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Gov't ever resolute in humanitarian commitment • 4th year greening to begin shortly marking end of challenge

BY ABDUREZAK MOHAMMED

ADDIS ABABA – The government of Ethiopia has always been resolute to expedite the supply of humanitarian assistance to the needy people Tigray, Office of the Prime Minister (PMO) said, calling the international community to intensify humanitarian response to all war and drought-affected people.

At a media briefing she held here yesterday, PMO Press Secretariat Spokesperson Billene Seyoum stated that the federal government has sent 2.1 billion Birr in cash for humanitarian assistance to Tigray State between July 2021 and June 3 2022 citing data obtained from National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC). Also, 217, 000 kgs of medicine; 130,000 kg snon-food items; 87,000 metric tons of food, and 783,000 liters of fuel have been delivered to the area. Excluding humanitarian flights, 1,306 trucks loaded with humanitarian aid destined to Tigray in the months of April and May of the current year.

Billene also reported that 19,000 and 244,000 metric tons of food have been dispatched for war-affected people in Afar and Amhara states respectively. “Within the

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Photo Tsehay Neguse

PMO Press Secretariat Spokesperson Billene Seyoum

T-TPLF leaves Tigray people to village thugs

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA- The suffering of the people of Tigray by village thugs has been intensified and the killings, lootings, beatings and displacements of civilians in the state capital Mekelle have become common, it was reported

Recently, BBC reported that the situation in Tigray State remains extremely distressing and criminals continue in the looting, killing and disruption of social life of the people of Tigray. The resident told BBC anonymously that many people remain in hard situation, business activities are not functioning properly due to insecurity, and administrative hurdles mainly by the terrorist group.

Commenting on the issue to *The Ethiopian Herald*, Political Science and International Relations Lecturer at Dire Dawa University Surafel Getahun stated that T-TPLF's relocation of security forces from Mekelle to the border with Eritrea and the neighboring Amhara and Afar states, to intensify its belligerence, has left the Tigray people to outlawed elements.

As to him, the T-TPLF widely opens the door for the thugs to loot and kill civilians and the human rights abuses, killings, property lootings and damages have been mounted from time to time. Reports that have been



Mekelle

coming from Tigray are shocking and devastating since the federal government has withdrawn from the area and serious threat posed on the civilian community since peace and order has been widely ruined by gangs.

“Considering what is happening in Tigray, the international community needs to exert pressure on the T-TPLF to restore law and order in the area. The federal government should also work closely with global actors and inform the latter about the radical element's disregard to the wellbeing of civilians.”

By the same token, several Mekelle residents have been reporting that business

and other activities in the city are largely interrupted due to the frequent lootings and intimidations. Members of the public as well as officials have been attacked by T-TPLF fighters who have been ironically claiming to be guardians of the people of Tigray.

Currently, the civilian population in Tigray has been facing a horrifying situation; a sizable number of people are killed by coordinated gangsters' attacks. “Following T-TPLF's combatants left Tigray urban centers to attack Eritrea, Amhara and Afar people, leeway for village gangsters is created and social crises follow.” The academician emphasized.

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Chinese firm allots 95 mln USD to IP construction

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

ADDIS ABABA- A China-based Woda Investment group (Woda Metal Industry PLC and sister companies) announced the allocation of 95 million USD for the construction of a medium- sized industrial park and associated facilities in Oromia State of Ethiopia.

Group General Manager Steven Cui told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the sister companies signed a memorandum of

See Chinese firm ... page 3

News

Premier says Ethiopia setting up modern police institution

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) announced that the reform in security institutions has been well run and started bearing fruits as a number of tangible outcomes are being recorded following the cemented base on which the police force is set up.

Speaking at the Police Force Recognition and Thanksgiving Program held Sunday, the Premier stated that the police force has been going through deep reforms incorporating capacity building accompanied by advanced technology, legal reforms and other related



factors.

“The existing Police institution is now capable of defending the country more than

ever. This Police army has experienced many challenges. Now, it is visible that the army is well-equipped with the required input as we are capitalizing on maintaining strengths and doing away with irrelevant aspects.”

According to him, the security service reform is being carried out with a view to building trust between the security institutions and the general public so as to abate the mushrooming criminal activities within the shortest time possible in collaboration with the people, and by creating well-structured and modern police forces in all states.

Hence, the government is now building

an institution to respond to all challenges occurring in Ethiopia.

The PM further noted that the 120 million people of Ethiopia deserve a modern, well-armed, ethical and adequate number of police force. “That is why we are also building a police army that can be well compatible with the structure and status of Ethiopia and its people. The coming generation also deserves model seniors, thus the existing institution is structured to have an emblematic gesture.”

The role the police force have been playing in law enforcement operations and countering terrorism is irreplaceable, he remarked.

Expert lauds govt's budget allocation for development goals

BY MULATU BELACHEW

ADDIS ABABA- The 786.61 billion Birr draft budget tabled for the next Ethiopian fiscal year will have a positive impact on the economy if it is supplemented by regulated public expenditures and enhanced by domestic revenue, according to an economist.

The economist Wasyhun Belay said the budget is a very huge one. Over the previous two years, the government spent enormous expenditure to stabilize the market affected by the conflict. Accordingly, the coming year budget allocation is done considering

last year's crisis impact including the future threat. Hence, the budget draft emphasized will help foster irrigation projects and boost food and other commodities accessibility.

Projects that can be transferred to the next year should be well focused on and completed on time. Besides, launching new projects and establishing new organizational structures requires a budget, he added.

The tactics that would help Ethiopia narrow gaps between revenue and annual budget expenses include strengthening good revenue collecting culture supported by strong and technological surveillance, accessing loans from National Bank of

Ethiopia, Treasury bill and filling budget deficits from loan and aid granted from donors as well as printing money in a balanced way.

The expert expressed his belief that the budget deficit in Ethiopia is high but wise and just utilization of allocated budget to the intended purpose is significantly useful in narrowing down the gaps. “The government should adhere to the following two things: increase the amount of income/revenue and cut public expenditure unless the presence of high budget deficit may force international donors to cut provision, and increasing revenue is crucial since expenditure depends on it.”



Wasyhun Belay

Agricultural export generates 2.28 billion USD

BY TEWODROS KASSA

ADDIS ABABA- The agricultural exports generates 2.28 billion USD in the past nine months of the current Ethiopian fiscal year, the Ministry of Agriculture disclosed, adding the amount covers 70 percent of Ethiopia's total export revenue in the reported period.

Presenting the sector's nine-month performance report before the House of People's Representatives yesterday, Agriculture Minister Umar Hussein said successive efforts to promote agricultural products export market have contributed greatly for the revenue.

Planning to export 9.78 million tons of agricultural products to abroad, the ministry has achieved 8.21 million tons (84 percent) of its plan. Accordingly, this year's export income shows 388 million USD increment from the past year similar period, coffee (45 percent), flower (19 percent), and others (37 percent) take the leading share in Ethiopia's agricultural export.

In addition, the country has harvested 336.6 million quintals by the crop calendar, while 1.8 million hectares of land have been



Agriculture Minister Umar Hussein

cultivated by the winter irrigation program and 14.03 million quintals of wheat has been harvested. More importantly, considering its potentials compared to other coffee growing countries the country has given due priority to increase its coffee production and productivity through participating private investors, the minister noted.

Accordingly, 6.37 billion tree seedlings have been prepared in 121,985 nursery centres for this year's green legacy program.

France vows to enhance companies' mining sector investment

ADDIS ABABA- /ENA/ French companies are working in collaboration with the Ministry of Mines to further enhance their engagement in the mining sector in Ethiopia, French Ambassador to Ethiopia, Rémi Maréchaux said.

Ambassador Maréchaux stated that French companies have already been engaged in geothermal power generation in Ethiopia. Ethiopian and France recently signed agreement to establish a geothermal power project in the former and the French companies are working closely with Ethiopia's Ministry of Mines to this end.

The French Investment Fund has agreed to generate 150 megawatts of power from geothermal. “The embassy will continue to work with French companies to increase their participation in Ethiopia's potential mineral resources,” according to the ambassador.

“Our companies have already presented in investing in Ethiopia in a field of geothermal electricity production. I recently attended the signing of a contract for the building of a plant to produce electricity. We are working closely with the Ministry of Mines in order to implement.



Ambassador Rémi Maréchaux

The French Investment Fund is about to start the production of 150 MW of electricity from geothermal. We hope that in the future we will be able to continue to use this incredible potential of Ethiopia,” Maréchaux noted.

The mining gallery organized by the Ministry of Mines and recently opened to the public will be a great success for the sector, he added.

He said “it is a major success to invite everybody to come and visit this place and open it to the public to know the potential in this field.”

News



Use of crypto currencies in Ethiopia unpermitted: NBE

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA- The National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) announced that it has not permitted the use of digital currencies notably Bitcoin in the country and

warned violators will face serious legal consequences.

In the statement issued yesterday, the central bank stated that any financial transaction in Ethiopia should be carried out in Birr unless the bank gives special permit. This prohibition is clearly

stipulated in the proclamation number 718/2003 E.C.

People are increasingly using crypto currencies notably Bitcoin for trading and payment methods without the knowledge and permit of the NBE and such virtual assets are creating a

favorable environment for large-scale money laundering and other illicit activities, the statement elaborated.

The NBE urges the public to protect themselves from using crypto currencies and to immediately report to legal bodies when they witness such illegal activities.

Gov't ever resolute...

past four weeks, we have seen rhetoric of gearing up for another confrontation from the other side." Unfortunately, this is coming in alignment with the farming season if TPLF is [beating] the war drums again as it has been doing over the past few weeks, this is going to be at the expense of citizens within the Tigray State and farming communities that have been affected by COVID-19 pandemic and missed farming seasons in the past eighteen months because of the war."

Regarding the drought, Billene noted that some parts of the country have been experiencing dire drought as a result of consecutive below average rainfall. At a policy level, Ethiopia has put in place several policies and institutional measures including cluster farming and irrigation based lowland wheat productivity which has shown considerable success.

"At response level for the needs to drought afflicted communities in immediate term, the government has responded much early and intensified national effort to enhance

effectiveness of disaster risk management. Per recent data received from NDRMC indicated from July 2021 to May 2022, over 3.2 million beneficiaries have received food assistance mostly from Oromia, Somali, and South Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' states."

Noting 2022 remarks the fourth and final year of the GreenLegacy Challenge which was embarked in 2019 to plant 20 billion seedlings, she indicated that this year's program will be launched with in the next two weeks.

"This does not mean we will stop there but it highlights that milestone has been achieved over the last four years commitment to plant 20 billion seedlings, we expect to exceed plan for data shows already 18 billion has been planted, the initiative included planting edible seedlings variety. Hence, this year's seedling plantation is in tandem with urban agriculture and backyard farming efforts being promoted aimed to partially addressing food security and global rising food cost."

Chinese firm...

understanding (MOU) for the construction of a facility that will rest on 100 hectares of land. Companies that are engaged in vehicles assembling, home appliances, tier production, food processing and others are set to operate in the planned industrial park.

Noting Woda plans to build a high-end facility, the general manager highlighted that a 50 megawatt power substation has been built to ensure a reliable power supply. Consolidated activities have also been carried out with relevant stakeholders to secure the plot of land for the project.

Upon completion, the industrial park is expected to generate 1,000 jobs and when the facility is fully operational, it will hire over 10,000 citizens.

The group chief further noted that the company aims to ease the forex crunch Ethiopia has been encountering through destining the bulk of its products to the export market. Apart from meaningfully contributing to Ethiopia's import substitution plan, Woda will allocate 30- 50 percent of



Group General Manager Steven Cui

the park's products for export.

Some sources indicated that Ethiopia spends up to 200 million USD to import TB and OR tires annually.

Opinion

Senator Chris Coons: Bearded Marxist in Kenya, Bald/Bold Interventionist in Ethiopia

BY AL MARIAM

PART TWO

Prophet of Doom and Gloom Coons also declared in his op-ed, “Ethiopia is at risk of becoming this generation’s Yugoslavia: a great nation and a regional leader that violently shatters along ethnic lines.”

Coons is either willfully ignorant or maliciously deceitful in overlooking the fact that it is the terrorist TPLF that created apartheid South Africa-style Bantustans called “kilils” and organized Ethiopian society according to strict ethnic, cultural and linguistic lines.

The TPLF’s aims in spreading the propaganda of a balkanizing Ethiopia along “kilil” ethnic lines (“ethnic federalism”) were two-fold: 1) As a “representative” of a minority ethnic group, the TPLF created ethnic enclaves to prevent the Ethiopian people from ever coming together at the national level and stamp out any sense of Ethiopian nationalism. 2) In the event, the TPLF is ousted from power, the kilils will serve as powder kegs of ethnic conflagration and implosion which will allow the terrorist TPLF to sneak back to power.

Coons’ Yugoslav admonition on Ethiopia is nothing new. He merely parrots what the TPLF, the so-called think tanks and other know-nothing Western press-titutes have been braying for years.

In January 2019, Foreign Policy pleaded, “Don’t Let Ethiopia Become the Next Yugoslavia.”

In November 18, 2020, two weeks after the terrorist TPLF attacked the Ethiopian Northern Command, Foreign Policy began pushing “Ethiopia is about to become the next Yugoslavia canard (bull****).”

In December 2020, Foreign Policy editors posed the question, “Is Ethiopia the Next Yugoslavia?” For decades, TPLF leaders bragged Ethiopia will become another Yugoslavia if they are no longer in power.

In 2005, the late TPLF thug master Meles Zenawi predicted that after his TPLF gets the boot, there will be the equivalent of an “Interahamwe-type Hutu militia which massacred Tutsis in Rwanda”. Zenawi repeated his prediction of ethnic bloodbath time and again. Zenawi’s sidekick and step-and-fetch it, Bereket Simon, went one step further when he predicted, “Strife between different nationalities of Ethiopia might have made the Rwandan genocide look like child’s play.”

TPLF “general” Tsadkan Gebretensaye straight up predicted civil war when the TPLF is ousted from power. TPLF boss Abay Tsehai predicted Ethiopia will be Africa’s 21st century Rwanda. He said things in Ethiopia are getting out of control and Ethiopia is careening into becoming the next Rwanda.

TPLF boss Seyoum Mesfin, also expected

a civil war but believed his TPLF will crush all opposition and remain dominant. In a bizarre interview, Seyoum effectively equated Ethiopians to Nazis and Tigreans to Jews in the Third Reich. The fact of the matter is that before the terrorist TPLF created “ethnic federalism” based on “kilils”, Ethiopia was divided into 12 provinces or governates-general (taklaighizat) and administered centrally without the legal requirement that one be a member of a particular ethnic group to live in a particular “kilil” ultimately creating a consciousness of ethnic insularity and forcing Ethiopians to abandon any sense of national identity.

In point of fact, Coons is clueless about what he is talking about! But Coons is not as dumb as he appears. By talking about Ethiopia as the new Yugoslavia, he is trying to use the credibility of his office and his close association with Biden to create alarm, panic, confusion and hysteria and convince Ethiopians and the world that Ethiopia is going to hell in a hand basket and that the US must intervene militarily and save the day.

On March 2, 2021, Coons tweeted: While the Ethiopian gov’t has taken a few initial steps to open some humanitarian access and communications channels into and within Tigray, much more is needed to improve the operating environment for aid workers, scale up the response and get lifesaving assistance to all who need it.

Coons did not mention a word about terrorist TPLF attacks on humanitarian trucks, use of humanitarian tricks to transport child soldiers and obstruction of deliveries. On March 10, 2021, Coons coordinated with Secretary of State Antony Blinken and for the first time Blinken used the term “ethnic cleansing” to describe human rights abuses he said have been carried out in the “Western Tigray” region of Ethiopia.

On March 17, 2021, Coon’s partner in dismantling Ethiopia, and co-sponsor of S.3199 (“Ethiopia Peace and Stabilization Act”) and indicted criminal, Senator Bob Menendez “called on President Joe Biden to assess whether parties to the conflict in Ethiopia are guilty of war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide.”

On March 19, 2021, National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan announced Biden was sending Coons to “convey the administration’s grave concerns about the humanitarian crisis and human rights abuses in the Tigray region.” The real reason was to deliver an ultimatum to PM Abiy Ahmed that if he does not negotiate with the terrorist TPLF, Ethiopia will face crippling US sanctions.

On March 23, 2021, Politico observed, Coons is Emerging as what some sources called a ‘shadow’ secretary of state for a president beset with foreign-policy challenges. He is a senior member of the Foreign Relations Committee, but it’s

highly unusual for a senator who doesn’t chair a panel to travel internationally on the president’s behalf. Truth be told, Coons was Susan Rice’s gofer; (More on that later.)

On April 17, 2021, Coons tweeted, I’m disappointed PM Abiy has not yet fulfilled his commitments to withdraw Eritrean forces, remove obstacles to humanitarian access, and hold perpetrators of human rights abuses accountable. I’m concerned by atrocities continuing to occur across #Ethiopia—inside and outside of Tigray.

On June 9, 2021, Coons tweeted, I look forward to continued work with @SecBlinken to urge the Ethiopian government to fulfill its public commitments, open humanitarian access, and reach a political solution to this conflict.

On October 1, 2021, Coons tweeted I condemn the gov’t of #Ethiopia’s unprecedented decision to expel the leadership of UN agencies providing life-saving aid to millions across the country. The gov’t should focus on advancing peace rather than obstructing the delivery of food, medicine, and other vital supplies.

Coons did not mention the “leadership of the UN Agencies” were caught red-handed meddling in Ethiopia’s internal affairs in flagrant violation of UN rules and policies. On March 29, 2022, the TPLF Support Troika, Coons, Risch and Menendez, threatened to deploy the nuclear option on Ethiopia by passing S. 3199, “Ethiopia Peace and Stabilization Act.” In a statement the Troika declared:

The vote today in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will empower the Senate, if necessary, to move forward and consider the Ethiopia Peace and Stabilization Act on the floor if the progress of recent days does not hold.

On March 29, 2022, Coons under withering criticism and pressure tweeted, If the humanitarian truce and ceasefire is upheld, this bill will not be necessary. I pray it won’t be, and as long as this peace continues, I’ll work to make sure this bill goes no further. However, my colleagues and I must be ready to pass this bill swiftly if fighting resumes. I told Coons what I thought of him and his bill, which is presented in full in this commentary.

Chris Coons, Senator from Delaware

As Coons champions the cause of “human rights” and rides his white horse to save black Africans, what has he done for the people of Delaware? What has he done for African Americans in Delaware? The total population of Delaware in 2020 was 986,809. African Americans represent over 22 percent of the population.

Coons was first elected to the Senate in a 2010 special election. Since taking office Coons has introduced dozens of bills and resolutions in the Senate. The question is how many of them have anything to do with

Delaware or the people of Delaware? Coons sponsored/introduced 60 bills/resolutions between 2011-22 on international affairs. Not one of them had anything to do with Delaware or the people of Delaware.

Coons sponsored/introduced 33 bills/resolutions between 2016-22 on commerce. Coons sponsored/introduced 18 bills/resolutions between 2014-2022 on labor and employment. Coons sponsored/introduced 17 bills between 2013-2022 on energy. Coons sponsored/introduced 15 bills between 2011-2021 on health. Not one of them had anything to do with Delaware or the people of Delaware.

Does Coons really represent Delaware, or the people of Delaware in the U.S. Senate? Today, 114,000 Delawareans, mostly African Americans, are “food insecure.” “Food insecurity” is defined as a lack of consistent access to enough food for every person in a household to live an active, healthy life. When “food insecurity” occurs in Africa, Coons, USAID, etc., are quick to call it “starvation” or “famine.” What has Coons done to rescue 114,000 Delawareans from food insecurity? Not a doggone thing!

On March 29, 2022 Coons tweeted:

While I’ve been encouraged by Addis’ announcement of a humanitarian truce and the TPLF’s agreement to a ceasefire last week, I still voted to advance an amended version of the Ethiopia Peace and Stabilization Act to punish parties who continue to fuel the conflict. (Italics added)

Coons is ready and eager to punish “starving” Ethiopians with crippling sanctions than take care of his starving African American constituents. Incredible hypocrisy! It is like the proverbial American commander in the Vietnam War who said, “It was necessary to destroy the village to save it.”

For Coons, it is necessary to destroy Ethiopia with crippling sanctions in order to save it! On May 30, 2020, Coons tweeted “I was proud to march today with fellow Delawareans protesting the killing of George Floyd and the unjust deaths of so many other African Americans. We must demand justice for George Floyd and actions to address structural racism.”

But when Biden signed the toothless and symbolic George Floyd Executive Order, Coons was nowhere to be seen. Coons talks the talk and does the photo ops but does not walk the walk!

Regrettably, an executive order is not worth the paper it is written on.

Since assuming office on Jan. 20, Biden has rescinded 31 of Trump’s 220 executive orders. There is no guarantee the next Republican president (guaranteed!) will not rescind many of Biden’s executive orders.

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

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Editorial

On the right track despite setbacks

Of the most baffling and recalcitrant of the challenges which Ethiopia faces right this time is an orchestrated conspiracy or confrontation to hold its remarkable stride towards prosperity and self-sufficiency back. Such an organized confrontation may take a number of forms—insistent opposition backed by historical enemies, incitement of ethnic and religious violence and what have you.

These and the not yet mentioned factors are just minuscule as compared with the wisdom and far-sightedness of Ethiopians and their government. That is the mystery behind the success stories of Ethiopia. In his recent visit to Bale area of Oromia State, as part of a High-level Delegation led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Ph.D), former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo said he had not only witnessed war in Ethiopia, but also a mesmerizing prospect of prosperity as well.

Obasanjo who is also AU's Special Envoy to the Horn of Africa stated it so nicely. No shred of doubt, Ethiopia is revolving around the right orbit to attain what it has long aspired amid such a tumultuous scenario. Its enormous efforts to create an independent institutions such as the defense, legal institutions, election board and the likes which are set up to exactly be compatible with Ethiopia's status quo, are a case in point in this regard. In so doing, the country has now been registering remarkable changes in all aspects despite a range of challenges here and there.

The wisdom of Ethiopians always turns adversities to opportunities. This has been manifest over the last centuries. The

history of Ethiopia tells us that it is not in the Ethiopians DNA to succumb to potential and real threats. Devise a solution—stand in unity, confront the threat and come out victorious is the characteristic feature of Ethiopians, period.

All too often when the government encounters resistance to change, it has devised possible solutions to the problems and looks further. Cognizant of the fact that no one can come and act accordingly to push the country steps forward and contribute to its overall prosperity, everyone is working from dawn to dusk in a harmonious manner despite anti peace elements' antagonistic move to foil growth.

Understanding that the lasting solution which has become increasingly popular for dealing with multifarious challenges and resistance to change is to get the people widely involved in game changing trajectory, the incumbent has highly appreciated a participatory approach in all lines, and a remarkable result has been well witnessed of course. Yes, the viable key to the problem is to understand the true nature of challenges and where do they emanate from.

Needless to state, obstacles are inevitable and often created because of certain blind spots and partisan attitudes which citizens have as a result of developing extreme versions about reforms. No matter how numerous problems and thorny the journey might be, light at the end of the tunnel has already flickered and it is better to take concrete steps to constructively deal with diametrically opposite view points.

Opinion

Harar: An exotic city of love and compassion

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

I would certainly not make a mistake if I say the fortified city of Harar is Ethiopia in the miniature in which Islam, Christianity and traditional religions coexisted for thousands of years. Harar boasts 4 museums but the city itself is an open museum in which multiple cultures and value systems peacefully coexist. The fortified historic town of Harar is perched on the eastern part of the country on a plateau with deep gorges surrounded by deserts and savannah. The walls surrounding this sacred Muslim city were built between the 13th and 16th centuries.

Harar Jugol, said to be the fourth holiest city of Islam, numbers 82 mosques, three of which date from the 10th century, and 102 shrines, but the townhouses with their exceptional interior design constitute the most spectacular part of Harar's cultural heritage. The impact of African and Islamic traditions on the development of the town's building types and urban layout make for its particular character and uniqueness. Harari people are known for their compassion towards the poor, the elderly and people with disabilities.

This world heritage city numbers 82 mosques, three of which date from the 10th century, 102 shrines and a number of traditional, Indian and combined townhouses with unique interior designs, which constitute a spectacular part of Harar's cultural heritage. The African and Islamic traditions influenced over a long period of time the development of the city and its typical urban planning and contributed to its particular character and uniqueness.

The present urban layout follows the 16th century design for an Islamic town with its central core occupied with commercial and religious buildings and a maze of narrow alleyways with imposing facades. The traditional Harari house has a typical, specific and original architectural form, different from the domestic layout usually known in Muslim countries, although reminiscent of the coastal Arab architecture, and with an exceptional interior design. At the end of the 19th century Indian merchants built new houses with wooden verandas that defined a different urban landscape and influenced the construction of the combined Indian/Harari houses. Their architectural and ornamental qualities are now part of the Harari cultural heritage.

Harar has been officially registered as an Ethiopian National Heritage site since 1974. The legislative framework which protects the property includes the "Heritage Conservation Draft Proclamation of Harari People National Regional State" (January 2000), "The Establishment of Harar Heritage Conservation Office" (Proclamation no. 21/1992) and the Federal Proclamation no. 209/2000 for "Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage". In addition, four levels of protection have been identified for the property within the Management Plan: principal monuments, important historic buildings, contextual urban fabric and 'out-of-context' buildings.

The Centre for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage (ARCCH), established in 1976, is responsible for the inventory and the definition of conservation policies,

providing support for restoration work, and making decisions over grants and permits. The local authority and the Kebele act as administrative offices in the process. The Jugol Heritage Conservation Office (JHCO), established in 2003, has a management committee and serves as a liaison between the Harari Counsel, under the General Meeting of the Harari People National Regional State, and representatives of the administrative and social structure in Jugol. The main source of funding comes from the government. However, there has been cooperation between the local authority, the Urban Development Support Service, and the German Technical Organization.

Dr-Wodajeneh-Meharene a public figure and scholar and one of the presenters on the conference who was born in Harar describes the city as "1. A fortified city 2. A historic city of 1,300 years, 3. A city of religious tolerance in which mosques and churches are built in close proximity and mutual support, 4. a city with 4 museums 5. A city of compassion, 6. A city that tames even the hyenas, 7. A city famous for its traditional herbal medicines which indicates that the city is endowed with indigenous solutions to basic health hazards 8. A city with 348 inner city lanes and roads, 9. A city that is both chilly nor hot exhibiting humanly suitable weather and 10. A holy city."

He added that extremism is alien to Harar and the people are friendly and compassionate.

He told the participants of the conference that Harar Jegol has two special lanes that only one person could pass at a time. If two people in the area in quarrel try to use the

lane from both ends, they would be forced to make peace among themselves by force of the necessity for mobility

It is to be noted that the cultural values of the people of Ethiopia have the characteristics of longevity and inclusiveness.

Nonetheless, our cultural values are our subjective social assets that have endured all kinds of foreign interventions and efforts towards positive modernization.

Except for some scanty research papers here and there, it is regrettable that no extensive research has been done on the traditional social values that the people in this country have developed and cherished for thousands of years. Unless the institutes of higher learning and concerned government ministries and agencies cooperate in conducting, cataloguing and using the findings in the education system of the country, it would be difficult to transfer the valuable historical and cultural values of the country to the next generation.

The positive cultural and traditional value systems of Ethiopia need to be skillfully incorporated into the education system of the country instead of focusing only on globally known and inherited values that are internationally acceptable. The nation cannot expect the smooth transfer of these cultural values unless they are recognized and cherished.

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

Business & Economy

Working hard to get the most out of the mining sector

BY BACHA ZEWDIE

Ethiopia's virtually untapped, diverse and vast mineral resources offer huge potential opportunities for exploration and development. These include – but are not limited to – tantalum, potash, gemstones, gold, iron ore and various industrial, energy and construction minerals. This extraordinary potential coupled with improving government policies and regulations means Ethiopia is now very much on the radar screen of international mining investors.

As witnessed by some officials of continental institutions, Ethiopia's mining sector has potential to stimulate economic growth and poverty reduction. The country is rich in mineral resources, including oil and gas, these remained largely untapped, adding mining's potential to contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction in the country could not be over-emphasized.

With considerable gold reserves, and a rapidly-developing governance structure in place, Ethiopia could be one of the most attractive investment destinations for the global mining industry, especially for foreign firms looking for a stake in the gold sector. According to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), Ethiopia boasts around 200 tons of gold, and with a further 360 million tons of coal and 69 million tons of iron, there is every reason to be optimistic about the country's mineral future.

Regardless of its untapped potential, the sector contributed to less than 1 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 14 percent of exports, 1 percent of government revenue and was only able to create 4,000 formal jobs in 2018. In its Growth and Transformation Plan, Ethiopia has set as a target for its mining sector to contribute to 10 percent of GDP by 2025. To achieve this target and to successfully leverage its mining sector for economic growth and sustainable development, the country will have to learn from the experiences and good practices of more mature mining economies and make use of available frameworks and guidelines.

Acknowledging the above suggestion, commendable activities towards exploiting the sector's resource are underway. As a result of utmost effort exerted to the sector by government and the private sector, more than 458 million USD was earned from minerals exports during the past months of this fiscal year, Ministry of Mines reported.

In the last nine months of the fiscal year,



Engineer Takele Uma, Minister of Mines

With considerable gold reserves, and a rapidly-developing governance structure in place, Ethiopia could be one of the most attractive investment destinations for the global mining industry, especially for foreign firms looking for a stake in the gold sector

458.7 million USD was earned from the export of minerals. During the same period, though planned to produce 8.2 million tons, cement factories could produce only 4.8 million tons.

The Minister of Mines, Eng. Takele Uma recently presented a nine-month report of his office to the 9th regular session of the 6th House of Peoples' Representatives of the FDRE. The Minister said in his nine-month report: Various companies and mines have been shut down due to insecurity in various parts of the country.

He said the issue needs to be resolved permanently. To this end, The Ministry is working closely with security agencies to address the security challenges facing the sector. Therefore, his office is currently working with the Ministry of Defense, the Federal Police, the National Intelligence and Security Agency and the Artificial Intelligence Agency to come up with viable solutions for the problems.

He also said that, the effort exerted to working in collaboration with security forces to address the security threats is yielding results in 14 mining sites. He further said that, an agreement had been reached to set up a police department at the federal and state levels. As a result, the procurement of logistics supplies for the establishment of the departments has been completed and the necessary information has been provided to the security forces.

He added that if the security situation can be improved with such an organization and sustainable solutions are placed in, the current benefits being gained from the sector could be advanced. Be it is, he said that a total of 458.07 USD was earned from gold, jewelry and industrial minerals exported in the last nine months of the current budget year.

The minister further elaborated that during the last nine months, 6,947 kilograms of gold was supplied to the National Bank of Ethiopia. Adding, he said that 2,337 kg of jewelry; 79 tons of tantalum; 7,363 tons of industrial minerals and 2,000 tons of sodium bromide were produced for the first time and provided to the international market.

In addition to the minerals exported, 4.6 million tons of industrial minerals and 36.8 million cubic meters of construction inputs are expected to be supplied to industries in the domestic market. On the other hand, 5 million quintals of table salt and 588,000 quintals of industrial salt have been put on the market, he said.

On the other hand, as of the Minister of Mines, there is a huge gap in the cement production, and marketing chain which is the main component for the construction sector. He said that the total cement factories in the past nine months have produced only 4.8 million tons out of the 8.2 million tons planned. And this is only 58 percent of the plan, he added.

According to the Minister's explanation, intervention of external forces had adverse impact on the success of the production plan. On top of this, as to him, the cement factories are facing internal problems, especially lack of skilled man power and management problems. Moreover, In addition to the shortage of coal, the factories are also suffering from hindrances of power outages, production machinery shortages and lack of adequate manpower.

According to the Minister of Mines, various measures are being taken to alleviate the problems the cement factories faced. To this end, construction of coal plants has begun in various parts of the country to address the shortage of inputs such as coal.

He added that a product and marketing guideline has been prepared and implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration and the Cement Producers' Association. He said the guideline is expected to create a smooth flow of factories and cement consumers.

In the Sphere of Diplomacy

Keeping the momentum on GERD

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

The political dynamics in Ethiopia is now in fervent mood because there are new and many times unexpected events taking place in the country. In a way the country is also undergoing various changes trying to come to terms with what has been going wrong for decades. The narratives that have been peddled along the decades have produced several undesirable but intentionally prospected consequences such as creating suspicion between communities and triggering animosities. This has occupied the minds of citizens and their aspirations for democracy and justice have been stifled.

Ethiopia has also been highly exposed to developments outside its borders. Being one of the key countries in the attempts to integrate in regional groups such as IGAD (the Intergovernmental Authority for Development) and, COMESA (the Common Market for East and South Africa), it occupies a pivotal space.

Being the source of much of the Nile waters which bathes more than ten African countries, but above all, having a huge role in the politics and economics of the three major riparian countries of the Blue Nile or, Abay as it is called in Ethiopia, the importance of Ethiopia becomes even more marked. Ethiopia's position in the Horn of Africa including Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia becomes even more pivotal. The route along the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Babel el mendeb Straits and the entire Middle East occupies vital importance as a trade route between Europe and Asia and the rest of the world, as well as its geo-political and strategic significance cannot be overstated. Many say peace in this part of the world is a key to peace in the entire world. It may sound a bit exaggerated but it is difficult not to find some truth in this assertion.

The Ethiopian government has long declared its intentions on harnessing the potential of the Nile River for its development prospects. It has been its dream for decades but these were frustrated by various factors.

At the same time Egypt has been peddling the narrative that the Nile is its exclusive property handed to it by nature and history denying the crude evidence that the Nile has its source in Ethiopia! Egyptian politicians have gone to a great extent convincing their nationals that the Nile originates from the Aswan Dam!

In the meantime the government of Ethiopia has repeatedly cleared its intention of not harming the interests of Egypt. It has sent successive prime ministers repeatedly to Cairo to clear its intentions, dismissing the complaints and accusations of certain extremist Egyptian politicians. No wonder the Nile is viewed 'a political issue' in Egypt.

Ethiopia understands whatever anxiety Egyptians may feel. Ethiopia is a law abiding country. What rests behind the intention of building the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, GERD, is only the



need to free millions of its citizens from darkness.

What is more, Ethiopia wants to benefit from the export cheap hydropower to neighbors. This would also advance regional integration. Ethiopia has repeatedly pledged not to hurt downstream countries through this flag project and has presented its plans with all the experts' analysis and findings on the project.

Ethiopia of course understands that the life of millions in Sudan and Egypt rely on the Nile waters, and it would be unthinkable that Ethiopia would block the flow of the water. Ethiopia believes the GERD should not be a point of contention but rather one of regional cooperation and integration. One hundred twenty million people expect their government to do its job properly, and exploit resources to their benefit.

For decades Ethiopia's intention of developing the waters of the Nile was frustrated by lack of resources. Today such resource has been harnessed because practically every national has put its backing behind this project and we see that the dam has seen the light of day.

Furthermore, the GERD cannot be seen as an obstacle for peace in the sub region. Rather it must be welcome, and neighbors should have cooperated even in availing the capital that it needs to complete thereby receiving the benefits in shorter times. The project would end earlier.

Nevertheless, it appears that Egypt and, to a certain extent Sudan, seems to worry too much about this project. However, for Ethiopians GERD is a matter of sovereignty even more than its economic significance.

No one can deny the right of a sovereign country from developing its natural resources. If we all agree that the Nile is an Ethiopian river, independently of the fact that it never developed it due to various historical and economic reasons,

nevertheless, this fact cannot authorize both Egypt and Sudan to block its usage by Ethiopia.

Throughout the past decades Ethiopia was too weak economically to exploit the potential of the Abay River. Contrarily, Egypt and Sudan enjoyed exclusive rights on it. However, Ethiopians have now come together to terminate this sad story! The necessary funds have been raised to be able to build the GERD. Despite the good intentions and the guarantees Ethiopia has made to downstream countries, Egypt and Sudan have been expressing their reservations on the usage Ethiopia intends to make on the Nile while Ethiopia has repeatedly dismissed the allegations underlining its true intentions.

Ethiopia has promised to abide by all relevant international trans-boundary rivers laws. It has pledged that it does not have any intention of harming downstream countries. But Egypt has been maintaining that its rights on the Nile are 'natural and historical' and refers frequently to the outmoded colonial era pacts with no validity to Ethiopia (which was not even consulted when England, Egypt and Sudan sealed their pact).

There have been a series of talks regarding the GERD, and Ethiopia's position. A number of expert analyses were made and presented, and scholars have debated at length on what implications the dam may bring to riparian. The findings have been in favor of Ethiopia's stance. Ethiopia has explained that the government has not only the right but also the duty to develop all the resources nature has provided it for the benefit of its citizens.

It should not be forgotten that for thousands of years Egypt and Sudan have made undisturbed and unrestricted use of the water. But not only that, they also benefited from the fertile soil the water carried away from the highlands of Ethiopia!

Egypt and Sudan have been extremely

lucky in this respect. Ethiopians did not have the necessary means to develop the Nile waters but this must not be intended to forfeiting its rights on the river. Today Ethiopia is at such a point that it is capable of gathering all the financial means to build a dam and use it to generate power. Today Ethiopia is also country of 120 million of whom more than half is in darkness due to lack of power. The Nile water in this regard becomes a key as Ethiopia embarks on this project. That is why Ethiopia maintains that the Nile is a matter of survival for it as it is for Egypt or Sudan!

It might take years to complete this huge project but going on with the current pace the completion of the project seems in sight. The dam has already slowly begun to produce fruits, and with time and gradually it would have more water in the reservoir and more turbines will be made to turn and produce more power. It is a slow process also because it takes time to fill the dam without harming the downstream countries. Ethiopia has shown exception caution on this point.

During the past two rainy season fillings, the flow of the Nile has not been affected as there was surplus water. The 'third filling of the dam' will take place shortly and Ethiopia needs to maintain the momentum with the completion of the dam's construction so that more water is harnessed in the reservoir. Once the project is complete there will be no water to catch but let it go by serving to turn the turbines.

GERD is hence a huge project with vital importance not only to Ethiopians but also to neighbors. The government of Ethiopia hopes that Egypt and Sudan will cooperate with Ethiopia instead of trying to obstruct the path towards a speedy completion of the project. It is high time that confrontation on the Nile be replaced by a spirit of cooperation. A new era of integration and common growth must replace confrontations.

Law & Politics

T-TPLF's warmongering acts: A shortcut to its demise

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

The terrorist TPLF group has been getting itself involved in layers of intrigues that can back the Tigray region into a corner and turn the lives of the people of Tigray into chaos more than ever before. In a similar vein, as the criminal group is known for creating unrest, it has continued bringing its nefarious deeds into play to instigate another disastrous war in the country. The hawkish habit of the TPLF clique has already triggered a dire humanitarian crisis in Tigray state leaving millions in need of aids.

Notwithstanding the fact that the terrorist organization put in place quite a lot of layers of treacherous for the love of coming to power, the TPLF group failed to bring the sought-after goal due to the unwavering stance of all Ethiopians.

Other than that on the heels of the failure of its hidden mission unfolding behind closed curtains, the criminal enterprise has been giving up hope and making an effort to up the ante in the country once again.

Failing to reciprocate the federal government's positive gestures, the terrorist TPFL group has been exerting all efforts day in and day out to escalate tensions in the region and survive its days. Though it is known that the people of Tigray have been clamoring for peace, the criminal enterprise is claiming the lives of Tigrayan children and youths with its war-mongering acts.

The terrorist TPLF group's criminal deeds can be termed as the last kicks of a dying horse intended to come to power by mystifying the international community with untrustworthy information and other evil deeds at the expense of the people of Tigray. In light of the current situation, the rogue element has been recruiting children forcefully for another round of war.

For the sake of truth, as if the group's past crimes are not enough, the criminal enterprise has been beating the drums of war time and time again and bewildering the international community with the usual propaganda that does not mirror the real situation in the country.

As things stand at present, funnily enough, the terrorist TPLF group has been deceiving the international community by playing the victim card and pressing forward its narrow interests. In the present climate, apart from bracing for another round of full-scale war, the clique has been putting the lives of civilians at serious threat, laying the blames on the doorsteps of the incumbent government and bracing for another round of full-scale war.

Although the criminal enterprise has been putting the lives of noncombatants at risk, the terrorist TPLF group has embarked on bewildering the international community with misleading information. To quash the increasing grievances of the Tigray people and mobilize the Tigray youths for war, the disgruntled group is also fabricating false narratives and sowing hatred in its attempt to incite grudge against the central

government.

Commenting on the group's hawkish acts, Tigray People's Democratic Movement (TPDM) claimed that the terrorist TPLF has employed war as a means of deceiving the youth to join battles and many other ways so as to escape accountability for the crimes it has been committing.

One of the TPDM combatants, Birhan Tesfay said that war mongering is the nature of the terrorist TPLF for extending power and always uses it as a method of escaping from being accountable. "Though the Tigray people sacrificed their youth for the equality, peace, justice, and democracy in Ethiopia, the terrorist TPLF has taken away the credit."

Birhan told The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that, the terrorist TPLF has been committing a crime against humanity since its inception. Particularly, conflict and war are the very nature of the terrorist TPLF as it is a good opportunity to flee from people's questions especially questions from Tigrayan people read, 'Where are our children?'

He further noted that, the terrorist group committed various damages against all Ethiopians in general and that of the Tigray state in particular. Therefore, war is the best option for these groups to extend their power and hide their massive destruction. Not only has the group committed a range of crimes but it also drums war trumpet for the third round to make the youth a cannon fodder instead of drawing important lessons from past mistakes.

Law Expert and the other TPDM combatant, Abday Seid on his part said that, the terrorist group does not believe in democracy, justice, and equality; rather it has preferred guns to peaceful ways to seize power, which is an unattainable option. "That is why the terrorist TPLF always beats war drums instead of serving the public interest. Therefore, the power made by war can only exist in turmoil and conflict. As to Abeday, kidnapping, arresting, killing, displacing, and destructing properties have been the main features of the terrorist TPLF all the time even during its stay in power.

"It is the real-time for the federal government for eradicating the terrorist TPLF belligerent so as to ensure peace in the country and encourage coexistence among all Ethiopians. Therefore, standing together in the fight against the terrorist TPLF barbaric activities is an incomparable weapon to bring about lasting peace," Abday underlined.

On the other hand, the terrorist organization has been colluding with Ethiopia's foreign adversaries near and far to wage war against the country.

TPLF is now desperate and finding partners in Sudan and Egypt to launch another catastrophic war. "I think TPLF now is desperate and they are finding partners in Sudan and Egypt to maybe launch something," former European diplomat Simo Parviainen speaking exclusively to Ethiopian News Agency.

"I (also) suspect the generals in Cairo and Khartoum are working now with the TPLF



against the common adversary in Addis Ababa. That is the most kind of example to weaken Ethiopia like they have been doing."

Various foreign conflict observers and journalists as well as the Ethiopian government have been warning these days that terrorist TPLF is mobilizing a massive number of fighters to areas adjacent to the Amhara and Afar regions to wage another devastating war.

The international affairs expert and seasoned Finish diplomat Parviainen disclosed that TPLF is not only recruiting fighters in Tigray to start another round of war but working with Egyptian and Sudanese generals to create instability. Ethiopia has therefore to remain vigilant for any threat in this regard, he stressed.

Speaking about terrorist TPLF leaders who cannot inherently survive without conflict, Parviainen pointed out that they have been amassing trucks and materials obtained from humanitarian agencies in Tigray to start another war.

He further stressed, the terrorist group remains an agent for foreign enemies to undermine the unity and territorial integrity of Ethiopia. There are clear indications at the moment that propaganda operations through international media outlets are getting stronger to defame Ethiopia, he noted.

Whatever the conspiracies being orchestrated by enemies, Parviainen is confident that the country has a potential to foil any form of threat against its sovereignty.

"Ethiopia will absolutely prevail. Even if the situation is a serious issue, they can be tackled."

He finally stated that, since Ethiopia has been still the most important country for the western countries and for their geopolitical interest, they have to readjust their policy and approach towards the country.

Another Tigray political party claimed that waging another round of war is a reckless move that exposes the Tigray population to various consequences.

Tigray Democratic Party (TDP) argued that

terrorist TPLF's war mongering is a shortcut to the group's demise.

T-TPLF's third-round war preparation is meaningless except for accelerating its elimination. The radical faction has been continuing its callous behavior and employing civilians as human shields to succeed in its ill-conceived objective. "T-TPLF vows to dismantle the country if they do not lead." However, the aimless war would immensely affect people without political involvement, so said the party's Public Relations Head Muluberhan Haile speaking to The Ethiopian Press Agency.

Muluberhan further noted that, the terrorist group has been doing everything it can to topple the democratically-elected government and dismantle the nation using destructive methods. T-TPLF is not only damaging Amhara and Afar states but is also becoming poisonous for the people of Tigray, which it claims to stand for. "No one benefits out of war and the main objective of the criminal clique is creating Tigray devoid of the public's interest. Indeed, the war is meaningless and has worsened the suffering of the people of Tigray."

The head urged ethnic Tigrayans, especially the youth, to firmly oppose the diabolic spirits of the T-TPLF. "The people of Tigray should fully understand the very nature of the outlawed clique and break the silence to root the group out of the soil as well as renew close ties with fellow Ethiopian brothers and sisters."

With the ragtag group intensifying its warmongering actions, the international community must put pressure on the group and spare the lives of the innocent Tigray population and restore peace and stability in the state.

Society

National dialogue for inclusive peace

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

National dialogue continues to make headlines around the world for its incalculable outcome in terms of convening diverse groups together to grapple about the underlying issues at hand, address challenging matters, breaking political deadlock; resolve persistent and deadly conflicts and for peaceful transformation.

As it is an inclusive platform and enables to address wide variety of issues, in some circumstances, leaders—civic or political elites—hold a genuine conviction that an inclusive conversation can forge progress toward elusive peace. In others, leaders use it to cement their power, extend their terms, or co-opt opposition while placating critics under the guise of consultation and inclusion.

As a result, many countries, especially those which were in protracted conflict held national dialogues for productive outcome- to resolve conflicts and sustain peace.

Nations including Yemen, Tunisia, Sudan, and Lebanon among others held national dialogues though the outcomes differ from countries to countries.

The national dialogue held in Tunisia, however, is always mentioned as successful dialogue and the main civil society organizations behind this National Dialogue, the so-called Quartet, received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015 for building the political basis for profound



constitutional and institutional reform, as documents indicate.

Correspondingly, understanding the importance of holding principled national dialogue to resolving the political problems of the country and ending the conflict, last year the Ethiopian Parliament approved a proclamation to establish a National Dialogue Commission.

According to the proclamation, the national dialogue's main objective is to resolve the "difference of opinions and disagreements among various political and opinion leaders and also segments of society in Ethiopia on the most fundamental national issues through broad-based inclusive public dialogue that engenders national consensus.

The move is also getting international recognitions and support from various nations.

And currently, the National Dialogue Commission, which is established with this same purpose and mission, is undertaking various activities.



"In my view, staging national dialogue is an important move to deal differences in civilized manner, address a wide variety of national issues and the root causes of conflict; of course at the end of the day to reach agreement on key issues facing a country," said Tsehaye Asnakea resident of Shewa Robit Town, North Shewa Zone of Amhara State.

Speaking to The Ethiopian Herald, Tsehaye said that, peace could not be realized through conflicts and war. Rather, it could be materialized through discussions and negotiations, and national dialogue is the best cure and tool.

"It is high time to make the process credible, and the willingness and commitment of the major stakeholders should be secured."

As to him, the dialogue should device mechanisms to include a broad range of stakeholders and enabling conditions to keep the general public informed and engaged in the preparatory phase, as broader public participation is critical to gain legitimacy, communicating results, and channeling the expectations of ordinary

Ethiopians into the process.

He further noted that, because historical analysis have been demonstrating that procedural fairness and inclusivity are key features of national dialogues that are successful in transitioning toward lasting and sustainable peace, the Commission should work on it for productive result.

"The top priority of the Commission should be conducting and making sure that the process and the outcome is free from any interest. The inclusiveness point should be well framed in bold way," he opined.

Alemu Assefa, from Dessie Town for his part noted that the move is commendable because the sole way to ensure lasting peace and development is discussion. "I am thrilled to the initiative because it tries to encompass all actors, and concerned bodies, but I recommend the Commissioner to invite the political parties designated as terrorists and the people of Tigray.

The youths, elders, women as well elites should part take without the interferences of other bodies, he added.

Shambel Sharew from Shewa Robit also said that, the national dialogue should identify the underlying cause of the conflict in the nation. Agendas that could benefit and treat all equally should be framed. What is more, the whole actors should be informed what is the dialogue trying to accomplish, what powers does it have and how does it relate to existing institutions. Clear answers to these questions are crucial for several reasons that could lead to concrete outcomes.



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Importance of counseling in students' successes

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

Sixty public and private High School Counselors from across Ethiopia participated in a capacity-building workshop, hosted by US Embassy Public Affairs Section from June 1 to 2. The Embassy also handed-over more than 500 volumes of reference and English language teaching books for the participating schools.

State Minister of Education, Fanta Mandefro (PhD), opening the training officially with Ruth Anne Stevens-Klitz, US Embassy Addis Ababa Public Affairs Counselor, said that the workshop was important to enhance teaching learning process.

"Education is a key instrument for personal as well as national development of developing and developed countries, and of course, a paramount significance for the former to break the vicious circle of poverty," he noted.

Ethiopia is the second most populous country in sub-Saharan Africa, with approximately 115 million people of which more than a quarter are attending general education (pre-primary, primary and secondary) not mentioning those who did not have the chance to be enrolled into the different levels of schools, he counted.

With this kind of demography and huge demands for economic development, the role of education cannot be overemphasized, he stressed adding: "Its role in realizing our dreams, however, greatly depends on our efforts and investment commensurate to the trust we have in it."

Cognizant of this, the Government of Ethiopia



has exerted significant efforts to make primary and secondary education accessible. It also works hard to reduce dropouts through various mechanisms such as school feeding, which requires the support and contributions of multiple actors representing multiple sectors of the society.

In spite of such efforts, ensuring quality education and improving students' success remain key challenges, he compared reasoning it: "The success of students is a key measure of the effectiveness of education programs. Students' success at various levels of education, however, depends not only on the quality of class room teaching-learning processes, but also on the guidance and counseling they receive."

There is a strong need for qualified and committed school counselors from primary to secondary schools, but more so in the latter to facilitate students' achievement and to guide in finding the right path in their journey to higher education.

He further accentuated: "Despite such significance as well as a key requirement, quite considerable number of private and public schools do not have counselors nor are they seriously engaged in the task in schools where they are available. Attention and necessary skills for counseling are seriously lacking."

Thus, students who aspire to study here at home and abroad have to navigate by themselves which impedes their success in their studies and

careers, he rationalized it adding: "Recognizing the need for filling such gaps in general and the need for US Education by the Ethiopian students, the U.S. Embassy, in Addis in partnership with the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, picked up the agenda and conducted a capacity building workshop for about 70 Ethiopian High school counselors in October 2019."

Consequently, the workshop focused on topics that best prepare high school counselors to assess readiness and assist senior students aspiring to attend colleges and universities. And the participants were selected so that local well experienced counselors shared their experiences and best practices.

Besides, it did not only provide useful information, but also built skills of counselors in how to assist students who are dreaming for their college education. These included identifying students' aspirations and interest levels, selection of the right-fit schools, application process, and encouraging students to build extracurricular skills among others.

These would help students taking advantage of the higher education opportunities in the United States and elsewhere that ultimately contributes to produce highly qualified professionals that our country needs, he hoped.

Finally, he said: "The process of setting up the workshop involved great collaborations between the US Embassy and the Ministry that we can draw lesson from for other engagements. We are thankful to the US Embassy for such support to enhance our capacity and strongly believe that the support will continue and should be scaled up. The Ministry is also thankful to all who participated in the preparation of the workshop."

Planet Earth

Modernizing Enset Producing helps to withstand environmental stress and Diversifying food plants

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Whenever the failure of rains in some parts of the Horn of Africa occurs, it levels millions of people in food insecurity and requires emergency assistance in the region. The occurrence of frequent climate change has forced humanitarian agencies to issue urgent appeals for support before the drought changes into widespread famine.

Climate change causes a lack of water and farmers have seen their crops dry up, and cereal harvests are expected to be much lower than normal. A significant number of livestock that is central to the lives of pastoralist communities have died in the region. Apart from human suffering, the body condition of most livestock in the nation is below normal compared with earlier years and milk production is lower than average. Farmlands across the region have also been ravaged by a desert locust infestation over the past two years.

The Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) a recent report confirmed that the drought that occurs in the region left over 40.4 million people with food insecurity which needs urgent support. Besides, the drought severely affected animals, both wildlife and domestic.

The recurrent drought which is caused by climate change affects millions of people. To tackle these problems, experts, governmental and non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and so on have put their recommendations. Among the recommendations, the plant enset, also known as *false banana*, is included as a new super food and a lifesaver in the face of climate change.

Enset or false banana has historically been recognized as a tree against hunger due to the domesticated plant having important attributes that support the food security of communities that cultivate it. These attributes were evident during the devastating famines of the 1980s, where enset-growing communities reported little-to-no food insecurity. Most significant is the evident ability of enset to withstand environmental stress, including periods of drought.

According to new studies, false banana has the potential to feed more than 100 million people in a warming world. The plant is almost unknown outside of Ethiopia, where it is used to make porridge and bread. Research suggests the crop can be grown over a much larger range in Africa.

Arba Minch University Research and Community Service Vice President Associate Professor Behaylu Merdekyos said that, considering the potential of enset, various collaboration works with stakeholders have been done to modernize and improve the production of enset.

Hawassa University Lecturer Dr. Wendawek Abebe told international media that Enset



or “false banana” is a close relative of the banana which is consumed only in one part of Ethiopia. Nevertheless, a false banana is a crop that can play a really important role in addressing food security in Ethiopia.

The banana-like fruit of the plant is inedible, but the starchy stems and roots can be fermented and used to make porridge and bread. Enset is a staple in Ethiopia, where around 20 million people rely on it for food, but elsewhere it has not been cultivated, although wild relatives - which are not considered edible - grow as far south as South Africa, suggesting the plant can tolerate a much wider range.

Arba Minch University Biotechnology lecturer and researcher Dr. Addisu Fekadu said that, enset is undisputedly Ethiopia’s potential crop that could ascertain food security and prevent stunting. The crop is found in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, however, it is domesticated and cultivated as a food crop only in Ethiopia.

With its starch-rich corm and pseudo stem processed into food products, *enset* is a staple meal for more than 20 million Ethiopians in southern Ethiopia. The crop has huge nutritional and food security for the country but has not been fully utilized. Unlike other crops, *enset* gives a high yield from a single plant. “A single plant can give

on average about 120kgs of edible product,” the researcher pointed out.

Currently, using agricultural surveys and modeling work, scientists predicted the potential range of enset over the next four decades. They found the crop could potentially feed more than 100 million people and boost food security in Ethiopia and other African countries, including Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda.

Study researcher Dr. James Borrell, of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, said planting enset as a buffer crop for lean times could help boost food security. “It’s got some really unusual traits that make it absolutely unique as a crop.” “You plant it at any time, you harvest it at any time and it’s perennial. That’s why they call it the tree against hunger.” Ethiopia is a major center of crop domestication in Africa, home to coffee and many other crops.

According to Associate Professor Behaylu, the University’s activities and new research findings regarding false bananas are now gaining not only local but also international attention. Hence, it is imperative to include false bananas in the policy at the government level.

Enset is a unique crop that has not only a high yield but also a climate-resilient crop that produces highly nutritious food. It is

also significant to get much food within a small area. Besides, it is important to encourage the government and any other stakeholder to scale-up *enset* growing in all parts of the country, especially in the north which has huge potential to cultivate *enset*, Dr. Addisu explained.

Climate change is predicted to seriously affect yields and distribution of staple food crops across Africa and beyond. There is growing interest in seeking new plants to feed the world, given our reliance on a few staple crops. Nearly half of all the calories we eat come from three species - rice, wheat, and maize. “We need to diversify the plants we use globally as a species because all our eggs are in a very small basket at the moment,” said Dr. Borrell.

To mitigate climate change impacts through enset, it is essential to modernize the production of enset. For this, Arba Minch University has created and distributed various types of equipment that are important for the modernization of enset production which includes Hamcho Cutter, Bula Squeezer, K’och’o from fiber separation machines, ceramic and plastic K’och’o fermentation processors, and yeasts that accelerate the fermentation process are being widely produced. However, much remain to be done, but this process should continue to bring better result.