The Ethiopian Herald

African Union 20 YEARS

AU EXTRAORDINARY SUMMIT

25th - 28th May 2022
Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

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Prime Minister Abiy in Malabo to AU Summit

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA - Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) arrived yesterday in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea to participate at the AU Extraordinary Summit.

The Premier and his delegation headed to Malabo after completing a two-day official visit to Nigeria that he conferred with the country's high-level officials including President Muhammadu Buhari.

Upon arrival at Malabo, the Ethiopian delegation received a warm welcome from Equatoguinean high-level officials.

Information obtained from AU website shows that the summits from the 25th to the 28th of May are 'The Extraordinary Humanitarian Summit and Pledging Conference and the Extraordinary Summit on Unconstitutional Changes of Governments in Africa.' with expected outcomes such as pledges and commitments to the Continental Humanitarian situation; assembly Declaration on the Extraordinary Humanitarian Summit and Pledging Conference; and assembly Declaration on Terrorism and Change Unconstitutional Government.

Kobo mother who buries 52 youth recounts T-TPLF agony

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

Bayuwa Sisay, 53, is a mother from Kobo town, which is situated in Raya Kobo District, in Northern Wollo Zone of the Amhara State and she had peaceful days until the Terrorist TPLF ruined her and the surrounding community's wellbeing in their short-lived occupation of the area.

The mother, who served as agricultural

President, Foreign Minister extend congratulatory messages to Eritrea

BY MULATU BELACHEW

ADDIS ABABA - President Sahlework Zewde has extended a congratulatory message to Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki, and through him, to the people and government of Eritrea on the occasion of marking the country's 31st Independence Anniversary.

In her message to President Isaias, Sahlework assured her country's commitment to further enhance its relations and cooperation with the people and government of Eritrea. "This special occasion gives me the opportunity to present my best wishes for Your Excellency's personal will-being and prosperity for the brotherly people of Eritrea."

By the same token, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Demeke Mekonnen extended his warmest congratulations and best wishes to his Eritrean counterpart Osman Saleh Mohammed for the same reason. "I am confident that our brotherly ties and excellent cooperation between our two

Sahlework Zewde

Demeke Mekonnen

countries will be further developed and fruitfully strengthened in the years to come for the mutual benefits of our people."

"[Let me] take this auspicious occasion to wish Your Excellency good health, wellbeing and continued success in your noble tasks."

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's (PhD) bold steps to reconcile with Eritrea is widely regard as instrumental to end the two-decade long 'no war no peace" condition and bring a new era of peace and cooperation in the turbulent Horn of Africa region.
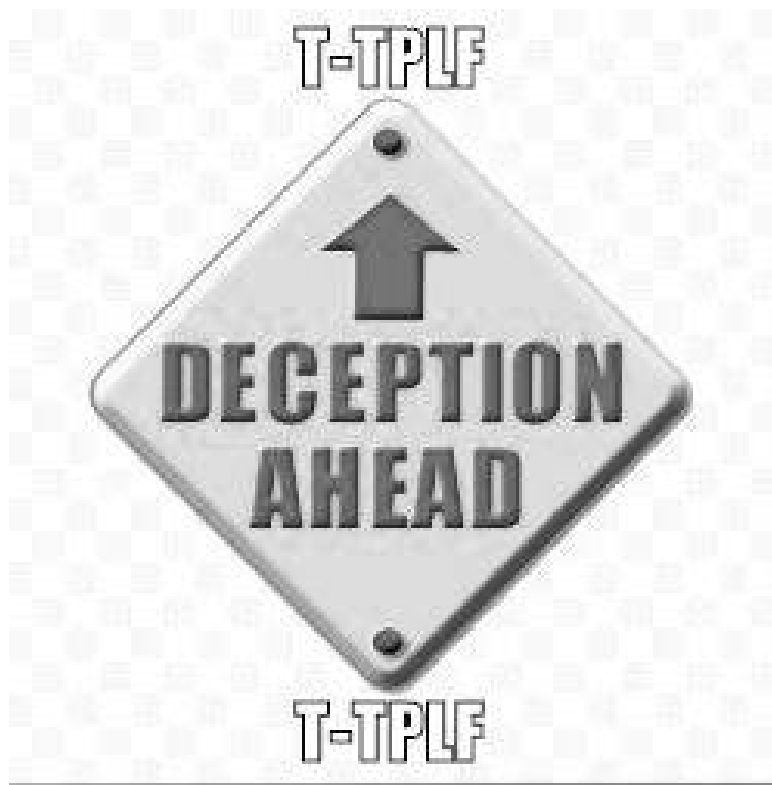

ደምህት TPDM

TPDM says T-TPLF foremost enemy of Tigray people

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – The people of Tigray is the foremost victim of the Terrorist TPLF aggression and whilst the criminal faction has been damaged and looted civilian properties, it also forcefully conscripted underage soldiers to quench its greed for power, the Tigray People's Democratic Movement (TPDM) said.

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T-TPLF

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DECEPTION
AHEAD

T-TPLF

T-TPLF's rhetoric aims to seize global attention

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA - The Terrorist TPLF's allegation of releasing war prisoners is clearly intended to boost the fake confidence of its supporters as it is preparing to launch another horrific war by penetrating into Amhara and Afar, said an expert in the area.

T-TPLF claimed the release of war prisoners last week. But the government of Ethiopia has announced that the so-called prisoners are civilians who were kidnapped during the war of TPLF in Amhara and Afar states.

Speaking to local media, Political Science and International Relations Lecturer at Bahir Dar University, Embiale Beyene noted that the criminal faction is now using misleading information to rejuvenate the psychology of its militia and international affiliates.

The claim by the T-TPLF is one of the technical propaganda used to boost fake-confidence of affiliates as well as to deceive the international community. Frankly, the propaganda has a clear intention to magnify TPLF's stature before international organizations, the academician added.

"We have seen that TPLF has not yet retreated from its initial stance of spreading fake information to realize its mission. It lost several battles last year. However, TPLF has never admitted its military failure; so, the claim [of releasing alleged surrenders] is not surprising so far."

Ministry envisages modernizing transport, logistics sectors

BY ABDUREZAK MOHAMEMD

ADDIS ABABA – Various activities have been carried out to modernize the transport and logistics sector, the Ministry of Transport and Logistics said.

Presenting the sector's nine months performance report to the House of Peoples' Representatives yesterday, Transport and Logistics Minister Dagmawit Moges stated that a number of works have been done to support the sector with technology and let it play a significant role in national economic growth. The transport and logistics sector has plunged into a variety of problems due to the absence of a modern and coordinated data management system.

The sector is also facing obstacles to record growth equivalent to the country's economic development, as it has not been supported with information communication technology. Taking this problem into account, an organized data center has been set up to help the ministry provide efficient services for the public, according to her.

The new moderation system and internet based service delivery said to cut wastage of time and money.

Meanwhile, Dagmawit revealed that the Ministry is preparing a 30-year transportation master plan to enhance accessibility of the transportation and logistics infrastructure to every part of the society and to ensure that they take into account the economic activities and settlement pattern of the society.

Photo: Gebabo Gebre

Transport and Logistics Minister, Dagmawit Moges

Ethio telecom, Hybrid Design PLC agree to improve customers' services

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - Ethio telecom and Hybrid Design PLC signed an agreement that will enable customers to access telecom products and services through Ride transport service and *telebirr* digital payment system at their convenient time and place, Ethio telecom disclosed.

Ethio telecom CEO Frehiwot Tamiru said that contractual agreement helps to integrate telecom and *telebirr* services with the Ride transport services in order to meet the growing demand of the customers on telecom products and services.

Hybrid Design PLC Co- founder and CEO Samrawit Fikru on her part said that the newly launched Ride transport serving drivers as *telebirr* agents will be engaged in collecting monthly ethio telecom and utility bill payments, registering new telebirr customers, upgrading *telebirr* customer levels, providing cash in and cash out

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Photo: Eyob Teferi

services, airtime packages and new SIM card sales, providing SIM replacement services to customers along with providing

with many other package delivery services to customers on behalf of ethio telecom.

It can be recalled that the *telebirr* payment

platform was launched a year ago this month; since then it has been very successful mainly because of its simplicity.

News

Measures on services push earning from manufacturing: Expert

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA - Taking series of scientific measures in the service sector would help Ethiopia earn more from manufacturing, an expert in the area said.

Assistant Professor at Ethiopian Civil Service University Wondaferw Mulugeta (PhD) told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the government has to work on avoiding bureaucratic red tape, providing the private sector with inputs, offering loans,

conducting researches, and establishing responsible investment offices in a bid to encourage local manufacturers and producers as manufacturing sector has shown sluggish pace compared with that of the service sector.

According to Wondaferaw, lack of adequate input and infrastructure, finance and working place, as well as the bureaucratic red tape are the main constraints private investors have been facing. Due to these reasons, local investors are fond of engaging in the service sector to earn profit within the

shortest time possible instead of investing in time taking manufacturing one.

He further said that following such a tumultuous way of doing business, Ethiopia has lost a lot from the manufacturing sector. The government has thus been exposed to burdens that pull subsidizing sectors.

He said he observed that fruits like Avocado, Papaya, and Mango are hugely produced in Jimma, Oromia State, but not more than ten percent is used for human consumption. Besides, coffee product wastage is also

common. Therefore, the agro-industry is significantly useful in processing fruits and protecting coffee product wastage.

Moreover, the government has to capitalize on applying flexible approaches and provide the concerned with research-based solutions to problems so as to encourage local investors to work more on the manufacturing sector, and private companies have to in turn exert utmost effort to contribute a lot to the national economy using various ways, he advised.

Kobo mother who buries...

expert in a local office, bitterly recounted the gloomy days the community passed under the tyranny of the radical element which took the oath to eliminate the people of Amhara. "I witnessed so horrifying things that I have never dreamt of seeing in my entire life. They killed my daughter before my eyes."

"I have made an effort to hide my daughter, Hayat, for six months and we heard the Ethiopian National Defense Forces was approaching Kobo, she insisted that I give permission to join the crowd who were out to celebrate. Since I kept Hayat for too long, and not knowing what was about to come, I allowed her to go."

Disappointed by this public gesture, the T-TPLF forces then fired on the crowd whereby seven civilians, whom Hayat was the one, killed instantly in front of her mother. Bayuwa crazily ran over to her child's corpse and wept, unfortunately, nothing could be changed.

Prior to T-TPLF invasion, Bayuwa and the local community in Raya Kobo

were embattled by the desert locust and when Kobo feel in the hands of the rebellious clique, she managed to escape with her youngest child but was unable to find a place to hide. Bayuwa recalled that when she reached a locality known '*Abuare*' she saw a heavy fire burning across the street and thought it was the rebellious group fired on civilians and left for another place named *Gedemeyu*. However, *Gedemeyu* was also under T-TPLF assault and she was forced to travel for 12 days and finally reached a place called '*Werecheko'* in Afar State. After four days, TPLF came into the area.

Her return to hometown, Kobo in mid-June 2021 is unforgettable that she witnessed countless atrocities the radical element committed on the ethnic Amhara community   "TPLF would distribute water on the day light just to buy the support of the local community and would loot and kill them at night."

She went and added: "They act like angels during the day only to commit horrible crimes that are beyond the mind of human beings at night. I

witnessed and was part of the burying ceremony of 52 people including my daughter on the same day. The fallen were buried at St Giorgis Church and there were some others buried the next day. Over 4 and 5 people were killed from a single family. During that day, TPLF was scared that the local youth would attack them and killed a number of residents going from one house to another."

It is impossible to list down the cruel deeds the T-TPLF committed on the people of Kobo. It killed farmers, laborers, and even common people without political involvement and put the everlasting scar on the local community.

"Having experienced the death of your child in your own hands is not different from dying twice. I lost the child that I sacrificed a lot to hide her for six months. I cannot express the agony that I feel about my daughter. I had to go to Addis Ababa as I was not mentally stable after her death and followed therapy service," Bayuwa remarked.

TPDM says T-TPLF foremost...

In a press statement issued recently, TPDM noted that the criminal faction continues to believe in a military solution, fully disregarding the plight of innocent civilians which it claims to represent and defend. "Indeed, the people of Tigray have been exposed to enormous problems and suffering due to the warmongering of leaders of the T-TPLF."

TPDM further noted that the livelihoods of Tigray people were immensely affected by the criminal clique's reckless character that created havoc with the rest of Ethiopia. T-TPLF should be eliminated by any means so as to free the people of Tigray from tyranny.

"The people of Tigray have never been separated from the rest of Ethiopia; rather it is strongly tied by blood. Thus, contending political parties, religious leaders, the youth, and the international community should work in tandem to liberate the people of Tigray from T-TPLF's tyrannical rule."

TPDM always struggle to combat the barbaric acts of the terrorist clique and save the life of innocent civilians across the nation and it has been putting some additional values to encourage Ethiopian unity and peaceful coexistence, the statement remarked.

Opinion

The Ethiopian point of view

His Excellency Ambassador Zenebe Kebede Korcho, Ambassador Plenipotentiary and Extraordinary of Ethiopia to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Switzerland, Austria, Rumania, and Hungary recently conducted an interview with the head of the Afrika-Bulletin Committee, based in Basel, Switzerland, Ms. Barbara Mueller, and Dr. Hans-Ulrich Stauffer focusing on the current situation in Ethiopia. Accordingly, Afrika-Bulletin has published the full report in English and in the German language in its article series No. 186. Please find here the full article:

For 27 years, the TPLF (Tigray People's Liberation Front) presided over a totalitarian government. It dominated the ruling EPRDF coalition. The military and the security were led by senior TPLF figures. They made sure almost all senior officers of military and the security were TPLF members.

TPLF ran a parallel economic structure with its own party owned businesses, which were above the laws of the country. TPLF members and supporters dominated the country's most important economic sectors. Through its extensive networks, it plundered the country's resources.

It led the country with an iron fist. Its brutal violations of human rights record widely recorded by national and international human rights groups. People were pushed to the limit. This led to a widespread opposition to TPLF, which refused to accept its responsibility.

This led to a peaceful change of government in 2018 with Dr. Abiy Ahmed as the Prime Minister. The reformist Dr. Abiy asked the people of Ethiopia for forgiveness for the brutal years of TPLF and released political prisoners. He reformed the Military, Security Services, and the Judiciary.

With his proposals and instances, the country is now led by a women President, women lead the Judiciary and the National Election Board, and make up 50 percent of his previous and significant number of his current cabinet. He put in motion the reform of legal system widening the political space for opposition parties to operate in the country and creating conducive environment for civil society organizations to operate freely.

He has led a reform of the economy, increasing the role and the participation of the private sector. Importantly, he insisted that people should work towards togetherness/unity than division. Dr. Abiy took the courageous trip to Asmara, the capital of Eritrea, ending 20 years of "no war no peace" situation with Eritrea. *For this historical step and the many reforms he undertook in the country, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019. Only one group saw these developments as a threat to their survival—the TPLF. Its leadership started to attack the reforms.* They become very hostile to the country's people living in peace with neighbors and that the opposition groups are allowed back in the country. They feared that their unfair economic supremacy was threatened. It pooled out TPLF members from the House

of Peoples' Representatives and other Federal Institutions. It just could not accept to serve where its supremacy was not the norm. It rejected equality. It was used to rule for far too long.

TPLF former leaders retreated to Mekelle, the capital of Tigray region. The government under Prime Minister Abiy attempted to resolve its differences with the TPLF peacefully. Respected elders and religious figures took the initiate to convince peaceful resolution of the disputes. They travelled to Mekelle and met TPLF leadership. TPLF refused to engage in dialogue with the government. Instead, they started taking very provocative steps. They held sham regional elections in violation of the Constitution.

The Government appealed to their senses not to allow the situation to deteriorate. They responded with their usual belligerence. They began training a total of 250,000 comprehensive paramilitary units by covertly deploying Tigray-born military personnel.

As the border conflict with Eritrea was not resolved/border not demarcated, Ethiopia maintained 80 percent of the army stationed in Tigray. The majority of the country's arsenals were also deployed in Tigray. With the newfound peace, Dr. Abiy's Government wanted to redeploy the army to other areas of the country. TPLF mobilized young kids to block the roads in opposition.

The surprise attack of November 3, 2020
On top of all these machinations, TPLF launched nighttime attacks on the army stationed in Tigray. The attacks took place in 120 locations simultaneously on November 3, 2021. It was coordinated and long-prepared strike. TPLF murdered high-ranking officers and captured the army's stockpile of weapons and ammunition. The army personnel who managed to escape the cowardly attack crossed the border into Eritrea.

Prime Minister Abiy, the commander-in-chief of the army, as soon as he learned of the raid, took the necessary steps and mobilized the troops from all parts of the country. Within three weeks, the TPLF was driven out of Mekelle.

In the short time, the Federal forces were stationed in Ethiopia, allegations against the Government were circulating by media outlets and human rights groups under the

pretext of alleged human rights violations. The Government takes human rights seriously. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission made preliminary inquiry in all allegations. It uncovered that TPLF conducted mass murder in Maikadra. It also reported other allegations of human rights violations. The Government then facilitated for the Joint Investigation by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The report of the Joint of Investigation made various recommendations. The Government does not agree to all findings. It, nonetheless, agreed to implement the recommendations. It established a Joint Ministerial Committee to oversee the implementation. The Government is working with different partners in this process.

In June 2021, the Government decided on a unilateral ceasefire for humanitarian reasons, to allow humanitarian aid to reach people in need and, to allow farmers in Tigray to cultivate their land during the rainy season. When the Government withdrew from Tigray, it assumed this will create conditions for a peaceful solution. But that was not the case. TPLF took advantage of the withdrawal, attacked the withdrawing forces, and again invaded the neighboring regions of Afar and Amhara.

The international community failed to condemn TPLF for continuing the conflict and for the unprecedented atrocities it committed in these regions. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and some human rights groups such as the Amnesty International reported on these atrocities.

In fact, some in the international community were waiting for the TPLF to advance on Addis Ababa. These members of the international community were sending such mixed signal when TPLF was looting industrial plants, universities, hospitals, clinics, warehouses of international aid organizations as well every private and public properties. TPLF destroyed what it could not carry back to Tigray region. Even the farmers' livestock was slaughtered or shot and their crops destroyed. TPLF forces raped women.

Consequently, H.E. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed made a national call stating "… Time demands sacrifice to lead this country, I am heading to the battle fronts tomorrow. Do not hesitate to join me on the battlefields if you wish to put yourselves among the greats in the Ethiopian History. …" and mobilized the entire population inside and outside Ethiopia to fight the TPLF.

The TPLF was defeated. It was pushed out of the Afar and Amhara regions. The government ordered the army not to proceed into the Tigray region. The hope was to avoid further casualties. Nonetheless, the TPLF continues to shell Afar displacing more than 300,000 people from their homes. TPLF disrupted humanitarian aid so that it could blame on the government. The Government facilitated humanitarian access both by land and air. Various aid organizations have brought food and other supplies to the Tigray region. The ICRC and

WFP have flown supplies to the region.
What conflict resolution?
The Government remained concerned that the people are in need of humanitarian assistance while the TPLF continued mobilizing to fight again. It was resolved to take extraordinary measures to allow unhindered access to humanitarian aid. For this purpose, the Government declared an indefinite truce with an immediate effect. This declaration was issued on March 24 remains in effect as the Government hopes that this will also prevent further bloodshed and pave the way for the peaceful resolution of the conflict.

The Government has been cooperating with the African Union High Representative for the Horn of Africa, former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo.
International entanglements
The initial coverage and perception of the conflict in the international media relied heavily on deliberate misinformation that was misguided and one-sided. It amounted to a campaign against Ethiopia. The reasons for this hostile attitude from partner Government and major media outlet were not clear for the reformist Government. Some media outlets were caught fabricating falsehood. They would not retract or apologize.

Some countries are pursuing geopolitical interests. They cannot be genuine concerns for human rights or humanitarian issues. If they were human rights issues, they would have insisted that it was time for the TPLF to account for its years of atrocities. Some have taken the lead to demonize Ethiopia at the UN Security Council. These were countries Ethiopia considered partners. Why would these countries engage in a campaign to denigrate Ethiopia and endanger its future? It is probably only known to them. Now some have started to take a more objective view. We hope that these are genuine change of direction. Some are still insisting pressuring Ethiopia with unilateral sanctions. The effects of these measures are affecting people with low incomes. We hope they evaluate such unhealthy measures and work towards mutual interest.

Ethiopia has good relations with the countries in the region. During this difficult time, Ethiopia rightly relied on Africa. It received encouraging brotherly and sisterly advice and support from our continent. It showed that ultimately regional integration is a solution for future peace and prosperity. Ethiopia will pursue every avenue for peace and prosperity.

The Parliament has established a national dialogue commission and appointed the commissioners. It is hoped that this be the best avenue to inclusively resolve the country's age old and new problems, concerns, grievances, and aspirations. All those who have Ethiopia's interest at heart would do well to support this forward looking and Ethiopian led process.

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

> *The international community failed to condemn TPLF for continuing the conflict and for the unprecedented atrocities it committed in these regions*

Editorial

Horn's formalized relations turn animosity to amity

The peace deal between Ethiopia and Eritrea that ended the two-decade of no peace and no war situation in 2018 brought groundbreaking changes in the Horn of Africa. The rapprochement initiated by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed followed a string of sweeping reforms in Ethiopia. The peace deal opened a new era of cooperation in the volatile region that has been marred by conflicts and strife.

With the changes also came dynamic geopolitical developments reverberating across the strategic location. Most importantly, the deal has shown both the friends and enemies that a united Horn is possible. The deal in fact earned Abiy a peace laureateship in recognition of Ethiopia's genuine commitment in extending an olive branch to bring the 20 years of stalemate to an end. Without exaggerations, the positive development was recorded as one of the notable diplomatic breakthroughs in the world that have been going through tumultuous times.

The rapprochement has been accompanied by a series of high-level diplomatic exchanges and the restoration of infrastructural services that connect the two brotherly peoples. This breakthrough gave relief to the two peoples who had been a victim of protracted deadlock due to political enmity. But the positive impacts transcended beyond bringing together other countries to a new dawn of cooperation and trust.

The camaraderie between Ethiopia and Eritrea opened the door for wider regional cooperation among other neighboring nations. The rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea has given impetus to the cementation of the relationship between Djibouti and Eritrea and Kenya ad Somalia.

The gains have been a boon to the regional countries to chart out their own socioeconomic and political paths without the interventionist policies and blessings of the West.

The trilateral strong relations among Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia have been imperative to forge common socioeconomic goals and fight regional pitfalls. This alliance has made the fight against terrorism and other threats successful. The overall impact has turned animosity into amicability in the region. It significantly reduced the chances of possible diplomatic rows and rifts among the nations. Strong ties among the regional nations mean fewer external interventions.

The region's strategic importance makes it hothouse to rivalry posing an immediate and direct threat to the member countries. The militarization and conformation of world powers in addition to the predicaments stemming from the regional countries remain pressing challenges to the region. The border conflict between Ethiopia and Sudan as well as the situation in South Sudan, Somalia, and Sudan make regional cooperation not just a choice but an obligation.

To overcome the mutual risks and dangers, the countries should come up with a collective approach. Relations among the nations need to be further formalized and cemented. Boosting infrastructural integrations in terms of roads, powers, and custom services catapult the existing cooperation to a new height. Timely revision and formalization of enabling collective policies also help to curb old and emerging setbacks and uncertainties.

In fact, a regional approach is also must to withstand natural strife including droughts and diseases. The resolute actions of political leaders of the countries play a key role to realize common aspirations in the respect. As can be drawn from Ethio-Eritrea peace deals, nothing could stand in the way of regional prosperity when countries commit themselves towards genuine and win-win cooperation.

Opinion

Pan-African integration has made progress but needs a change of mindset

This year's celebration of Africa Day provides another opportunity to assess how far continental integration has progressed.

Integration would mean a truly united Africa – either a federalist "United States of Africa" or the African Union (AU) exercising binding powers over member states. At present, the AU merely serves as a platform for coordinating the interactions of its 55 member states.

Although some progress has been made, more needs to be done to achieve the goal of integration.

Member states need to move beyond paying lip service to unity, and empower critical AU organs. This requires a shift in mentality. States need to appreciate the need to sacrifice some autonomy for common socioeconomic and political gains. Lacklustre commitment to continental integration is connected with Africa's peripheral position in global dynamics.

In my view, as a researcher of the institutional dynamics of Africa's integration process, pan-African integration is in a crucial phase. This phase is as important as the creation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963 and its eventual replacement with the AU 20 years ago.

A pan-African worldview

In a 1969 speech, the then Tanzanian president, Julius Nyerere, captured what the African worldview entails:

A pan-Africanist worldview understands that the continent cannot exist in isolation. However, this must be accompanied by a determination to drive an agenda that enhances pan-African goals.

This position reflects the views of many of Nyerere's contemporaries, and those who came

after him, on how Africa should position itself on the global stage.

Kwame Nkrumah's "African personality", Thabo Mbeki's "African renaissance", and the oft-repeated "African solutions to African problems" have also been used to capture the essence of an effective pan-African worldview.

Mbeki's idea speaks to restoring Africa's dignity, and pushing for its economic and political development. Nkrumah's advances the principles of societal equality. It places the community over the individual in preparing African societies to establish a federal union of African states that is assertive on the global stage.

What's working

The continent has seen some positive developments that could advance integration.

As Thomas Tieku, an expert on Africa's international relations, has observed, despite some of the failures of pan-African integration, the AU has set admirable guidelines on governance, peace and security.

It has also developed enforcement mechanisms for violations of its standards. It has quickly adopted the African Continental Free Trade Area, empowered the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD, mobilized resources to get COVID-19 vaccines, and integrated the AU development agenda into national development plans.

Yet pan-African continental integration remains constrained by many problems. These include countries' unwillingness to transfer powers to AU organs.

Addressing this will require a change of worldview. Africa needs to rebalance the way

it sees itself and relates to the world. African states need to equip national and regional institutions to deliver on the promise of political and economic development.

What's not working

The ability to project a strategic pan-African worldview is undermined by several factors. One is the unwillingness to transfer supranational powers to key AU institutions. For example, the Pan-African Parliament has only limited, advisory rather than full legislative powers.

Similarly, the AU Commission lacks the power to make member states comply with institutional rules. The 2017 Kagame report on AU reforms noted that the union has passed over 1,500 resolutions but has no mechanism for tracking their implementation.

Member states have failed to comply with about 75 percent of the decisions of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. In reaction to judgments against them, member states such as Tanzania, Benin, Rwanda, and Côte d'Ivoire have withdrawn the permission allowing individuals and NGOs access to the court.

The AU's dependence on external funding is another impediment. Despite ongoing financial reforms, at least 61 percent of its budget comes from external donors. Some use donations as a tool to manipulate AU processes.

The continuous violation of AU norms and standards on human rights and governance is a major obstacle to deepening continental integration. For example, there has been an upsurge in military coups in recent years. In addition, democratic backsliding is on the

rise, through unconstitutional changes of term limits, digital repression, violent clampdown on opposition voices, and electoral fraud.

The AU's response has been tepid. In some cases, leaders involved in suppressing democratic voices are tasked with leading key processes in the AU.

The limited role of civil society in pan-African integration is another concern. And there is little public awareness of what the AU does and how.

Despite the benefits that could come from an integrated Africa, many African countries remain wary of the process. For example, some restrict human mobility. They have refused to sign the continental protocol on free movement, citing security concerns and protection of local jobs.

Changing mindsets

The effectiveness of reforms at the AU depends on a change of mindset. Members need to understand that enhancement of Africa's position in global realpolitik depends on an internally cohesive body.

Without a system that emphasizes fundamental rights and good governance, regional integration goals such as trade, free movement of people, gender equality, peace and security cannot be realized.

(Source: The Conversation)

Business & Economy

Skill development for decent employment, sustainable economic growth

BY LAKACHEW ATINAFU

The history of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Ethiopia had not been out of the normal academic education. Ethiopia has long merged both the academic and skill sector which results in leaving learners in the limbo as they have no a clear chance to decide their fate due to the fact that there are ambiguity to choose their soul interest.

Before decades the government reshuffled the education system making discrepancy between the academic and technical education. Then after, there have been glittering successes registered in the sector.

The three East African Countries signed agreement to contribute in the harmonization of TEVT educations systems at continental level beyond East Africa within the ambit of African Continental Qualifications Framework.

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.

During the opening session of high level work shop to adopt the East African Qualification Framework for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Deputy Executive Secretary Inter University Council for East Africa, Prof. Mike Kuria said that the agreement ensures mobility of TVET learners and professionals and make mutual recognition of qualifications a reality.

He also conveyed his message to take the opportunity to wish all of East Africa a fruitful deliberation and looking forward to the final adoption of the East African Qualifications Framework for TVET.

"When we began this process to harmonise 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. I would like to thank all members of the Technical Working Group and the consultant, Cadena International Development Projects, for the efforts you have put in ensuring that we have the Draft Framework," the professor remarked.

The national technical committee of the three countries have applauded the World Bank for its financial support, through the EASTRIP Project, to make this process a success.

They also would like to thank the EASTRIP Team together with their colleagues at Inter University Council of East Africa (IUCEA) for the tireless effort to ensure that the integration reach this far.

"As we enter the final discussions and possibly the adoption of the East African Qualifications Framework for TVET, I would like to remind you that the most

Through discussion was held regarding the agreement

difficult work is beginning now," he said.

Assegid Getachew, Representative of Federal Government of Ethiopia and a State Minister of Labour and Skills, on his part said that it requires stronger institutional collaboration and coordination amongst all parties concerned at all levels. "I would like to add my utmost assurance that the Ministry is fully prioritizing and supporting the implementation of EASTRIP," The State Minister said.

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

Following the meeting of Ministers of the three countries with the EASTRIP family during the Mid Term Review of the project earlier this year, national coordinators and members have taken on the assignment of expediting implementation and solving bottle necks. I would like to thank the World Bank in their continued support thus far in the restructuring processes we are undergoing within EASTRIP.

I would also like to caution that although we have reached a great milestone in the EASTRIP project, the real and hard work begins now. The implementation of validated Frameworks, Approved Guidelines and the Construction of the Center of Excellences; including the construction of the Education Quality Assurance Agency will prove the success of the project .

It requires stronger institutional collaboration and coordination amongst all parties concerned at all levels. I would like to add my utmost assurance that the Ministry is fully prioritizing and supporting the implementation of EASTRIP.

Dr. Margaret W. Mwakima Principal Secretary State Department for Vocational

and Technical Training on her part said the East Africa Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project (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 programmes and commencement of infrastructural development in each country has achieved the skills for transformation component of the EASTRIP project. However, the regional integration intervention remains a challenge as was underscored during the project midterm review held from November 2021 through 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 practises. The institutions should inform the conference of mitigation measures on the challenges they have experienced.

A number of discussions, involving a several key stakeholders in the TVET sector, have since taken place to come up with the current draft East African Qualifications Framework for TVET. On a number of occasions, the other EAC Partner States that included Burundi, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda were also invited to participate in the discussions, from which their inputs enriched the process of harmonisation under EASTRIP. All this was done amidst challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

That the policy makers ensure the wheels of policy making do not grind so slowly as to make the great ideas obsolete before they are implemented. I am glad to note that this is a high-level workshop involving top policy makers from the ministries responsible for education and implementing TVET agencies.

"I would like to urge you to undertake the necessary steps and initiate policy reforms, where necessary, to ensure successful

implementation of the East African Qualifications Framework for TVET," Dr. Margaret.

That those of us in institutions of higher learning and regional bodies such as IUCEA remember this document can be used as a reference and QA instrument of which use does not have to move at the same pace as policy TVET Qualifications Framework making. I believe no agency will censor us for going beyond recommended minimums.

The East Africa Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project (EASTRIP) is a multilateral project whose short-term impact is being felt across Sub-Saharan Africa, but its long-term impact is global.

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Federal Technical and Vocational Education and Training Institute (FTVETI) were established in 2011 by The Council of Ministers Proclamation 245/2011 to produce highly professional and technically efficient TVET teachers and leaders. The driving force for establishing FTVETI, among other things, was that there were no institution to train competent and sufficient technical and vocational teachers and leaders based on the outcome based system and occupational standards.

At the time of its inception, the institute ran degree programs in 5 occupational sectors namely: automotive, construction, electronics/electrical, information and communication technology and manufacturing technology, and two years later railways and surveying technology departments were opened. Those programs embraced ten specializations, namely, Automotive, Building, Road, Water, ICT, Electrical and Control, Electronics and Communications, Manufacturing, Rolling Stock and Surveying.

Art & Culture

The Culture of Ethical Journalism in the Time of Social Media

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States is often quoted as saying that "The only wise policy to discover the truth was to put the market place of ideas and information unregulated by the government. Were it left to me to decide whether one should have a government without newspaper or newspaper without a government, I wouldn't hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

Jefferson's opinions on the nature of truth, freedom and the free movement of ideas has guided many a pundit for more than 200 years and are still the guiding lights of what is known as ethical journalism. When it comes to social media practice today, it seems that many practitioners might prefer a government with unethical media over unethical media without government. Opinions are shifting constantly and preferences are rearranged in accordance with changing times.

Social media have become so powerful that it is dictating in a way the terms of the new deal. Governments in the West are often bowing before the gods of social media while societies endure the consequences. Traditional journalism as we knew it before the revolution in media technology is nowadays unrecognizably skewed and the borderline between what is ethical and unethical in journalism is constantly blurred if not ignored.

Global economic, political and social developments have recently become difficult for journalists in many countries to exercise or observe ethical standards in their news reporting, news analysis and comments on many issues. The growth in electronics technology that led to the rise and growth of social media have made ethical standards unattainable in their day to day activities. In the now bygone decades of conventional journalism, ethics assumed a primordial importance and the yardstick to distinguish well versus bad journalism was tantamount to the presence or absence of ethical standards.

The growth in recent years of media technology, the birth and growth of the internet and the development of social media, interconnected and interdependent as they are, are increasingly undermining ethical journalism to such an extent that any claim to authority on the matter seem ridiculous if not immaterial. Almost everybody in any part of the world has become informal journalists and the notion of "citizen journalism" seems to have captured the imaginations of hundreds of millions of people.

Millions are taking part in media activities every day that may be good as far as the growth of democracy and the unfettered expression of opinions are concerned even when they transgress the basic assumptions of ethical journalism and the standards of objective reporting. However in the final analysis rights, without duties become destructive when they are measured against the yardsticks of ethical journalism, often leading to catastrophic consequences.

The absence of any kind of legal or institutional enforcement of professional ethics against transgressors of the traditional rules of ethical journalism seems to have encouraged tens of millions of social media actors to enjoy their technology-acquired "press freedom" without the reciprocal observance of ethical rules that had made this once great profession,

dubbed the Fourth Estate, one of the most distinguished and honorable activities in the world. Ethical journalism has nowadays nearly succumbed to mediocrity, arbitrariness or irrelevance. In the worst case, it has turned into a catalyst of horrible conflicts, political crises and government arrogance as tools or manifestations of new tools of oppression and domination.

This has in turn given greater leverage to big media companies to blur the dividing line between ethical journalism and fake news. It has given unwelcome actors in access to unprecedented power to disseminate all kinds of nonsense in the name of journalism. It has promoted the creation create of a new symbiosis between power structures and media corporations as far as determining the contents of social media, in setting the agendas and in shaping the consciousness of the unsuspecting audience. How the global power centers and their media brethren conspire and converge in promoting their agendas in not rocket science. How they manipulate the minds of tens of millions of citizens of the world is a daily event while dominating the world through soft power is their strategic objective.

Africa is particularly the target and victim of big media and big power convergence and the social media offensive in spreading fake's news, destabilizing governments and confusing the innocent populations in the peripheral areas in particular. Fake news has consequently become not only the weapon of terrorists of all hues but also that of presumably responsible and respectable world powers. Even before the advent of social media both African governments and media practitioners paid little attention to the observance of ethical standards in conventional journalism. The culture of democratic dispensation was inexistent or severely curtailed. Ethical journalism was a buzzword that has no significance in practice as it enjoyed a small army of believers or followers.

Back in 1983, when social media was still unknown, journalists in many African countries could not grasp the importance of observing ethical standards in their professional practices. Many of them could not distinguish between politics and journalism and saw both as interchangeable while in reality they are distinguishable and often unfriendly to one another. Many journalists in Africa often played the role of political opposition while parading as journalists simply because they could not grasp the difference between the two.

The press in Africa, if properly practiced could be the voice of the people but it could in any way replace the people and act on their behalf by playing the role of political opposition that is attributed to politicians whether in opposition or in power. Legitimate criticism of governments is warranted but unjustified abuses against governments however illegitimate or authoritarian they might be is prohibited by the very ethics of the profession that required newspaper to be impartial, balanced, plausible, and fearless.

The private press in Ethiopia was born in the decade of the 1980s,that is to say in 1984 if we take the issuance of the infamous Press Law as its starting point. This led to the division of journalists in Ethiopia between those belonging to the state-owned and

the independent press. The old Ethiopian journalists Association (EJA) was under the control of the government while the new Ethiopian Free press Association (EFPA) was formed by independent journalists who were working in the newly emerging free press. There was rivalry between the two organizations not around the issues of professional standards or ethical considerations but around the fact that the first was under the government while the latter opposed the government. This had in turn greatly harmed the emergence of ethical journalism that was the foundation of any true journalism because journalists both in the government and private press were alien to the ethical standards of true journalism and lacked the courage to look inwards to them and make the necessary corrections. As a consequence of this, the culture of relative tolerance that was beginning to barely take root right after the Press Law was issued started to decline progressively and in the end, it led to the near-total disappearance of any hope of press freedom. Attempts to reshape the Press Law led to repeated deadlocks simply because most journalists acted as political defenders of this or that political party and not as genuine public watchdogs as ethical journalism required.

It would be relevant here to outline some of the standards of ethical journalism based on the experiences of foreign countries. What are the standard ethical principles for journalists? There are several key ethical standards that are practiced or ignored by countless media practitioners across global news organizations. At the highest level, the standards call on journalists to seek the truth, act in the public interest, and minimize harm. The Watergate Scandals in the United States back in the 1970s is one of the best examples of how journalists should conduct their inv investigations to unearth the truth of a historic event.

That was also a critical moment in American history when the fate of many politicians hangs in the balance and the public needed to know the truth about the scandal and its implications.

"The Pentagon Papers, a major investigative story in The New York Times and The Washington Post, is a great example of the need for journalism ethics. Journalists faced a true dilemma. "On one hand, journalists had a duty to reveal the truth, as it was in the public interest. On the other hand, they also had a duty to protect the people named in the classified documents. Such papers can contain the names of secret operatives or reveal military plans—information that can cost lives and arguably weaken the nation if made public."

In the end, they decided Americans' "need to know about the government's deceit outweighed the risks of revealing certain information. The U.S. government tried to suppress further publication of the documents, but the Supreme Court ruled that the newspapers had a right to make their own decision under the First Amendment."

There had never been anything similar in American journalism since the Watergate scandals that has become a standard lesson in ethics for any journalists anywhere in the world to appreciate and imitate. According to Wikipedia, "Journalistic ethics and standards comprise principles of ethics and good practice applicable to journalists. This subset

of media ethics is known as journalism's professional "code of ethics" and the "canons of journalism". The basic codes and canons commonly appear in statements by professional journalism associations and individual print, broadcast, and online news organizations."

To go back to the situation in Ethiopia back in the 1980s, the absence of journalistic ethics was the main reason behind the absence of professional unity among the journalists and the tendency to play politics by many journalists and wearing many hats in order to camouflage their transgressions or lack of professionalism. The lack of cohesion among journalists had in turn undermined their potential to come together in defense of public interests or protect journalists from legal abuses.

One of the guiding principles of ethical journalism is to seek truth and report it Ethical journalism should be accurate and fair. Journalists should be honest and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information. They also need to keep their emotions or their likes and dislikes in check whenever they exercise their profession. If not they should return their press cards to the relevant authorities and join a political party to promote their cause. It is utterly unethical to wear two hats and wear them interchangeably. One is either a politician or a journalist. Ignorance or conscious neglect of this simple rule has cost Ethiopian journalism a great deal.

All said and done, the absence of ethical journalism in Ethiopia was largely a lack of knowledge about what true journalism is and how it should function in order to play its role as public watchdog. There may be real passion in the hearts and minds of many young journalists who were doing their job with zeal and commitment. Unfortunately, there was also a real lack of knowledge about the core principles of ethical journalism that look simple but are difficult to exercise. There was also lack of knowledge and insight on the part of the media authorities on how journalists should be helped to attain ethical standards in their practices and turn from hostility to cooperation in their relation with the media authorities. The main emphasis should be on educating journalists instead of hastening to punish them for any real or alleged transgression. There should be a clear guideless for journalists to observe and enforcement of the rule of law in order to mitigate any form of arbitrariness. Press organizations need to be institutionalized and professionalized in the sense that they should be responsible for the professional conducts of their members. These are simple steps that need to be taken in order to free the Ethiopian press from lack of direction and lack of professionalism. The media authorities and all the relevant actors need to work in unison in order to free the press from its decades-old existence in the dark labyrinths of ignorance.

However, in order to achieve this objective, journalists need to put professional ethics above their personal preferences and/or political inclinations particularly at this time of social media confusion or chaos. All professions may allow their practitioners to engage in politics. Journalism may be the only profession in the world that is prohibiting its practitioners such a luxury and that is for the ultimate good of societies, governments and nations.

Science & Technology

Digital Earth Africa program connecting information resources with society, knowledge-led economy

BY HAFTU GEBREZGABIHER

Digital Earth Africa is steadfastly becoming the "connecting-the-dots" part of Africa's efforts to harness information resources for the society and knowledge-led economy, says Oliver Chinganya, Director, Africa Centre for Statistics at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

"The Program has started paving a new way to build a robust data infrastructure that can help us have a better understanding of our changing landscape and provide insights that can enable African governments, NGOs, businesses, and individuals to make more informed decisions," said Chinganya.

The ECA director who is also a Board Member of Digital Earth Africa was speaking at a side event on Digital Earth Africa: Earth observations for sustainability in Africa organized by the African Centre for Statistics division of ECA and Digital Earth Africa on the margins of the Economic Commission for Africa's annual Conference of Ministers of Finance, Economic Planning and Development (CoM2022) in Dakar, Senegal.

The objective of the side event is to showcase the development of Digital Earth Africa as a unique information resource for sustainable development across Africa and to explain how Digital Earth Africa is being applied in areas such as national statistics, agriculture and water resources.

In a press release sent to The Ethiopian Herald, Chinganya noted that ECA will continue to use its convening power to foster the dialogue with member States, African sciences and research institutions, existing networks and programs, as well as other sectors to increase awareness in space science and technology insights for economic growth and social development. The Commission remains engaged to promote and support the Digital Earth Africa vision, goals and anticipated activities for the benefit of our continent.

Lisa Hall, managing director Digital Earth Africa Establishment Team said the goal of Digital Earth Africa is to deliver an exceptional fit-for-purpose platform of Earth observation satellite imagery into information and insights on the changing African landscape and coastline, which will open new data frontiers for tracking progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

"Digital Earth Africa catalogues changes across Africa in unprecedented detail and provides spatially enabled data on a vast number of issues, including soil and coastal erosion, agriculture, forest and desert development, water quality and changes to human settlements," said Hall.

> The objective of the side event is to showcase the development of Digital Earth Africa as a unique information resource for sustainable development across Africa

Zviko Mudamu, Head of Operations, Digital Earth Africa said, Digital earth Africa is helping provide the data required which was already a gap before with the various partnerships we engaged with the various governments in Africa.

"Digital Earth is empowering communities with access to satellite information; communities have been empowered and are sharing their impact stories such as conservation of mangroves in Zanzibar, roaming of giraffes at Lake Baringo in Kenya," said Mudamu

The concept of "Digital Earth" was put forward in 1998 by the then Vice-President of the United States of America, Al Gore. Since then, Digital Earth has evolved to embrace the development and adoption of technologies such as Earth observation, geo-information systems, global positioning systems, geospatial science and technology and space sciences.

According to the International Journal of Digital Earth, the digital transformation of our society coupled with the increasing exploitation of natural resources makes sustainability challenges more complex and dynamic than ever before. These changes will unlikely stop or even decelerate in the near future.

There is an urgent need for a new scientific approach and an advanced form of evidence-based decision-making towards the benefit of society, the economy, and the environment. To understand the impacts and interrelationships between humans as a society and natural Earth system processes, we propose a new engineering discipline, Big Earth Data science.

This science is called to provide the methodologies and tools to generate knowledge from diverse, numerous, and complex data sources necessary to ensure a sustainable human society essential for the preservation of planet Earth. Big Earth Data science aims at utilizing data from Earth observation and social sensing and develops theories for understanding the mechanisms of how such a social-physical system operates and evolves.

The manuscript introduces the universe of discourse characterizing this new science, its foundational paradigms and methodologies, and a possible technological framework to be implemented by applying an ecosystem approach.

Big Earth Data science challenges and collaboration opportunities

Studying the planet's sustainability using data science must face several challenges belonging to the different domains and technological areas that constitute the context of Big Earth Data science. They deal with diverse research and innovation areas, including, holistic view – the models representing the social, economic and natural spheres of our planet as well as their interactions and integration to form a holistic view of Earth, socio-technological view – ethical and privacy challenges related to data analytics and artificial intelligence, economic-technological (or sustainability) view – there is a clear need for innovative, collaborative governance models for digital ecosystems and Interoperability view – the advent of IoT is requiring the use of new computing architectures to move intelligence from the center to the edge of the network (fog and edge computing); another valuable example is inter-cloud interoperability, the researcher at the international journal of earth science stated..

The transition from Earth data systems and data sharing to Earth data ecosystems and intelligence generation has started but it is not yet complete. To facilitate and accelerate this process, there is a need to introduce a new science: Big Earth Data science. One of its main objectives is to define a reference framework for this new paradigm.

"We have argued that Big Earth Data science is becoming an important new scientific discipline to meet the current and future challenges that are a product of societal evolution, digital transformation, and resource scarcity. This new discipline is tasked with integrating the consolidated knowledge of the world and making it accessible to individuals at different levels of the decision and policy formulation process. Acknowledging challenges such as invisibility and inequality, it thereby pushes the limits of sustainable development by leveraging digital and social transformations, and helps us to prepare for a better future."

Since the turn of the century, innovations in technology and greater affordability of digital devices have directed the 'Industrial Revolution of Data,' characterized by an explosion in quantity and diversity of real-time digital data in our lives. The amount of data being generated by people and machines alike is growing exponentially with development of smart devices and sensors, and our society is 'entering an unprecedented period in terms of our ability to learn about human behavior.

To complete this digital transition, cover more complex application sectors, and meet the eminent challenges of urgently required international and cross-disciplinary collaborations; we envisage an additional step that improves transparency, reproducibility and knowledge co-creation. This new methodology is yet to be established in a way that connects globally shared and actionable knowledge from databases to local realities and activities.

This approach requires novel insights, working methodologies, and sustainable systems that continuously evolve in order to meet the dynamic needs of modern society. It should aim at the best possible solutions for sustainable development and human wellbeing, including new methodologies for engagement across geographic scales, spearheading the independence of science from political agendas, and evidence-based proposals for democratizing data. At the same time, the application of this new approach has to be adapted to equally evolving constraints and boundary conditions, such as data ownership and control, data security requirements, feasibility of technical implementations and the increasing autonomy of machines.

Society

Engaging youth for the prosperity of Africa

BY STAFF REPORTER

Africa is the continent characterized by the youngest population worldwide. As of 2021, around 40 percent of the population is aged 15 years and younger, compared to a global average of 26 percent.

However, these massive and powerful forces, which have the ability to shape the future of their respective countries and peoples, bring about substantial socio economic development to the continent; have never been utilized at the desired level due to various reasons. Including poor political leadership and dictatorship tendencies, the absence of strong institutions coupled with political greed and bad governance, corruption as well as having a conscience of dependence among others have challenged the socioeconomic development of the African region despite its abundant natural resources. Worse than this, giving less attention to its productive forces has compelled the continent to pay dearly.

In fact, since the last decades, though it is not at the desired level, African countries are struggling to exploit their untapped potential and revamp their economies through equipping the young people with the required knowledge and skills.

Currently, African leaders, understanding that young people are central in the realization of their countries overall activities and to let their voices be heard by key decision makers at all level, are integrating their youth populations in the social, political and economic affairs. And nowadays it is common to see young African peoples taking part at the tables

Participants of the Summit

Photo- MoFA

where the problems and the fate of Africa are entertained.

As part of this action, at present African youths are holding the Pan African Youth Summit here in Addis Ababa, under the theme 'Building on Pan-African ties and Promoting indigenous knowledge in Africa.'

The three days summit which started last Wednesday (May 25, 2022) by celebrating Africa Day; and expected to be concluded today will deliberate various matters.

In his keynote speech, Demeke Mekonnen, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister said that Africa is facing a number of challenges and African youth should change challenges into opportunity by equipping themselves with the desired knowledge and

skills as well as filtering information.

"Today, it may not be necessary for us to gather with the sentiment of Pan Africanism as our forefathers did for freedom. However, Africa is still in poverty; and we must get together to detach Africa from the vicious circle of poverty," he remarked. As to him, greater integration, cooperation, collective action and response is order of the day to free the continent from all forms of challenges it is in now.

Recalling the liberation struggle Africans had exerted, he called on the youth to join hands and work together in fighting contemporary challenges.

Africa is a continent with tremendous values and wisdoms. By utilizing these highly

valued knowledge and wisdom that are a blessing for the continental development aspirations, Africa's youth population should work diligently to grow and prosper Africa, he underlined.

Most importantly, he further said, African youths, instead of fleeing fearing hardship saying the setting is unfavorable and narrow, should be optimistic and face every challenge they may encounter in their daily lives to gain the best out of it.

Ergogie Tesfaye (Ph.D.), Minister of Women and Social Affairs on her part said that the youths of Africa should join hands and work together to the realization of Africa's unity through utilizing social media accordingly.

Mentioning that out of the total population of Africa 65 percent is young; the Minister said that Africa can make a lot of differences by using this powerful potential.

According to her, blessed with vast natural resources along with a high number of young people, Africa has immense potential for development.

Poverty still challenges the continent. Thus, the youth should deal with it, mainly with a problem-solving mentality and undivided attention, Dr. Eregogie said.

The government of Ethiopia has devised a homegrown economic reform plan and identified priority sectors to engage the youth in productive activities.

The output of the summit would contribute to the policymakers and all other stakeholders, she expressed her hope.

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Ethiopia, UNICEF collaboration on WASH

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

In Jakarta, Indonesia, ministers from 37 countries have exchanged experiences on water, sanitation and hygiene. As well, the forum was attended by governmental and non-governmental civic organizations, UN agencies, development banks and other stakeholders.

The discussion focused on the sustainable development goals for sustainable access to basic water, sanitation, and hygiene services. This year, it was said to focus primarily on political commitment, additional investment, leadership, and accountability to achieve the goals of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services by 2030. Besides, sanitation and hygiene were discussed on with the ministers of the sector.

Representing Ethiopia, State Minister for Health Dereje Dhuguma (MD) and Minister of Water and Energy Habtamu Itefa (PhD and Engineer) participated in the forum. It was an opportunity for Ethiopia to share its experience in water, sanitation and hygiene work and to gain experience from other countries. Consequently, this piece of writing focuses on this experience as compiled by UNICEF and the Ministry of Health.

Improving sanitation and hygiene to address stunting, diarrhea and trachoma, leveraging resources for access to water and sanitation in schools and health facilities, innovating to improve functioning of water supply is essential.

For every child, clean water is not an alternative. In Ethiopia, 60 to 80 percent of communicable diseases are attributed to limited access to safe water and inadequate sanitation and hygiene services. Also, an estimated 50 percent of the consequences of under nutrition are caused by environmental factors that include poor hygiene and lack of access to water supply and sanitation.

And there are strong links between sanitation and stunting, and open defecation can lead to fecal-oral diseases such as diarrhea, which can cause and worsen malnutrition. Diarrhea is the leading cause of under-five mortality in Ethiopia, accounting for 23 per cent of all under-five deaths – more than 70,000 children a year.

When water and sanitation in numbers are considered: 65 per cent of households have access to improved water sources while 6.3 per cent of households have access to improved sanitation. And 60 to 80 percent of communicable diseases are attributed to limited access to safe water and inadequate

sanitation and hygiene services. Plus, 70000 under-five deaths per year is due to diarrhea while 17 per cent of people practice improved hygiene behaviors and live in healthy environments.

Accordingly, UNICEF ensures that the Ethiopian population – especially women, children, adolescent girls and vulnerable groups – equitably access safely managed water supply and sanitation services, end open defecation and adopt appropriate hygiene practices, including menstrual health and hygiene, in households, communities and institutions in rural and urban areas.

Equally, UNICEF collaborates with the government on the ONEWASH National Programme, a sector wide and multi-sectorial approach to WASH programming. Sanitation promotion, hygiene and Baby WASH, in areas with a high prevalence of stunting and diarrhea, are a significant focus of UNICEF's work.

UNICEF innovates to improve the functioning and resilience of water supplies in water insecure districts, and to expand urban sanitation and water service delivery. In a country with regions that face chronic drought, UNICEF is supporting the One WASH program to strengthen its climate resilience through the promotion of sustainable deep boreholes linked to multi-village supply systems.

UNICEF also strengthens sector coordination for development and emergency

programming. Through the network of 38,000 Health Extension Workers, UNICEF promotes hygiene and sanitation. A National Sanitation Marketing guideline from the Ministry of Health is used to increase the supply and demand for culturally accepted and improved sanitation products and business models along with a promotional strategy.

Similarly, UNICEF has played a lead role in developing a National Urban Sanitation Strategy to address the gaps and challenges in urban sanitation. UNICEF strengthens the capacity of the WASH sector through evidence-based strategic planning, coordination and implementation of development and emergency interventions. Improving knowledge management through data generation to inform and strengthen service delivery, policies, procedures, monitoring and evaluation is a key focus.

Plus, in emergencies, UNICEF enhances sector coordination and technical support to partners for effective and timely responses to populations affected by WASH emergencies in line with minimum standards.

Therefore, as Health Ministry and UNICEF has brought tangible improvement on the lives of the neediest part of the population, other sectors should cooperate with their respective stakeholders to bring about the needed outcome. And nations should work hand in hand with UN agencies to upgrade the living standards of their people.

This is Ethiopia

The magnificent Gondar castles

COMPILED BY TEWODROS KASSA

"Perhaps castles are not the first thing that comes to the traveller's mind when thinking about Ethiopia, but this African country hides many surprises within its territory; and tales of emperors and princesses are among them. One of such wonders is the city of Gondar. This enclave, also spelled Gonder, was home to Emperor Fasiledes castle and the walled city of Fasil Ghebbi, now part of the UNESCO World Heritage List, says a piece written about the Castle of Gondar. As to the piece, many call Gondar 'the Camelot of Africa' but unlike Camelot, Gondar is a real city made out of royalty and blood and its history covers hundreds of years starting as early as the 12th century.

True, Gondar is among world's top pilgrimage sites. Located at 747 kilometres from the capital Addis; and at 176 kilometres from the city of Bahir Dar, Gondar had served as the main centre of administration during the ancient times of the Empire of Gondar. Being the centre of the highest topography of the country in the Northern tip, it has a comfy climate with humid subtropical climate.

The city was founded by Emperor Fasiledes at around 1635. Since its establishment, the city continues to be a potential trade centre of Ethiopia. A total of 13 kings were enthroned during the Gonderian period. Emperor Fasil made Gondar his administration centre or capital and started building his castles considering the presence of different inputs. The main reasons to the establishment of the city, as documents indicate, were fulfilment of basic preconditions such as: the suitable natural resources available for the kings, preferable topography and climate for healthiness, fertile land for agriculture, sufficient water and wood, other construction inputs aside from its strategic location or routes for defence and having a better market channel for trade.

Gondar is well known in the world for its huge castles and an array of natural and man-made tourist attractions. The city served as a castle for more than 250 years, from 1636-1785 (from Emperor Fasil- Teklegiorgis). Being on strategic position, the city played a fundamental role to the triumph over different foreign invaders against Ethiopia.

Gondar and its people have shown a remarkable and colourful account of history along with Ethiopia's independence from foreign invaders in the past. Being ensconced at the top of mountains circled by two year-long flowing rivers, its residents are well known for variety of cultural music and dances. Different cultural nightclubs are available inside the city, which presents cordial musical songs at night.

Azmaries (Traditional singers) welcome

The delicious spicy cultural food, municipality embraced with glamorous ancient architectural buildings plus peaceful and sociable people as well as comfy climate and flat terrain topography make Gondar one of the top-preferred tourist destinations in the world.

guests with entertaining poems and songs and invite them to revisit the city. The presence of extra number of cultural musicians adds greater colour and value to record unforgettable memory to one's journey. Everywhere you go in the city, you could have the opportunity to entertain at the cultural night clubs. The poems and tune of each *Azmari* (cultural musicians) with their homebrewed cultural alcoholic drinks; like *Tej, Tella* and *Areki*, served to you in a manner keeping the traditional way of presentation, will make you more happier and feel dynamic in your trip.

It is common to observe many tourists yearlong in the city and its surroundings. The city provides ever better amenities to guests and tourists, who witness a hospitable city.

The delicious spicy cultural food, municipality embraced with glamorous ancient architectural buildings plus peaceful and sociable people as well as comfy climate and flat terrain topography make Gondar one of the top-preferred tourist destinations in the world.

In addition to this, its mysterious ancient monasteries, like Debrbrehan Silassie with well-mannered art works and other buildings, the resident's diversified traditional and religious festivals observance and the magnificent Northern Mountains National Park, embraced with the Ethiopian endemic mammal occurrence in proximity to the city attracts anyone to be on the land of Gondar.

Tourists flow to the city is rising year after year. The golden name of Gondar, colourfully written with ancient forefathers and mothers and the historical six castles found inside Fasil compound has afforded an opportunity to the city to be registered in UNESCO world heritages list.

The six castles found inside Fasil Gibi are made by the then leaders of Gondar known as; Emperor Fasil, Empress Mintewab, Adbar Seged Dawit, Righteous Yohannes, Adiam Seged Eyasu and Emperor Bekaffa castles.

Among these castles, the Castle of Fasil which is still liveable was constructed 200

years back in the 17th century.

After the downfall of the locally called Zemene Mesafint administration system, the sagacious and courageous battler Ras Kassa Hailu, springing from Quara, controls the throne of Gondar to become Emperor Tewodros II. Emperor Tewodros II established a centralized administration system and started the realization of a unified Ethiopia.

In sum, with regard to introducing and practicing clustered means of administration in Ethiopia, Gondar contributed much more to the best of the present Ethiopia and the world. It has introduced a unique architecture. Different ancient buildings of the city witnessed that it has contributed more to the construction sector in our planet. Gondar was also the leading city of Ethiopia along with introducing taxation and land lease payment system. In addition to this, the active engagements and role of women in the leadership area was the manifestations of the ancient Gondar kingdom.

Various religious festivals are key for making Gondar tourists' top visit list. Currently, several institutions and individual building works such as; University of Gondar, Emperor Tewodros Airport, hotels and lodges are portraying the ancient Gondarian construction and architectural arts style.

According to the 2017 projection made by Central Statistical Authority of Ethiopia, currently, more than 360,600 people are estimated to live in the city. And this projection makes Gondar city the third populous city next to Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa.