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Homegrown reform avails record-high finance to agriculture

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA- As part of the homegrown economic reform, a substantial amount of loan has been channeled to finance the agriculture sector, the mainstay of the country over the last three years, the Planning and Development Ministry said.

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Planning and Development Minister Fitsum Assefa (PhD) stated that consolidated efforts have been carried out to finance the agricultural sector that has been challenged by poor technology, forex crunch as well as shortage of inputs and other supports.

Taking into account agriculture is the main driving force for Ethiopia's economic progress, the government has allocated immense financial loans during the past three years to ensure innovation thereby enhancing product and productivity. In addition to providing loans for irrigation development, the government has allocated a considerable budget for the expansion of other modern farming methods and has lifted the collateral requirement from farmers and investors.

"Furthermore, the reform has enabled farmers and investors to import agricultural inputs, technologies and other

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Photo: Gebabo Gebre



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Foreign journalists lambast Int'l media's remote reporting about Ethiopia

BY TAMERU REGASA

ADDIS ABABA- Having visited the Amhara and Afar states, the noted journalists Alastair Thompson and Ann Garrison made a call to professionals in the international media to shun remote reporting and to get first-hand account on the northern conflict.

The journalists recently visited the war-affected states and conducted interviews with residents with a view to acquiring independent and verified information.

Accordingly, New Zealand's major independent news website, *Scoop*, co-founder and managing editor Alastair Thompson claimed that the international media have been largely downplaying the suffering of millions of civilians due to the TPLF belligerence.

Noting the tendency of the international media to cover conflicts through secondary



Alastair Thompson

sources, Thompson highlighted that the method is largely prone to political interests and fake news. To address the shortcoming, media authorities should encourage and



Ann Garrison

allow international media institutions to visit and objectively report about Ethiopia. "Surprisingly, the international media turn

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Ambassador Tefera Shawl

Foreign policy keeps Ethiopia's unity amidst political glitch

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Contesting parties slam TPLF's warmongering

BY ABDUREZAK MOHAMMED

ADDIS ABABA- It is unfortunate to see the terrorist TPLF does not learn from its mistakes, and its mobilization of the Tigray youth to another round of all-war is duly unacceptable, leaders of the contesting political parties said.

It is to be recalled that in his recent televised

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Befitting usage of agricultural inputs to meet food self-sufficiency target

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Rebel filmmaker with historic causes honored at Turin

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News

Ethiopia inks accord to establish ESX

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA- Ministry of Finance (MoF), the Ethiopian Investment Holdings (EIH) and FSD Africa signed a cooperation agreement to establish the Ethiopian Securities Exchange (ESX).

A Cooperation Agreement would provide the technical and financial support required to establish Africa's newest exchange.

Speaking at the signing ceremony held yesterday, MoF Minister Ahmed Shide said that the Ethiopian government has embarked on developing capital market as part of the priority for home-grown economic reform and the development of capital market.

"Well-functioning capital market mobilizes private capital and can promote innovation providing information. The establishment of a securities exchange is the first in our nation's history and through such a viable scheme, public-private partnership will usher a new era for the Ethiopian financial industry and the economy as a whole. The cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Finance, EIH, and FSD Africa is a first concrete step towards realizing our vision," he said.

The exchange will support Ethiopia's economic reform and privatisation agenda and put the country on a sustainable path to domestic resource mobilisation. Well-



Photo: Gebabo Gebre

functioning securities exchanges promote economic growth by enabling the growth of savings and investments, increasing access to long-term capital, coming up with efficient pricing of assets, and creating liquidity which improves the allocation of capital, it was learnt.

EIH CEO Mamo Mihretu on his part said: "The ESX will provide issuers and investors with unique and unseen access to capital markets, promote efficient capital allocation and utilization. In support of Ethiopia's ambitious economic development agenda, the exchange will ensure that much-needed capital is availed to businesses, entrepreneurs, and young innovators across Ethiopia. For the first time in the history of

our country, all Ethiopians will have access to long-term finance to build sustainable businesses, create much-needed jobs and be a part of the country's economic prosperity."

Ethiopia has enjoyed strong economic growth over the past two decades, averaging about 9-10 percent. A fast-growing economy demands significant amount of capital and more long-term sources of funds for investment. A capital market is therefore crucially important for Ethiopia's economy to connect the financial sector to the real and social sectors, he underlined.

At the event, FSD Africa CEO, Mark Napier said: "We are pleased to collaborate with the government of Ethiopia in this

historic initiative that will accelerate the development of capital markets in Ethiopia. Our assistance for establishing the ESX will leverage FSD Africa's vast expertise and experience in developing capital markets infrastructure across Africa. This support signals our long-term commitment to a thriving capital market that is deep, liquid, and efficient."

As to him, the exchange is designed to provide a fundraising platform for small and medium-size enterprises, which are the backbone of the Ethiopian economy. It would also offer a platform for the privatization of Ethiopia's state-owned enterprises.

The ESX will provide a medium of exchange between investors and those who require capital to build and expand business and will provide a regulated, transparent, and secure platform that will promote good corporate governance amongst issuers listed on the exchange and good market conduct with due regard for shareholders rights, he added.

Accordingly, FSD Africa has worked in collaboration with the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) on Ethiopia's journey to developing capital markets, providing technical assistance for scoping the feasibility of the exchange and providing technical expertise to build the capacity of the market.

Humanitarian organizations deliver aid to Tigray safely: commission

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA-The National Disaster Risk Management Commission stated that humanitarian organizations have been providing food and non-food items safely to Tigray state though the terrorist group is blackmailing the government via disseminating fabricated propaganda.

Talking to VOA Amharic Service, National Disaster Risk Management Commission Public Relations Director Debebe Zewde said that Tigray state has been receiving humanitarian aids that have sent by various international organizations and government, but sometimes the smooth flow of the aid is disrupted by the terrorist group.

"We are doing all our best on a day to day basis taking humanitarian affairs into account. International aid organizations and donors have provided the needy in Tigray with support in cash and in kind like medicine, food and non-food items, and nutritious ones of course, keeping international standard and kindly treating people."

These humanitarian organizations have been reaching out to the needy by air and using truck on a daily basis, he said.

Government Communication Service Minister, Legesse Tulu (PhD) on his part said that the terrorist TPLF is still disturbing the proper flow of activities with regard to



aid distribution by blocking humanitarian aid corridors.

He further said that the terrorists did not completely leave some areas neighboring states such as Adirkay, Tselemt and Abergele in Amhara state and Berhale, Conora and Abala, Megalle in Afar state.

It is to be recalled that WFP announced last week 165 trucks arrived in Tigray and delivered 3,000 tons of food and nutrition.



Photo: Eyob Teferi

Ethio telecom launches new water bill payment service

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA- Ethio telecom and Information Network Security Administration (INSA) have launched monthly water service bill payment via telebirr.

It was learnt that from now on any customers could pay their monthly water bill via telebirr.

During the launching event, Ethio telecom yesterday signed agreement with the seven towns of Water and Sewerage Service Heads such as ArbaMinch, Harari, BahirDar, Dessie, Kombolcha, Injibara and Finote Selam.

Ethio telecom CEO Frehiwot Tamiru said this payment would foster the cashless society and enable digitalize Ethiopia and

improve flow of business information.

This payment system also play crucial role for water service providing institutions to collect the service bill instantly with lower cost of transaction and can improve customer relationship management. The customer can settle their bills remotely and anywhere at their convenience will save time and avoid bureaucracy, she stated.

"Any customer can pay its monthly water consumption via telebirr at any place, anywhere without any difficulty."

This new water bill payment services would make lower cost and save time and avoid lineup and bureaucracy for water beneficiaries', she said.

The new water bill payment services are easy, fast, convenient and safe for the customers or organizations that implement it, she noted.

News

Foreign policy keeps Ethiopia's unity amidst political glitch

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopia's foreign policy has been the cornerstone in keeping the unity of the country amidst the domestic political glitch that has been intensified by external pressure, actors, a veteran diplomat commented.

The diplomat Ambassador Tefera Shawl told local media that the foreign policy and the accompanying meticulous diplomatic efforts enabled Ethiopia to overcome both internal and external political unrests. Ethiopia's longstanding diplomatic success which was demonstrated since the Italian's invasion of 1896 help the country to curtail existing pressures.

"Successive Ethiopian leaders have made great efforts to establish friendly relations

across the globe and we can say the country is surviving because of its foreign diplomacy."

As to him, the then leaders of Ethiopia established cordial relations with neighboring and other African states to fight against both internal and external aggressors. Likewise, the current leadership prioritizes relations with neighboring countries with a view to ensuring the national interest. "Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's decision to reconcile with Eritrea has played an inimitable role in combating even the domestic political problem."

The ruling government has also kept the country strong amid external and internal pressures and enabled it to repatriate a large number of Ethiopians who have been in difficult situations. No country can survive

in such conditions, but Ethiopia is still fighting and will realize its victory by the help of both political and public diplomacy.

Noting the existence of some countries who have been employing terrorism to succeed their diplomatic interest, Tefera highlighted that Ethiopia should keep peaceful and viable mechanisms to enhance cooperation and partnership with neighboring and other countries.

The ongoing revision of the foreign policy is also being carried out to make meaningful relationships with any country that could positively contribute to the peace and development of Ethiopia. Freedom, national interest, mutual development and peace should be accommodated in the policy revision, the diplomat recommended.

EAS offers accreditation, certification to 13 institutions

BY MULATU BELACHEW

ADDIS ABABA- The Ethiopian Accreditation Service (EAS) said that it has provided accreditation to 13 institutions which have fulfilled international and national accreditation criteria.

During a recent accreditation and certification event, EAS Director General Araya Fesseha said that the certification and accreditation would serve as an input for the government to realize quality and standardization issues.

Accordingly, EAS has provided accreditation to six Health institutions, three inspection laboratories and three inspections and one certification institutions.

Besides, the accreditation service would help institutions accelerate foreign trade and avoid obstacles. In this regard, the accreditation has played a significant role in fostering success and motivating other institutions to use the accreditation service provided by EAS.

Accredited Health Institutions would earn trust from society regarding the laboratory



test reports and at the same time help the societies avoid being repeatedly charged. They can also make sure to have import and export standard quality products. Hence, such kinds of institutions are expected to expand lessons to other sectors, it was recommended.

Laboratory Inspection accredited institutions do have a meaningful role in maintaining product quality and standard via examining the products standards and qualities, he said adding that Asrat Ethiopia Management Certification PLC is the first

accredited plc in Management System Certification from private sectors. EAS urged institutions to work hard to maintain the obtained accreditation.

EAS provided accreditation to Health institutions and Laboratories according to ISO 15189, Inspection laboratory ISO/IEC 17025, for Inspections ISO/IEC17020, Personal Certification ISO/IEC 17024, Product Certification ISO/IEC 17065, and Leadership System Certification ISO/IEC 17021 and in Calibration sector ISO/IEC17025, it was learnt.

Foreign journalists...

deaf ear and blind eye to atrocities the terrorist TPLF has been committing on the people of Amhara and Afar and failed to denounce the crime."

The journalist further stated that the people

of Amhara and Afar accorded him a warm welcome with his fellow journalist Ann Garrison and provided them the information that they require to conduct the news reports.

Black Agenda Report Editor Ann Garrison

said for her part that TPLF should be held accountable for the deaths of thousands of civilians if the case is heard by international courts. "Unfortunately, international crime courts did nothing as their activities are largely influenced by Western powers."

Contesting parties...

address, one of the top leaders of the criminal faction Alem Gebrewahid ordered the people of Tigray to send their children to warfronts and made the appeal to the latter to build the capacity to fight for longer. "Fighting will never stop. And for those who didn't partake in the war, there will not be a better day to combat."

Commenting on the issue to local media, leaders of the Ethiopian Democratic Union and Freedom and Equality parties stated TPLF continues to believe in a military solution, fully disregarding the plight of innocent civilians which it

claims to represent and defend. Citing the international media outlets' reporting of TPLF's forceful mobilization of the youth for war, they have condemned the faction's irresponsible act.

Accordingly, the Ethiopian Democratic Union Party Chairperson Gebru Berhe said TPLF has forced the Tigray youth to die in the war that the latter do not believe in the importance of fighting with the rest of Ethiopians. It is unfortunate to see the radical element does not learn from its mistakes and prepares for another round of all-out war.

Sharing the above rationale, the Freedom and Equality Party Deputy Chairperson Zenur Abdulwehab reiterated that TPLF's failure to learn from failure and its callous behavior is duly unacceptable. The deputy chairperson further called on conflict parties to cease hostilities and uphold their responsibilities to protect civilians.

Disputed factions should seek ways to resolve differences in a peaceful and civilized manner and refrain from further provocation that could lead the country to another round of devastating war, the politicians made the appeal.



Photo: Priscial Jamma

UN Human Rights Committee Brazil's candidate visits African authorities

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA - "As the diplomatic capital of Africa, Addis Ababa is just as important as Geneva and New York, where most UN treaty election campaigns usually take place."

This is what motivated prosecutor Aldo de Campos Costa, 47, Brazilian candidate for the UN Human Rights Committee, traveling from Rio de Janeiro to the Ethiopian capital, where he arrived on Monday (16), to seek the support of African countries for his candidacy.

During his visit to Ethiopia, Costa will hold bilateral meetings with the Director General of International Organizations of the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry and diplomatic delegations from Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Congo, Eswatini, Guinea, Libya, Mali, among others.

This is the first time that a candidate from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC), one of the five regional groups of the United Nations, has presented himself in Africa to campaign for a seat in this treaty body.

The election will be held on next 17 June, in New York. If elected, Costa, who has extensive experience in the field of civil and political rights, will be the first Brazilian to sit as a member of the UN Human Rights Committee.

Homegrown reform...

amenities without tax that would in turn supplement the manufacturing sector's limited capacity of exporting value added products."

Meanwhile, the Minister highlighted that over the last nine months of the current fiscal year, Ethiopia has secured over three billion USD whereas the manufacturing share is about 400 million USD. Ethiopia didn't permit commercial loans over the past four years and the homegrown economic reform has played an iconic role increasing agricultural productivity and stabilizing the inflation.

The government has been trying to stabilize the market by boosting agricultural productivity and it has also lifted import tax from essential commodities including rice, wheat, cooking oil, sugar and others, Fitsum remarked.

Opinion

Filthy Rich Texas Congressman Michael McCaul Gunning for Poor Ethiopia!

BY ALMARIAM

PART TWO

“When the going gets tough, the tough get going.”

When the Biden administration intentionally and deliberately schemes to make the lives of ordinary Ethiopians hell, they just have to return the favor by telling the Biden administration to go to hell and pull themselves up by their bootstraps. They do not have to be hostages to Biden’s sanctions shenanigans.

The Biden administration and the Dirty Dozen believe they can break Ethiopia’s back and break her knees with sanctions because they believe Ethiopia is a beggar nation.

In 1967, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Nigerian nationalist, author and statesman at the 4th Summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity warned:

Today, Africa is a Continent of COMPETING BEGGAR NATIONS. We vie with one another for favours from our former colonial masters; and we deliberately fall over one another to invite neocolonialists to come to our different territories to preside over our economic fortunes...

The TPLF made Ethiopia a beggar nation because the TPLF which held power for more than a quarter century in Ethiopia was a beggar organization. They thrived by begging, stealing, cheating, jailing and killing.

I have always opposed US aid to and sanctions against Ethiopia on philosophical and grounds. In my 2011 commentary, I argued US aid created a moral hazard in Ethiopia and Africa:

Western taxpayer dollars provide the failsafe insurance policy for the survival and persistence of failed regimes in Africa. By shifting the risk of economic mismanagement, incompetence and corruption to Western donors, and because these donors impose no penalty or disincentive for poor governance, inefficiency, corruption and repression, African regimes are able to cling to power for decades abusing the human rights of their citizens and stealing elections.

In my December 2016 commentary, I advised the Trump Administration to “significantly curtail its aid and budget support programs which have served to prop up corrupt and repressive African regimes.”

The best way America can help Africa is by letting Africa help itself, and by making sure the culture of panhandling on the continent is permanently ended. The Trump administration should provide aid to African regimes only if they meet stringent conditions of accountability and transparency. The era of U.S. foreign policy of aid handouts and alms giving to Africa generously supported by American taxpayers, without accountability, must end or significantly curtailed!

Damn sanctions because Ethiopia is a rich country with enormous resources. Ethiopia



has land that can be cultivated for agriculture to feed not only Ethiopia but also to become the breadbasket of Africa.

We have rivers and lakes to generate hydropower and expand the use of irrigation to produce not only for home consumption but also exports. We have a young population that can be trained to move the Ethiopian economy to new heights.

So, when the Biden administration makes the going tough for ordinary Ethiopians, ordinary Ethiopians have to get in gear and get going! A man/woman has got to do what s/he must to put food for his/her family. So must a nation for its citizens.

McCaul carrying the White Man’s Burden in Ethiopia

McCaul, like his senate collaborator Jim Risch of Idaho, gunning for Ethiopia, carries the White Man’s Burden to save the “half devil, half child” black Ethiopians. McCaul, the “ethnic cleanser of Texas” cannot unburden himself from the White Man’s Burden he carries on his shoulder.

The same burden Rudyard Kipling mandated as the divine mission of all whites in positions of power.

Kipling, the foremost apologist for European colonialism penned a special poem in 1899, “The White Man’s Burden”, exhorting the powers that be in the United States to colonize the Philippine Islands:

Take up the White Man’s burden—

Send forth the best ye breed—

Go bind your sons to exile...

Your new-caught, sullen peoples,

Half devil and half child...

McCaul has been in the US House since 2004.

Until he signed up with the lobbyists for the terrorist TPLF, McCaul could not pinpoint Ethiopia on the global map. Until he was approached by terrorist TPLF lobbyist who got paid in blood money stolen from Ethiopia, McCaul has never, never said a word about Ethiopia.

McCaul never complained about human rights violations in Ethiopia following the Meles Massacres of 2005. Every year the State Department published its annual country human rights report documenting

the gross violations of human rights by the TPLF. McCaul ignored those reports and kept his mouth shut.

When the TPLF declared a state of emergency and massacred thousands in 2016-17, McCaul remained deaf mute. Today, Texas Ranger Mike McCaul rides his white high horse from Texas to save black Africans in Ethiopia.

It boggles the mind why McCaul would be so concerned about blacks in the northern part of Ethiopia when he was part of an “ethnic cleansing” of black people in Tulia, in the northern part of Texas.

McCaul has never raised his voice to support any legislation that advances racial equity or equality in the US or empower African Americans. McCaul has opposed efforts to protect the human rights of African Americans railroaded to prison or suffering under the American criminal justice system.

McCaul’s voting record shows he opposes funding for education, environmental protection, foreign and humanitarian aid, humane immigration policy, poverty amelioration, racial equality, and women’s rights and supports big business, military spending, domestic surveillance. McCaul’s record shows he is against human rights in America and neighboring countries while advocating it in Africa.

McCaul is opposed to providing humanitarian aid to people suffering on the U.S. Mexican border; creating path to citizenship of undocumented immigrants leaving the perpetually stateless; expanding affordable health care for poor Americans lowering prescription drug costs.

Legislation restraining police brutality against African Americans and other minorities He opposed H.R. 1280, “George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2021” a human rights and police reform bill!

Little known facts about the filthy rich Texas congressman

Filthy rich slum lord

Few people know the filthy rich Texas congressman is a slum lord! On October 28, 2020, it was reported that McCaul’s real estate firms have pursued two dozen lawsuits over breaches of lease agreements.

According to American Prospect, Most of the businesses were owned by people

of color. Tenants complained about leases being granted under false pretenses, poor conditions in the properties, or hardship events forcing their abandonment, including at least one restaurant closed by law during the corona virus pandemic. But McCaul’s companies aggressively pursued back rent and expenses anyway.

Filthy rich water waster

McCaul and his family live in the wealthy suburb of Austin, TX called West Lake Hills. In 2011, when Texas had the worst drought in recorded Texas history, McCaul was fingered as sixth-largest water user. He could not care about water conservation and consumed 1.4 million gallons!

McCaul is frequently named as one of the top ten users of household water in the Austin area, and was the No. 1 consumer of household water in the city in 2017. In 2018, McCaul had the dubious distinction of being top single-family water abuser in Austin, TX.

Does a filthy rich Texas Congressman who does not give a rat’s ass about the basic human and constitutional rights of African Americans and Hispanic Americans have the moral right to criticize Ethiopia on human rights?

Does a filthy rich Texas Congressman who does not give a rat’s ass about the welfare of his own community by conserving life-sustaining water have the moral right to criticize Ethiopia on human rights?

Does a filthy rich Texas Congressman who is slum lord have the moral right to hector Ethiopia on human rights?

Don’t tread on Ethiopia?

Many patriotic Texans carry the Gadsden flag with the inscription “DON’T TREAD ON ME.” It was used by the Continental Marines as an early motto flag.

It signifies a defiant stand not to be bullied, intimidated and coerced and a determination to remain vigilant against coercive injustice. I say to the filthy rich Texas congressman, “DON’T TREAD ON ETHIOPIA!”

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

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Editorial

Ethiopia continues playing key roles for sustainable peace across the Horn

On Sunday, Somalia elected a new president replacing Mohamed Farmajo. The Horn African country that has been marred by Islamic radicalism and terrorism has been going through a relative period of stability. The African Peacekeeping Mission with Ethiopia at the forefront has been supporting the country to fight Al-Shabab and other terrorist groups significantly reducing the terrorist attacks. Lately, in what could be said a promising move towards a democratic transition, the Somalia people appointed Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as President of the Federal Republic of Somalia.

As a key partner and staunch ally of Somalia, Ethiopia warmly congratulated former President H.E. on his reelection and vowed to work closely with the new leadership in the spirit of the longstanding and friendly relationship between the two countries.

Ethiopia sees the election as a leap forward to building a democratic process in the country and respects the wish of the people of Somalia. In fact, Ethiopia has been a major force behind Somalia's peace and security. Ethiopian troops have been fighting terrorist groups paying the ultimate prices. Still, Ethiopian troops have been protecting the Somalia civilians against all odds.

Ethiopia has also been a staunch supporter of the democratic transition of Somalia sharing its experience and lessons. That is why Somalia views Ethiopia as a reliable partner and a close friend.

Now that Mogadishu gets new leadership, the longstanding ties of the two neighboring countries is expected to see a new momentum and capitalize on the current progress.

Having backlogs of internal and external setbacks, the new leadership is expected to improve the socio-economic and political as well as security well-being of the people of Somalia. From terrorism to human trafficking, Ethiopia and Somalia in this regard have common areas of cooperation. Ethiopia has been the linchpin of the Horn Africa region. The country has been a leading peacekeeping and peacemaking force in the volatile region.

Ethiopia has left an indelible mark in the region in terms of brokering peace deals and restoring stability in South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, and beyond. The country also remains a key partner in rallying the Horn African region towards regional integration.

As the region goes through layers of challenges, Ethiopia remains committed to work closely with the member countries including the new leadership in Somalia to step up the security and stability of the region. The insecurity in one of the member countries risks a domino effect and could trigger a security vacuum elsewhere.

Besides, the militarization and confrontation of superpowers pose an imminent threat to the whole region. And, curbing the security threats will behoove the nations to adopt a regional approach. In fact, collective security requires collective action. Members of the Horn region cannot achieve socioeconomic development separately.

In this regard, the countries must boost their cooperation to grow together and turn calamities into opportunities. The region is prone to regional and international threats and the only way to stay safe and thrive is through regional cooperation.

Opinion

Eliminating Al-shabaab targeting its means of camouflage

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

This week, Somalia held a successful election that returned Hassen Sheikh Mohamud to Somalia's presidency. As the home of Al-Shabaab terrorist group, there were fears that Somalia may face instability during the election, surprisingly, Somalia managed the election peacefully and rescued from another circle of instability. Somalia's peaceful election was commended by many countries of the world. Somalia's central government stability and continued peaceful means of power transition exercising would play a vital role for the stability of the Horn of Africa in general.

The Horn of Africa is known for its volatility. The Horn was named among the turmoil regions of the world, with internal and external factors for a long period of time. In addition to other internal and external factors, the political problem in Somalia since the 1990s badly complicated the stability, development and security of the Horn of Africa. On top of Somalia's statelessness since the 1990s, during the mid of the first decade of the 21st century, the birth of Al-Shabaab militant group in Somalia worsened the regional security situation.

Since its inception in 2006, Al-Shabaab, a wing of Al-Qaeda terrorist group, is terrifying Somalia and countries in the Horn for almost 18 years. Though, dozens of operations were held to eliminate the terrorist group with regional and international efforts, so far, even though the operations made its capacity cripple, they

could not able to eliminate the group once and for all.

Now, following the recent successful and peaceful democratic power transitions in Somalia, the central government of the country's power is showing significant developments. This opportunity would help concerned regional and international actors to increase their assistance to Somalia and its neighboring countries to eliminate the militant group from its bases. So far, the military operations against Al-Shabaab were mainly led by external actors due to the weak central government in power in Somalia.

But, since recent years, the central government in Somalia is becoming strong and strengthening its security forces and has the opportunity to work with allies for the stability and security of Somalia. Hence, concerned regional and international actors must use this opportunity to fully eliminate the militant group to save the region and to sustainably create stable, peaceful and economically strong Somalia. Somalia's recent peaceful political developments must be powered by giving every assistance to support its journey of becoming economically developed and the security secured country.

Unless Somalia becomes free from Al-Shabaab fully, Somalia's political journey is unsafe and may face another political turmoil that may even worsen the country's stability and the regional security in general. The newly elect-president of Somalia and strong regional and international allies of

Somalia must focus on eliminating Al-Shabaab from the country by destroying its bases and separating from its social bases solving the problems of the Somali people.

The Horn of Africa, among the top strategic regions of the world, has numerous problems, internal and external. The internal factors are mainly the old-habit of the zero-sum game dominated diplomacy and conspiracy between the countries of the region. In addition, its strategic location also makes the region the power play center of the international power blocks.

Due to these reasons, the region's features are instability, backwardness, insecurity, poverty and Famine. But, in recent years, the internal diplomatic relations between and among the countries of the region is showing significant developments, though a lot remains to be changed yet. Principled diplomatic relations are developing between and among the countries of the region and there are efforts to build regional integration. But, still countries of the region are experiencing internal political problems that directly and indirectly have regional impacts.

With a lot of limitations, the give and take based diplomatic relation of the Horn countries in recent years, unlike the previous zero-sum game relation, is changing the internal problems of the region. But still, internal political instabilities within each country and Al-Shabaab remain top internal security problems of the Horn of Africa. Hence, in addition to supporting the political stability within each country, eliminating

Al-Shabaab must be the top priority of concerned regional and international actors to promote peace and development of the Horn of Africa.

The power of Somalia's central government is becoming stable and strong through process. In addition, the peaceful elections are adding hopes for the continuity of Somalia's stability. To capitalize this opportunity, the countries of the region should cooperate and work hand-in-hand with the government to strengthen the Somali government eliminating Al-shabaab, a threat for regional stability and peace.

Combating Al-shabaab with the old strategy must be changed. First, the strategy must be identifying the factors that help Al-shabaab to build adaptability and resilience. The investment must target separating the terrorist group from its bases, economic sources and strategic locations by supporting the local people.

For continuous stability of Somalia and to make the central government more effective, all concerned actors should cooperate with the Somali government in eliminating the militant group from Somalia and the horn as well with continuous joint actions. Without making Somalia free from Al-shabaab, there is no guarantee for the stability and security of Somalia and the Horn of Africa.

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

Business & Economy

Befitting usage of agricultural inputs to meet food self-sufficiency target

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Registering as long history as of human age, agriculture lasted to date being backbone for nations' economies particularly for the developing countries including Ethiopia. The sector is a means of living of over 80 percent of the population in Ethiopia and serves as a major supplier of raw materials for manufacturing industries and an astral means of export earnings.

But the narration of ensuring food self-sufficiency and poverty reduction has been still a dominant phenomenon. Therefore, modernizing the sector must be taken as a sole option and to that end befitting utilization of agricultural inputs is essential.

The Ethiopian Agricultural Business Corporation (EABC) is a Public owned entity that imports agricultural machinery and inputs and supplies to the farmers and agricultural enterprises.

During his recent interview with the local media, Kifle Woldemariam, Chief Executive of the Corporation said that the Corporation is established with 2.44 billion Birr permitted and 610 million Birr paid capital. As the government allows the corporation to enhance its paid capital from its profit, it could increase its capital to 2.44 billion Birr.

As to the Chief Executive, fertilizer is one of the key inputs that play crucial role in rising agricultural productivity and before the establishment of the corporation, purchasing of fertilizer from the international market was carried out via brokers and agents and such practice exposed the farmers and customers for exploitation. The establishment of the corporation, however, could shorten the value chain and enable to supply agricultural inputs to farmers in a reduced price.

The new purchasing system through direct contact to the producing company enabled the Corporation to save 3.2 billion Birr annually and the farmers to buy a quintal of fertilizer with 1,500 Birr which is a fair price that supports the farmers' efforts to raise productivity.

In addition, more than one million quintals of selected seeds supplied to farmers and agricultural businessmen in the last budget year. Similarly, mechanized service is provided by preparing extensive farms and harvesting products so that reducing product wastage was possible.

Habtemariam Abate (PhD) is a private consultant working for various firms. In his view, though the utilization of agricultural inputs is enhancing from time to time, still there is huge gap in meeting the demand. The majority of farmers are still engaged in subsistence farming and located in the remote areas of the country far from the main roads.

To transport inputs to their farms, they take up to 6 hours with pack animals. Due to this, only few farmers which have the capacity to get access use agricultural inputs. The rest still do not use modern agricultural inputs. Hence, to reach the poor farmers, expanding



Photo credit: Ethiositer.com

Reality on the ground in Ethiopia, should changed regarding agriculture

the roads infrastructure up to the nearest areas is essential, he suggested.

As to Habtemariam, agricultural inputs include fertilizer, selected seeds, pesticides and herbicides. Pesticides and herbicides are all in all imported from abroad and due to the fluctuating market, the importation of the products has become very expensive. As a result, it has been unaffordable to most of the farmers.

Habtemariam further elucidated that crops such as wheat and maize grown in the central high lands of the country are highly vulnerable to pests and sometimes farmers lose up to 50 percent of their products due to the diseases. Therefore, supporting the farmers through supplying inputs in an affordable price is essential to mitigate the problem. But currently, some malice is witnessed in the supplying of selected seeds which has a debilitating effect on the product and the environment as well. Some seed-producing companies supply their products which are substandard and the output also severely affects the farmers. Therefore, agricultural cooperatives, in order to protect farmers from such unfair seed distribution, should inform them to purchase seeds only from accredited and pertinent seed enterprises.

There are numerous see enterprises in the places such as Arsi, Bale of Oromia region and in Amhara region as well but some of them have no license and illegally engaged in supplying their products to the farmers.

According to Kifle, the corporation to meet the market demand, it reproduces qualitatively and quantitatively fit selected seeds and supply to the market and plays crucial role in raising productivity at the national level. In an effort to obtain land for producing selected seeds, it could secure 2 hectares of land in Bonga area in South West Ethiopia which could be utilized for seed preparation and storage; for office and laboratory work. In addition, it obtained

more than 3 thousand hectares of land in Kefa zone for selected seed reproduction.

As to Kifle, currently, the scarcity of hard currency in commercial banks hampers the importation of spare parts and ultimately crippled service provision capacity of the corporation.

Because of the fluctuating circumstances in exchange rate of Birr against Dollar, during the opening of letter of credit in Banks, the corporation is asked to pay the difference rate worth of 548 million Birr by the Ministry of Revenue. As a result, the corporation found itself financially incapable.

Though the corporation comes up with achievements and challenges, it courageously prepared itself for better achievements in the coming five years.

Kifle further stated that the corporation as a public enterprise, supports the nation's development endeavor and as a business entity, it competes in the market to gain profit and in this regard, it has dual purpose and crafted its five years plan.

In its planed years of operation, it targeted to provide services that worth 19.6 billion Birr to customers and to gain 1.5 billion Birr profit before tax in the budget year. In addition, it planned to boost its export earning capacity.

As mentioned above, as a public enterprise, the corporation has a duty to support the nation's development endeavor and to meet the goal in the coming five years; it strives to supply 100 percent of the nation's fertilizer demand and 27.7 percent of selected seeds demand.

To achieve the plan and thereby enhancing the supply of quality selected seeds, it allocated 45 million Birr to import two incubation machines for selected seeds and allocated 32 million Birr to import 3 harvesting machines.

To increase the supply of selected seeds in quality and quantity, it prepares 3,500

hectares of land and to that end it allotted 159.6 million Birr.

Desalegn Rahmato is a senior land researcher worked for the last five decades for various firms. On his part, he said that agricultural inputs are essential to raise productivity but still a good portion of farmers are disregarded from using the inputs due to various reasons.

In the rural part of Ethiopia, population explosion pushed land size to be fragmented as a result of having extended family is common in the areas. Most children in the rural parts attend their school only up to grade 8 and after completion of that level; they have no other option than engaging in farming simply to follow footsteps of their parts.

Parents also provide portion of the land to their children to support their livelihood and as a result, year after year, the land is fragmented into small plots which in turn exposes it to degradation.

As to Desalegn, when land becomes fragmented, it will be exposed for soil erosion both by rain water and wind. Hence, even though the farmers utilize inputs, its productivity will be downsizing in quality and quantity.

He further said that practicing modern farm depends on the size of the farm land. Besides, it is not feasible for the operation of tractors on small scale farm and utilizing agricultural equipment also is not fruitful.

The current global warming and climate change also critically affects small scale farmers and they are not able to withstand the problem because of the underdevelopment of the way of their farming.

Therefore, to expand modern and large scale farming, the government should eye a new strategy which can shift the stranded of rural labor from agriculture to the non agriculture sector, he suggested.

Art & Culture

Rebel filmmaker with historic causes honored at Turin

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

Whether he makes a film on the historic Battle of Adwa or about the traumatic period in Ethiopian recent history under the military dictatorship of the Derg, Haile Gerima is dealing with his subject with tenacious passion and a rage against what he regards as historic injustices that need to be redressed, at least on the silver screen or in the conscience of the victims.

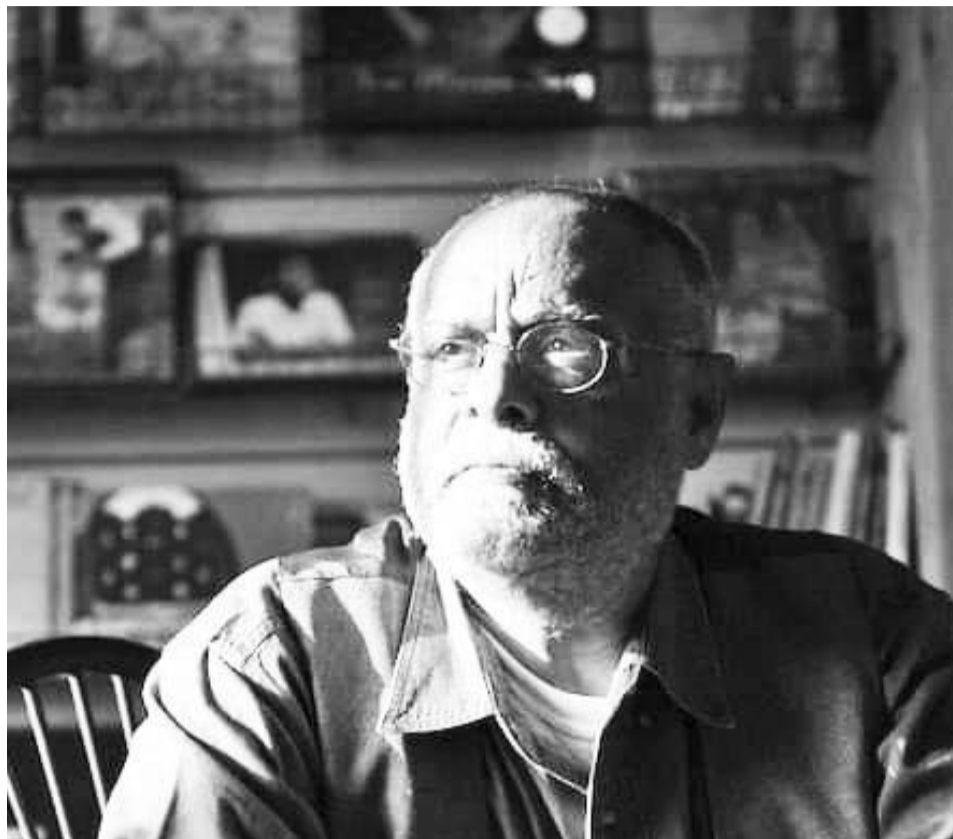
Haile Gerima's scope and vision is usually larger than the size of the silver screen and his rage against the evils of all sorts of oppression so loud that it is sometimes deafening. Whether he deals with his country's traumatizing experience under five years of occupation or exposes the injustices of oppression of black people in America by the white racist establishment, Haile Gerima displays not only artistry in portraying his characters but also realism in telling his stories.

"The work of him stems from the urgency of rage against all forms of oppression—whether colonial, feudal, racial, social or cultural. Exploring the present, the past and the relationship with the roots, to reconstruct the history of a people as a cure against alienation, his camera becomes a weapon of resistance and struggle for memory, and reminds us that the Cinema is a powerful tool to decolonize the minds, redefine the concept of hospitality and experience what Angela Davis has called global membership."

Haile is obsessed with the black issue in America and elsewhere in the world that is still unresolved, festering beneath the headlines and catching public attention during open crises like the Black Lives Matter movement recently or the more structurally hidden white racism in America that is still buried within the white-dominated establishment as well as it promotes and abettor in the culture establishment going straight into Hollywood or in the aching conscience of the Klux Klan which is, according to Wikipedia, "an American white supremacist terrorist and hate group whose primary targets are African Americans, Jews, Latinos, Asian Americans, Catholics, Native Americans as well as immigrants, leftists, homosexuals, Muslims, and atheists."

Haile Gerima's voice is as powerful in criticism of the white dominated political establishment as it is in facing the immorality, brutality and entrenched racism of the white-dominated cultural establishment like the Hollywood which is also the soft power behind America's quest for global domination. Haile did not go to Hollywood begging for the culture authorities there to help him produce films that do not appeal to their tastes. A few black American filmmakers like Spike Lee and others showed the way for making movies that appeal to the black audience and black history, i.e., the film about black rights leaders Malcolm X acted by Denzel Washington.

A similar motivation and his deep interest



Haile Gerima—Ethiopian filmmaker

in black liberation have also inspired Haile Gerima to go for films that raise black issues such as Sankofa. The difference is that Hollywood agreed to produce Malcolm X because it knew that it will be a financial hit and refuse to turn its attention towards Haile because he is an African-American coming from a country renowned for its struggles against fascism during WW-II. The anti-fascism of Haile is not however confined to Ethiopia or Africa; it goes beyond conventional borders and appeals to the conscience of all black people everywhere in the world. Hollywood ignored Haile simply because his appeal is far-reaching and his vision borderless because oppression has no racial borders. As fascism is the highest expression of racial prejudice like its twin brother Nazism, Hollywood preferred to ignore Haile's talent as a filmmaker.

As a rule, works of rebel artists are rarely accepted by the American white-dominated cultural establishment. Only a handful of filmmakers have escaped the institutionalized biases of Hollywood to attain global prominence. Charlie Chaplin is one of them who came to prominence at a time when the so-called "red scare" or communist producers ran amok in every studio and directors like Alia Kazan were targeted by the league of so-called "anti-American activities" or anti-subversive campaigns conducted by the white cultural establishment. "A turning point in Kazan's career came with his testimony as a witness before the House Committee on Un-American Activities in 1952 at the time of the Hollywood blacklist, which brought him strong negative reactions from many friends and colleagues."

Charlie Chaplin was also allegedly alienated for his political views that were associated with communism or socialism in the 1940s and 1950s, because in his films he sympathized what he called the common man. Because of this he was accused of harboring communist views. At one time he was asked whether he was a Bolshevik and

his answer was straightforward: "I am an artist," he said.

Although he is an outsider to Hollywood, Haile Gerima succeeded in shaping his own notion of independent African cinema as a revolutionary tool for the emancipation black people oppressed by racism, colonialism, neocolonialism and class bias. In this way, he is in league with another African filmmaker Sembene Ousman, often dubbed the father of African cinema, because he was "A revolutionary filmmaker and writer, who used both pen and camera to return African stories to African people. Battling racism, censorship and language barriers, he transformed Senegal's and Africa's cultural output."

Haile Gerima is also a path breaking radical filmmaker and "A prominent figure of the cinema of Africa and African American, referring to independent cinema, the Ethiopian Gerima was among the founders of the "blacks of directors School of Los Angeles," the fervent movement in the 70s experimented with new aesthetic, breaking through the narrative and production logic Hollywood. The work of him stems from the urgency of rage against all forms of oppression—whether colonial, feudal, racial, social or cultural.

The difference between Haile Gerima and Sembene Ousman is not so big because both of them struggled to promote the cause of the black people; both made films in English, French as well as in their respective African languages. In the case of Haile, his masterpiece *Teza* is made in Amharic but won prestigious international awards for its cinematography, artistry and theme. Thematically, Haile leans more heavily on history and the sufferings and triumphs of ordinary Africans or Ethiopians during some of the great historical crises of the 20th.

Haile is, "Exploring the present, the past and the relationship with the roots, to reconstruct the history of a people as a cure

against alienation, his camera becomes a weapon of resistance and struggle for memory, and reminds us that the Cinema is a powerful tool to decolonize the minds, redefine the concept of hospitality and experience what Angela Davis has called global membership."

What makes Haile different from any other African filmmaker is that he fought against many odds and primarily against studios and cultural establishments that were not so keen to promote his works because of their strong lessons they convey or the passionate way in which they oppose oppression and call for justice. Consequently, Haile made some of his most prominent films with his own money or with money he borrowed or managed to collect anyhow. He also faced many hurdles with the distribution rights of his films. He and his wife, filmmaker Sirikiana Aina, founded the distribution company Mypheduh Films Inc. in 1984.

A recent cultural event took place in Turin, Italy in honor of Haile's works that are Visions of the repressed and the first comprehensive retrospective of the director in Italy and, in addition to presenting all Gerima film – some of them unpublished in Italy – will offer a preview of the work in progress of Black Lions, Roman Wolves / The Children of Adwa. Thus, there is a kind of historical continuum in Haile's "cinematic oeuvre", with the same of struggle and liberation going through most of his works.

As it was recently disclosed prior to the May 26 event in Italy honoring his works, "This memory documentary, which Gerima has worked for decades, is conceived as the result of Adwa, an African Victory, to tell the answer of the Ethiopian people against the fascist army in 1935. It tells the invasion collective trauma but also tenacious resistance that later led to independence. At the assembly, the testimonies and memories of survivors of war in Ethiopia (1935-1936) are interwoven with archival footage with the secular folklore, war songs, and poems of praise. The projection will show the first hour of this long process which includes the experience of the director's father."

Haile Gerima does not however enjoy professional fame in his home country as he does in the international film world. Maybe this is because his views are mostly unconventional or because he is a straightforward man who does not mince his words. He should however serve as a symbol of Ethiopia's film industry to the outside world and an inspiration to the young and upcoming filmmakers who are still caught in humbugs as they often indulge in "man meets woman and falls in love" kind of stories that are the bread and butter of many aspiring movie makers whose careers are cut short for lack of proper orientation or absence of genuine passion for a cause worth fighting for. They should turn to Haile to learn how to make a movie in the genuinely Ethiopian way.

Notes from Ethiopia, Part 4: The TPLF destruction of Afar

BY ANN GARRISON

It's 110 degrees in Ethiopia's desert Afar Region, one of the hottest areas humans inhabit, and I'm thinking about how much damage the U.S. empire does with its proxy wars in even the most remote corners of the planet—like this one—which most Americans have of course never even heard of.

There's a USAID meeting going on in the next room, here at the Hotel Dini in the city of Semara, Afar Region, and this illustrates the typical US modus operandi in Africa. Send in proxy warriors who destroy and cause immeasurable suffering, then send in USAID and the rest of the NGO industrial complex to mop up and foster dependence. The meeting in the next room is about "reforming" health care and building health centers, with particular focus on antenatal and postnatal maternal and infant health.

I asked several participants whether they knew about all the Afar health centers that the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front had destroyed and looted, or the women who'd had to flee the TPLF—some in late stages of pregnancy—or the women and children who'd died in flight or are now living in IDP camps. They said they didn't know about that, and I'm sure they wouldn't talk about it if they did. They've got a gig sponsored by USAID, Save the Children, Project Hope, and General Electric.

The Afar Pastoralist Development Association, a small local NGO that works with several small, little-known Western NGOs, has no such qualms. On March 15 it published "OVER 300,000 NORTHERN AFAR LIVING UNDER TREES, HERDED BY THE TERRIFYING SOUND OF ARTILLERY," including this account of a birth on the road:

Kadiga's story illustrates this amazing resilience. She is now 32 years old and fled when the first rockets began to shell the town of Aba'ala in December. She and her 5 children, her mother and the neighboring women ran for 3 days into the rural area of Aba'ala where she was till 15 days ago. Fortunately, as she says it was daytime and all of a sudden rockets started falling again, this time hitting the temporary house the women had made for themselves – no one was inside but all inside was burnt. They fled with a total of 12 children, she is by then 9 months pregnant. She carried the 2-year-old and struggled to carry water. They ran for some hours and then broke off into a steady walk. On the 4th day of walking, labor pains began but the other women just said there was no hope till they reached Garbeena and Harsuuma. Kadiga described how awful it was to go with the labor for 2 days till she could take no more. Collapsing under a tree, the baby began to come and a woman she hardly knew said she would handle it. This is how her 6th child, a son, came into the world. Asked what food did you eat, she said they



Afar IDPs who fled TPLF attack on Aba'ala, Afar Region, Ethiopia, now sheltering with relatives in Semara. Three children here suffer the symptoms of measles, which could fatally sweep through Afar IDP camps and hospitals. (Photo: Ann Garrison, 05.16.2022)



had eked out the small amount of grain they had taken when fleeing Aba'ala but that had finished. Local Afar helped to revive her and she continued on till she reached Harsuuma in Afdeera, a total journey of 9 days. In Harsuuma, government food was distributed, each household getting 1 kilogram of flour and one kilogram of rice.

Valerie Browning, founder of the Afar Pastoralist Development Association, is a legendary Australian nurse, known locally as Malaika, who has lived among the Afar desert pastoralists since the famine of 1973. Speaking to New Zealand journalist Alastair Thompson, Ethiopian journalism professor Menychle Abebe, and I, she described the TPLF's horrific destruction of Afar communities' markets, health centers, schools, churches, mosques, and livestock, and said that what they couldn't steal, they destroyed. She also didn't hesitate to blame

US and Western support for the TPLF for the catastrophe that Afar has been left in, with hundreds of thousands of Afar living in IDP camps or still in the remote desert lands they fled into to escape the TPLF. "If the Western world had not put their hand in at the beginning of the war, we wouldn't be in this mess today. They interfered from the very beginning, they agreed with the TPLF, they enabled the TPLF."

Browning also dismissed the current US position that the TPLF is one warring party that should negotiate to reach some sort of shared power arrangement. The people of Tigray Region should have a voice in government, she said, but the TPLF should not return to power after all the damage they have done in their war on Afar and other parts of Ethiopia.

"I think the American position is still that TPLF should be in government and this is not gonna go. The people of Tigray should have a say in the Parliament of Ethiopia, the same as any people in the country, but not the TPLF. No. No no no no no, wait a minute, let's be fair."

Health emergency

Dr. Mohammed Yusuf of Dubti General—a free public hospital near Semara—told us that infant malnutrition was a major problem that they were compelled to treat before the war, but that now, with some hundreds of thousands of Afars living in IDP camps, the problem has multiplied way beyond the hospital's capacity. And of course, he added, emergency treatment for malnutrition may bring a child back to health, but it won't solve the underlying problem of food insecurity, which is of course hugely exacerbated by war and displacement.

Dubti General Hospital has had to appeal for help—not only to the federal government, but also to the big international aid agencies like Save the Children and—who else? —USAID. The IDPs we interviewed in Afar also told us that the government was doing

what it could to feed and otherwise help them, but that the crisis was beyond its capacity.

We visited the hospital's pediatric wards, which seemed way overcrowded. Dr. Yusuf told us that a possibly pending measles outbreak could sweep through both the pediatric wards and the IDP camps. He said they had sent tests to Addis Ababa and were awaiting results to be certain that is what they're facing.

During interviews with IDPs conducted on the night before we spoke to the doctor, we met several children who showed all the signs of measles—fever, rashes, sneezing, and severe conjunctivitis.

Most people who contract measles survive, but complications, including even death, are more likely in children under age 5, most especially children who are already undernourished. So Dubti General Hospital, Dubti IDP Camp, and similar facilities could be on the cusp of a catastrophic wave of infection.

Just as we were on our way out through the hospital gates, five SUVs labeled "USAID" drove in and began to unload supplies. The hospital can't help but seek and accept such assistance under the circumstances. They are in no position to turn away or find fault with any help they can get.

Those of us who are not similarly constrained, however, must do what we can to oppose ongoing US support for the TPLF, whom the Afar people expect to attack them again.

"If TPLF come back again, I don't know what we will do. I just don't know," said Malaika, "They've hurt Afar so badly with its livelihood that I really don't know. The people of Afar need food. They need water supply, clean water supply. They need medical help. They need everything. If the TPLF come back and do even more dangerous destruction again, then Afar will be in an even more shocking condition."

Law & Politics

T-TPLF's appalling atrocities in Afar and Amhara states

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

The gruesome attacks perpetrated in various parts of Afar and Amhara states by the terrorist TPLF group have turned the lives of millions into chaos and sufferings that have not been experienced in the history of the country.

Albeit atrocities committed in the areas became the talk of the world, the criminal enterprise has continued paying no heed to its heinous deeds and turning upside down the lives of noncombatants. As the group places emphasis on destabilizing the country and raising the stakes, it has been maneuvering to pursue its objectives.

Notwithstanding the fact that the incumbent government has been moving heaven and earth to achieve peace, TPLF has continued escalating tension and saber-rattling. What's more, as usual, in a desperate attempt the group is bracing for ransacking, destroying property, slaughtering blameless noncombatants, and other criminal acts.

From the destruction of schools, hospitals, and infrastructure to committing unspeakable crimes against the people of Afar and Amhara, the group has been exerting all possible efforts to launch a fresh attack. Failing to learn from its past blunders and failing to recall the war victims, the group has been beating the drums of war that do not help attain the sought-after goal.

Aside from suffering from food insecurity and shortage, the lives of displaced people have been worse with little food aid reaching the community. Some of them have been suffering from emotional and psychological traumas that cannot be forgotten at the earliest possible moment.

Although the people of Tigray hate to death the terrorist group, the criminal clique has been coming up with untrustworthy information with the intention of winning their hearts and minds. At the present juncture, some of them have already started in a broad daylight blaming the nefarious deeds of the group unfolding in and out of the Tigray state. However, the group is not in a position to lend its ears no matter how much it costs.

As is generally known, the ragtag terrorist TPLF group has slaughtered and buried noncombatants in every nook and cranny of the northern parts of the country. Following the evil deeds of the group, most children have become orphans while some parents lost their breadwinners.

Lately, some reports have laid bare the horrific criminal acts committed by the clique and its henchmen in Afar and Amhara states.

Administrators of several districts of the war-hit Afar State said the civilian communities are still in constant fear due to the growing preparation of the Terrorist TPLF to reinvade the area.

According to a report by local media, chief administrators of different districts of Afar are deeply concerned by the TPLF plan to expand the war on civilians.

Approaching by local media, Koneba



Mass graves uncovered in Afar State

District Chief Administrator Osman Nuri said TPLF has brutally murdered children, elders and women. Students have been killed and buried in mass graves. Similarly, elders, women and youths [who were not a part of the war] have been left to die by horrific attacks on residential houses. "I had never seen such a number of civilians killed in the war."

Also, Berhale District Chief Administrator Haji Osman has told the same media that residents who had no any enmity to TPLF had been murdered by TPLF. While showing the mass grave to the journalist, "We have found 21 civilians buried in a single grave.... [] half of them were buried in the same direction while others have been buried in opposite directions. They have been murdered at the same time."

As to Arbiti District Administrator Muhammad Aliyu, civilians who were in their residential areas had been killed during the arrival of TPLF in the area. Those who tried to leave the area have also been killed by TPLF. TPLF killed at least 17 children, seven women, 14 youth and elder men in Arbiti District. Another five individuals have not been found yet; Muhammad remarked.

TPLF has fully destroyed Abala during its recent invasion of the Afar State and left the local community in deep darkness, according to the town's Peace and Security Head.

Speaking to local media, the Head Haji Abdu said TPLF ruined the town that was one of the trade hubs and a growing town of Afar with more than 20,000 merchants had been trading until the war broke out. Due to TPLF's aggression, residential houses, shops and community service centers, including government offices have been burnt down and the looting carried out by the rebellious group was very intense.

A resident of the town, Al Amin, claimed that his entire asset has been burnt by TPLF. "Now, I and my family are in a wretched situation. TPLF showed us its utmost

abhorrence by destroying private and public assets. We have left nothing."

"Religious institutions, administrative and communal properties all have been burnt intentionally to destroy the town. They have looted a large amount of assets," he added.

"The damage in this town is not hidden. Everybody can judge it easily. Nothing has been left. The town is now in desperate condition," said another resident. "Abala was so busy... now, it is synonymous with grave; impossible to restore to its historical status. The destruction will affect its entire development for a long time."

The TPLF group executed scores of civilians. Survivals are also in a hell-like condition due to displacement caused by the clique, he recounted.

Commenting on TPLF's atrocities in Afar State, the founder Valerie Browning (locally known as Malaika) stated that the criminal faction has forced hundreds of thousands of Afar people to displace from their homes and shelter in refugee camps and desert lands. "If the western world had not put their hand in at the beginning of the war, we wouldn't be in this mess today. So, they interfered from the very beginning. They agreed with TPLF and allowed the destruction. At the same time, the fighting was going on and the public's suffering and hardship had been intensified. They only started talking about the suffering and hardship of Afar about six weeks ago."

TPLF's catastrophic destruction of civilian infrastructure has left hundreds of thousands of destitute Afar people to live in refugee camps or still in desert lands as they fled to escape from the radical group.

Noting the people of Tigray should entitle a voice in parliament, she highlighted that the TPLF must not return to power after all damages it has done in Amhara and Afar. "I think the U.S. position is reinstating the TPLF in the government. This is not going to go. The people of Tigray should have a space in the parliament as part of the

country, but not TPLF."

Similarly, according to the research conducted by the state's 10 universities together with the state's statistical office said the Terrorist TPLF (T-TPLF) forces executed and gang-raped over 7,000 civilians in their short-lived occupation of the Amhara State.

The study was conducted during the past five months and the data found out by the researchers were heartbreaking and gruesome, said Debre Markos University President Tafere Melaku (PhD).

Tafere, who is also Chairperson of the Amhara State Universities Forum, told local media that the study was carried out by researchers from ten universities and the state's statistics office.

According to the study, over 288 billion Birr worth of property was damaged out of most of the property owned by farmers. The study also documents close to 1,800 mass killing, 1,782 gang rapes and 579 tortures committed on civilians. In general, 828, 862 were direct victims. The information was revealed having carried out field observations and door-to-door interviews with witnesses and victims' families.

The researchers compiled videos, audio files, photographs and other necessary information about the findings. The main objective of the study is to expose TPLF's evil deeds and to aware the people of Ethiopia and the international community about these horrific atrocities.

He stated that while committing all those crimes, the TPLF terrorist group is planning for another devastating conflict and forcibly recruiting Tigray youths and children so as to satisfy their power hunger.

The report also said over 24,236 people faced human right abuses, while many others were allegedly kidnapped and their whereabouts are unknown. The war has claimed lives, displaced people from their home and left millions in need of food aid.

Women in Focus

Making public procurement work for women

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

Women in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Ethiopia have insignificant involvements in public procurements where expenditure on public procurement in the country takes the largest share from the annual government budget with 14 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

From the country's budget of 2021/22GC which is about 561.7 billion Birr/12.9 billion USD, it could be easily understood that the huge amount (64percent) spent is on public procurement.

According to the report of the International Trade Centre of the year 2020 entitled "Making Public Procurement Work for Women", public procurement accounts for almost 15 percent of GDP in developed countries, and the figure can reach as high as 40 percent in some developing countries. However, it is shocking that women-owned businesses account for a mere 1percent of this critical sector, the report said.

Lack of access to information on bids, lack of information about opportunities and requirements, complex procedures, corruptions and bias and strict financial and qualification requirements are identified as barriers for women entrepreneurs to win public tenders, as to the same source.

With the aim of improving the participation of women SMEs in Public Procurement, Center for Accelerated Women's Economic Empowerment (CAWEE) is closely working with its partners such as Oxfam, FEMNET (African Women's Development & Communications Network) and the EU as one of the key activities of the STITCH (Strengthened Network for Greater Impact) project in Ethiopia.

Thus, with the support secured from Oxfam, deploying local consultants, the first-ever policy influencing strategy was prepared in a participatory and highly consultative approach through the active involvements of key stakeholders of the project such as, the Public Procurement Agency at the Federal level, Public Procurement Agency of Addis Ababa City Administration and women in business groups, said Nigest Haile, Founder and Executive Director of CAWEE.

In-depth discussions were made with the representatives of such agencies and target groups and extensive desk review of relevant documents to assess the existing contexts like opportunities, challenges, possible solutions, risks and recommendations.

More specifically, ranges of consultations and discussions among stakeholders and in-depth desk reviews were used to identify current challenges and possible solutions and factors that need to change to identify people or institutions that influence and have power to change the things ought to change, and the tactics and tools that are needed to use (research, media, alliances, lobby, and mass mobilization), as to her.

The results of document reviews advised



the Government to take into account the different factors which may render policies to be less effective for marginalized groups, such as women and people with disabilities.

Several written documents are indicating that boosting women's businesses is largely believed to create jobs and inject the market with new ideas and competition and therefore, the Government is advised to Increase women-owned suppliers winning Government contracts. Moreover, the public procurement agency can also open opportunities for women by proactively seeking out and engaging women-owned businesses, as well as establishing a fair ground and redress procedures and simplify contracts to reduce preparation time for tenders.

Similarly, the government could apply affirmative action that encourages women in SMEs to easily benefit from public procurement and also plan for a gender-responsive procurement strategy that will ensure that goods and services procured take into account how they impact women, particularly the poorest and most marginalized group in society.

Recognizing the gendered aspects of corruption in the supply chain, and creating measures to both prevent and prosecute will help mitigate risks including monitoring gender-disaggregated procurement data, and it could be done to monitor competition and gaps, quality of implementation and understanding and addressing complaints of structural discrimination.

The overall goal of the policy influence is to ensure that women in SMEs secure preferred access to public procurement, thereby empowering them economically to contribute to a greater share in the economy of their families and the country due to the newly revised and enacted policies, legal frameworks and directives.

The main objectives of the Policy

Influencing Strategy are also said to increase the understanding and knowledge of policy and decision-makers in Ethiopia, it would develop positive behavioral changes towards the rationales and benefits of active involvement of women entrepreneurs in public procurement as well.

The existence of low policy attention towards public procurements, lack of SMEs friendly policy, directives and legislative on public procurements, prevalence of socio-cultural and economic problems, existences of poor coordination between and among procuring entities, lack of transparency & accountability, existences of misfit of tender design & suppliers, lack of understanding of women rights and knowledge on procurement procedures particularly about complaints review were among the problems identified through advocacy strategy.

Availability of SMEs friendly policy, directives and legislatives on public procurements will lead to improved recognition of women in SMEs. Plus, the existence of gender-responsive socio-cultural and economic context will lead to secure gender-responsive public procurement, the presences of improved coordination between and among procuring entities will help to have improved access of women to finance, time, information and mobility.

On the one hand, improved public procurement transparency and accountability will also lead to oversee fast procurement evaluation and contract award processing, the improved tender design will lead to have high participation of women in public procurements and ensure improved income and the improvements in knowledge of suppliers on procurement procedures is anticipated to lead to improvements of contract performance by suppliers, according to the Director.

She also noted that solutions are proposed to alleviate the problem in involving all the concerned ones: the Government, the private sector (Chambers & associations of women in business), women in SMEs, CSOs, involving men allies (using men Ambassadors), etc.

It is expected that such kinds of awareness creation forums will be instrumental in bringing together the concerned ones, like-minded partners, to take time to discuss the challenges that women in SMEs face in accessing public procurement and to propose and recommend remedial measures.

Though women make up half of the world's population, they are disproportionately represented among the most marginalized. Despite making significant, often unrecognized contributions to the social and economic development of their communities, they face multiple and overlapping barriers to realize their full potential in terms of access to education, information, decision-making power, earning power and many other challenges.

On the other hand, research has shown that successful efforts to promote women's economic empowerment not only positively impact incomes but also build self-confidence, enhance women's capacities within the household and community and contribute to improved education, health and security outcomes for families.

It has been enshrined in international conventions and declarations', including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and all available evidence confirms that supporting women's entrepreneurship and women-owned businesses helps to increase the pie for all to benefit. More importantly, women's economic empowerment is a necessity for long term sustainable development, the ultimate goal of the SDGs.

Society

Trapped in the net while using internet: The youth

BY TEWODROS KASSA

The invention of the internet has brought dynamic changes in this world. According to reports, the use of digital media, specifically social media, is growing at a rapid pace and the twenty-first century could be described as the “Boom” period for social networking. According to reports provided by Smart Insights, as of February 2019, there were over 3.484 billion social media users. The Smart Insight report indicates that the number of social media users is growing by 9 percent annually and this trend is expected to grow at the same pace. Presently, the number of social media users represents 45 percent of the global population. The heaviest users of social media are digital natives, the group of persons who were born or who have grown up in the digital era and are intimate with the various technologies and systems, and the “Millennial Generation”, those who became adults at the turn of the twenty-first century. These groups of users utilize social media platforms for just about anything ranging from marketing, news acquisition, teaching, health care, civic engagement, and politicking to social engagement.

However, the unethical use of social media has resulted in the breach of individual privacy and impacts both physical and information security. Reports in 2019 reveal that persons between the ages 8 and 11 years spend an average of 13.5 hours weekly online and 18 percent of this age group is actively engaged on social media. Those between ages 12 and 15 spend on average 20.5 hours online and 69 percent of this group are active social media users. While children and teenagers represent the largest internet user groups, for the most part, they do not know how to protect their personal information on the Web and are the most vulnerable to cyber-crimes related to breaches of information privacy.

In a press release sent to *The Ethiopian Herald*, Surfshark, a company working in cyber-security and a Gold winner in 2021 awards as the most innovative security service of the year announced that Ethiopia has the lowest data breach density worldwide.

The Cyber-security company Surfshark conducted a study on countries with the highest data breach rates worldwide. According to the research, Ethiopia has the lowest breach density in Africa and worldwide, with 0.5 breached email accounts per 100 internet users in 2021. At the same time, Sudan ranks first in the continent with 70 breached accounts (per 100 internet users). The research shows that Africa has the lowest breach rates on a continental level, followed by Asia and South America.

“Looking at the data breaches landscape in 2021, we see that 71.7 percent of the analyzed countries have a breach density that’s lower than the global average. This shows that hackers usually target particular



While social media are contributing a significant role in the daily activity of humankind, their adverse effect has also brought social crisis all over the society. This is especially true among the youth who are prone to internet addiction

countries such as Russia and the U.S. more than others,” – says Agneska Sablovskaja, Data Researcher at Surfshark. “However, 6 percent of all analyzed countries have an extremely high data breach density. To put this into perspective, more than half of the internet users in countries such as the U.S., Iran, Israel, the UAE, and Qatar got breached in 2021.”

While Africa has the lowest breach rates worldwide, North America has the highest, with 1 in 2 internet users being breached in 2021. This number is three times higher than the global average. Nevertheless, Iran is the country with the biggest breach density (231 emails per 100 users). The study also found that South Africa is the only African country making it to the top 10 countries with the most extensive overall cybercrime density. The country ranks 6th with 52 victims per 1M users in 2021, almost 92 times less than the list-leading UK (4,783 per 1M).

Data breaches are not the one and only way for criminals to get access to victims’ information. According to Surfshark’s study, phishing continues to be the most common cybercrime for the second year in a row. Accordingly, the following are some of the most popular cybercrimes worldwide.

In 2020, there were a total of 241,343 phishing victims. However, on average, phishing victims lost the least amount of money (USD136 per victim), while people who fell victim to investment fraud lost the most (USD 70,811 per victim on average).

At the same time, investment fraud had

the highest financial impact in total on its victims. People lost about USD 1,5B this way in 2021. That year the least impactful online crime was the Denial of Service (DoS) attacks – only around 1,000 victims reported this crime with an average loss of USD 197.

“As the geopolitical tensions grow, we might see more cyber warfare and 0day spyware similar to Pegasus,” explains Aleksandr Valentij, Security Officer at Surfshark.

In total, cybercrime claimed at least 6,502,323 victims and USD 26,116,000,000 in losses over the last 21-year period. Thus, countering malpractices on the internet should be the responsibility of everyone to ensure sustainable positive impacts on the day-to-day socio-economic aspects of human life.

Studies are showing that, while social media are contributing a significant role in the daily activity of humankind, their adverse effect has also brought social crisis all over the society. This is especially true among the youth who are prone to internet addiction. Overuse of social media, online video gaming and attempts to hack someone’s account is considered among the youth as a sign of excellence. What is more, those social media users in developing countries are becoming more and more addicted to unethical videos and instruments of political activists and their evil desires. In this respect, proper measures are recommended by experts. This includes active involvement of parents, teachers and other concerned organs.