



# The Ethiopian Herald

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## Ethiopia's commitment to Africa's cause unwavering: Premier

• In Nigeria for state visit

BY ABDUREZAK MOHAMMED

ADDIS ABABA- Being the leader of Ethiopia which is the bedrock of Africa's

Unity, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) seized his Africa Day best wish to reaffirm his country's everlasting commitment for a united, integrated, prosperous Africa.

In his twitter message in connection with the Africa Day, which marked the establishment of the Organization of the African Unity

See Ethiopia's ... Page 3

## Summit highlights 'African values' to repel today's challenges

• Marks Africa Day

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- African youths need to take the past liberation struggles as the inspirational tool to join hands in repelling contemporary challenges, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen said.

The Deputy Premier made the above remark here yesterday while opening the three-day Pan-African Summit which is being held under the theme 'Building on Pan-African ties and Promoting indigenous knowledge in Africa' in connection with the Africa Day.

Demeke noted in his speech that African youths should turn challenges into opportunities by equipping themselves



Photo: Tsehay Nigussie

with distilled information and knowledge. The massive youth population of the continent is considered a blessing for the continental aspirations. "The youths should

remain optimistic and learn from others to contribute to their society, country, continent, and the world."

As to him, Ethiopia has unwavering commitment to the execution of Pan-Africanist ideals and its commitment is not affected by regime changes. Ethiopia has contributed greatly to the realization of Pan-Africanism and the establishment of the Organization of the African Unity (OAU), the forerunner of the African Union (AU). "The thoughts that we try to connect from our past will help us to see the future clearly. Learned wisdom gained from the struggle of our forefathers is valuable for the future of our continent. Our forefathers fought for independence, for freedom and liberation of our continents. We just need to learn from this sacrifice."

See Summit highlights .... Page 3

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Photo Dagne Abera

## Gov't backs domestic participation in manufacturing

Page 3

## Ethiopian orders five Boeing 777 Freighters

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA- The Ethiopian Airlines, the largest and leading aviation group in Africa, and its longstanding partner, Boeing Inc. today announced the carrier is further

See Ethiopian... Page 3

Aspiring structural change through the homegrown economic reform

Page 6

Addis Ababa: A city of contrast

Page 7



# News

## MIDROC Ethiopia lauds gov't attention to private sector

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** – MIDROC Investment Group (MIG) has applauded the effort of the Ethiopian government to encourage local producers and the private sector via building their capacity to be successful in various engagements though some shortcomings are witnessed.

Speaking at an event, named 'About Ethiopia,' organized by *The Ethiopian Press Agency* at Dire Dawa City, MIG CEO Jemal Ahmed said what the government is working to encourage the private investor in various spheres is worth mentioning.

Jemal further noted that Ethiopians have been providing markets with a range of products directly following the favorable conditions created by the government. For example, Ethiopian coffee and other products are supplied to various markets by Ethiopians, whereas it is not common in the other African nations as foreigners provide them with. "MIG has taken the lead in terms of coffee exporting out of the industries operating in Ethiopia though the

government has been playing a vital role towards this end."

The movement called 'Ethiopia Produces' aiming at building manufacturing sectors capacity is a good will that enables the country to attract the foreign direct investment, and MIDROC is always ready to work with the government and other institutions to make a difference at national level. "Some shortcomings and gaps hindering the realization of private sector operation as expected are witnessed through the government has been striving to encourage the private investor."

As to him, lack of adequate finance, foreign currency, unequal chance between the foreign investors and the domestic investors (the foreigner take a lion's share in taking privileges) and the likes are the major problems that are attributable to the sluggish pace of domestic private sector operators.

Responding to Jemal's concerns, Finance Minister Ahmed Shide also said the government has been carrying out reform targeting at lessening the challenges of the private sector in a sustainable manner. The



Photo: Dagne Abera

minister also noted that the government is identifying the sectors which seriously question the foreign currency with a view to encouraging local producers.



## Local firm exports heavy trucks to neighboring countries

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA**- Local manufacturer Frankun ET Automotive Engineering PLC has exported heavy trucks to neighboring countries for the 15<sup>th</sup> round.

The industry displayed its products at Friendship Square Tuesday in the presence of senior government officials.

Speaking at the event, Founder and Owner of the Industry, Francisco Viloni stated the organization was established ten years ago and started exporting more than 15 trucks to neighboring countries earlier. The industry sold 200 cars for the local market so far

and it has received orders from buyers to produce 67 heavy trucks.

For Industry Minister Melaku Alebel, industries situated anywhere in the nation are striving for seizing the ladder of success by overcoming problems they have been facing at different times. "The work of Frankun is encouraging and helps boost truck manufacturing process as well as get the production well reinvigorated. To this end, the government would provide the industry with all sorts of assistance."

Frankun ET Automotive Engineering PLC is the sole assembler of trucks in Ethiopia and is expected to generate 320 jobs upon fully operational.

## Sustainable peace key for economic growth: Scholar

BY MULATU BELACHEW

**ADDIS ABABA**- Improving the political situation in the nation is useful in addressing bottlenecks compromising economic growth and helps the government run a range of activities towards enhancing citizens' wellbeing, according to a renowned economist.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Gutu Tesso (PhD) said that the country is expected to prioritize the issue of peace and security as it is essential to realize sustainable and steady economic growth in the country. "Obviously, security problems in the country have been challenges to the economic growth."

The academician also indicated that since absence of sustainable and steady growth will impact the country's politics, ensuring peace and political stability will help correct the trajectory of the economic growth.

If the political situation is improved and the main economic growth bottlenecks are resolved, the economic growth will revive soon. Since Ethiopia has a suitable climate for agriculture, utilizing



Gutu Tesso (PhD)

such favorable conditions is timely and necessary for modernizing the agricultural sector thereby boosting production and productivity.

As Ethiopia is rich in natural resources, and possesses various tourism resources, utilizing this natural resource in order to generate income that supports the national economic growth is decisive, the economist recommended.



# News

## 3 East African countries ink TEVT harmonization accord

**ADDIS ABABA**-Three East African Countries namely Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania have signed an agreement to contribute their share to the harmonization of Technical Education and Vocational Training (TEVT) education systems at continental level beyond East Africa within the ambit of African Continental Qualifications Framework.

Speaking at the opening of a high level workshop to adopt the East African Qualification Framework for TEVT, Deputy Executive Secretary Inter University Council for East Africa, Prof. Mike Kuria said that the agreement helps ensure mobility of TVET learners and professionals thereby making mutual recognition of qualifications a reality.

He also conveyed a message to East African states to look forward to adopting the East African Qualifications Framework for TVET.

He said, "When we began this process to harmonize TVET qualifications for Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania at a meeting in Nairobi, Kenya in March 2020, it appeared to be a long and difficult journey. I remember that moment; it was during this time that the first Covid-19 case was discovered in Kenya."

Representing the Ethiopian government Labor and Skills State Minister Assegid Getachew said it requires stronger institutional collaboration and coordination amongst all concerned parties. "I would like to add my utmost assurance that the Ministry is fully prioritizing and supporting the implementation of the East African Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project (EASTRIP)."

As to him, this project will have quite a lot of benefits including exploiting economies of scale to lower costs of training for individual countries on specialized and

certified training programs, facilitating mobility of technology and skilled labor, promoting peer learning among countries and institutions, sharing good policies and practices and targeting employment toward regional economic corridors such as the Northern and Central Initiatives and other mega infrastructure projects in the region.

Dr. Margaret W. Mwakima Principal Secretary State Department for Vocational and Technical Training on her part said that EASTRIP is a multilateral project whose short-term impact is being felt across Sub-Saharan Africa, but its long-term impact is global.

The development of training programs and commencement of infrastructural development in each country has achieved the skills for transformation component of the EASTRIP project. However, the regional integration interventions remains a challenge

as was underscored during the project midterm review held from November 2021 to February 2022 in the three participating Countries.

It is important that the three participating countries come together and agree to work towards the mutually recognized qualifications. This will achieve the intended results and meet the ultimate project development objectives; the strategies for regional staff and students exchange and enrolment, discussions with our Institutions to be candid, innovative and focused on good practices. The institutions should inform the conference of mitigation measures on the challenges they have experienced, it was stated.

The participating countries come together and agree to work towards the mutually recognized qualifications to achieve the intended results and meet the ultimate project development objectives on skill development.

## Gov't backs domestic participation in manufacturing

BY GETNET TESFAMARIAM

**ADDIS ABABA**- Ethiopia's private sector has become a major employer and is supplementing the country's rapid economic progress, the Ministry of Finance said adding that the government wants to boost the sector's role in the manufacturing industry.

The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) has organized a panel discussion concerning industrial development in Dire Dawa city under the theme 'About Ethiopia' recently. Speaking at the occasion, Finance Minister Ahmed Shede expressed the government's interest to enhance the role and contribution of local investors in the manufacturing sector.

Ahmed further highlighted that the manufacturing industry will grow mainly with the active participation of local investors which is being facilitated by the government's provision of favorable business climate as well as the availability of land and other amenities.

The government is also facilitating sizable finance for local businesses in the manufacturing sector and a substantial amount of loans is provided by the Development Bank of Ethiopia for this purpose. A significant portion of the loan is made available to the private sector. "The government is doing its level best to expand infrastructure, ensure the rule of law and increase foreign supply. Efforts are also being made to alleviate bureaucratic hurdles in the provision of public services."

Noting support needs to be given to local investors to enhance competitiveness in the manufacturing industry, the minister emphasized that this does not mean the industry can only succeed at domestic capacity. "Indeed, local and foreign investors are vital parts for the economic growth and coordinating the two has also brought a significant success in various industrial parks. Our financial and technical capabilities are limited and we will continue to support both to work together."

The integration of local and foreign investors will play an important role for Ethiopia's economic progress and the government also encourages the participation of foreign companies which have the desired capital, technology and expertise, Ahmed remarked.

Expressing his confidence in the African youths and that they will dedicate lives for the unity and integration of the continent, the Deputy Premier wished them a successful deliberation that will be a great platform for many succeeding generations.

Women and Social Affairs Minister, Ergogie Tesfaye (PhD) said on her part that Ethiopia's victory in the Battle of Adwa is inspiring Pan-African movements and anti-colonialism struggles. "As history reveals, the contribution of Ethiopia is significant in the realization of Pan-Africanism. The victory of Adwa since it was the first

## Summit highlights...

victory for African nations and all black people against colonialism, the victory had elevated the psychological makeup of Africans and black people everywhere."

Although poverty still challenges Africa, the youths should deal with it with a problem-solving mentality and undivided attention to education, she added. Accordingly, the government of Ethiopia set up a homegrown economic reform plan and identified priority sectors to engage the youths in productive activities. "The human capital we have is unskilled and technologically unequipped. In the

absence of technological and financial capitals, we cannot get rid of poverty from the continent. Our continent is expected to pay its attention to the development of technology, and innovation."

Ergogie further stated that African countries should cooperate and create a platform to develop digital technology for the benefit of all. "I just would like to strongly recommend our African youth, especially the social media actors, to use technology in the way that it can contribute to the change of society's livelihoods."

## Ethiopia's commitment...

(OAU) on May 25, 1963, the Premier stated that his government sticks with the vision of continental unity. "We are also maintaining the commitment of our predecessors towards a peaceful, integrated and prosperous future."

Commenting on the issue to The Ethiopian Herald, Diplomacy and International Relations Lecturer at Ethiopian Civil Service University Endale Nigussie said the unwavering commitment of Ethiopian governments for Africa's cause makes the country unique. Ethiopia's stance for a peaceful and prosperous Africa has not changed due to regime change.

The academician further noted that Ethiopia has made a noble contribution to the liberation

of Africans from colonialism. Emperor Haile-Selassie's meticulous effort to reconcile the Monrovia and Casablanca groups is widely regarded as the instrument to establish the OAU that helped to liberate several African countries under the yoke of colonialism.

OAU was established with the aim of promoting the unity and solidarity of the African States; and coordinating and intensifying their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the people of Africa. The organization is also mandated to defend African countries' sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence as well as eradicate all forms of colonialism.

"When we think of African countries that

were colonized at that time, we understand the importance of the institution and the irreplaceable role of Ethiopia, as most African countries, except the former, was under colonial rule. Ethiopia is still giving priority to Africa's cause and it is crucial to strengthen coordination with fellow Africans to overcome pressing challenges"

Meanwhile, on Africa Day, Ethiopia's high level delegation led by Prime Minister Abiy arrived in Nigeria for a two-day official visit. Premier Abiy is expected to hold talks with Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari on bilateral and regional issues of mutual significance.

## Ethiopian orders five....

expanding its all-Boeing freighter fleet with an order for five 777 Freighters (current freighters).

Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mesfin Tasew said the addition of the five B777 Freighters into the airliner cargo fleet will enable it to meet the growing demand in the cargo operation. "While cementing our partnership with the Boeing Company with new orders, the growth of our freighter fleet takes the capacity and efficiency of our shipment service to the next level."

We always strive to serve our customers with the latest technology aircraft the aviation industry could offer. Our Africa's largest cargo terminal coupled with fuel efficient freighters and well trained cargo handling professionals will enable our customers to get the best quality shipment service. Customers can rely on Ethiopian for wide-ranging cargo services across five

continents."

Boeing's market-leading 777 Freighter is the world's largest, longest-range and most capable twin-engine freighter currently flying with 17 percent lower fuel use and emissions compared to prior airplanes. Ethiopian Airlines currently operates a fleet of nine 777 freighters, utilizing the range of 4,970 nautical miles (9,200 km) and maximum structural payload of 107 tonnes (235,900 lb) to connect Africa with 66 dedicated cargo centers throughout Asia, Europe, the Middle East and the Americas. Ethiopian Cargo and Logistics Services covers 127 international destinations around the world with both belly hold capacity and dedicated freighter services.

"We value the trust that Ethiopian Airlines places in the 777 Freighter to support their cargo ambitions which will provide them with

increased capability and flexibility to their operations," said Hssane Mounir, Boeing's senior vice president of Commercial Sales and Marketing. "Additional 777 Freighters will enable Ethiopian to capitalize on near-term cargo demand, while positioning the airline for further expansion in the future," the CEO remarked.

In early March 2022, Boeing and Ethiopian Airlines also announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the intent to purchase five 777-8 Freighters, the industry's newest, most capable and most fuel-efficient twin-engine freighter.

Ethiopian Airlines also operates three 737-800 converted freighters, as well as a combined passenger fleet of more than 80 Boeing jets including 737s, 767s, 787s and 777s, according to the press release the airliner sent to *The Ethiopian Herald*.



# Opinion

## Balancing the diet via intensifying urban agriculture

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Urban agriculture has recently been recognized as an important economic sector. It has gained attention in many developing countries following their rapid urbanization. Urban agriculture has a critical role in urban economy, producing output and creating employment for labor engaged in the sector. Studies show that this sector contributes largely to the urban economy of the developing countries. There are, however, gaps in terms of institutional and policy support for this sector. In this regard, studies have to be conducted on the macroeconomic aspects of the sector as they contribute to decision making by development planners. In Ethiopia, there is a need to clarify the concept of urban agriculture in formulating sector, regional, and national economic development policies and strategies.

Researches reveal that the size of population in every country has been rising in the past decades. Similarly, urban population has been increasing at a faster rate, but accompanied by urban poverty. Following this, many countries have focused on urban agriculture as a strategy for creating urban employment. Urban agriculture is complementary to rural agriculture in providing food security, and in contributing to the social, economic and environmental security of a country. Urban infrastructure connects consumers directly to farms thereby reducing agricultural profit margins, and allows for the efficient and effective use of urban resources. Urban agriculture also creates environmentally sustainable urban areas that integrate various resources such as land, water, energy and infrastructure for use by urban farmers. Thus, it has to be guided by urban development plan.

It is believed that urban agriculture has the potential to enable national and global efforts to promote sustainable rural and urban development. Thus, it is attaining increasing attention in the developing countries, including Ethiopia where the rates of urbanization and the number of poverty stricken and food insecure people are high. As a developing country, Ethiopia is facing high growth rate of population, rapid rates of urbanization and rising food prices and high cost of living. In this situation, urban agriculture has an important role in advancing sustainable urban development in the country. However, urban agriculture in Ethiopia has been given little or no attention from researchers, policy makers, planners and other stakeholders.

The existing literature provides little information on the macroeconomic role of urban agriculture at local, regional and national levels. Therefore, future studies will have to focus on the missing areas, to give an abstract and a summation of urban agriculture in Ethiopia. These studies may

discuss the role of the sector in the total economy, with reference to size of land, types of harvest, marketing, employment, income, food security, poverty reduction and the GDP. The studies should influence further research on the various aspects of urban agriculture to inform policy makers. In particular, they should diagnose the current state of urban agriculture in the country. These studies may show where the farming activities take place. The sector is often left unreported due to its low contribution to the urban economy.

The lack of institutions with clear mandate has negatively affected the sector until recently. Researchers still depend on sample survey reports to have a glimpse of the sector in the overall agricultural production, employment and income generation. When referring to its contribution as related to the overall crop production, the shares vary from very low to low. In this regard, it is useful to take into account the low proportion of population living in urban areas which is less than twenty percent of the total. Moreover, the size of urban population engaged in agriculture is comparatively low. In this situation, the contribution of urban agriculture to the urban economy is assumed to be low in terms of its share in gross domestic product(GDP). As an informal sector, in which the number of small enterprises is concentrated, its share in the total income is expected to be low. This indicates the strong association of the poor working people with the urban informal sector.

The urban center in Ethiopia is a major political, industrial, and commercial focal point that explains its miniscule share of urban agriculture in the total GDP. Although a large majority of the population is engaged in rural agriculture, the share of urban employment in the total labor force has increased through time. Income of urban workers increased slowly as compared to the rising cost of living in the urban areas. There is, however, an increasing trend in urban employment as urban agricultural activities have increased with time. This reveals the importance of urban agriculture although it is an untapped economic sector in Ethiopia. It is considered as a secondary or minor activity for the majority of the urban farmers, who are also engaged in the informal sector. Yet, it continues to engage workers using the same traditional means of farming as the rural agriculture where both land and labor are relatively abundant.

In Ethiopia, crop yields in urban areas are very low as compared to that of the rural agriculture. This situation reveals that urban agriculture is not yet fully exploited in the country partly due to the absence of clear policy and legal framework related to investment in the sector. This implies two issues, the first of which is related to allocation of land for urban agriculture, which competes with other urban land

uses, such as, green areas, parking lots and playgrounds. The second issue is its influence on the number and capacity of wastewater treatment plants which in turn determines the quantity and quality of fresh water available to urban area. For instance, organic waste in the cities is dumped on land while wastewater is used to irrigate urban areas. Thus, ascertaining the importance of the sector, some big urban areas have recently started establishing institutions for urban development. There is, however, low awareness among policy makers on the importance of the sector. This is due to lack of concrete national urban agricultural policy framework.

There are several reasons to consider urban agriculture an important economic sector in Ethiopia. This is true in light of the current economic development in the country. In particular, issues such as unemployment, poverty, and inequality are still major economic problems in urban areas. Urban unemployment has recently shown a significant increase. In parallel, there is growth in urban poverty and inequality. Also, food price is rising over time. This is explained partly by the low level of agricultural productivity which is not growing enough to satisfy demand for food. The driving force behind the rise in demand is the high growth rate of population which contributes to poverty. The urban poor in Ethiopia are becoming increasingly vulnerable to price shocks. Also, the trade margins or profits in Ethiopia are high due to poor transport infrastructure. The difference between producer and retail urban prices for agricultural produce are high contributing to inflation.

Studies reveal that rural households usually provide less than a quarter of their agricultural output to urban markets, retaining the rest for their own consumption and for seeds. Urban food security, therefore, may be compromised, particularly, during environmental changes such as flood and droughts. The studies also show that calorie consumption among urban households is less than their rural counterparts. The growth of rural agricultural productivity is facing a number of environmental constraints. Agricultural land is declining due to high population growth and severe degradation of land which supports the country's population. At the same time, soil erosion on the highlands is negatively affecting the productivity of land, causing its degradation. Climate change and variability increase the risks to agricultural productivity in Ethiopia.

A combination of factors, including high growth rate of population, climate change, and inappropriate use of water are projected to increase water scarcity in the country. Therefore, with the current agricultural system in place, it may be difficult to meet the rising food demands due to population growth which is expected to contribute to urban poverty.

In urban areas of Ethiopia, poverty among female-headed households is higher than among male-headed ones. Also, unemployment rate among women is higher than men. Yet, the proportion of female agricultural holders is bigger in urban areas than in rural areas. The wage gap between male and female in some developing countries is narrow in urban agriculture compared with the wage gap in other urban industries.

Studies reveal that with the rapid rate of urbanization, urban water and organic wastes are expected to rise. Unless it is recycled and reused, this will need more public spending on waste disposal by the municipality. Urban areas are markets and political centers in which many rural farmers make frequent visits for different purposes. Thus, urban agriculture may serve as example for rural farmers. They may observe its contribution to urban real income by improving direct access to food products, generating extra income, and reducing expenditure on food. African households engaged in urban agriculture earned income which was bigger than that of other urban wage earners. In other words, as self-employed workers, their monthly income was much better than some of the workers engaged in various private firms. Experience from African towns indicates that urban vegetable growers earn monthly income which is more than a net monthly income of a public servant.

Urban agriculture helped to partly reduce the effects of changes in price on real income and consumption among urban households. This was partly due to the agricultural products with high profit, such as vegetables and fruits which grow in urban areas. Thus the sector could improve urban food supply and diversify sources of nutritional diets.

Urban agriculture could also generate employment, empower women economically and narrow gender inequality and reduce urban poverty. In addition, it could serve as an instrument for effective management, recycling, reusing of urban waste. However, municipal authorities in Ethiopia should note that the use of urban waste for urban agriculture should be accompanied with policy, program and project guidelines on appropriate technology. These guidelines should be strictly observed by those engaged in urban agriculture, particularly in the safe use of waste matter in agriculture. The policy should be designed to promote efficient resource use and environmental sustainability in growing urban areas of Ethiopia. This is particularly useful in the context of scarcity of water in urban areas.

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

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## Editorial

### Beyond observing the day

Yesterday was Africa Day. May 25 is annually observed since Africa made history with the foundation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on 25 May 1963. The day had formerly been known as African Freedom Day and African Liberation Day. The OAU was transformed into the African Union (AU) on 9 July 2002 in Durban, South Africa, but the holiday continues to be celebrated in various countries across the African continent, as well as around the world on 25 May.

The aim of the commemoration is to acknowledge the progresses of the OAU (now the AU) since its formation on May 25, 1963, in the fight against colonialism and apartheid. Indeed, the celebration also plays significant roles in encouraging Africans to review the achievements the continent has been registering in development and continental integration.

In his congratulatory message, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed stated, "On this Africa Day, we affirm the vision of continental unity and the commitment of our ancestors towards a peaceful, integrated and prosperous future." Sure, the day is an opportunity to affirm and promote the continent's unity, deeper regional integration and founders' vision that can determine Africa's destiny.

Interestingly, this year's celebration has been dedicated to recognize the contributions of the young people. The youths and young adults of Africa who have made their mark in the world through their accomplishments in various areas such as Social Activism, Science, Technology, Sports, Art, Film, literature and the like would be recognized. It is hoped that the recognition will encourage other African youths to contribute their share in creating the Africa we want.

Certainly, recognizing the youths' achievement is a wise decision! Evidence indicates that Africa has a high young population in the world, with 70 percent of sub-Saharan Africa under the age of 30. Recognizing the contributions of such a high number of young people is indisputably a tremendous opportunity for the continent's growth as it encourages other youths to maximize their potential. Besides the progress achieved so far, more needs to be done to exploit the untapped potential of the young people. This assuredly requires high commitment from African leaders who can well predict Africa's destiny in the global arena.

More importantly, the youth ought to be well aware of the continent's existing opportunities and challenges as well as the goals and worldviews of pan-Africanism. They must walk as determined pan-Africanists who can transform Africa and regulate its place in the global arena. Stressing the idea of 'African solutions for African challenges', the youth essentially should strengthen their unity that enables them to work towards the goal of Pan-Africanism.

All in all, it is crucial for Africans to explore the opportunities embedded in celebrating the day. Dedicating this year's celebration to recognize youths' achievements would result in positive influence. And in turn, the youth should cultivate a strategic pan-African worldview while the leaders ought to work to equip national and regional institutions to deliver on the promise of political and economic development. Besides identifying and addressing the constraints that have been hindering African integration, African leaders must work relentlessly to determine the roles and place of Africa in the global movement. Accomplishing all these will inevitably realize the Africa we want.

## Opinion

### Mutual understanding for breaking hostility sword

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Needless to state, Ethiopians do have a longstanding and entrenched culture of respect, supporting one another at bad times and combating common foe together. Such an awesome lifeline has so far been spoiled following the evil acts of the terrorist TPLF as the group has been capitalizing on divisive fashion instead of consolidating unity, fattening personal gain instead of serving the society, providing the public with rivalry agendum instead of amicable gesture and common understanding.

All activities the terrorist group has been undertaking undermine peaceful coexistence among citizens of the country as it has these days shifting its approach to sow hostility among Christians, Muslims, and other religious and ethnic groups though it has not been fruitful so far.

These heinous acts of extremists stem from ideas that are totally incompatible with the shared cultures of the people and history of the nation; rather it contradicts authentic religious teachings and harmonious way of living that lasted for almost three thousand years. True, all evil deeds of T-TPLF harm the image of faiths and destroy communion between the cohorts of diverse religions,

but these destructive actions lead bandits nowhere since all religions call for peace and coexistence among congregations.

As religions have started denouncing in the strongest terms the persecution of the faithful in general and all sorts of ethnic communities in particular, situations have come to the right track and those who have manipulated religion to justify violence against people of other faiths and desecrated sacred sites and symbols will never have leeway hereafter.

Further, it is quite important to call upon all countries who are involved in some way with this struggle, together with the international community and its international organizations to find a rapid and appropriate solution to the problems in Ethiopia.

New Ethiopia has cherished its independence, actively sought peaceful coexistence with other countries around the world and worked hard to improve its external environment, particularly in its surrounding area, the Horn, of course with a special emphasis to come up with common prosperity.

The values of Peaceful Coexistence have to be well entertained and leaders must point out an effective way to peacefully address the disputes arise among citizens under the guise of religion

and other related factors, give a strong protection to the interests of fellow citizens and serve the improvement and expansion of a win-win relations. They have to provide citizens with an important philosophical basis for the establishment of a new national and international political and economic order that is just and rational.

Surprisingly, the question of peace is yet to be resolved, the question of development has become even more obscure though a more secured peace and greater development is the common aspiration of the people of the universe. The myriads of problems facing Ethiopia and the Horn in particular and the world over in general have to receive immediate, long-term and unremitting efforts of all countries and their strengthened friendship and cooperation. In doing so, it would be possible to create a chaos free planet.

Yes, sovereignty is the birthmark of any independent state, the crystallization of its national interests and the best safeguard of all it holds dear. That is why all Ethiopians at home and from abroad are moving in unison these days and consolidating peaceful coexistence to make Ethiopia new. The wrong seeds sowed before have to be rooted out and it is high time for Ethiopia to bring

about real difference in all aspects.

Yes, no country has the right to impose its will on others, nor can it undermine or deny other countries' sovereignty under whatever excuse. Facts have proven that such practices disregarding other's sovereignty are becoming rampant nowadays. For instance, Ethiopia has been challenged by a number of conspiracies and ill attempts to pass in a trying scenario.

However, all diabolic spirits can be well aborted following Ethiopians unity, peaceful co-existence and sense of belongingness to work hard for this beloved motherland—Ethiopia.

It is essential to remove the root causes that breed antagonism and jealousy by standing on guard against and striking hard on terrorism in all forms and manifestations. True, aspiring for peace, development and cooperation has become the popular will of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the irresistible tide of the times against Ethiopia. Let us move in unison flying our flag high under the umbrella of peaceful coexistence to confidently overcome Ethiopia's foes.

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



# Business & Economy

## Aspiring structural change through the homegrown economic reform

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Ethiopia planned its 10 years perspective economic plan and has been implementing for the last two years and will continue up to 2030. The plan was prepared by the Ministry of Plan and Development.

According to the Minister, Fitsum Assefa (PhD), the plan has a motto, "Making Ethiopia African Beacon of Prosperity". As to her, agriculture plays pivotal role in the nation's economic growth and the poverty reduction scheme. But to unleash its huge potential by enhancing production and productivity the challenges witnessed in the sector must be resolved.

The government is endeavoring to make the sector playing crucial role to ensuring food security; substitute imported foods; and boost its foreign currency earning capacity. Considering this lofty idea, in the last three years reform works had been implemented in the sector. As to the Minister, the sector in the past did not get sufficient attention in the aspect of finance, foreign currency, and technology that used as inputs. Therefore, to reverse the situation, in the last three years special loan which ever had in terms of amount has been allocated to the sector.

In addition, budget also allocated to institutions which have stake in agriculture to expand irrigation farms both in the low and high land areas of the country.

The collateral requirement put as criterion to get loan from Banks in the past has been a constraint to the agriculture sector. Similarly, pastoral community was inhibited to secure loan from banks because of the collateral requirements. But now implementation of the new economic reform has enabled to halt all constraints and by now both sectors could obtain loan from banks by using their movable assets as collateral. Therefore, financing the sectors could be possible.

The other measure that have been taken to modernize agriculture is utilization of technologies such as tractors, machinery, milking machines and other inputs could be imported free of tax.

New farming techniques that can improve the productivity of the sector also introduced and among others farming in cluster way can be mentioned. In the past, small holder farmers claimed that the smallness of their plot inhibited them from raising their productivity and production but the cluster farming technique could break that thinking and increase their production.

To that end, the provision of extension service to farmers played pivotal role for the registered achievement. In Bale and Arsi zones of Oromia region and in western and eastern Gojam zones of Amhara region, undertaking cluster farming scheme could be cited as the farmer's success in rising production.

In addition to these, through implementing the summer irrigation farm, raising wheat production could bring tremendous result. The venture by now plays pivotal role in stabilizing the market which face shortage of



10 year perspective plan intended to make Ethiopia African Beacon of Prosperity by 2030

supply. It also plays its own role in ensuring food security. For all these achievement, as to Fitsum, the credit goes to the homegrown economic reform plan.

According to studies, from 2011 to 2020 the agriculture export plan accomplishment was 73.8 percent; manufacturing 12.2 percent and mining was 11.2 percent. Asked what plan was drafted to boost the export in terms of kinds of products and value addition, Fitsum replied that a given economy growth, development and modernity depends on the achievement in bringing structural change.

The structural change manifests itself in modernizing agriculture, manufacturing and mining because they are core economic activities among others. Besides, the stranded labor suffocated in the rural part of the country must be shifted to none farming sector which has high productivity capacity such as manufacturing. Agricultural products also must be supplied to the foreign market not in the raw form rather, with value addition. The mining sector also should supply its products to the industry to be used as inputs. The creation of job and the income obtained in such activities boost the nation's economy and improve citizens' living.

During the EPRDF time in the past, there were plans to bring structural change but was not successful. The producing industry, in fact, has its own limitation in terms of competency. The level of its value addition on agricultural products has not shown progress as expected of it. Adding an insult to injury, industries import 70 percent of their inputs that cost them high amount of hard currency while using very little inputs from the local sources.

The other weakness that should be mentioned is the great significance of forward and back ward linkage between the heavy and small industries. Such situations will leave the economy to be vulnerable to spontaneous shock.

Similar to the agricultural sector, in the 10 years perspective economic plan, priority is given to the manufacturing industry sector. The government has an ambition to raise the sector's productivity and its competency in the international market.

As to Fitsum, Ethiopia is endowed with abundant natural resources and 100+ million populations. Thus, through tapping such huge resources, the industry will be the source to create wealth in the coming 10 years. However, in the past two years, due to the outbreak of COVID 19 and the war in the northern part of the country, Ethiopia could not obtain the necessary financial support from partners. Some western countries, by ignoring atrocities committed by the Terrorist TPLF, blame Ethiopia blindly as if it violates human rights and halt their support. On the other hand, unless Ethiopia develops modern and competent industry at the international level, achieving strong economy could be an attempt to reach for the stars. In line with this, creating viable job opportunity for hundreds of thousands is impossible. Commendably, various works still have been done by the Ministry of Industry to modernize the manufacturing sector.

There are also tangible results registered by the sector's good performance. For example, industry accomplished its 80 percent of plan in the last 9 months. The export sector also obtained 400 million USD in the last 9 months. While the nation has come across sever political turmoil, the achievement when evaluated, it is remarkable. The sector suffered a great lose at the international level due to the outbreak of COVID 19. In such a situation, industry parks play pivotal role to boost the export earnings. But more has to be done in the coming years for the reason that the industry contributes only 12.2 percent for the export earnings yet.

The 10 years perspective economic growth plan targets to raise the contribution of the manufacturing sector to the GDP from 6.9

*Unless Ethiopia develops modern and competent industry at the international level, achieving strong economy could be an attempt to reach for the stars*

percent to 17.2 percent by the year 2030. It also intends to enhance the sector employing capacity from the current 5 percent to 15 percent. Asked whether the plan is achievable or not, Fitsum noted that industrialization needs cultural change which takes long time. The industrial revolution broke out in 18 century in Europe had been under gone up to the 19 century and that cumulative efforts made the western countries to reach the economically advanced level currently witnessed. And for such development the Cultural Revolution played its own determinant role.

She further said that, development could not be achieved over night it rather needs a century long struggle and commitment. It needs creativity, imitation, patency, profound knowledge and more over industrial culture. Hence, when talking of industrialization as to her, it is essential to ask when Ethiopia did begin industry production and the response is less than 100 years, which lasted for very short time. Therefore, acknowledging this is essential.

However, with regard to achieving the plan, first looking the vision and the plan vitality is essential. There were various economic policies formulated by successive regimes; so that looking into their strength and weakness is essential to gain lesson for improving the weakness while scaling up the strength.

As to the Minister, following in depth observation of the plan the 10 years perspective economic plan, consensus has been reached by all the stakeholders that the industry must play a backbone role for the nation's economic growth. Moreover, creating forward and back ward linkage between small scale, medium and large industries has been underlined.

Providing sufficient inputs to the industries mostly from local sources got emphasize. Therefore, it can be said that the plan is achievable.



# Art & Culture

## Addis Ababa: A city of contrast

BY KFLEYESUS ABEBE

“Inspiring yet heartbreaking, vibrant yet chaotic, fascinating yet at times incredibly frustrating.” This was what Indian city Calcutta was described. Back in high school, I remember reading an essay titled “Calcutta a city of contrast.” In the essay, you see how fascinating Calcutta is for its monuments, many heritage buildings, cemeteries, shopping malls, eateries, all kinds of well-paid work, private hospitals and other useful service facilities. The city is indeed influential, vivacious and riveting. But the city is also ever-changing, polluted, and very busy and many people struggle with life.

Likewise, Addis Ababa has different attractive places ranging from monuments, national museums to luxuries shopping malls. Right on your arrival in Addis Ababa, you will be met with spacious airport. As your cab can take you to luxury hotels, you can witness the beauty of the city for yourself. Addis Ababa cannot be compared to any city in the country. It has wide, long roads contrasting with thin, dark and confusing alleys. The cathedrals, the mosque, the national museum or the national theatre are some of places you could stop by. There are luxury apartments, shopping malls, restaurants, very modern Cinemas, recreation parks, and parking lots. The recent constructions in the city like Unity Park, Entoto Park, Meskel Square and others in constructions have started giving new look for the city. Indeed it is a city any visitor won't regret visiting.

As Calcutta (now called Kolkatta), Addis Ababa is also a city of contrast. From crowded bus terminals, you would see people hurrying and brushing sides to get into a taxi. On your way, you may see very brand cars as you see people in old cars or waiting long hours to find a bus. There are tall buildings, villa houses and mansions as there are also simple houses or people sharing a single room for many or even you will see people sleeping on the street. Some people say high rise buildings have hidden dimensions of poverty. You see people wearing very stylish clothes every day as there are people who wear ragtag. You may see people full packed in expensive restaurants but you meet also people who begs you for daily bread. There are rich neighborhoods in suburbs of the city but there are shanty houses and neighborhoods maybe at the downtown. The contrasts in fact gave alternatives for people with



*“From a thorn comes a rose, and from a rose comes a thorn,” Addis Ababa has a chance to live up its name*

different economies. However, there is still life struggle as some are very comfortable to live in Addis Ababa. Some people even say tall buildings have covered it all.

The economic model changed from command economy to capitalism in the past

three decades might have helped the country to achieve fast economic stride in the region. But this uncontrolled progress has also caused economic inequality within the society. Senior citizens recall the city used to have very limited economic gap in the times of the military regime. Some people tend to appreciate the past for people were caring to each other as they were very much alike. But for the others, today might be better even though there are still people who haven't got benefitted from the competitive economic model. The young people who don't know the past don't have much of a choice but to insist equitable distribution of benefits.

Nevertheless, the city continues to be contrastive as more and more people are flocking to the city for job opportunities. It will be a scene of opposite world as long as constructive interventions are implemented. The influx also creates transportation congestion, housing prices to hit high and other basic facilities to be much needed. In fact, there are some activities the city administration implementing for the past couple of years. Helping the elderly by house renovation, school feeding program,

meal sharing, condominium construction, and other activities can be taken as some the activities the city administration undertaking. It is a commendable work of ensuring social welfare. Free education and affordable health access are somehow a relief. But the city might have needed rapid progress given the rise of population and economic woes.

As the saying: “From a thorn comes a rose, and from a rose comes a thorn,” Addis Ababa has a chance to live up its name. It can narrow the economic gap and make it comfortable for everyone, for all residents. But this can begin with an understanding that Addis Ababa for now is black and white. By increasing the job opportunity, it can be a city alm seekers won't be seen; many people could feed themselves and find shelter. At least, there can be a time people won't be seen sleeping in the street if government increases intervention to narrow economic gap in the city.

Regardless of this fact, Addis Ababa is a melting point of all regions where people live in peace and harmony. It has favorable weather condition and has low drug cases and moderate crime rate.

## Romanticizing war

BY ALEM HAILU

Let us go one step far  
Let us fight a bit far,  
Though to indulge in  
A lost battle  
With an unjust cause  
Subjects' lives to mar,  
Let us set ablaze another war.  
Scarifying youths

For the sake of scarifying,  
In a show of misogyny  
Coercing mothers  
To send to the front  
Up to 5 sons, going to school  
Is whose wont,  
Bellicose, braggart  
The government  
What is more, neighbors

Let us confront.  
By nature a fox,  
Let us press ahead  
With acting a hawkish ox.  
Let us project  
Another face,  
As governments' soldiers  
We craftily scapegoat

Our rapist nature  
The gullible global community  
Could not trace.  
Under hypnotic spell  
It can't view us  
From the aspect  
For women, children's life  
We have no respect.



## Keeping 'hate speech' out of our political discourse

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

Freedom of expression, freedom of thought and freedom of religion are among key cardinals of any democratic thoughts that have been almost unanimously accepted in today's political discourse and deliberations. It is impossible to imagine democracy without freedom of expression because democracy presupposes choices and these can be guaranteed only if there are the conditions for the proliferations of various ideas and thoughts which can be presented to eventual electors. And for this we need freedom to allow for circulating of the choices. In short, it is impossible to imagine a democratic society without guaranteeing freedom of the press. Similarly, freedom of religion and hence the freedom to express one's religious convictions and beliefs in various forms can be broadly included in this cardinal pillar of freedom which is freedom of thought and expression.

However, freedom of expression can not be envisaged in an unfettered manner, in an uncontrolled way. Hence, the need to regulate it with appropriate and reasonable principles that need to be included in a well articulated legal framework. The law is hence called to regulate this critical freedom so that abuses and excesses are prevented and avoided for the survival of the freedom. History has shown us there have been attempts to abuse such freedom by unscrupulous 'political animals' and parties who are anxious to come to power using every means available.

The line between the proper use of the right and its abuse is often thin and a strong and unequivocal regulation becomes imperative if we want to avoid such excesses. All political actors need to respect such demarcation for the survival of democracy and, in the end, for the guarantees of other freedoms and others' peace and survival. Anticipation of excesses becomes a sort of guarantee for the continuation of this crucial freedom. We have seen in the past that excesses have led to violence as emotions have been provoked by the misuse of freedom of expression. Excesses have provoked emotions and the reactions have often been negative with animosities kindled among communities organized or not under party lines or ethnic or ideological lines.

Such freedom of expression, such proper regulation of this freedom is all the more critical in multi interest societies where such interests are underpinned by a multiplicity of reality deriving from multiplicity of ethnic groups, language groups or geographic realities beyond ideological differences. Hence, countries such as ours need to pay attention while allowing this key freedom that can have immense implications in the political landscape of the country.

Furthermore, in societies such as ours where there is low literacy and underdevelopment is the reality in many senses, having well defined and regulated freedoms such as expression and others becomes imperative

lest abuses lead to unwanted animosities that could eventually lead to clashes.

Political interests underlie many actions and parties and groups may be tempted to use certain words and phrases which might not go down happily with competing interest groups and their goals. Competing political ideas are expressed through this freedom that is guaranteed but the demarcation must be acceptable to all so that everything is done with compromise and self-imposed common sense, including putting one's condition in the rivals' shoes. Only then can there be a certain consensus, and hence the urge to respect the limits of the law.

It is now presumed that Ethiopia is governed by a federal democratic constitution that has incarnated in it various advanced and well-articulated guarantees with ample

freedom to nations and nationals which appear to be the key beneficiaries or destinations of the guarantees. The way the constitution tries to address the issues of nationalities or ethnic groups and the way the freedoms are guaranteed may have their own contentions from parties that try to vie for power in the country. That is not the subject of this article, but focuses on how we should address the excesses of such cardinal principle and provision that establishes freedom of expression in very broad and libertarian terms. In fact, there are those who argue that Article 29 of the constitution 'right of thought, opinion and expression', can be taken as very generous that

is criticized for not taking into due account the level of political consciousness of the society, the level of awareness and probably political maturity as well.

In many ways, the freedoms and principles included in the constitution seems to anticipate or assume a certain level of education in society. Many are heard questioning 'is the constitution realistic when it allows for broad freedoms in such a society'. Do the principles contained in the constitution take into account the level of literacy and consciousness of the society, the level of maturity that would enable them to appreciate these freedoms and use them appropriately, making their choices freely? These are open questions because we have seen frequent abuses of such freedom of expression through the various media outlets allowed for by the rules. There have come out a flurry of media outlets and bodies that have been catering for the ever thirsty needs of the population.

Various messages have been disseminated

among these communities and what is more, beyond and above the traditional media outfits, the new realities of the social media have invaded the political landscape addressing the beneficiaries in no time. With the fast expansion of smart phones and the widespread habit of using them, messages are delivered in real time and that has come to further look again deeply at what sort of freedoms are allowed and which ones need some restraint.

There could be two sides to the issue because some say freedom of expression must be allowed without limits except in some rare and extreme cases with clearly terrorist threats while there are those who argue that such freedom for a society such as ours has more damages than benefits because people are easily pushed or moved by what they read or listen to in certain social media where there are no editors or bodies that take responsibility for the misleading or controversial messages and calls. Hence, beyond and above the conventional media that do have responsible guides or managers, the other sector now largely labeled as 'social media' needs appropriate and timely regulation before it gets too late.

The tendency to abuse these multiple forms of expression has been linked now for a while with words and phrases which were once taboo are now seen invading the socio-political landscape of the country; and this has now grown to alarming levels. Above all, more and more hate speeches and hateful ideas are being expressed through these media without any accountability. In the face of all these developments, there have been calls recently by many concerned academics, intellectuals and political figures recommending urgent and effective action to stop abuses.

All those who behind veiled and unidentified masks take advantage of such freedom of expression to disseminate hate inspired ideas, bodies that make emotional appeals with false claims and narratives and try to incite one community against another one need to be sanctioned in an unequivocal manner before it is too late, the academics argue. They envisage the grave dangers our society may run due to the unscrupulous actions of certain groups who may even have taken the agenda of foreign powers who have been found being financed by them to destabilize our society. The recent calls for violence with the pretext of abuse of freedom of religion can be cited as an example of excesses. That is why all of us must wake up and protect our country from any veiled attempts of alien infiltration in our body politic.

For a society such as ours, there needs to be a restraint on similar outbursts because they tend to erode our long lasting peaceful cohabitation between communities. We cannot let this happen threatening the existence of a stable and sovereign state and allow our enemies both new and old enjoy our unmaking. That is why we need to cautiously regulate abuses of freedom of expression using whatever means. Above all we need to watch out hate speeches and hateful discourses that have begun to circulate freely and undisturbed by social media, trying to create chaos.

*All political actors need to respect such demarcation for the survival of democracy and, in the end, for the guarantees of other freedoms and others' peace and survival*



# Law & Politics

## National dialogue for nation healing

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Expected to address polarized views of the Ethiopian state by creating consensus on major national issues, Ethiopia has been bracing for an inclusive and game-changer national dialogue. Following the historic national poll, the incumbent has been engaged in finding conciliatory gestures to expedite the nation-building process.

The national undertaking came amidst a defining moment at the time when the country is going through a tumultuous period of transition defined by opportunities and challenges.

For decades, Ethiopia has been facing must-solve political polarizations turbocharged by divisive rhetoric. Undeniably, Ethiopia has been marred by decades of unresolved setbacks that still put a strain on the nation building process.

In this regard, with the process going smoothly, the planned national dialogue allows all concerns to be tabled at public queries.

So far, the dialogue is undergoing a democratic and independent process. In fact, the public is the primary driving force to make it more sound and acceptable to all. This helps to bring each and every voice to the national platform. The dialogue is receiving public acceptance and many are pinning their hope on it to cement Ethiopia's democratic path and prosperity.

If properly it is utilized properly, the national platform is also a genuine and millstone attempt to reconcile differences and to find a middle ground. The steps taken so far to ensure transparency in the early works of the national dialogue would lay a foundation for future undertakings.

The dialogue is by Ethiopians for Ethiopians and is being carried out in Ethiopian sentiment. The dialogue came amidst unwarranted foreign pressure is aimed at undermining the sovereignty and integrity of the nation. The legitimacy and the outcome of the dialogue are sole to be endorsed by no one but the Ethiopian people.

Most importantly, the purpose is neither to please the outsiders nor to doge international criticism. While Ethiopia is ready to consider constructive support, the world has no choice but to stand by the will of the Ethiopian public.

It should be borne in mind that in recent times the incumbent government is at the ready to carry out National Dialogue with the intention of resolving conflict through dialogue among the various Nations and Nationalities residing under the umbrella of Ethiopia and coming to a consensus for the common benefit of the general public.

As one would expect national dialogue plays a major role in the nation-building process, forestalling discords and repairing hostilities of multiple types through dialogue with the audience and the conflict-resolution process. Apart from



# NATIONAL DIALOGUE

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supporting living in peace and harmony, the national dialogue plays a major role in giving rise to stability as well as prosperity and taking the country to the next level of accomplishment at the earliest possible time.

In the same way, the national dialogue is expected to resolve unsettled political predicaments unfolding in the length and breadth of the country and bring people together at the earliest possible juncture.

In actual fact, the various Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples of Ethiopia are generally known for resolving their problems in their way in accordance with their respective cultural traditions. For centuries, they have been getting to the bottom of their disagreement with no trouble. Reasoning from this fact, Ethiopians have been living under Ethiopia's skies with entrenched homegrown cultural and religious values that enable them to live together peacefully and harmoniously.

To this very day, whenever a problem arises among various communities, Ethiopians utilize their well-known conflict resolution mechanisms.

In the present climate, Ethiopia is pulling out all the stops to hold peaceful discussions with quite a lot of entities that are functioning countrywide intending to resolve differences peacefully, and joining forces for the common good of the country no matter what the cost may be.

According to Mulatu Gebremariam, a sociologist and a resident of Addis Ababa, the national dialogue is an opportunity to heal past experiences, and envision a new, more inclusive country that embraces diversity and equality.

There are some kinds of disagreements among fellow citizens mostly with regard to the flag, national anthem, national symbols as well as on the constitution.

“And, in my view, holding national dialogue is a golden opportunity to resolve differences, come to an agreement on

such and other differences, and work for the common good of the country.” As he stated, he is optimistic that the national dialogue could solve the political crisis and create a new path for peace, political tolerance, and national unity. All pertinent stakeholders, however, should take care while practicing, from commencing to the last point of finalization.

It is known that Ethiopia in its history has passed through a number of challenging moments, and Ethiopians have been undergoing a number of undesirable grim experiences. They have witnessed ethnic and religious conflicts, unrest, killings of innocent civilians, and displacements.

In the past four years, many innocent civilians were also killed and tortured in broad daylight. Many have also been displaced following the concerted conspiracy of some destructive forces for the reason they are unaware. The internal displacement and vandalizing of public and private properties and ethnic polarization have been common incidents in some parts of the nation, specifically in Amhara and Afar states, he added.

As to him, all the incidents tell that the country should take some kind of measures to arrest all peace and security challenges in a more peaceful way and show the coming generation that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. The national dialogue initiative in this regard paves the way to build a community that tries to resolve a difference of any kind and misunderstandings through dialogue in a conventional way.

“We are witnessing while some elites are attempting to dehumanize elders and spiritual leaders of communities; as well as working to radicalize the youth through toxic rhetoric and labeling other groups to execute their political will.”

Earnestly; all community and spiritual leaders at all levels should be part of the national dialogue. Since the national dialogue platform is a cost-effective way of ensuring peace and opens constructive opportunities to pull out the nation from

the vicious circle of unrest, each activity should be well documented and the principle of transparency should be well translated.

“I believe if it is implemented accordingly and in a balanced fashion, the national dialogue is a cure to Ethiopia as it paves the way for national consensus and keeps the integrity of the country. As well, it could help nation create the circumstances to healing the past, leaving ethnic divisions behind, restore peace and stability, and opens a new chapter of understanding towards a united, peaceful, and prosperous future.”

Emebet Getachew, Country Program Manager at Life and Peace Institute said that the national dialogue initiative that fosters peace and stability is needed more than ever in Ethiopia. The existing civil society initiatives should not be overlooked. Such initiatives by partners, including the Multi-stakeholder Initiative for National Dialogue (MIND), a coalition of Yehasab Me'ad (Plate of Ideas), Destiny Ethiopia and the Political Parties' Joint Council, endorsed and supported by the Ministry of Peace can contribute a lot.

Led by civil society, MIND aims to build confidence in the concept of dialogue among participants. An inclusive national dialogue could help to resolve challenges to peace and security.

Ethiopia has shown the world and proved naysayers wrong by holding a historic and credible poll with important lessons drawn from the national success.

The sweeping reforms that have been taken by the incumbent to pave the way for democratization and national healing would have a great deal of contribution to making this tall order a success.

To keep the momentum going and give the promising start a complete success, the leadership should maintain the resolve that has been seen so far. The general public needs to openly engage in the whole process thereby meeting the noble objectives of the national task.



# Women in Focus

## Ending Obstetric Fistula

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

In most cases, it is common to see women suffering from Obstetric Fistula (OF), an abnormal connection between a woman's genital tract and the urinary tract (vesicovaginal fistula) or between the genital tract and the rectum (rectovaginal fistula), due to prolonged obstructed labor.

Especially in the rural parts where early marriage is rampant and maternal care is inaccessible, more women develop OF. As studies indicate, in Ethiopia, an estimated 9000 women develop Obstetric Fistula each year. Following the case, the victims face serious social and economic challenges aside from devastating health problems.

Women who experience the sickness suffer a lot from psychological trauma, stress, shame, social segregation.

Understanding the severity of the case and the disgraceful feeling it causes on victims, many organizations and individual volunteers are exerting utmost effort to support women affected by Obstetric Fistula (OF), cure them and beam a ray of hope on them.

Recently, Healing Hands of Joy (HHOJ) in collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs organized a recognition and gratitude program for individuals and institutions that support work carried out in the area of fistula with their own accord.

Speaking on the occasion Minister Ergogie Tesfaye (PhD) said that aside from health challenges, the main reasons of Obstetric Fistula entrenched with gender inequality, discrimination and harmful traditional practices against women. Especially, early marriage is one of the reasons that expose young girls to OF.

To this end, the Ministry, making the issue its priority agenda is working diligently with partners and stakeholders to curb early marriage and harmful practices that have adverse impacts on the lives of women and girls.

Mentioning that two years ago national strategies, goals and targets have been



Photo: MoWSA

devised and frameworks that enable to achieve the goals have been set to curb the problem, she said as a result, with the endeavors made to raise awareness, remarkable achievements are witnessed.

As to the Minister, in addition to government's firm commitment to the matter, the activities and involvement of nongovernmental organizations in terms supporting women affected by Obstetric Fistula (OF) is exemplary. She also mentioned and appreciated Dr. Catherine Hamlin, the pioneer who was exerting incalculable effort in fighting OF.

In addition, Ergogie appreciated the Healing Hands of Joy's (HHOJ) efforts in providing holistic revitalization and

examination services; and pledged to continue support.

On the other hand, CEO and Co-founder of Healing Hands of Joy, Allison Shigo said that the primary objectives of the organization is eliminating Obstetric Fistula from Ethiopia entirely and securing safe motherhood for women. To this end, she noted that they are providing service in Amhara, Oromia, SNNPs, and Tigray states.

Nigest Haile founder and Executive Director of Center for Accelerated Women's Economic Empowerment and member of the Board said that since its establishment 2010, Healing Hands of Joy has provided revitalization and

examination services for about 2350 women.

Roman Tesfaye, CEO of Hailemariam and Roman Foundation on her part said joining hands with Ministry of Health, states, woredas and community centered health extension experts and stakeholders, works are carried out to realize national strategy through bringing attitudinal change and curb fistula by 2025..

Attendants held discussion and experience sharing on ways to prevent obstetric fistula.

Meanwhile, recognition was given to Goodwill Ambassadors who have been offering voluntary service to patients after their recovery (rehabilitation).

## 'To educate girls is to reduce poverty'

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

It goes without saying that an investment that goes to girls' education and trainings will not only transform communities, countries and the entire world but it is one of the most transformative development strategies that could be applied to a country.

Girls who receive an education are less likely to marry young; and more likely to lead healthy, productive lives. They earn higher incomes, participate in the decisions that most affect them, and build better futures for themselves and their families, as to UNICEF.

It is a fact that educating girls strengthens

economies and reduces inequality and plays a pivotal role in contributing to more stable, resilient societies that give all individuals the opportunity to fulfill their potential.

Recently, Addis Ababa City Administration Bureau of Women, Children and Social Affairs along with KVO international Charity organization hosted a capacity building training which aimed at enhancing the all rounded-capability of students for Etege Menen girls' Boarding Secondary School students.

Deputy Head of Addis Ababa City Administration Bureau of Women, Children and Social Affairs, Meron Aragaw, noted during the capacity building training apart

from providing material or in kind support, offering capacity building trainings for women has multifaceted benefit with regard to enhancing their holistic capability.

According to the Deputy Head, since the students are well skilled and have good academic performance to begin with, the capacity building training would enable them to not only apply on themselves but it would also allow them to support fellow students.

Once accomplishing the training, the students would be equipped with the capacity to manufacture sanitary pads to themselves as well as others, as KVO.

Investing in girls' secondary education and

training has a paramount of significance. Of such importance, the increases of lifetime earnings of girls, rises of national growth rate, decline rate of child marriage, falls on child mortality and maternal mortality rate, as well as drop of child stunting, are among others, according to UNICEF.

Taking the above fact in to account, CEO of KVO International Charity Organization, Mikiyas Girma, Deputy Head of Addis Ababa City Administration Bureau of Women, Children and Social Affairs, Meron Aragaw including the School Principal of Etege Menen Girls' Boarding Secondary School, Tigist Yosef, signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to provide further capacity building trainings.



# Society

## Exploiting folklore for nation building

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

It is clear that common traditional values, customs, beliefs and stories that passed from generation to generation through word of mouth or in written form have always been linked to nation formation and connected directly with the discourse and development of the nation.

These social resources describe the identity and life events of that specific community, its behavioral aspect and psychological makeups, history and norms, the social, historic, political and economic and the like progresses. Among these wisdoms which passed from generation, folklore is the one.

As studies indicate, folklore is an asset that demonstrates the manners, customs, beliefs, superstitions, gallantry and the like makings of a given society. As the community expresses its beliefs, customs, manners and the like activities through various symbolic discourses, including myths, parables, ballads, fables, riddles, proverbs, folklore is seen as an essential way of expression and a tactic that is used to transmit history, teach morality, stimulate the feeling of gallantry and nationalism and to entertain. For some countries, primarily in northern and central Europe, the idea of folklore was directly linked to nation formation, studies stated.

Various documents indicate that though there is no consensus among folklorists on how to define folklore or how to explain the issues with the meaning and the function of it, folklore generally refers to cultural expressions, such as narratives, jokes, beliefs, proverbs, legends, myths, music, songs, dances, costumes, food, and festivals through which individuals and groups shape and disseminate a shared identity.

Ethiopia, as one of the oldest country and the most diverse nations in the world where over 80 ethnic groups inhabited peacefully, is rich with its unique literary wisdoms and shared values that pass from one generation to the next; and have influential effect.

These valuable assets, even these days, are used widely for various purposes such as to settle conflicts, build social consensus and sustain peace.

With this same end, of late, Culture and Language Research Institute of ArbaMinch University, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Sport, had organized a national symposium under the theme "Folklore for national consensus" at Arba Minch town.

Speaking on the occasion, Culture and Sport Minister Kejela Merdassa said that in Ethiopia, each and every community has thousands of narratives and sayings that are of critical importance in settling conflicts and nation building. At various times and occurrences, these wisdoms have been used for long to nurturing good behavior, resolve conflicts and nation building. However, these days unless it is in the rural part of the country, these valuable



***Ethiopia, as one of the oldest country and the most diverse nations in the world where over 80 ethnic groups inhabited peacefully, is rich with its unique literary wisdoms and shared values that pass from one generation to the next; and have influential effect***



assets are diminishing in the urban areas. Thus, it is important to conduct research in various languages, collect and analyze the wisdoms so as to preserve the wisdoms and pass to the coming generation because they have tremendous constructive impacts in the nation building. According to him, the concept of national identity is inescapably connected with folklore

Dr. Mulugeta Debele, Dean of College of Social sciences and Humanities said that folklore has been used in a multitude of ways since the beginning of civilization as it provides mankind explanation for natural occurrences: harvest time, natural disasters like earthquakes and storms, as well as life events: birth and death, apart from teaching moral values and was also used to entertainments.

According to Dr Mulugeta, he is also Chamo Campus Head, in Ethiopia we do have a number of received wisdoms. Unfortunately, the past regimes used them just to propagate local ethnic based understanding in ways undermining the national issues and concerns of the country. This had hurt us and created undesirable insecurity matters.

Mentioning that folklores have both constructive and destructive outcomes, he said what matters most are the ways we use the assets. As to him, academicians and pertinent stakeholders should search ways to capitalize the efforts to collect the folklores, how to disseminate the resources to the respective ethnic groups and learn from each other.

Of the deliberators Lema Nigatu (PhD) from College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Jimma University for his part noted that countries like Island and Finland have taught their posterity the oral literatures and the mythologies of the past generations and let them know and practice the wisdom of love, peace building and

other similar common values in a manner the knowledge help them ensure peace and prosperity in constructive way.

““Though we are rich in oral literature, we are not using it accordingly. Some are trying to manipulate them and promote their own political agenda denying the big picture of humanity that all humans are connected to one another,” he underlined.

According to him, it is high time to retune and correct the wrong practice in the conventional usage of the oral literature and myths to nation and peace building.

Aster Lema (PhD) Bahir Dar University Cultural Center Head and Instructor at Folklore Department also said that there are a number of values we should impart from the previous generation and let the present and the coming posterity learn from the values of his forefathers' history.

According to Aster, the major reason for the crisis that the country is in now is the false narratives that have been created by some entities and have been propagated for long within the communities. Folklores have substantial role to play in peace building. Thus, in order to withdraw false rhetoric, sustain peace and survive as a country, works should be done. In this regard, collecting and incorporating folklores in the curriculum is prudent.

To make this a reality, concerned bodies and pertinent stakeholders should act on the dot before some communities' valuable oral literatures and folklore become extinct.

The workshop was attended by senior government officials and participants drawn from higher education institutes, members of ArbaMinch University Council, instructors and students as well as elders from Gamo Zone and invited scholars.