exchange; if we are working for the growth of the country's



Mr. Yared Estifanos

economy, then we need to put in place a full-fledged system," he said.

According to Yared, the need for small and medium enterprises to produce high quality goods locally is a matter of concern of government institutions.

Pointing out that the government has been promoting job creation aiming to reducing the number of unemployed, he said giving priority to local producers compared to importers will contribute to the further development of the industry.

Apart from the idea of selling and producing, he is also playing his part in producing knowledgeable professionals; he said adding that in addition to the training provided by his organization, he is also providing technical training up to degree level in technical college.

After studying theory in college, the trainees present their products in a workshop. And then they provide the products to the market. The students in collaboration with an experienced professionals work in the production of a qualified workforce. There are currently about one hundred and eighty undergraduate students in the college, and they are staying at the college for four years.

However, after a year in the classroom, they will remain in the workshop until they become professionals; he said adding that the training is 30 percent theoretical 70 percent practical. He also said that his vocational training institution is the only one in the Southern Region that offers postgraduate technical training. Electronics technology, metal fabrication, and machine technology are parts of skills provided in the institute.

These include automotive technology and electronic technology. It is rated at a degree standard, while others are rated at a level standard.

Previously, many people, who used to have diplomas and have not been able to improve their skills, were forced to leave Hawassa to continue further their education.

Thus, he said that it is a relief to be able to get a college that can meet the educational needs of the local community. When it comes to social services, manpower production is one of the social services. He further said that the institute is providing free education to nine trainees those unable to afford the tuition fee. He also said that he is fulfilling his responsibility to actively participate in national calls.

As to him, the government has provided them with various supports as he has previously worked in micro and small enterprises and later moved to the middle manufacturing level.

Out of this, 800 square meters of production space has been given to him and he is renting a hall to display his products. Acknowledging the government's support underway, he needs more support to reach the next level, he said.

In the future, he will be working to make plastic products, sponges, and other materials, and he will be more effective if he focuses on the connection, not the charity. "Finally, I always hear about the transition of the economy from agriculture led to industry led. I think we will never stop here. It is possible to achieve the desired results but if one can only be measured professionally and by refining corrupt mentality and practices.

Art & Culture

Holidays blend religion and culture, and out of it art emerges

BY KFLEEYESUS ABEBE

The coincidence of the fasting seasons of christians and muslims—Lent and Iftar—in Ethiopia reminds me the traditional song first sung by legendary Bahiru Kegne and later Teddy Afro. The songs important lyrics roughly translated;

“It is not short of wonder the fasting seasons of muslims and christians coincide (2x)

Maybe they have appointment to go to God (2x)

I wish God listen their prayers

As their coexistence is built on tolerance”

I believe Ethiopian holidays kept nation’s valuable treasures; wisdom, ways and history. They are manifestations of us as Ethiopians. During holidays, we try to wear costumes that we used to frequent in the good old days. Colorful traditional clothes or costumes adapted from each culture or with religious symbolism. During such an event, we dine in the pristine culinary ways arraying a variety of dishes, mouth-watering meal with a shared plate in circle. The clothing all the ceremony and assortments are unique and eye catching. Acts of charity, togetherness and tolerance are important aspects of celebrations.

During holidays people gather together. Even people who live far away make it to their hometown. They show their affections to one another. I remember my childhood friends who were muslims and how we shared eachothers celebration.

Holidays are seasons of beauty. Houses will be refurbished as much as the owner can or at least they will be cleaned. Different kinds of food dishes will be prepared. There is exchange of happy holyday wishes. There is exchange of invitations. And, music and spiritual songs creates the vibe begining from the eves of the holiday.

The church ceremony where church goes flock together with white linen cotton dress is impressive to watch. The church service is also unque as it is attended by many people especially when the holyday approaches.

The same is true to moseques’ scenes where muslims conduct their prayers. During the holyday and in the eve of holydays, prayers and Salah will be seen out in street attended by a large number of the believers.

It is customary to witness a bustling market during the eves of religious holydays. Celebrants buy various items necessary for the celebration. Chicken, Goat, Sheep or Bull. Other groceries or drinks will be

bought. Or, they will buy clothes; cultural dressings. In the houses of the muslims there might be sweets in addition to animals to be slaughtered. The commotion is a scene of attraction for tourists. It is a display of life for artists. Several artists have drawn inspiration for their artistic pieces; be it is music, painting or movies.

Holiday is a time when people get a small break from day to day life and give time to people around them. It is a time of interaction with neighbors and relatives who live afar. Hospitality and charity to the poor gets high as people will be generally happy and committed to live up to respective religious commands. Therefore, anyone could be part of the celebration. It is customary people from different religion or other background exchange a happy holiday messages. And in fact people of different religion can celebrate each others holiday together. Holidays in Ethiopia aren’t just happy moments. These are moments we cherish our culture and get prouder as people. They are also confirmation for wellbeing of people and the nation. Tigist Bekele’s song about holyday roughly translated below show how significant holidays are in Ethiopian households.

“When the holyday comes every year

We are joyfull and get prouder

When live in our country

Our lives are full

When Joy, happines prevail in this land

In our beloved land, our country

The local has unique taste

It has unique mystery

Holidays are moments where togetherness, tolerance and charity are preached. Through and during those auspice times, elders attempt to bequeath heritages to posterity. People show their love to eachother. As people get together, they also check on lives of one other. How is life treating them? Whether they got married, gave birth upto affairs of their country. This togetherness and the beauty of the ceremony leaves unforgettable memories in the minds of celebrants. As artists produce nostalgic songs conveying important messages such as the plight of migraants, the good old days and signifncane of love and peace in our lives, they find holidays to have this values all together. They use them as the tone, mood and settings of artistic productions. Kuku Sebsibe’s song “*Yebereha Hager*” is set to holiday time but represents nostalgic feelings of Ethiopian diaspora and describes the suffering of Ethiopian refugees.

I am a migrant to the desert country

Who doesn’t get sleep till I get back to my country

It is only when I get back I would get relief

When the rainy season departs and the sunny one comes

I would miss Addis Ababa,

It isn’t life to live out of one’s country

It is a success and blessing to celebrate holidays and for it Ethiopians bless God. “*Eknuan adereseh/adereshe*” a common phrase that is frequently heard during holiday times. Roughly translating *Eknuan adereseh*, it means glory to God who made you alive to see this day. The late Manalemsh Debo’s song is the reflection of this.

For a man God gave health

For a man God gave age

Holiday is joy

Holiday is a blessing

Happy the holiday has come

It is a Glory to God

The beautiful ceremony and its significance in the life of ordinary Ethiopains compelled artists to give special attention to holidays. Other forms of art such as painiting made successful attempts to preserve and promote this unique heritage. Legendry Maitre Artist World Laureate Afewerk’s “*Meskel flower*” and “*Demera*” are among notable works capturing holyday moods of Ethiopia.

The holidays have also inspired fashion. Designers are adapting beautiful cultural dress to this time. People with different cultural dressings have continued to make holydays ever beautiful and colorful.

So long as holidays blend religion and culture with beautiful outcome, art would be there to reflect back with emotional power, intensity and ideas. Ethiopian Artists will continue to get inspiration from such rich religious and cultural heirtages. And, as Art is a way of expression, artists will further preserve, promote and help beautify our way of life.

So long as holidays blend religion and culture with beautiful outcome, art would be there to reflect back with emotional power, intensity and ideas. Ethiopian Artists will continue to get inspiration from such rich religious and cultural heirtages

Science & Technology

Safaricom inspires by the introduction of competition in the telecommunications sector

BY HAFTU GEBREZGABIER

In his recent interview with The Ethiopian Herald, Matthew Harrison-Harvey, Safaricom Chief Regulatory and External Affairs Officer stated that Safaricom is inspired by the introduction of competition in the telecommunications sector.

It is inspired by the process that the government and the Ethiopian communications authority started to introduce competition in the telecommunications sector four years ago. "We believe that was a very good decision by the government and the authorities. As we have seen in many countries around the world, telecommunications, especially digital services, can have an impact on economies and societies."

The license offered to Safaricom opens an opportunity for us (Safaricom) to serve Ethiopia in accelerating its digital agenda by increasing connectivity, providing digital services to meet citizens' needs, creating new digital businesses, and generating new jobs for citizens across the country, the company stated.

In line with the government's macroeconomic strategy, a ten year development plan which put digital tech as one of the key pillars, is something that inspired our shareholders to participate in the telecoms licensing process. So, it was a very well run process and we were very happy at the end of the process, in May last year to be announced as the winner. We went through the final steps which we had to go through, needed to incorporate a company paid license fee and then we were granted the full license in July last year.

Safaricom is working for digital transformation, digital inclusion and partnerships to build for the long term operation in the sector.

It is currently investing over 300 million USD just to get started and then we are going to be investing another 700 million USD next year. And so currently, we are importing the entire 300 million USD worth of equipment into the country. So, that is providing the infrastructure, which enables us to be competent. So, we are investing in our own infrastructure which will then on top of that providing services to customers at the same time like around the world.

Telecom operators need to work together, if this is so, we can do more. Because telecoms infrastructure is a very capital intensive sector and it's something that is always changing. So if you think about Ethiopia, it used to have 2G, 3G mobile services and now it has got 4G mobile services, and then you're going to have 5G mobile services. Thus, this requires regular investment.



Hence, the more we can work together to stretch that investment, the more we will be able to provide services throughout the country.

The government has made a very big decision to issue the license and we recognize it as a great decision. Secondly, they've done a number of things to assist us working very closely with us to be successful in that so as to meet the expectations of everyone. This, apart from encouraging citizens who will be using our services, the decision introduced competition among telecom companies.

As an organization works in the telecoms sector, it has set goals, mission, targets, as per the desire it aspires to achieve. We have targets in relation to customer numbers, their financial performance, and normal business targets. I think what makes our company special, not worrying about how many customers we have, or how much profits we have. I've also measured how many people's lives have been positively impacted by our services. So I have actual targets which I have to report to our board and our shareholders where we will be measured on how many school children have benefited from digital education. How many doctors and nurses are using digital health services? How many farmers are using digital farms? That's really nice.

When the government started the process, it planned to build the future. That's something we see as well. And obviously, the more we build the company, the more people use and love our services, the better for everyone.

"So the government, as I said earlier, they issue a process, a request for proposals for license applications. They did in March 2020. So, they published the request for proposals. It had worked on a long process where they had consulted about the National Strategy for digital. They issued a new proclamation. So there's a 2019 communications proclamation. Under that,

there are 11 directives to basically set the framework, the rules to enable those digital Ethiopia objectives."

If people are clear about what you're trying to achieve, they can come together with that goal. And if you're open minded, you're looking at solutions to help move things forward. Reading, being open minded, and learning from others is key to face up challenges. So, one of the things that people first told me when I was hired here was to spend time, be very humble, and spend time listening and learning from others to know more about Ethiopia as it's a very unique and special country. So, our approach is very much focused on understanding what the country needs to achieve and then try and work on solutions to achieve that. If you can't do it on your own, it has to be done through partnership. When we tried to import equipment pertinent to our work, all the government agencies were cooperative to make it possible in a short period as the objective is clear for all. The key thing here is working in partnership having clear objectives.

Safaricom has experience outside the country as well. It is very experienced in providing telecommunications and financial services in many countries. Its key focus is bringing in talent and employing talented Ethiopians as part of our team and the combination of international and Ethiopian experience is very powerful. The company is going to be an Ethiopian company serving Ethiopians with shareholders who are from different parts of the world.

Digital literacy is critical for all ages, he further stated and adding that so one of the things that his company will do is, to provide the information, the training, the skills on how to use the services through putting together other programs to help customers get more deeper into other digital skills to our employees or staff, our partners and our customers.

Society

The joy of sharing while marking Easter

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

Easter is all about sacrificing one's interest to save others. Crucifixion of Jesus Christ at the cross and his resurrection is the only best example we have about selflessness, forgiveness and loving each other.

Ethiopia had been through hard times. The hardship it has passed through, in turn, has taught a great lesson to all. However, despite all these challenges, the land and its people have survived and flourished. Ethiopians, using relative peace and stability, are now leading their life and celebrating holidays along with their family members and friends.

It is true, whenever holidays come, there is always the culture of sharing among Ethiopians. Depending on the culture or economic status of a given family, all Ethiopians mark holidays colorfully at the same time extend a helping hand to those who are in need of help and special care.

Easter is one of the most important celebrations in the Christian calendar. Easter/ Fasika, signifies the resurrection of Jesus Christ. After the crucifixion, death and burial, three days later, He rose from the grave. By this, He has conquered death and redeemed human kind from eternal death. By doing this, He has taught mankind to live in peace and love.

Like that of the New Year, Easter has a significant place among Ethiopians. Since it is celebrated after 55 days of lent and prayer, almost all Orthodox Christians mark the day by eating nonfasting and other cultural foods.

On the day before the eve of *Fasika* it is common to see Ethiopians dressing up with traditional clothes and attending church for prayer and chanting that will last till midnight.

Unlike other week days, the first week that comes before the Easter has a somber atmosphere; and church services will not be held as colorful as at other occasions because the week is considered as the reflection of Jesus's sufferings, but for the faithful of great importance.

This holy week or what is locally called, *Hemamate Sament*, faithful Christians will observe the harshest week where Jesus Christ was betrayed, insulted, crucified and all the meekness Jesus showed to his disciples.

The secret behind Easter is rebirth and sharing one's priceless life to others, says Mesfin Alemu, a resident here in Addis Ababa. According to him, through His death and resurrection, Jesus has shown to the world the meaning of love. God has shared His only son to the world on the cross. This is an indication of His pure and

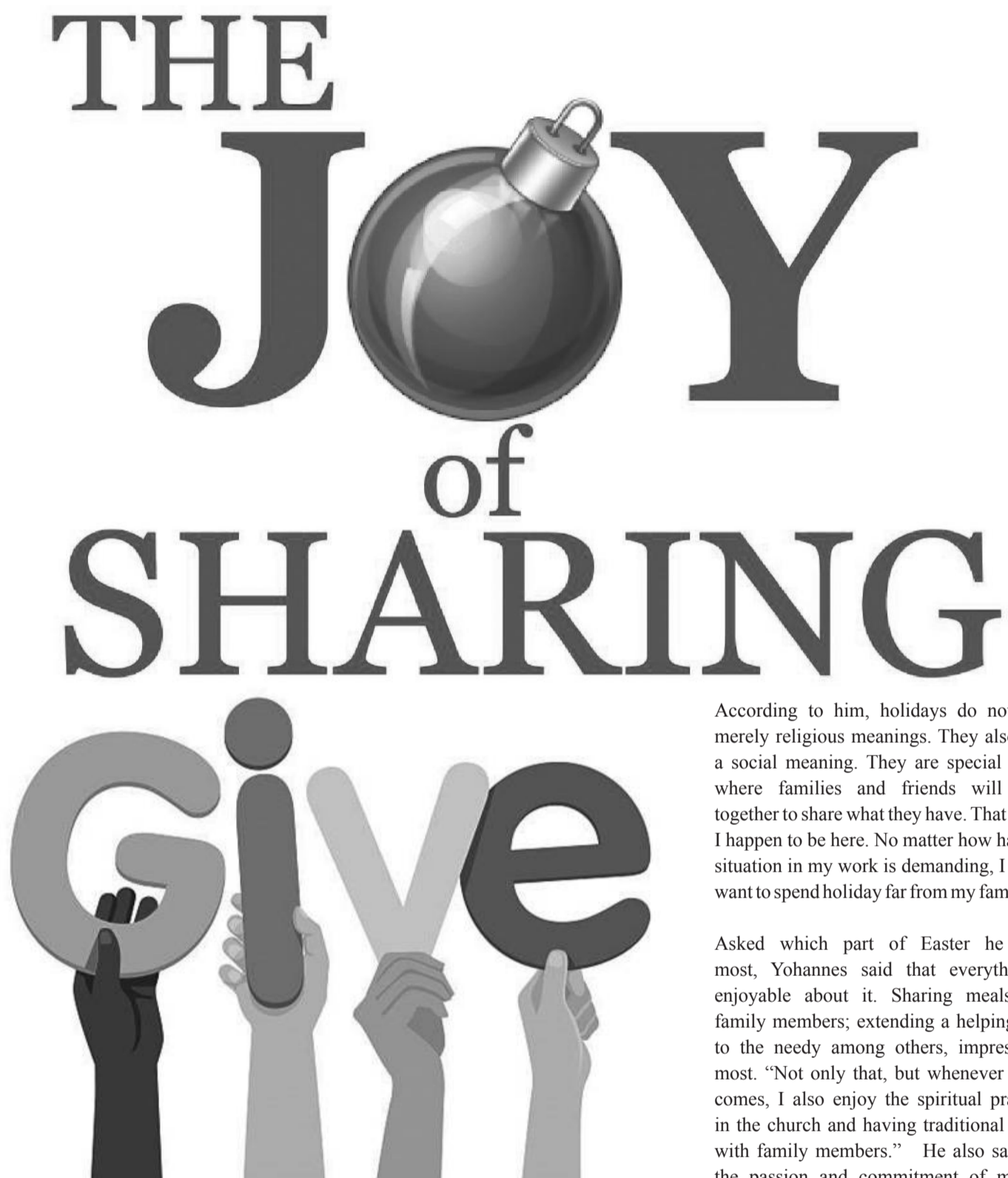
unconditional love to human beings.

The death, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ have special and mysterious meaning to all Christians. Through his death, He has conquered death itself. Through His crucifixion, He has defeated sin on the cross. The resurrection of Jesus Christ has given a new life to His followers. He has also left behind the true meaning of forgiveness by loving those who crucified Him. While He was on earth, Jesus has let His followers to know the meaning of love, kindness and compassion by exemplifying Himself.

According to Mesfin, while celebrating Easter festival, we should also remind ourselves to forgive others. We should love others unconditionally. While God shares His one and begotten son unconditionally, we also learn to share what we have with others. When we practice this, our faith will become whole.

Ayalnesh Assefa, is a mother of five. She is also a grandmother of two. This journalist met her in the minibus while she was rushing to market to buy some holiday commodities. Even if she is in her late fifties, Ayalesh looks so young and vibrant. When this journalist asked her how well she is prepared to celebrate Easter, Ayalnesh responded with passion. "Easter and New Year are my favorite holidays. For that reason, I am well prepared to give all my energy and time to my children and grandchildren. Whenever holiday arrives, especially Easter, I enjoy getting together with my family members, chatting and feasting what we have."

Yohannes Ayenew, is a young Ethiopian whom this journalist met accidentally. He is a driver by profession. For that reason, he spends most of his time far from his loving family. However, whenever it is a holiday, Yohannes will not compromise to attend the day with his loving families.



According to him, holidays do not have merely religious meanings. They also have a social meaning. They are special events where families and friends will come together to share what they have. That is why I happen to be here. No matter how hard the situation in my work is demanding, I do not want to spend holiday far from my families."

Asked which part of Easter he loves most, Yohannes said that everything is enjoyable about it. Sharing meals with family members; extending a helping hand to the needy among others, impress him most. "Not only that, but whenever Easter comes, I also enjoy the spiritual practices in the church and having traditional dishes with family members." He also said that the passion and commitment of mothers and sisters to add more color to the day is something words cannot express. Despite the fact that they put their full energy in preparing Doro wot at night and other traditional foods; they have no regrets about it. This is visible on their smiling face.

Indeed, holidays are special to Ethiopians. Despite all the economic and political challenges they have been through, they are ready and happy to celebrate Easter with families, friends and the needy ones. Sharing is one of the core values of holidays. Whenever people learn to share whatever they have in holidays, they are sowing a love seed in the heart of the receiver. Life is not always about what we get, it is also about what we can give to others. At the end of day, our giving warmth our heart, produces sense of fulfillment and joy that the world and all its treasures could not create. It is also in giving to others that we can teach others to do the same.



This is Ethiopia

Top Ethiopia's Christian pilgrimage sites

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Ethiopia having the most competitive airline in the world and the largest in Africa is expected to harness its tourism potential via transporting a largest number of international tourists from different corners of the world into the country.

Historically, Ethiopians were known with religious pilgrimage to the birth place of God and the center of Christian religious preaching in Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Thus, it was common to see numerous Ethiopians traveling to Israel during Easter.

However, in recent years the number of religious travelers from one part of the country to the other is increasing in the country. The annual religious trip is also attracting numerous local and international tourists.

The following are the major religious pilgrimage sites with a larger number of travel records in the past few years.

Genna at the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela

The Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela is found in Lalibela, a town in the Amhara region of northern Ethiopia. The place is known for its distinctive rock-cut churches dating from the 12th and 13th centuries, which are pilgrimage sites for Coptic Christians. Carved out of rock, the subterranean monoliths include huge Bete Medhane Alem, and cross-shaped Bete Giyorgis.

Genna is annually celebrated colourfully at Lalibela with a get-together of local and international tourists.

Timket celebration at Fasiledes Bath in Gonder

Timket is annually celebrated with huge attendants of local and international tourists in Gonder Fasiledes Bath. Ethiopians give priority to celebrate the day with more colourful events. The Gonder Timket celebration is unique and more colourful than the other parts of the country. Thus, a large number of people annually visit Gonder in connection with the event.

Saint Gabriel celebration at Kulubi

The festival of Saint Gabriel is celebrated on every December 28 (Tahsas) 19 Ethiopian calendar at Kulubi Gabriel which culminates in a pilgrimage to the area. The biggest Ethiopian Orthodox Church festival Kulubi Gabriel (Saint Gabriel) is among the leading Ethiopian religious pilgrimage sites. The location marks the colourful processions and exclusive ceremonies. The small town is located near Dire Dawa. The famed ancient church was built over a century ago.

The annual festival hosts more than 100,000 people from around Ethiopia who hike up in the hill holding their gifts to the ancient church.

Saint Mary Zion Monastery celebration in Axum

The Axum Zion celebration of Saint Mary is also among the leading Christian pilgrimage sites in

Ethiopia. The celebration takes place annually on 30th November. The monastery's power of sanctification and the ceremonial process by the Axum priests makes Saint Zion to be among the preferable destination of the worshippers. The monastery is believed to be home to the Ark of the Covenant. Axum is also the birth place of Ethiopian Saint Yared who is the mastermind of Ethiopian Orthodox Church songs and Ethiopian music. Some Ethiopians referred Axum as a blessed city.

According to Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ethiopia has a big size of population with diversified cultures that makes it an ideal tourist destination. To this end, the country is home to diversified religious and cultural festivals that attracts numerous local and international tourists. Giving more focus on inward looking programs in terms of developing, promoting and expanding local tourism sought to advance the country's endeavors to sustainable development.

The Ministry in its duties and powers is playing a decisive role for a concerted and multipurpose effort to be undertaken by the people and stakeholders in the development of tourism and culture. Since the tourism industry is now globally lucrative and one of the largest business in the world economy,



preparation of various regulations, directives in order to study, preserve, control, register and conduct inventory of tangible and intangible cultural heritages apart from quality control and classification of standards in tourism area are some of the major areas that the Ministry focused in the 10-year strategic plans to benefit Ethiopia out of the sector.

More importantly, stimulating domestic tourism is fundamental to replace the income generated from the international tourists' inflow during this COVID-19 pandemic.

The multi-sector collaboration and partnerships between travel agents, hotels, resorts, lodges, and transport service providers, financial institutions, Ministry of Tourism and other stakeholders is needed to reinvigorate the country's tourism



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Drought resistant miracle plant "enset" development project

BY KFLEYESUS ABEBE

Ethiopia is not only the birthplace of coffee and other variety of crops, but it is also the origin of "Enset." Enset can be available in different parts of the country. It is also produced and consumed very much in the South Nations, Nationalities and People's State.

Kaffa Zone, located in the recently established South Western State, has favorable environment for the development of enset. Nonetheless, locals still struggle to be self-sufficient due to disease and spoilage.

As part of alleviating this problem, the university is multiplying improved disease resistant enset seed on 23.49 hectares of land. It is open for researchers and can serve as a practical teaching place for agriculture and plant science students.

It also provides technological and other skills to farmers of the locality. In addition, the university is working to generate substantial income from this enset production.

Scientists laud the significance of enset for



University's enset seed development and multiplication

it resists drought and could be a lifesaver in the face of climate change. It has the potential to feed more than 100 million people in a warming world, according to a new study.

Research suggests that the crop can be grown over a much larger range in Africa. "This is a crop that can play a really important role in addressing food security and sustainable development," said Wendawek Abebe (PhD) of Hawassa University, Ethiopia.

Enset or "false banana" is a close relative of the banana, but it is consumed only in some parts of Ethiopia. Though the banana like fruit is inedible, the starchy stems and roots

can be fermented and used to make porridge and bread.

Likewise, it is a staple in Ethiopia, where around 20 million people rely on it for food, but elsewhere it has not been cultivated, although wild relatives - which are not considered edible-grow as far south as South Africa, suggesting the plant can tolerate a much wider range.

Equally, using agricultural surveys and modeling work, scientists predicted the potential range of enset over the next four decades. They found the crop could potentially feed more than 100 million

people and ensure food security in Ethiopia and other African countries, including Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda.

By the same token, researcher James Borrell (PhD), of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, said planting enset as a buffer crop for lean times could help boost food security, in his stay with BBC English.

"It has got some really unusual traits that make it absolutely unique as a crop," he said adding: "You plant it at any time, you harvest it at any time and it is perennial. That is why they call it the tree against hunger."

He has also indicated that climate change is predicted to seriously affect yields and distribution of staple food crops across Africa and beyond. There is growing interest in seeking new plants to feed the world, given our reliance on a few staple crops.

"Nearly half of all the calories we eat come from three species - rice, wheat and maize. We need to diversify the plants we use globally as a species because all our eggs are in a very small basket at the moment," said Borrell.