



The Ethiopian Herald

Vol. LXXVIII No 249 28 JUNE 2022 - Sene 21 , 2014

Tuesday

Price Birr 10.00

Gov't puts forward direction for peace talks

BY ABDUREZAK MOHAMMED

ADDIS ABABA – Government has set direction for peace talks to end conflict in northern Ethiopia. Accordingly, the talks should be conducted upholding constitutional order, national interest, and African Union's role as facilitator of the process.

This was noted after the Executive and Central Committees of the ruling Prosperity Party (PP) held ordinary meeting and discussed the current situation in the country.

Briefing resolutions of the two committees to journalists, member of PP Central Committee and Justice Minister Gedion Timothewos (PhD) stated that both committees have underscored the need to pursue a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

The basis for the deliberation was a report submitted to the committee which was previously established by the Executive

See Gov't puts ... page 3



Gedion Timothewos (PhD)

Photo - Tsehay Nigussie



TDP working on exposing T-TPLF warmongering acts

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA- The Tigray Democratic Party (TDP) said it has been carrying out meticulous activities to expose the Terrorist TPLF's warmongering acts against the peace-loving Ethiopians to the international community.

See TDP working ... page 3

AfDB aligns finance with Ethiopia's dev't priorities

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

ADDIS ABABA-The Africa Development Bank Group (AfDB) has made every attempt to align its financing programs with the development priorities of Ethiopia and other recipient counties, the country director said, adding the bank has been accompanying Ethiopia's path to industrialization.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, AfDP's Country Manager to Ethiopia Abdul Kamara (PhD) stated that the Bank has been financing the execution of Ethiopia's successive development programs for many years including the recent Homegrown Economic Reform and the 10 Year Development Plan. AfDB has five core areas of engagement namely infrastructure development, regional

See AfDB ... page 3



Abdul Kamara (PhD)

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Amhara, Oromia states toil in unison to counter terrorism

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - Chief Administrators of the Amhara and Oromia states expressed firm stance to counter the terrorist and extremist forces' attempts to disrupt the peaceful balance that exists between the two

See Amhara, Oromia ... page 3

News

Dark forces manipulating ethnic based militias to destabilize Ethiopia

ADDIS ABABA - The ethnic national militias manipulated by dark forces from outside and inside the country want to make sure that Ethiopia is permanently destabilized, an American political-economic analyst told ENA.

Lawrence Freeman strongly argues that the recent massacre against civilians in Oromia region is a result of ethnic polarization used as a weapon by people inside Ethiopia, governments outside the country, and intentional forces.

“The massacre that occurred against the Amhara in Oromia (Region) is committed by ethnic national groups manipulated from outside of the country and inside the country by dark forces that want to make sure that Ethiopia is permanently destabilized,” the analyst noted.

According to him, the dark forces outside of Ethiopia and inside the country which do not want to see a stable, prosperous and sovereign Ethiopia have exploited this.

The analyst contends that as a result of a project to destabilize Ethiopia, ethnicity is clearly being manipulated in Ethiopia “because there are political forces that want to weaken Ethiopia and you should not discount the fact,” Freeman pointed out.

Asked about the recent attacks in Wollega



against civilians by militias, he responded that foreign forces are using these militias to destabilize the nation.

Given the perspective regarding the recent ethno-nationalist forces that are being supported by outside and inside enemies of Ethiopia to threaten the country, the analyst pointed out that the third-filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) could be an immediate cause.

“Within weeks ahead, it is going to be the third filling of the Grand Renaissance Dam, which has been opposed not just by Egypt and Sudan but also by the West. This dam produces electricity and could become a game changer in the Horn of Africa and there are people who don’t want that to

happen. If you have people fighting each other and constant internal conflict, then you have an unstable government that can easily be manipulated for outside political purposes.”

Speaking on the commitment of the Ethiopian government for peace and to solve the conflict in northern Ethiopia, the analyst is doubtful about the seriousness of the terrorist TPLF which demands concessions. He blamed western nations and media outlets for their failure to support the government from the outset. They instead supported the TPLF.

He further stated that there is also a belief among the people that those powers might have changed their position now to having a weakened government in Ethiopia.

The ethno-nationalist terrorists and militia like the Shene and TPLF are now carrying out these attacks and disruptions which are all intended to weaken the nation state of Ethiopia, Freeman elaborated.

Ethiopia’s leadership need to embark on a process, actual discussion on the cultural political history of Ethiopia and what the nation state means to citizens of Ethiopia, the analyst recommended.

Freeman explained that it is because right now there has been an eruption of conflicts

going on by extremists and various militias based on ethnic identity.

As a strong nation state is now essential for the continuation of Ethiopian society and its economic development for generations, the government needs to have a much broader approach to this dialogue conception.

“First, people are going to have to discuss the difference between an ethnic grouping and the citizens of the nation. These have a fundamental difference since there’s no equality between the two whatsoever. The discussion has to be also held throughout the country. The second thing is to unite the people. Ethiopia has to a mission for its nation. That would unite people together.”

In his statement about the attack in western Ethiopia, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said on Tuesday that there is zero tolerance for horrific acts claiming lives recently in both Benishangul Gumuz and Oromia regions by elements whose main objective is to terrorize communities.

Earlier he told the House of People’s Representatives that his government “wants peace with everyone” and revealed for the first time that “a study committee” has been formed under the leadership of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen.

President appreciates CRS humanitarian assistance in Ethiopia

BY MULATU BELACHEW

ADDIS ABABA- President Sahlework Zewde has appreciated the Catholic Relief Service (CRS) for providing humanitarian and development supports to the needy through the long-standing partnership with the Ethiopian Catholic Church for the past several years, it was learned from press statement sent The Ethiopian Herald.

A delegate led by Eminence Cardinal consisting of Reverend Fr. Teshome Fikre, Secretary General, Sean Callahan, the president of CRS, Matt Devis CRS Regional Director and Zemedezewde CRS Country Representative met with President Sahlework Zewde recently.

Teshome Fikre Secretary General of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Ethiopia

presented an overview of the Social and developmental services that the Ethiopian Catholic Church is providing throughout the country.

The president Sahlework on her part said that the government is aware of all the noble services that the Ethiopian Catholic Church is providing to the poor and marginalized people in Ethiopia regardless of any variations.

She also added that being minority in Ethiopia the Church is providing efficient services calmly and transparently. The government is grateful for the services being provided by the Church and all of its partners.

During the course of the meeting, the president and the delegation have also discussed the impacts of developmental, emergency, education, health and other areas of services delivered by the Ethiopian



Catholic Church throughout Ethiopia.

BekeleMoges, Deputy Secretary General for Social and Development Commission at CRS, stated on the occasion that priorities in the future cooperation will be standardization and modernization of financial, HRM Property management systems and ICT infrastructures. Inclusion of additional

dioceses in CRS programs based on needs will also be focused on.

Zemedezewde, the Country Representative of CRS Ethiopia presented on his part the overview of CRS programs in Ethiopia. In his presentation 10.8 million beneficiaries addressed in the year 2021 in CRS Programs throughout Ethiopia.

Diasporas hold vigil for victims of terrorist attack

BY MULATU BELACHEW

ADDISABABA- Members of Ethiopian Diaspora and friends of Ethiopia held vigil for victims of the recent terrorist attack in west Ethiopia.

The candlelight vigil for the victims was organized in many cities across Europe and USA. Accordingly, many innocent civilians, mostly women and children were slaughtered by terrorist Shene group.

Atlanta, Cambridge, Denver, Los Angeles, Minnesota, Toronto, Kansas City, New York City, Oakland, Ottawa, Dallas, Houston, London (UK), Seattle, and other cities carried out the candlelight vigil to remember the victims of such heinous crime.

Ethio-Canadian Network for Advocacy and

Support (ECNAS) expressed sorrow for the loss of innocent lives and extended its deepest condolences to those who have been affected by this tragedy. ECNAS has called upon the government of Ethiopia to take appropriate actions against the perpetrators and assist those who have been displaced due to this violence.

Nebiyu Asfaw, member of Ethiopian Diaspora and an activist in Denver Colorado, who attended the candlelight vigil for the victims, said a lot is expected of the government to restore peace and order in the country and guarantee citizens’ peace and security especially from armed militant groups attack targeting ethnic groups.

He said: “The government has to declare state of emergency in the area and takeover the area under federal military control and administer with central military command to halt the worst

to come.”

“In general, the country has been passing with huge difficulties but this incident should be a turning point to end ethnic massacres, ethno-religious clash, and ethnic cleansing, said MingaNegash a Professor of Accounting at the Metropolitan State University of Denver and the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). Perpetrators of such incidents at all level should be held accountable, he underlined.

It is to be recalled that the House of People’s Representatives (HPR) has instructed Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to investigate and report the recent horrific human rights violation perpetrated against innocent civilians in Oromia and Gambella states and condemned the inhuman act against innocent civilians.

Sunday, June 26, 2022.

CANDLELIGHT VIGIL

State Capitol (South Side of the Building) 200 W Washington St. Indianapolis, IN 46204

In front of Westin Hotel

Remembering the victims of the massacre in Wollega, Ethiopia 6pm-8pm

News

Deputy PM officially launches summer voluntary service

ADDIS ABABA (ENA) - Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Demeke Mekonnen has officially launched this year's Summer Voluntary Service.

It has been several years now since the government of Ethiopia embarked upon promoting voluntarism in the country.

The Summer Voluntary Service is one of these endeavors carried out annually during the summer.

The nation has finalized to conduct this year's annual summer voluntary service under the motto of "Virtuous Acts to Uplift Ethiopia!"

Some 19 million youth will participate in this year's voluntarism service in which more than 40 million people are expected to



benefit in various areas.

It is indicated that the free services to be provided by the volunteers estimated to cost more than 11 billion Birr.

Speaking on the launching ceremony of this year's Summer Voluntary Service, Demeke said volunteerism is a humanitarian activity

without border and it is a deep-rooted culture in Ethiopia.

Voluntarism will play an important role in alleviating the economic pressures faced by the country especially in the face of man-made and natural disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic and the current global situation,

he added.

Demeke praised the enthusiasm demonstrated by millions of young Ethiopians to participate in voluntary services and urged the youth to be ambassador of hard work, peace and welfare wherever they are deployed.

He finally expressed his best wishes to the participating youth to successfully accomplish their task in their voluntary services.

According to Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, this year's program is about young people from all parts of the country going to serve in different regions.

Recently, the ministry has planned to expand this service to neighboring countries in collaboration with Ministry Foreign Affairs.

Gov't puts forward...

Committee of the PP to explore the prospect of the peaceful resolution of the conflict.

He added that the peace talk should respect the constitutional order and constitutionalism, fundamental national interest of the nation and citizens, and AU's role as the facilitator of the process in accordance with the principle of "African solutions to African problems".

As to him, both committees have also emphasized that any outcome of such process should be within the bounds of this three principles.

He also indicated that both committees taken into account the fact that peace is essential and paramount for political and reform initiatives to succeed. And, they have underscored the need to put an end to this tragic chapter in Ethiopia's history and to move forward.

He further said that both committees have expressed an aspiration to move towards reconstruction, rehabilitation, and reconciliation of communities that are affected by the conflict.

Committees have also reiterated the need to avoid further bloodshed and to end the suffering and misery have been occasioned by the conflict, he said, adding that both committees have expressed the need to foster national consensus for inclusive National Dialogue.

Both committees called on all Ethiopians from all walks of life and from all parts of the country to support this initiative. They have also renewed call for international community and friends of Ethiopia to play a constructive role and support this peace initiative and agenda.

TDP working on exposing...

TDP Deputy Chairperson Mesfin Desalgne told *The Ethiopian Herald*, consolidated efforts have been also made to inform the global community that the T-TPLF does not have the legal mandate to conduct act on behalf of the people of Tigray.

"The international community should revisit the way it has been handling the action of the group and accept our quest for a transparent and an all-inclusive dialogue in Ethiopia. Moreover, it has to be clear that the criminal faction doesn't represent

the real wishes and aspirations of the people of Tigray."

Global partners should also realize the true nature of the T-TPLF and its hypocrisy and they are expected to shun supporting the criminal faction and exert more push for a transparent and an all-inclusive dialogue that would ensure lasting peace in Ethiopia. "T-TPLF is characterized by false narratives, belligerence, disunity and inhumanity and has not changed the wrong stance it

has entertained since inception. Putting the viable option of resolving conflicts in negotiations away, the radical element still sticks in its longstanding habit of militancy and it has never been ready for peace."

If the interests of the people of Tigray were to be addressed by war, the T-TPLF would have been addressed in its 40-year rule. The problem is multifaceted and needs structural or constitutional changes. Besides, the national dialogue should be clear, direct, inclusive, and strong while it is based on a win-win approach, the deputy chairperson emphasized.

AfDB aligns finance...

economic integration, private sector development, governance and accountability as well as skills and technology.

Noting AfDB's focus on availing energy to the continent, Kamara indicated Light up and Power Africa, for instance, is one of the priority areas of the bank followed by agriculture, health, nutrition and so on. The bank is also financing projects that integrate Africa including cross border road connection, railways and air transport among

others.

As to him, AfDB has been hugely engaged to improve the quality of life for Africans and finance projects related to health, education, water and sanitation and so on. There are also cross cutting areas such as governance, climate change and others that the bank focuses on. "Indeed, the priorities in each country are slightly differ one from the other given that countries are at different stages of development and transformation."

"Shortage of resources, conflicts, global dynamics or global shocks and climate change are some of the challenges that the bank has faced. I can really assure you that we are very much on top of things and we are doing whatever it takes," the country manager remarked.

The AfDB was founded following an agreement signed by member states on August 14, 1963, in Khartoum, Sudan, which became effective on September 10, 1964. Since then, the bank has actually grown and transformed up to the level where it is today. Ethiopia is a founding member of the AfDB.

Amhara, Oromia states toil in unison...

largest ethnic groups of the country.

Amhara State Chief Yilkal Kefale (PhD) and his Oromia State counterpart Shimeles Abdissa exchanged views on ways to deter the Terrorist-Shene's ethnic-motivated killings of civilians in different parts of Oromia on Sunday. Accordingly, they came to terms to strengthen the law enforcement operation to neutralize the criminal faction.

As to Yilkal, *Shene's* ethnic-motivated killings of civilians aim to create dismemberment and disrupt the age-old peace of the country. "In collaboration with the Oromia State, we will work to ensure peace and order and not allow similar atrocities to be committed on the defenseless people."

The leadership should bear common understanding to prevent such kinds of atrocities and ensure peace and stability. Leadership at all levels should guarantee the safety of civilians and take appropriate measures to prevent future problems. "All Ethiopians also expected to support the law enforcement efforts across the country."



As to Yilkal, both states have been exchanging information in the border areas and forming a joint committee to fight the common enemy. "*Shene* is not only the enemy of the people of Amhara, it is the enemy of all Ethiopians."

Oromia State Chief Administrator Shimeles Abdissa said for his part T-Shene has been employing violence, killing, attacking and abducting of civilians as the means of achieving its ill-intended goal. As a result, the leadership and security forces of the Oromia State paid noble sacrifices while defending their people.

Shimeles further highlighted that *Shene's* frequent attacks on ethnic Amharas targeted

to create a hate and suspicion between the people of Amhara and Oromo. "The hearts of the people of Oromo have been broken by the radical element's recent killings of ethnic Amharas in Wollega though the attack will never break our unity and brotherhood. We should not only condemn the act, but also work together to maintain our country's unity and will take merciless actions against the terrorist group."

The two states reached consensus to work together for the successful conduct of the law enforcement operation and consolidate the military, political and security apparatus, he remarked.

Opinion

The critiques of the Green Legacy Campaign, the timing of terrorist TPLF wicked conspiracies on Ethiopia

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

For apes that fail to grab them, grapes are sour. For those who used to benefit from the status quo ante before four years, the reform programs underway in the country is a real threat and are therefore out to vehemently oppose it. Over the last four years, criticizing every achievements registered by the people and government of Ethiopia has become a fashionable trend in international and some local media companies. Critique on the other hand is positive and objective specially in promoting creative arts. However, the political critiques in this country policies on every achievement that the country has registered. They fail to differentiate beans from apple butter and view the green legacy of the country as something undesirable even after 4 years of the campaign.

The current political campaign on Ethiopia's greening campaign is part of the international conspiracy skillfully orchestrated by those who suffer from the phobia of the national reform program. It is to be noted that terrorist TPLF has already prepared a package of discrediting and defamation propaganda on everything Ethiopian ranging from the defamation of the leaders of this country to propagandizing on the reform programs of the country.

The opponents of the development programs of the country deliberately provoke ethic and religious based massacres to falsely blame the government for ethnic cleansing and war on the faithful of the followers of specific religion. This has been staged in Gondar, Western Wollega, Silte Zone and other areas of the country including Eastern Hareregie Zone. Falsified and venomous politicking has become a sub-culture for terrorist TPLF which has created an earthly purgatory in Tigray.

OLF- Shene massacred hundreds of innocent citizens in Wollega to tarnish the image of the country in timings that coincided with government briefing on the 13th regular session of the HPR and the startup on the 4th Green Legacy Campaign to hammer a wage of public mistrust on the capacity of the government to ascertain law and order in the country. Although there is no practical link between the green legacy campaign and massive wheat production in the country, social media gladiators and quack politicians intoxicated with extreme hatred are busy helping the enemies of the country in their orchestrated campaign to balkanize the country and its people into

scattered villages rule by war craving hooligans.

Some think that the current crisis in Wollega is an isolated incident by disgruntled and fanatic extremists whose grey matter is externally stowed in their guns. Such type of blame shifting has been used by Adolf Hitler in staging the holocaust on the Jews branding them as enemies of the Aryan Race. Terrorist TPLF has inherited this style of war mongering on its own people, Ethiopians.

The timing of these conspiracies is linked to the 3rd round of war that terrorist TPLF is organizing against the people and government of Ethiopia. Shene which is a partner with terrorist TPLF took a pair of responsibilities to trigger a religious war and also provoke a localized war between the Amhara and Oromo people in exact consonance with its 5 points strategy it prepared a month back as part of the conspiracy to help it win the war. The campaign against the Green Legacy initiative, the beatification of Addis Ababa and the promotion of huge human focused construction programs in the city on Social media is being fanned to push a wedge of mistrust between the people of Ethiopia in an attempt to cut short the support that the citizens are giving for the maintenance of the unity and territorial integrity of the country and their specific support for the 3rd round of filling GERD and its final completion.

As reported by the Government Communication Office. The terrorist organization has now totally blocked airlifting food and medicaments to Tigray for no reason. Yet, it is attempting to blame the government with no evidence and on actions for which it could not be accountable. As usual, Shene lost no time to shift the blame while video clippings clearly show that it staged the massacre. This shows hoe terrorist TPLF and its international supporters are vilifying all possible efforts by the government to ensure unfettered flow of food into Tigray.

It is now clear that the UN systems and the so called western democracies have remained neutral and unaffected when the terrorist TPLF-Shene alliance massacres innocent citizens even if they were taking refuge in churches and mosques. The UN insists on further free flow of food into Tigray while it is silent when a section of mankind is facing daylight extermination.

Even if terrorist TPLF claims that it would start its third round of rampage of war, it is in fact interested in elongating the conflict so that it would continue to receive food donations and other accessories to feed its

own army.

Again, the existence of a double standard is quite obvious. When the Ethiopian sovereign government takes law enforcement measures in Amhara and Tigray regions, the western media laments about state sponsored atrocities but when what they jointly named TDF-Shene alliance massacres innocent citizens it is reported as a response to the actions by the security forces, thus justifying a genocide on the people of Amhara, Oromo and other ethnic groups.

Local traitors and anti-peace forces are also busy inciting citizens for a civil war the consequences of which they can never predict. For more than four years, the people of Ethiopia have endures a lot of painful incidents which has affected and continued to affect thousands of households across the country.

In terms of timing the conspiracy against the third round filling of GERD, a new blend of conspiracy has been prepared in the form of multiple strategies to prevent the filling of the dam in a couple of weeks. The conspiracy and propaganda ploy that is currently escalating on GERD is already irrelevant and void. The only chance that remains for Egypt and Sudan is to sit back and thin k on how they can cooperate with Ethiopia to share the benefits of a completed flagship project that is being constructed for Ethiopia and Africa. The political arrogance and the Machiavellian strategy that both countries follow these days will backfire on them as they are bust trying to fan on an artificial animosity between the people of Ethiopia and fellow African brothers and sisters in both Egypt and Sudan.

Moreover, in Ethiopia, the farming season has already set in and terrorist TPLF and its associates are busy attempting to sabotage farming activities in Tigray, Amhara, Afar and Oromia. The terrorist organization chose this season speculating on the advantages it can get from bad weather conditions in waging the war and to use the situation for an economic war geared towards staging the ground for famine in the regions.

As another strategy of waging economic war on the people of Ethiopia, terrorist TPLF is now fully engaged in systematic contraband trade with all kinds of commodities including fuel, illegal money transfer and trade in drugs and a number of electronic devises.

Back on social media, ethnocentric propaganda and agitation is already taking shape to assist terrorist TPLF for its planned

war on Ethiopia. This terrorist organization has already forfeited peace and has started a campaign of calculated mockery on peace and possible negotiations. It is interesting to note here that while the western countries have repeatedly called for peace and negotiations on the war in the northern part of this country, they have totally failed to convenience terrorist TPLF to come to round table negotiations.

The government of Ethiopia has made it clear that peace talks is the only viable solution to the stalemate in the country but this stand is not being supported by many in the country and in the diaspora. War according to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed snatches away lives but is also expensive and unreasonable.

Any war requires genuine cause to fight for and an economic base that can buttress it. Terrorist TPLF is engaged in a brand new war tactic of using food aid to feed its terrorist army in untold violations of the natural rights of the people of Tigray to have access to food. It must be clear that over the current year, terrorist TPLF was unable to win any war in all the fronts that it has provoked aggression. The group is losing thousands of the fighters of its rag tag army and the demographic and gender balance that existed in the region during the pre-war period is now seriously disrupted.

Here, the author intends to forward a number of suggestions that if implemented could be useful to fight back the savage war of the terrorist organization. In the first place, the local media outlets need to double their efforts in efficiently disclosing the objective reality on the ground both to international and local audience in a proactive manner. It is now visible that social media outlets including YouTube transmissions are engaged in misinformation and character assassination of leaders and dangerous agitations that the mainstream media houses are having difficulties to cope with.

Strengthening the security structures of the country right down to the village level is necessary for sharing information in a swift manner. On the other hand, the resistance and final defeat of the terrorist forces and their allies needs to include every able citizen that needs to take part in ascertaining local peace and security. I think establishing citizens security networks that can convey information to all law enforcement and security networks can pay off both in the long and short run.

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

The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943

Published daily except Mondays
By The Ethiopian Press Agency



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Tel. 011-126-42-22

Fax. 251-011-156-98-62

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The Ethiopian Herald

Editorial

Redoubling IDPs' rehabilitation activities

The myriads of problems that the people of Afar and Amhara have been facing as a result of T-TPLF-provoked war are with no doubt nationally, regionally and globally recognized. Tasks of sustainably rehabilitating these people require an integrated, inclusive and meaningful participation of all concerned bodies such as the government as well as local and international humanitarian organizations.

Supports given to the people have to be well consolidated and help come up with permanent and sustainable change in such a way that war affected citizens in the two states can have quality and effective humanitarian responses.

No time can be spent cleaning up debris and rebuilding homes for conflict survivors who lack sufficient resources to seize state of normalization. The government is working hard all the time and it has been smoothing the trauma that has been created since the aftermath of conflicts in the states. Besides, the support with which the needy have to be provided needs to be well amalgamated and meaningfully run. The government of Ethiopia is doing all its best in this regard and it is rendering immediate medical care, food and clothing distribution, community and social services, among others.

It has thus the overall aim of assisting war-affected community to respond to their needs and requests. Concerned national bodies along with other partners have provided victims with all-round supports and worked to assist the latter in finding permanent, long-term solutions to their conflict-related problems. The government has in particular embarked on rehabilitating victims, mothers and children.

Apart from acknowledging what the government is practically

doing, the international community, humanitarian aid organizations and other partners are expected to scale up their participation to help the government hit the set targets regarding supporting and rehabilitating citizens.

Obviously, the Ethiopian government is effectively discharging its duties and responsibilities so as to support all citizens prone to humanitarian crises and it needs to be certain that the humanitarian response is effective, timely and efficient. Still, as compared to the magnitude of the problem, the meaningful participation of all stakeholders is very important. To make this happen, it is important to provide accessible information thereby ensuring an effective process for participation, referring to all parties and the international community, to support and sustainably rehabilitate the war-affected community. Setting up a well-organized and streamlined humanitarian support to create an environment of greater trust, transparency and accountability is also worth noting.

On the one hand, aid organizations, humanitarian agencies and even international donors should work hard to ensure that the voices of the most vulnerable groups irrespective of gender, religion, clan category, language and the likes are heard well.

The provocative acts of the terrorist TPLF and the inhumane acts of its junior partner, terrorist Shene, also must be condemned and these elements must lay down arms, on the other. People must not die and displaced from their livelihood. Any problem can get a peaceful solution through the planned National Dialogue. Turning head towards cowardly acts would serve no purpose other than claiming the lives of innocent people.

Opinion

Finding a way out for the alarmingly growing inflation

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Ethiopia is characterized by its agrarian economy which engages about 70 percent of the labor force. It is a means of living for 85 percent of the population. It also contributes to the nation 75 percent foreign currency earning.

The service sector, though it holds very tiny population number, it contributes more than 65 percent for the Gross Domestic Production. To modernize the economy and to enhance the role of the manufacturing sector in the economy, the government gave emphasis to the sector.

To boost the economy the nation needs to import more capital goods and processed materials used as inputs for manufacturing and the agriculture too. In addition, essential commodities such as medicine and petroleum oil and others should be imported.

However, currently due to the economic crises in the international market the prices of the imported items are soaring from time to time.

According to the official report, Ethiopia annually imports items worth 15 billion Dollar while it exports only 3 billion Dollars. This indicates how the nation suffers from negative trade balance and shortage of hard currency.

This in turn slows down the manufacturing sectors progress. Currently due to scarcity of hard currency in banks the manufacturing sector is forced to produce below its average

capacity. It has also forced importers to secure Dollar from black market in the exchange rate of 1 Dollar to 80 Ethiopian Birr while in the formal market 1 Dollar is exchanged by 52 birr.

The depreciation of the value of birr both in the formal and parallel market obviously makes the imported commodities to be expensive because of the decline of the purchasing power of the birr.

The National Bank argues that the official devaluation of birr boosts export which in turn enhances the nations hard currency earning capacity. It also attracts foreign investment and doing business here because they can obtain cheap labor and raw material in the local market and ultimately boosts export.

However, some economists argue the other way round. They say that, the devaluation of birr rather aggravates inflation instead of boosting export and as to them, only in the last four years the value of birr is devalued by over 20 percent by official market and to manage the growing inflation the government should halt the devaluation of birr for the time being.

To enhance the nation's hard currency earning capacity, the government encourages the diaspora Ethiopians to send remittance in the formal bank system. According to official sources, the nation annually could garner 5 billion Dollars from remittance which exceeded the export earnings by 2 billion Dollars.

However, there is anxiety that the increasing of the value of Dollar in the parallel market might force to shift their sending money from the formal system to that of the black market. Because their parents residing here can gain a lot while they exchange the Dollar in the black market than the formal channel which again exacerbates inflation.

Currently the government allowed the diaspora to open bank account in foreign currency and such measure enhance the nation hard currency reserve but restricting them to get their money in Birr after 28 days on the latest exchange rate poses complaint and in this regard consideration should be given to the matter and setting special exchange rate to the diaspora who deposit their money in hard currency should be taken as solution.

As mentioned above to balance the deficit witnessed between export and import the nation must enhance its currency reserving capacity. But as to some business men the existing law discouraged to use the formal bank system. The cumbersome bureaucratic hurdles prevailed in the banks discourages importers and resort to look parallel market as alternate mechanism. Exporters also are required to import goods by what they earn from the export trade within 28 days and if the day is terminated they only regain their currency in birr. This also can be seen as one factor to stay away from the formal system.

There are many Ethiopians working in international non-governmental

organizations including the United Nations who receive their wages USD but the governing rules in banks do not attract them to deposit their hard currency.

Therefore, they prefer to open bank account in the neighboring countries so that they can regain their hard currency as it was with no exchange of other currency without time limit.

Ethiopians working for the Ethiopian airline in foreign countries earn their salary in Dollar but because of the above mentioned reasons they do not deposit the money at home. We should understand that such situation again exacerbates local parallel market here which again aggravates inflation.

Recently due to scarcity of hard currency the government allowed importers to import goods through Franco Valuta. But some importers instead of using their Dollar they resorted to purchase Dollar from black market and such situation again makes the imported goods to be expensive. Therefore, the government should scrutinize where Franco valuate users obtain the Dollar. In addition making policy change with regard to setting Dollar- Birr Exchange rate and money depositing rules should be taken as a way out.

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

Business & Economy

Ministry's action in revoking licenses encourage legality, development in the mining sector

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

The best thing to explore this time is natural resources. The continent of Africa has untapped natural resources that could drop the jaws of those colonizers in the past. On the other hand, African countries have not used their natural blessings to pave the way to freedom from the shackles of poverty.

In the past few years, things in Ethiopia have been changed in the ways that promote development and success. The country has been scoring tangible progresses towards manufacturing and export. It is this year that the country has registered one billion USD revenue from coffee export. Not only that, the nation is trying its best to promote industrialization and increase the quality and quantity of production and productivity.

It is the fact that the country has immense natural resources, and this time the government has been excavating those natural resources and uses them to build the nation's economy. The Ministry of Mines, in this regard, is taking the responsibility to make things more favorable to those who want to work in the mining sector. A number of actions have been taken to make the sector competitive in the international markets holding better quality and quantity. Licensing investors and creating better environment for them are some of the actions taken by the Ministry.

While presenting the Ministry's 11 months performance report of this fiscal year recently, Minister of Mines, Takele Uma mentioned some of the major achievements registered by his office. According to the Minister, the government of Ethiopia has exerted its utmost effort to make the mining investment competitive internationally. The Minister said that licenses that have been given by the Ministry incorporate other advantages like financial, technical and professional supports.

It is important to remember that there are investors who wish to use those advantages they got from their licenses and vanish without any trace. Takele said that the above mentioned incentives and advantages are encouraging for those who dedicate their assets to invest in the sector. The Minister said on the other side, "These provisions are not for those who have used shortcut to success creating their own advantages via abusing the nation's property."

There are multiple of achievements in the mining industry in the current fiscal year. Minerals have been produced in quality and quantity and by type. As a result, Ethiopia earned 513.9 million USD only from its gold production during the past 11 months, the Minister noted. By making field assessment on the progress of other mining companies, the Ministry found out some constraints regarding their production, Takele highlighted.

As to the Minister, while taking the filed assessment in the mining sector, there are companies found striving to bring success and revenue to the nation. On the contrary, there are companies and individuals that



Nation's performance in gold should be replicated in other minerals

chose the illegal way to use the mining resources for the sake of their own benefits.

As a responsible government organ, any government institution is mandated to take actions to achieve success. Similarly, the Minister disclosed that his office has passed a decision on those investors who took the license, signed an agreement, and submitted work proposals but have not accomplished accordingly as per their schedule. The decision was made based on the legal and administrative process. There was also a meeting with responsible stakeholders to decide on the matter. In addition, decision was also made to cancel the license of those companies that have participated in acts that hurt national interest of the country, the Minister mentioned.

Likewise, the Minister explained that from those 972 companies which their license canceled, 850 of them are companies who are working in mining industry other than gold. Takele also expressed the deeds of the aforementioned companies with void licenses. Though these companies had the certificate of qualification and the permit to export minerals, they failed to use their advantage legally; rather, they have used the license as a cover to practice contraband and illegal trade of minerals. These acts are revealed during the field assessment.

According to the Minister, the illegal practices committed by these companies under their legal licenses made the country lose its revenue from mineral exchange. These companies used the government's license to satisfy their greedy interest via hitting individual advantages. Moreover, 116 companies with mining licenses have been canceled because they have not done their job as per expected of them.

Such decisions were not made over night; rather, various steps have been taken to come to the final point. Takele further mentioned the steps taken by his Ministry to execute the decision. He said that the companies whose licenses become void were informed in many mechanisms. Though informed in

advance to make corrective measures, the companies continued acting illegally instead of carrying out their duties according to the agreement they reached on with the government.

The government had provided necessary assistance to the companies earlier taking in to account their level to minimize the risk, but they failed to meet the target registering less progress. Consequently, the companies have received warning letters; however, they intentionally ignored the alarm and kept on doing their illegal activities. For that matter, the government and people of Ethiopia have not gained any economic and social benefits they deserve, the Minister revealed.

In addition to the above facts, the Minister added that there are 6 more licenses that were revoked because the companies have not done what they had to do.

These types of illegal activities definitely bring unwanted consequences to the nation. Takele mentioned that those under achiever companies coerced the country to import mineral industry inputs spending high foreign exchange. This is due to those companies that have not achieved their plans even though they received different supports from the responsible bodies, the Minister reaffirmed.

The Minister added that these actions will be continued to regional states after assessing the legal procedures and reviewing the licenses. The minister further stated that it is decided to execute better decisions.

To wrap up the above mentioned ideas, it is important to act against the issues that hurt the nation's interest. Illegal practices must be identified and the responsible body should take critical actions to teach others. Actions taken by the Ministry of Mines could be a lesson for other institutions. As it is said earlier, the country should be benefited from its natural resources, and these resources must be exploited effectively as they can bring appropriate revenue to the country, it was learned.

The companies whose licenses become void were informed in many mechanisms. Though informed in advance to make corrective measures, the companies continued acting illegally instead of carrying out their duties according to the agreement they reached on with the government



In the Sphere of Diplomacy

Nile/GERD should not a sacrificial lamb in EU-Egypt deals

BY YOHANES JEMANEH

Since the inception of the flagship Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) project, Ethiopia has been closely working with Sudan and Egypt to resolve disputes and create mutual trust. The tripartite negotiation saw some headway with the signing of the Declaration of Principles and Memorandum of Understanding in 2015 and 2017 respectively. But the three countries failed to reach a deal on outstanding issues due to the downstream countries' ill deeds and foot-dragging.

In some cases, the two countries mainly Cairo has been trying to politicize and internationalize the technical matter taking the issue to UN Security Council and Arab League. Particularly, Egypt has been walking away from negotiations and trying to conspire with other internal and external adversaries to stop the unstoppable project.

GERD is a hydropower plant, not a political project. The politicization and internationalization of the dam will do more harm than use. Egypt has been trying to pull a third party to the negotiation and mystifying the international community with incendiary rhetoric and false propaganda. Some blocs and countries bought Egypt's idea though their sought-after goal had not been attained due to Ethiopia's unity and integrality.

Lately, the European Union either wittingly or unwittingly made a rather ridiculous claim about the Nile and GERD.

The claim was made during the ninth meeting of the Association Council of the European Union and Egypt took place in Luxembourg on 19 June 2022. The statement that came out of the meeting indicated that the two parties agreed to boost cooperation in various areas which includes securing Egypt's interest in the Nile river waters by enforcing a binding agreement on the negotiation of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).

The joint statement on GERD portrays the Nile as the only source of water resources and livelihood for Egypt, and also stresses the protection of Egypt's water security.

The statement sparked anger on Ethiopia's side since it mentions a "support" for Egypt to "protect Egypt's water security" and considers the Nile as "a sole water resource" to the country contrary to the international water experts' consensus that Egypt has abundant groundwater resources than Ethiopia.

EU's position is one-sided and its claim of the preservation of Egypt's "historic share" from Nile waters contravenes the Union's impartial status regarding the construction of the GERD, so said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) lately.

MoFA's former Spokesperson Ambassador Dina Mufti recently said that the EU's backing of Egypt's mythical historical



share from Nile Waters is not something expected from observers, urging the Union to reconsider its stance.

"EU's stance about "Egypt's water security" is not acceptable. Ethiopia doesn't have any plan to harm any of the Nile downstream riparian countries and has been strictly governed by the Tripartite Agreement. For a country that shows a genuine stance on the dam, such a partisan statement is unacceptable," the spokesperson said in condemnation, added the Ambassador.

EU has been discharging its non-partisan role in the GERD Tripartite Negotiations; the spokesperson indicated the latest comment showcases the Union's departure from its mandate and affinity with Egypt. The move also puts the EU's integrity and impartiality in the negotiations in a doubt.

The joint statement clearly reflects the EU's interest to use Egypt as a vehicle for its interest and activities in the Middle East, Africa, and Arab League. The union which currently is finding ways to resist the impact of the Ukraine crisis is also endeavoring to get benefit from Egypt's food and commodities. In return, the bloc planned to assure support to Egypt including the country's interest in the Nile.

Egypt has been opposing Ethiopia's move to utilize developmental projects on the Nile since the launching of the construction of GERD. The country has been propagating that the dam threatens its water security. To meet its goal, Egypt has deployed various diplomats to echo its false narratives and tarnish the dam.

Dina who had stayed in Cairo for a year as Ethiopian Ambassador believed that issues related to the GERD or the Nile River are misperceived by some Egyptians and deliberately distorted. There are Egyptians who believe that the Nile originates from their country. Such misconceptions might have promoted undue arguments with

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Ethiopia on the Nile. In fact, the Egyptian government may use some western allies to claim Ethiopia's natural resources. However, for Dina, not all western countries are putting pressure on Ethiopia. There is support from African countries as demonstrated through the recent hash tag "No More" movement. The collaboration among African countries with regard to resisting pressure from any corner be it West or East is very important because of the principles of mutual respect.

Noninterference with the internal affairs of other countries and respecting the sovereignties of other countries should be observed by anyone be it countries from the west or the east, according to Dina.

However, bilateral cooperation must not affect other countries' national interests

and sovereignty. The same is true for this unblest commitment since it poses threat to Ethiopia's sovereign national interest of utilizing its natural resource for economic benefit and regional integration. Instead, both parties need to support the rapid construction of GERD as it is a win-win project for Ethiopia and other downstream countries in regulating water flow, averting siltation, and gaining energy at a fair price.

Whatsoever, Ethiopia's cooperative diplomatic move on GERD will not be affected by such irresponsible moves either from Egypt or the EU side? In his recent report to the parliament, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) expressed that Ethiopia still wants to work cooperatively and through negotiation with the Egyptian and Sudanese brothers.

"We do not have the desire of stopping the flow of the Abay water, rather generating energy. Everyone will be benefited if we work together and through negotiation," he said.

If Ethiopia generates energy and Sudan produces food through irrigation, sharing the energy and the food will be more than enough. Abiy also urged the downstream countries to join the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) on the utilization of Nile waters as it equally benefits all, according to the premier.

For years now, Ethiopia has been consistent in its position to resolve the contentious issues through diplomatic negotiation and a win-win approach. It has been Ethiopia that willingly embarked on the tripartite negotiation over the dam right after the launching of the project. And, the construction of the dam has been progressing well with the third filling expected to take place this rainy season. And, the choice for Sudan and Egypt is to get back to the round table and solve the outstanding issues and utilize the shared Nile River equally and reasonably.

Law & Politics

The June assaults on innocent lives

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

There seems to be a constant in certain sequence of tragic events that have been materializing in this country in the month of June. The very first year in which the reformist government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed was sworn in there was a vast rally carried out at Meskel Square with hundreds of thousands of citizens hailing him and wishing him good luck in his new duties. People chanted slogans of support and expressed joy as a result of his coming to office. It was a new chapter in Ethiopian history. He had secured so much support that many wondered how that could happen in Ethiopia with so much diversity. Many suspected the reaction to the long years of TPLF tyranny, the longing for change.

But before the headlines were over, a huge tragedy was about to unfold. It was June 23, 2018 the day hundreds of thousands had showed up at Meskel Square with the podium ready to welcome and wish well to the new premier. People were gathered from all corners of the country. Speeches were delivered and the highest officials of the government were in attendance. As soon as the premier finished his address bombs were thrown on the podium, and for a while there was confusion and pandemonium.

People rushed to secure the safety of the premier and in the panic the closest people to the premier's podium were live witnesses of the events while the rest of the people did not have a precise idea of what had been happening. In a worst case scenario the victims could have been plenty but fortunately the damage was limited to a few casualties and injuries. The event was on live TV and images of confusion were seen following the explosions.

Later on it was established that it was an act of terrorism well designed, planned and implemented by highly skilled and trained professional criminals who had insider's information. Various conjectures followed regarding who the culprits could be. Some people said it was TPLF agents while others said it was OLF who disliked Abiy. Still others suspected that there could even be the longa manus of alien forces ready to destabilize the country and put it at the mercy of their dominion.

The message Abiy had transmitted since he came to power seemed very genuinely ambitious talking repeatedly about a united and strong Ethiopia despite the immense diversity. He even invited neighboring countries to come together and work in total collaboration to defeat underdevelopment in unison. He invited Eritrea to come to the table because he would embrace them in peace accepting without preconditions the Algiers Agreement that was negotiated between Eritrea and Ethiopia and TPLF had

prevaricated from implementing it. This was a complete departure from the policy of the TPLF government. All this may have alarmed those who had lost power and influence. Hence they may have fancied removing the chief protagonist of the reformist government.

Then came the June of the next year and this time the leaders of the Amhara Regional State were massacred when they were attending a high level meeting in Bahir Dar in their headquarters. It was an immense tragedy that involved the entire country as in the same day's event in Addis Ababa the Chief of Staff of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces was also killed apparently by his guard in what looked like a coordinated attack with the one in Bahir Dar. There were again various explanations behind the attack and the country had to somehow cope with it.

A year ago another bloody June was to take place when TPLF forces were to attack the two adjacent regional states of Amhara and Afar. Thousands of TPLF forces were prepared to carry out the attack following the unilateral ceasefire announced by the Ethiopian National Defense Forces and their retreat from Tigray. This was done up on the insistence of the international community who asked the government to give peace a chance.

However, the TPLF forces took advantage of the stance of the federal government and embarked in an all-out attack even more than it did when it attacked the Northern Command in November 2020. The gesture of the Ethiopian government was not reciprocated by a peaceful position and in the attack thousands of people were killed with immense devastation taking place in the two regional states until there was inevitable need to save the country from dismembering or seeing again a TPLF government in Addis Ababa.

With immense national mobilization, immense usage of resources the attack was reversed and the TPLF forces were driven out of the positions they had taken and sent back to their region. Again there were indications that TPLF could not have acted alone in all this highly orchestrated and planned attack as it was later on discovered that it had benefited from various sorts of assistance including most importantly satellite intelligence accorded them and some sophisticated electronic equipment they used during the assault. TPLF's advance was highly facilitated also by outside forces including their network of informers outside Tigray and a large part of the Western media who glorified their attacks. The country's stability was at risk and the premier himself guided the successful counterattack.

Again another June, this time a few days ago another round of merciless violence was perpetrated against innocent civilians living

showed also their utter disgust. Some horrible images were posted to show the brutality of the attacks. Many said it was unprecedented and unheard of even by the standards of similar attacks encountered in recent years. Those killed were many, the property destroyed was massive, and many houses were burnt down. Some observers said the attacks seemed intended to send a message to the government, that Shene is still powerful. Some however did not exclude the responsibility of the regional government of failure to avert and prevent such attacks. Besides their reaction to the attacks has been too late and some even have suggested the intentionality of such moves as there may be complicity on the part of certain local government officials. Connivance with the terrorists has not been excluded.

The UN human rights agency has asked for an independent investigation so that the culprits will face justice. So has done the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. The news has attracted international attention because it involved massive cruelty and targeted mainly women and children in numbers. Ethiopians continue to wonder the rationale behind similar atrocities. It is even more troubling when ethnic and religious differences have been called as motives. Paradoxically, Shene has accused the local government of the atrocities denying its involvement.

Moreover, there are those who argue that foreign hands may have been involved. Ethiopia's enemies do not go to bed without planning and perpetrating some vicious act against its citizens. Some say there could be a link with the current rainy season when Ethiopia is bracing up to carry out the third filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, GERD, with more water. They say it may be devised to retard the operation or possibly sabotage it altogether. Doubtless the involvement of TPLF is clear as they have signed a pact to attack Ethiopia in tandem with Shene.

Meanwhile, the Ethiopian government has declared that all these sequences of attacks and atrocities are an expression of despair as the bases of Shene have been hard hit by the defence forces. It said it may be an attempt to derail the reforms the government is undertaking and the development trajectory. But it said they will not succeed because Ethiopia is resolute to withstand every sacrifice and continue on its march ahead.

The premier condemned the attacks in the strongest of terms and ordered the armed forces to launch a major counteroffensive on the Shene positions while launching the phase four of the Green Legacy Initiative. Further condemnations were expressed from all corners of the country including the regional presidents who called for more sustained operations aiming to eradicate these terrorists.

Ethiopians continue to wonder the rationale behind similar atrocities. It is even more troubling when ethnic and religious differences have been called as motives

in Western Oromia around Ghimbi in what looked like a premeditated and planned attack on the most vulnerable of people. Reports said a big number of innocent women and children were ruthlessly killed targeted because of their ethnic or religious group. Many were injured and thousands more were displaced. Eye witness reports talked about how merciless the attacks were.

The authorities in Addis Ababa both at the federal and regional level accused the Shene of resorting to such atrocities as they have been under tremendous pressure following the attacks of the ENDF trying to root them out of the regional state. The premier had a few days earlier declared that a big security operation was in the making to destroy the bases and positions of Shene with a thousand killed and many more detained. The premier had said the people of the regions involved in the operation were relieved by such measures.

However, just a few days later this atrocious attack on innocent civilians materialized. As the details transpired over the weekend, the indignation of every one was evident particularly in social media where people

Society

'Fostering an Africa fit for children'

BY ZECHARIAS GETAHUN

African children are amongst the most vulnerable group worldwide. Inexplicably, most of African children at their early age encounter various challenges, and compelled to lead depressed life which could produce harmful consequences on their health, safety, and physical and psychological wellbeing.

Contrary to the rights and freedoms every child is entitled to enjoy (regardless of race, ethnicity, color, gender, age, religious cultural or any other dimensions), many African children are compelled to lead the worst life and suffer disproportionately.

To this end various organizations including AU, have been working diligently to promote and respect the rights of children, address the challenges that prevent children from achieving their rights thereby ensure that children's rights are realized at the desired level wherever they are residing.

As part of this effort, the former The Organization of African Unity (OAU) which later changed its name to African Union (AU) adopted 'The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child' (ACRWC) in 1990; and the law entered into effect in 1999 for the protection and promotion of children's rights in the continent.

As the document stresses, the Charter, 'The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child', is a regional human rights treaty



sets out rights and defines principles for the status of children and hold governments accountable for ending child marriage.

As part of the commemoration of the Day of the African Child, (DAC 2022), the continental launch of the Child Friendly Version of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (the African Children's Charter) was held in Maseru, Lesotho, on the 16th of June 2022.

The Child Friendly Version of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in Maseru, Lesotho, was officially launched by the Chairperson of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), Joseph Ndayisenga, in the presence of Children from different parts of the continent.

At a ceremony held in Maseru, seat of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), Queen Masenate Mohato Seeiso of Lesotho urged

African governments to do more to ensure that "children become the bedrock of Africa's development".

"Let Africa's development be people driven, women and youth driven, a development that centers its children, one that ends harmful practices against children such as child marriages, Female Genital Mutilation as well as child labor, and we must address these vital ills," she underlined.

This year's the day of the African Child (DAC) 2022 was celebrated under the theme: "Eliminating harmful practices affecting children: Progress on policy and practice since 2013".

The development of the Child Friendly Version of the African Children's Charter has been a joint initiative between Plan International and Save the Children International to mark the 30th anniversary of the Children's Charter. The Charter is one of the most important legal instruments that was put into action in 1990

in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), precursor to the African Union (AU).

The Child Friendly Version of the Charter presents all the articles of the Charter in a simple and accessible language, designed to be easy to understand the rights of children and how they can hold duty bearers to account, it was learnt.

The African Children's Charter outlines the rights and responsibilities of children in Africa. The Child Friendly Version makes sure that children learn and understand these rights. The document is done in English, French and Portuguese, created with children and for children to help them learn about their rights and responsibilities as an African child, it was learnt.

As it was stated, the Charter will enable children to learn about their rights and responsibilities, realize their dignity and place as children, and become active participants in Africa's development agenda. Further, it empowers children to make the prevention of and response to the violation of children's rights effectively managed.

Plan International and Save the Children International are further devoted to creating the Child-Friendly Version of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in Braille and extra language translations for universal access and understanding.



Published on every Tuesday in cooperation
with the Federal Ministry of Education

Planting our print for future generations: Premier

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

The Green Legacy Initiative launched in June 2019 was based on the vision to build a green and climate-resilient Ethiopia, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said.

Issuing a statement relating to the Green Legacy Program of 2022 launched on June 21st with a target of planting 6 billion seedlings, the Premier went on saying: "We are laying our foundation for multidimensional prosperity by leaving a climate smart generational legacy, during this rainy season. The energy we have harnessed in this process is a key learning to be applied to yielding greater results in our agriculture productivity."

The July 29, 2019 challenge of planting 200 million seedlings within a 12-hour span was exceeded by 354 million seedlings and the June 21, 2021 that Ethiopians planted in a single day and casted their votes in for Ethiopia's first democratic election are the two particularly significant milestones during this three-year period that are worthy of note.

These two milestone moments, together with efforts citizens have been making by responding to each year's Green Legacy Challenge, have set into pace the development of a green culture in Ethiopia, he furthered it.

A target of planting 20 billion seedlings within four years was set; the Premier stated adding that 18 billion seedlings were



planted by mobilizing more than 20 million citizens throughout the nation by the end of the third year.

"Inevitably, when we set out the initiative, we expected clear outcomes including combating the effects of climate change; restoring degraded landscapes and forests; promoting a green culture and ecotourism; as well as improving the livelihoods of citizens."

It has also set to build an exclusive process that will enable a large section of society to be custodians of such a Grand National Initiative first by participating in the execution and then by being guardians for the future, the Premier pointed out.

"The prevailing environmental context

around the country when we launched this initiative was a staggering rate of land degradation due to deforestation, among other causes.

As it pertains to tackling deforestation, Green Legacy as a movement has been instrumental in creating public awareness, thereby leading to significant decline in the rate of deforestation over the past couple of years," he indicated.

Ethiopia is gravely affected by the consequences of climate change and is considered a climate vulnerable country, he furthered adding: "Our immediate and practical approach to addressing climate change, is the Green Legacy initiative.

While literally sowing the seeds today,

we have no doubt these seeds will bear fruit across generations and contribute to reducing carbon emissions, decreasing water and air pollution, increasing rains in dry areas and preventing flooding and landslides."

Ethiopia as a nation has achieved numerous gains through the Green Legacy Initiative and millions participate in planting every year, the proliferation of nursery sites throughout the country has enabled job creation for various sections of society.

Over 183 thousand permanent and temporary jobs have been created as a direct outcome of our greening endeavors. In addition, an annually improving survival rate of around 80 percent is contributing to the creation of new forests, it was learned.

Some 7.2 billion seedlings of which 52 percent account for agroforestry trees, 47 percent forestry trees and the remaining ornamental trees have been prepared for the fourth year Green Legacy program of 2022.

Abiy underscored "achieving this year's planned target will catapult us way above the four-year goal of planting 20 billion seedlings."

Therefore, as the premier has extended invitation to all Ethiopians and their lovers, all should demonstrate perseverance for a generational cause and join in making Green Legacy a continent-wide phenomenon to contribute to the continued success and reach of it.

International News

Influx of DRC refugees into Uganda poses health crisis as Covid spikes

By JONATHAN KAMOGA

The recent explosion of violence in eastern DR Congo has triggered a new wave of refugees crossing into Uganda, presenting a potential health crisis as the region grapples with a new Covid-19 wave.

More than 62,000 Congolese refugees have entered Uganda since January and the numbers have increased in the past few weeks following renewed fighting between government forces and M23 rebels.

According to the Uganda Red Cross, the majority of the refugees are not vaccinated against Covid-19.

The UN refugee agency protocol is that refugees are scanned for several diseases, including Covid-19, at receiving centres near the border. But it has not been easy to control movements of those coming from the DRC, with many of them

refusing to go to reception centres for screening, opting to remain along the border as they wait for fighting to subside.

"In fear of being processed as refugees, many set up temporary shelters at the border where they mix with the local communities," Uganda Red Cross spokesperson Irene Nakasiita told *The EastAfrican* on Thursday.

By Thursday, official data showed that Uganda had administered 21.7 million vaccine doses, of which 16 million were single doses and 10 million double doses.

The country has a target of vaccinating about 21.9 million people, which is 49 percent of the population.

And although there is no official data on how many Covid-19 cases have been detected among the refugees, Uganda health officials are still worried they pose a health risk.

As of Wednesday, there was a daily average of

98 new detected cases and the National Planning Authority says there will be more than 1,000 new infections by end of this week.

Covid-19 cases have been on the rise in East Africa, with governments' vaccination campaigns having slowed down.

Uganda Health officials attribute the low vaccine uptake to a lack of medical personnel, logistics challenges and lack of information, especially in rural areas where people still shun the vaccine.

The country is facing the expiry of over six million doses of vaccines worth over Ush333 billion (\$88.65 million) in the next three months, according to Minister for Health Jane Ruth Aceng.

Low vaccination

In a Cabinet report last Monday, Dr Aceng said "the low rate of utilisation of the vaccines started when the third wave was controlled and the economy reopened in January 2022, which affected the seriousness of the risk perception. This was

compounded by myths and misconceptions on social media and worsened by negative activists who are decampaigning vaccination."

However, governments in both Kenya and Uganda have no plans of introducing lockdowns to contain the infections, but are pushing for vaccination.

In Uganda, plans to vaccinate school-going children were halted after Education ministry officials rejected the proposal arguing that schools are not gazetted health facilities.

Many parents are also against the idea of vaccinating their children and fear they could be forcefully jabbed in school although the Health ministry has assured that no child will be vaccinated without the consent of parents.

"We are surely going to vaccinate the children but from ages 12 to 17 only during the holidays and their parents have consented. We shall give them the Pfizer vaccine," said Health ministry spokesperson Emmanuel Ainebyona said.



Elon Musk's child seeks name change to sever ties with father

Elon Musk's transgender daughter has filed a request to change her name in accordance with her new gender identity and because "I no longer live with or wish to be related to my biological father in any way, shape or form."

The petition for both a name change and a new birth certificate reflecting her new gender identity was filed with the Los Angeles County Superior Court in Santa Monica in April. It came to light recently in some online media reports.

The former Xavier Alexander Musk, who recently turned 18, the age of consent in California, has asked the court to change her gender recognition from male to female and to register her new name, according to court documents available online through PlainSite.org.

Her new name was redacted in the online document. Her mother is Justine Wilson, who divorced Musk in 2008.

There was no further explanation of the rift between Musk's daughter and her father, the Tesla and SpaceX chief who is attempting a \$44 billion takeover of social media platform Twitter.

Neither a lawyer who represents Musk nor the Tesla media office immediately responded to Reuters emails requesting comment on Monday.

Afghanistan quake kills 1,000 people, deadliest in decades

The death toll from an earthquake in Afghanistan on Wednesday hit 1,000, disaster management officials said, with more than 600 injured and the toll is expected to grow as information trickles in from remote mountain villages.

Houses were reduced to rubble and bodies swathed in blankets lay on the ground, photographs on Afghan media showed.

Helicopters were deployed in the rescue effort to reach the injured and fly in medical supplies and food, interior ministry official Salahuddin Ayubi said.

"The death toll is likely to rise as some of the villages are in remote areas in the mountains and it will take some time to collect details," he said.

Wednesday's quake was the deadliest in Afghanistan since 2002. It struck about 44 km (27 miles) from the southeastern city of Khost, near the border with Pakistan, the US Geological Survey (USGS) said.

Disaster management officials said at least 1,000 are dead and 600 injured. However, local officials put the number of injured higher.

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"1,000 dead, 1,500 injured, and this number might go up, many families have been lost. Injured people have been taken to Kabul and Gardez," Mohammad Amin Hozaiifa, information and culture director of Paktika, told Reuters.

Most of the confirmed deaths were in the eastern province of Paktika, where 255 people were killed and more than 200 injured, Ayubi added. In the province of Khost, 25 were dead and 90 had been taken



to hospital.

Haibatullah Akhundzada, the supreme leader of the ruling Taliban, offered his condolences in a statement.

Mounting a rescue operation will prove a major test for the Taliban, who took over the country last August and have been cut off from much international assistance because of sanctions.

Shaking was felt by about 119 million people in Pakistan, Afghanistan and India, the EMSC said on Twitter, but there were no immediate reports of damage or casualties in Pakistan.

The EMSC put the earthquake's magnitude at 6.1, though the USGS said it was 5.9.

Adding to the challenge for Afghan authorities is recent flooding in many regions, which the disaster agency said had killed 11, injured 50 and blocked stretches of highway.

The disaster comes as Afghanistan grapples with a severe economic crisis since the Taliban took over as US-led international forces withdrew following two decades of war.

In response to the Taliban takeover, many nations imposed sanctions on Afghanistan's banking sector and cut billions of dollars worth of development aid.

Humanitarian aid has continued, however, with international agencies, such as the United Nations, operating.

The UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) said Afghanistan had asked humanitarian agencies to help with rescue efforts, and teams were being sent to the quake-hit area. A foreign ministry spokesman said the Taliban would welcome international help. Neighbouring Pakistan said it was working to extend assistance.

Large parts of South Asia are seismically active because a tectonic plate known as the Indian plate is pushing north into the Eurasian plate.

In 2015, an earthquake struck the remote Afghan northeast, killing several hundred people in Afghanistan and nearby northern Pakistan.

In January, an earthquake struck western Afghanistan, killing more than 20 people.

Planet Earth

Leaders pioneer in PMs 100 seedlings challenge

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

“Me, Mr. Hailemariam, Mr. Mulatu and Mr. Demeke starting today, we will plant seedlings daily for the coming two months to plant 100 seedlings and we publicize that to the people” said Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed during the launching event of the fourth year Green Legacy initiative last week at Entoto Botanical Garden.

These officials, yesterday’s and today’s top leaders of the country, current PM Abiy, the former PM Hailemariam Dessalegn, former President Mulatu Teshome and current Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Demeke Mekonnen, agreed to apply the 100 seedling challenge during this rainy season of Ethiopia’s fourth year mass plantation.

As part of its four year Green Legacy initiative launched in 2019, Ethiopia started the fourth year seedling plantation with a goal of planting six billion seedlings across the country by mobilizing millions of citizens. During the launching ceremony at Entoto, current and previous top officials of Ethiopia, Ambassadors and Diplomatic Community based in Addis Ababa and public figures were attended the launching ceremony. All the attendants of the event have planted seedlings and left their finger prints at Entoto.

Ethiopia’s four year Green Legacy initiative challenge was launched by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to plant 20 billion seedlings and during the past three years, Ethiopia has planted 18 billion. During these greening years, the roles of the leadership in mobilizing the public and in leaving their finger prints were exemplary and the PM calls the leadership to continue their activities by planting 100 seedlings during this plantation season as a challenge.

Speaking to a local Media with regard to the 100 seedling challenge and the current Green Legacy initiative, the former Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn said that he and his predecessor as well as the current Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) understands climate change an economy-wide issue and gives ample consideration with a view to diversifying energy sources and building a green economy. Accordingly, various greenery programs have been carried out by the successive governments to build green economy and to combat climate change and its impacts, Hailemariam stated.

Green Development strategy was applied and attracts donors. Beyond that, the objective of Green Development and the current Green Legacy is a sustainable project that must continue with generations. The project of Green Legacy started by understanding its significance and Ethiopia clearly understands the significance of green development even in the past and discussions were there. Ethiopia was also promoting Green Development and fighting for that at international forums, the ex-PM noted.

The significance of Green Legacy starts



since climate change is becoming a threat equally both to the world and to our country. Climate change, for Hailemariam, is a serious threat to the planet, the people and all living things within the planet and to every individual. Hence, the significance of planting seedlings to increase the forest coverage begins from this real current situation of the earth.

“It is important to contribute your side in creating suitable environment for living in our surrounding, in our homes, in our villages to have harmonious climate even at micro-climate level” Hailemariam stated adding that to create suitable and beautiful environment in our surroundings, it is the responsibility of everyone to plant trees and to care for the environment.

“As it stands, currently climate change is a matter of life and death and serious threat and crisis for life. Even for our country drought during my child hood used to happen once in 15 or 20 years, but now drought is happening recurrently. There is no even smooth transition from one season to the next season which is an indication that the crisis is badly increasing from year to year” He elaborated. Though the environmental and climate crisis is the outcome of the general world activities and developments, it is affecting our life seriously.

“Since the beginning of the Green Legacy initiative three years ago, I became part of the initiative since the greenery effort was also a priority project during my career as PM. What makes the current Green Legacy initiative different from the previous green development efforts is the mass mobilization that mobilizes the country’s population massively. I became part of the mobilization to contribute my side for the achievement of the initiative,” he noted.

Noting he himself has planted over 600 various tree seedlings over the last three years, Hailemariam called on the people of Ethiopia to engage in the ongoing Green Legacy program cognizant of its multiple benefits. The participation of elders, youth, women and other members of the public would bring tangible outcomes in reducing the impacts of climate change and emission of gas.

“Personally, since I understand the significance of the green legacy early, I actively participated in planting trees during the past three years of Green Legacy Initiative. I planted 547 trees for forest coverage and 18 avocado trees, 21 apple trees, 19 banana trees and 53 *Inset* trees during the past three years to become part of the Green Legacy initiative” Hailemariam noted adding that from the fruit trees he planted three years ago, the *Inset* and Banana are starting production.

“From the *Inset* I planted three years ago, we started making *Kocho* (a traditional food prepared from *Inset*) and three Banana trees of the 19 are just bearing fruit” the ex-PM reiterated. Hence, Hailemariam said that he is not new in fulfilling the call of greenery challenges and he accepted the call of Prime Minister Abiy’s 100 seedling plantation challenge for higher officials.

“Recognizing the multiple importance of the Green Legacy initiative is the first step to curb the impact of climate change,” he argued and as he recognized the Green Legacy initiative, he announced to apply the 100 seedlings planting challenge of higher officials. “I am part of the competition and an avid supporter of Premier Abiy’s greenery campaign, cognizant of its success would enable us to overcome the pressing challenge.”

“From my three years plantation experience, the current challenge is not too much and I would realize it,” he underlined adding “I am ready even to plant beyond the target. I planted 15 seedlings in a single day, yesterday and it is easy to plant 100 trees within two months.”

“I believe my contribution have a great importance in increasing the national and global efforts of combating climate change and that is why I am actively participating in the Green Legacy Initiative to leave my finger prints,” the former PM argued calling all citizens to plant trees and to actively engage in the Green Legacy initiative mobilization. According to him, as the Green Legacy program has far-reaching benefits to reduce impacts of climate change and curb carbon dioxide emission, the consolidated efforts of all actors is crucial for the successful conduct of this generational cause.

According to Hailemariam by planting trees, the world can control one-third of the carbon emission to the environment while two-third can be controlled by expanding green energy and minimizing the use of charcoal and other fuels. Hence, for him, since everyone has the opportunity to plant trees easily and this can contribute a lot in combating desertification, climate change and in controlling natural disasters, he calls for all citizens to leave their finger prints in this green legacy initiative.

The 100 seedling planting challenge is not only for government officials, it is a challenge for every citizen to apply during this plantation season. The challenge for the officials is as an appetite to mobilize the mass and the officials are already starting planting the trees by accepting the challenge.