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Ethiopia desirous of taking lead in Red Sea Initiative

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia has expressed keen interest in taking the lead in the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol's) Red Sea Initiative that aims to curb maritime crimes in the Red Sea, the country's main import-export route.

Ethiopia's pledge came recently when the Red Sea Initiative officials briefed the Federal Police Commissioner General Demelash Geberenicahel about the project.

During the discussion, the Commissioner General emphasized the project's importance to draw closer partnership of different stakeholders to curb crimes that have posed a serious threat to the Red Sea region and the international community alike.

As the leading East African economy, Ethiopia has been hugely engaged to combat arms smuggling and illegal human trafficking and to capitalize its East African Police Commissioners organization chairmanship to mobilize the region's



countries to that end. "Ethiopia has ample experience in fighting terrorism, human trafficking and contraband in the East Africa region; hence, it will share its success for the East African countries as well as to the

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China remains leading foreign investor in Ethiopia

BY TAMERU REGASA

ADDIS ABABA - The leading involvement of Chinese investors in Ethiopia's priority sectors have been thriving in recent years and the former remains the leading foreign investor in the East African nation with 1,709 projects, the Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) said.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Investment Information Team Leader and Technology Director with the commission Azalech Bekele noted that China's investment in Ethiopia have been increasing both in number of projects and aggregate capital from time to time.

Of the aforementioned projects, some 377 are at preliminary stage, 220 at implementation stage, and some 1,112 have been fully operational. Saudi Arabia and India are the second, and the third largest foreign investors in Ethiopia next to China.

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WBG pledges 200mIn USD to Ethiopia

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - The World Bank Group (WBG) made a pledge to provide 200 million USD to finance Ethiopia's efforts to create substantial jobs for its ever-widening youth.

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Congressman Trent Kelly says will strengthen Ethiopia, US cooperation

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA - Congressman Trent Kelly and his delegation as well as Chargé d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Ethiopia Tracey Ann Jacobson visited yesterday National Intelligence Security Service (NISS) digital exhibition.

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News

Gamo elders highlight community leader's role in nat'l consensus

BY TEWODROS KASSA

ADDIS ABABA - Gamo elders who have been taking part in the Ethiopian Press Agency's third panel discussion forum in Harar Town highlighted the community elders and religious leaders' role in creating national consensus and nation building.

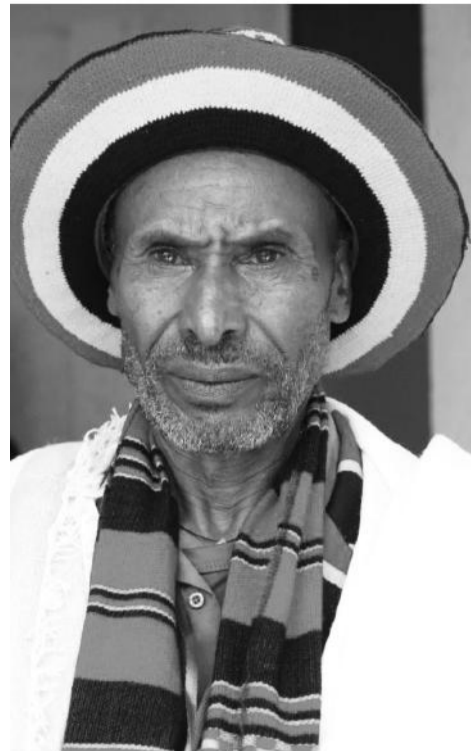
The elders said community elders and religious leaders have an indispensable role in resolving communal conflicts and putting the upcoming National Dialogue in a solid base.

Approached by the EPA, a Gamo elder Kawo Bekele Bizuneh noted that the people of Ethiopia should contribute share to make the National Dialogue successful. Ethiopians should prioritize their country over personal interests and the elders are expected to work hard to prevent further problems when disagreements arise for various reasons.

"The new generation should listen to the advice and discipline of the elders. The generation knows their history well and we follow the footstep of our forefathers and mothers to make our country great. Investigating and finding the root cause of the current crisis in our country should be the major responsibility of every citizen."

More importantly, this generation should ask and find out why the country is immersed in this predicament when it needs to continue perform well and grow. "Everyone should give priority to peace. We should continue to strengthen our common values of tolerance, love, affection and togetherness."

Another elder, Yohannes Holle said the elders and religious leaders should play an important role in resolving conflicts in their locality and ensure sustainable peace in the country. The experience of the Gamo elders teaches the society to condemn conflict by explaining the severity of conflict and past experiences before conflicts occur.



Kawo Bekele Bizuneh



Yohannes Holle

Photo: Dagre Abera

"Conflict is stifling our national development by misusing our resources and causing us more problems, Yohannes said, adding that local elders and religious leaders need to work for a lasting solution to the conflict in

the country.

Recognizing the importance of peace and the devastation of conflict, the new generation should guard for peace and contribute to the development of the country, he remarked.

State signs MoU with stakeholders to regulate price of cement

BY TAMERU REGASA

ADDIS ABABA - Oromia State signed memorandum of understanding with different stakeholders to regulate the price of cement product through breaking illegal processes in production and market chain.

Oromia State Deputy President Awolu Abdi said that the price of cement product has been skyrocketing due to international and internal factors. As to him, though there are a lot of factors for the rise of the price of cement products, the role of illegal brokers takes the lion's share. Likewise, inability of the manufacturing firms to produce at their maximum potential due to lack of inputs and stability is also the major causes for the



Awolu Abdi

Photo - Gebabo Gebre

increasing of the price of the product.

The deputy president stressed that the state administration has made numerous discussions with stakeholders and set direction to adjust issues related to the product. Accordingly, the administration has been working with transport,

security, trade and industry bureaus to adverse the problem. "The administration has been organizing over 300 legal enterprises that will be engaged with the selling and distribution of the product to solve issues related with supply side," Awolu added.

The deputy president also underscored that the administration has also prepared to enable firms to produce at their maximum potential through enhancing the provision of inputs and solving the instability problem in the state.

At the event, the state signed the agreement with Ministry of Mining and 20 cement producing industries to solve problems related to the products.

Minister of Ministry of Mining Engineer Tekele Uma on his part, appreciating the effort of the state, said that as more than half of cement product is produced in the state, the price adjustment in the state may positively affect the price of the product at the national level. He stressed that the ministry will work to transfer this practice to the other states across the country.

Addis strives for mega projects excellence completion

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA - Addis Ababa City Administration said that it has been carrying out various activities to complete mega projects as promptly and efficiently as possible keeping the set schedule.

City Mega Projects Construction Office Director, Addis Aregaye told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the city has been carrying out various activities aiming at accomplishing projects under construction in the city in time. Providing materials like steel, cement, and foreign exchange is one of the some activities of the city administration to avoid constraints compromising the sector though the support is not adequate enough.

According to the Director, Addis Ababa has many mega projects under the Eagle Hills like LA Gare One Construction project, one of the three projects on which the city administration is actively working as a real

estate scheme.

Addis Tomorrow and Addis Africa International Convention and Exhibition Center are others.

He said, "The Eagle Hills is merely operating on 11 hectares at present though it possesses 36 hectare of land to run real estate. The city administration is thus working carefully to realize the well establishment of mega projects."

Project Manager of Rama Construction under La Gare One Construction, Yohannes Getachew on his part said that the Rama construction allocated some 12 million USD to accomplish the construction of apartments in 670 working days. The main activities of this project are framing the skeleton of the construction, identifying the building with category, working on the exterior of the building, decorating the landscape of the construction environment, and the like.



According to the Manager, the LA Gare One construction is well underway hitting ten floors out of the plan 21 storey one, and includes entertainment center as per the schedule. The construction was however interrupted by a lack of cement for three months. It is hard to minimize cement challenges though the government has tried its best as the problem becomes very wide, he said.

He further noted that LA Gare One Construction comprises 192 apartments, 260 parks, and conference halls and lies at 4,000-square-meters of land. The construction also employs international quality technology improvement such as concrete grade quality of C-50 (world class quality) with self-compact technology to help it avoid earthquake threat. The LA Gare One construction is creating over 700 jobs.

News

Ethiopian diplomatic mission in UAE seeks businesses

BY MULATU BELACHEW

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopian Consul General to Dubai and Northern Emirates Ambassador Aklilu Kebede held talks recently with the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) to strengthen the two countries trade and investment relations.

Ambassador Aklilu discussed the business community's major concerns with SCCI Chairperson and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Chambers of Commerce and Industry Federation Deputy Chairperson Abdalla Sultan Al Owais. "One of my main objectives is to make UAE and Ethiopia's business communities, particularly Sharjah commerce and investment, relations and cooperation high."

Recalling the agreement made between SCCI and Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations, the ambassador noted that consolidated efforts are taking place expand such relations. Making Ethiopia's private sector businesses



competitive in international commerce by sharing experience and providing them technical and technological support are among the priorities of the diplomatic

mission.

The parties also exchanged view to seek ways to address the two countries' business communities' bottlenecks via working with integrity and cooperation, exchanging common business and investment promotion information with a view to doing better business than ever.

The Ambassador visited exhibition center which comprises some 190 industries sample products. He said, "I am working to create relations with these companies and I do have keen interest in visiting port Sharjah and the free investment zone.

Abdalla said on his part that the federation is ready to work in cooperation with Ethiopia to help the two countries' business and investment seize its peak.

The SCCI promotes sustainable commercial development for businesses in Sharjah, one of the seven emirates of the UAE where many Ethiopians are residing, which is growing culturally and economically as promptly as possible, it was learnt.

Ethiopia desirous of taking...

entire continent."

The five-year project which aims to combat illegal human and drug trafficking and other international crimes is initiated by Interpol and the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the European Union (EU) and the UNDOC facilitated the task. Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen and Eritrea are member states of the project.

The initiative has also a plan to build

the capacity of maritime security institutions and provide them logistical support. Ethiopia's Modjo Dry Port, Somalia's Bosaso Port, Port Sudan, Djibouti Port and Yemen's Aden Port have been identified as major areas for the aforementioned purposes as well as for operational activities. Accordingly, capacity building training will be offered in the Modjo Dry Port in the coming days, *The Ethiopian Herald* learnt.

Congressman Trent Kelly says...

The Congressman who stated the long-standing and matured cooperation of the two countries in terms of joint mitigation of terrorism and other cross-border crimes pledged to work to further strengthen this cooperation.

NISS Director-General Temesgen Tiruneh for his part said the two-side diplomatic relations have remained intact for generations mentioning that both are still working together in various areas.

Ethiopia is a strong strategic partner of the US regarding the prevention of terrorism

in East Africa, Temesgen indicated, noting that activities are underway to take the cooperation to a higher level both at institutional and national levels.

The director-general explained that the reform activities implemented have helped to accomplish various works ranging from strengthening partnership and cooperation, ensuring impartiality from political affiliation and serving all equally, as well as creating leadership that has a strategic vision, building professional personnel and developing technological capacity that could defend the threats of the time.

WBG pledges 200mln USD to...

In her social media post, Labor and Skills Minister Muferiat Kamil stated she exchanged views with the WBG Washington Bureau's officials on the strategy to enhance the capacity of public technical and vocational training institutions thereby providing skilled manpower to the labor market. "Consensus was reached to provide 200 million USD for the execution of the project."

The Minister expressed gratitude for the bank's officials who have made extensive study on the feasibility of the project.



China remains leading...

As to her, most of the Chinese companies have been investing in the priority areas including manufacturing, education, health, agriculture, hotel and tourism, housing development, construction, water development and others. It is to be recalled that Ethiopia and China have been working together to strength economic ties through creating conducive business climate

Azalech further noted that the government has been paying due attention to attract foreign investments in priority sectors and to improve competitiveness by providing export incentives, customs duty exemption, income tax holidays, and offering land in competitive lease price. The government of Ethiopia has also been hugely investing to improve the country's infrastructural

networks and set policies that create favorable investment climate. The efforts have bore fruits by attracting large-scale Chinese companies.

Recently, Ethiopian Ambassador to China Teshome Toga said the two countries benefits from the partnership that is based on mutual benefit, equality and common

understanding. Ethiopian products have already become familiar in Chinese markets and currently the country has made due efforts to increase the volume of exports and diversify the commodities thereby enhancing the forex earnings, the diplomat remarked.

Opinion

Conspicuous consumption Vs conspicuous compassion

BY GETACHEW MINAS

In economics, the term conspicuous consumption explains the practice of consumers in buying and using goods of a higher quality and price in large quantity than practical. The Norwegian-American economist and sociologist, Thorstein Veblen, coined the term conspicuous consumption to explain the spending of money on and the acquiring of luxury goods and services specifically as a “public display” of economic power of the buyer. To the conspicuous consumer, the public display of income is an economic means of either attaining or maintaining a given social status. Conspicuous consumption also identified other economic behavior such as “invidious consumption,” which is the showy and pretentious consumption of goods. This is an action designed to provoke the envy of other people. There is also an exaggerated and pompous use of “charity” designed to promote the reputation and social prestige of the donor, which is only the socio-economic practice of consumerism.

Veblen identified, described, and explained the behavioral characteristics of the nouveau riche (new rich) social class that emerged from capital accumulation during the Industrial Revolution (1860-1914).

In that period, the term “conspicuous consumption” applied narrowly in association with the men, women, and families of the upper class who displayed their wealth as a means of manifesting their social power and prestige, real or perceived. The strength of one’s reputation has in direct relationship to the amount of money possessed and displayed. That is the basis of “gaining and retaining” a good name for leisure and conspicuous consumption. Later on, economists proposed that changes in lifestyle as a result of the industrial age led to massive expansion of the financial emulation. As a result, conspicuous consumption had induced in the mass of society a “philosophy of futility” that would increase the consumption of goods and services as a social fashion, which is “consumption for the sake of consumption.”

In Ethiopia today, the affluent and prosperous persons live in comfort in the face of mass poverty in every corner of the country. They are influenced by the “demonstration effect” of friends in the same trade and income bracket. Their actual consumption depends upon the real level of spending. It is also based on the degree of their spending as compared with the expenses of other people. The conspicuous consumer is motivated by the importance to him of the approval of his social and economic group. Conspicuous consumption comprised socio-economic “behaviors” practiced by rich people with high disposable income. Consumption behaviors are assumed to be very common among Ethiopian middle class, regardless of the person’s ethnic and tribal group. Upper-class economic behavior in Ethiopia

is similar to those groups in societies with emerging economies. The “vulgar” consumption of goods and services signals that the buyer rose from poverty and has something to prove to the Ethiopian society. A person who truly earned his income is less likely to be a vulgar consumer.

Despite huge expenses on consumption, there is also conspicuous frugality, thrift and stinginess as a “variation” to conspicuous consumption. A new rising class with a certain level of net-worth tends to avoid noticeable consumption, and practice frugality until it achieves the targeted high income. Conspicuous consumption explains the economics of a consumer society and the increase in the types of goods and services that people consider necessary. It is a form of displaying a personal identity and the consequent advertising, as reflected in the consumer culture. Visible consumption is a psychological end in itself, from which such a consumer derived the honor of superior social status. In the developed economies, the “gender analysis” of consumption indicates that men have greater scores for materialism and eye-catching consumption. Women tended to buy goods and services on impulse, and both sexes were equally loyal to a given brand of goods and services.

The act of buying something expensive, that is not necessary to one’s life, is a noticeable way of displaying great wealth. This may be done by means of idleness, spending too much time in the practice of leisure activities, and spending much money to consume luxury goods and services. “Conspicuous compassion,” the practice of publicly donating large sums of money to charity to enhance the social prestige of the donor, is sometimes described as a type of noticeable consumption. This behavior has long been recognized and sometimes attacked, as in the Bible. The wealthy people make large donations for a show, while the poorer people make small but comparatively more difficult donations in “secret.” In Ethiopia, a person’s display of wealth depends not only upon the actual level of spending, but also upon the unnecessary expenses, as compared with the spending of “other” people. His motive is to attract people’s attention, particularly that of the poor.

Studies show that splendid consumption is a form of “anger” towards society. It is an “aggressive ostentation” which is an antisocial behavior that arose from the social “alienation” suffered by successful men, women, and families. Such persons feel that they have become anonymous to their societies. This sense of alienation is aggravated by the lack of respect essential to a person feeling himself part of the whole society. Noticeable consumption is reflected in various sectors of the economy. In the construction sector, the trend towards building houses that were larger than needed by a nuclear family became the fashion of the day as Western

owners turned abnormal. These persons started buying houses that were “double” the average size needed to comfortably house a nuclear family.

Negative consequences of either buying or building an oversized house in the center of a city might include the loss of or reduction in the family’s domestic recreational space, including the backyard and the front yard. It also led to the spending of old-age retirement funds to pay for a big house. It caused long travel time, from house to job, and vice versa, because the required plot of land was unavailable in a city center as it is observed in Addis Ababa residential area. Oversized houses facilitated other forms of visible consumption, such as an oversized garage for the family’s oversized motor vehicles or buying more clothing to fill larger closets. Impressive consumption becomes self-generating “cycle of spending” money for the sake of social prestige. Analogous to the trend for oversized houses is the purchase of light trucks, station wagons or V8s as a form of impressive consumption since such vehicles are usually bought by wealthy city-dwellers and state officials.

Sociologists have identified prestige or “status” consumption which is based upon “conspicuous” consumption. However, the literature of contemporary “marketing” does not establish definitive meanings for these terms. Moreover, it is claimed that sociologists often incorrectly used the two terms as interchangeable and equivalent terms. It is determined that the two terms of status consumption and conspicuous consumption “denote” different sociological behaviors. The decision of consumers does not readily accommodate “conspicuous consumption,” because the nature of their behaviors varies according to their social and economic group. In Ethiopia, “status” consumption seems to be dominant. Here, the irrational elements of decision-making often influence a person’s decision to buy particular goods and services. Marketing and sales techniques influence the irrational and “corrupt” emotions dominant in decisions for displaying unearned income as it is observed in the country.

The consumer may notice the “value” of a product as a prime factor in evaluating its usefulness. Value is a major reason for buying a product. It helps to ignore the “irrational” element in the behavior of the consumer. Yet, a conspicuous consumer purchases goods that are exclusively designed to serve as “symbols” of wealth, such as luxury clothing, high-tech tools, and vehicles. Materialistic consumers are likely to engage in conspicuous luxury consumption. The global yearly revenue of the luxury fashion industry is estimated to be in billions of dollars annually. Buying of conspicuous goods is likely to be influenced by the spending habits of others. This view of luxury conspicuous consumption is being incorporated into social media which is impacting consumer behavior.

This is being observed in different media in Ethiopia. It is well designed to attract and influence, for example, the children of the wealthy class.

Veblen said that among the primary motives which lead men to accumulate wealth, financial “competition” continues to be strong, both in scope and intensity. In the study of borrowing “to keep up,” consumption tends to increase when the buying and the using of goods and services is conspicuous. Ethiopian consumption signals status to other relatively poor people. In doing so, conspicuous consumer increases the frequency of borrowing money. Poor people take out loans in order to compete at consumption even without earned income. Economic inequality is worsened with access to credit. Studies reveal that poor people connected with powerful politicians “borrow” money in order to signal status, which becomes a vicious circle. The cyclical effect of borrowing money for conspicuous consumption leads to and perpetuates economic inequality. The poor people imitate, and emulate the consumption patterns of rich people in order to increase their social status.

The socio-economic behaviors, facilitated by easy access to credit, generate economic instability and unpredictability. This causes deceitful financial rivalry exaggerating a person’s social standing. The solution to noticeable consumption is taxing luxury goods to diminish societal expenditures on high-status goods. Such measure renders more expensive goods less accessible to conspicuous consumers. In this sense, luxury taxes can be seen as a market correction with more efficient mechanism for increasing government revenue. A luxury tax applied to goods and services for conspicuous consumption is a type of progressive sales tax that partially corrects the negative impacts on the economy. Observers assert that the rich persons hoard assets because it establishes socio-economic position within society.

When utility is derived directly from accumulation of assets, it helps to raise more tax. In place of luxury or asset taxes, economists proposed the application of a progressive consumption tax. As a remedy for the social and psychological disorder of conspicuous consumption, the personal income tax in Ethiopia should partly be replaced with a “progressive tax” upon annual income spent on the conspicuous Ethiopian consumer of goods and services. Another less practical option is the redistribution of wealth, either by means of progressive taxation for the provision of public goods. Though idealistic and impractical, redistribution of wealth might lead to greater social welfare at the cost of economic regression.

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

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Editorial

Authentic backings key for sustainable peace

Last Tuesday, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Demeke Mekonnen had a meeting with Hanna Serwaa Tetteh, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa. The two leaders discussed the national and regional issues. The Deputy Prime Minister briefed the Special Envoy about the current situations in Ethiopia and appreciated her efforts to support peace-building activities in the region. Moreover, the Deputy Prime Minister mentioned the confidence-building measures the government of Ethiopia has been undertaking to ensure sustainable peace. He said the government is doing its level best to support people affected by human-made and natural disasters.

In response to this, the special envoy lauded the peace-building steps taken by the government of Ethiopia and its commitment to avoid another wave of conflict. Sure, this moment, Ethiopia is taking praiseworthy measures to avoid any possible war while the Terrorist TPLF has engaged itself in warmongering activities. The government of Ethiopia from the outset has been working towards peace and eliminating grounds for destructive wars which the TPLF considered them as its serious business. Hence, the appreciation of the special envoy for Ethiopia's effort is proper and justifiable.

Moreover, the special envoy also pledged to diligently work to ensure peace and stability in the Horn of Africa, further calling on the Ethiopian government for the necessary support for her efforts. She also said that since Ethiopia is a founding member of the UN, the organization exerts efforts to strengthen its relation with Ethiopia. Here, it is evident that the special envoy has understood the commendable roles Ethiopia can play in establishing sustainable peace across the Horn. Ethiopia appreciates such an insightful diplomatic approach that can contribute a great deal in resolving problems in the region. Unlike the stance of some individuals in the UN, the envoy lauded the necessity of strengthening relations between the UN and Ethiopia to sustain peace across the Horn. In turn, Ethiopia attentively continues working with the UN as long as its sovereignty is respected.

Furthermore, Special Envoy Hanna Serwaa Tetteh and the Minister of Peace Benalf Andualem discussed the humanitarian assistance being provided to those displaced by natural and man-made causes, current peacebuilding activities in Ethiopia and other peacebuilding issues. Appropriately, she said the humanitarian assistance provided to the people of Tigray State is commendable and the Ethiopian government's initiative to ensure

unfettered access for humanitarian assistance is appreciable. Certainly, the words of the envoy are the clearest indication of the reality on the ground.

On the contrary, the terrorist group disgracefully denies this fact to capitalize its wicked gains. Nevertheless, realizing the authentic efforts of the Ethiopian government, she said, "We will work with the Ethiopian government to provide humanitarian assistance to those displaced by natural and man-made disasters." More importantly, the UN will stand by the Ethiopian government and people to support the ongoing peacebuilding process in the country and make the forthcoming national dialogue successful, according to the special envoy. Unquestionably, this stance benefits the Horn and beyond! Ethiopia also appreciates any endeavor that supports its efforts towards sustainable peace.

All in all, Ethiopia is currently taking praiseworthy measures to ensure peace and stability for its people and the region. UN special envoy's recent recognition for Ethiopia's efforts and commitment towards peace contributes significant shares to the journey towards peace and stability. Ethiopia appreciates any support that enables it to meet current humanitarian needs and establish sustainable peace.

Opinion

UN must correct the double standard on Ethiopia

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

In just a simple sentence, the UN is again repeating the gross miscarriage of justice that the League of Nations has committed on Ethiopia when the country appealed for help to the global organization against Fascist invasion of the country in 1935.

The League of Nations allowed an orchestrated mockery on Ethiopia and failed to come to the assistance of this historical country that was also a founding member of the organization.

Ethiopia helped to keep peace under the auspices of the UN in South Korea, Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia, South Sudan, Darfur on peacekeeping missions rendering the most commendable and accredited service for keeping peace in Africa. The whole world knows that thousands of Ethiopian servicemen and women have sacrificed their lives so that peace would prevail across the world.

At all UN forums including forums on climate change, summits on poverty reduction, regional peace and security and terrorism, Ethiopia vigorously pronounced the interests of Africa and the less developed countries. The nation spoke for and with Africa on all international forums. Ethiopia

deployed its health professional volunteers for the battle against Ebola in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. Ethiopia has already gained a global reputation on peacekeeping missions particularly in Abyei.

Instead of fully and clearly understanding and if possible remaining appreciative of the efforts that were underway by Ethiopia to light the houses on more than 65 million Ethiopians who have no access to electric power, the UNSC conducted a series of 12 sessions on Ethiopia and GERD considering the flagship project of Ethiopia as a threat to international peace.

The UNSC has never uttered a word When Sudan built six major dams along the Nile in Sudan (Jebel Aulia Dam, Khashm el-Girba Dam, Merowe Dam, Roseires Dam, Upper Atbara, Setit Dam Complex and Sennar Dam) which were all built at different times for different purposes – supplying electrical power, irrigation, protecting land and people from floods and using dams. On the other hand, Egypt also built two grand dams on the Nile including Aswan High Dam and Sennar Dam.

Over the past 50 years, six Nile Basin countries have built 25 hydroelectric dams. As of 2019, four dams were under construction with four more being studied.

However, when Ethiopia started to build one single dam on the Blue Nile which contributes 85% of the waters of the Nile, there was a big outcry across the western countries, the UN systems, Sudan and Egypt as if the second BIG BANG! Has occurred or as if a great meteor has fallen from the sky on mother earth.

The UN failed to at least recognize Ethiopia's multiple sets of contributions to the world including transporting COVID-19 virus vaccines across the world.

Ethiopia and a number of African countries are fully cognizant of the fact that the UN is no more on track when it comes to considering member nations as equal partners who are expected to benefit from the activities of the UN. However, the UN has never been and may not be able to continue as an impartial global organization but only a pawn of the western powers that use it to enforce their national interests on poor countries.

The most recent example is how the UNHRC has allowed terrorist TPLF which is an organization labeled as terrorist to engage in using refugee camps in Sudan to recruit fugitives, so called refugees and any Ethiopian found in the area to be deployed in training camps for the cross-border battle

against Ethiopia. There is no other evidence that should be submitted to prove that the UN is effectively collaborating with the most notorious terrorist group in Africa against a member country.

Indeed, the UN itself is already acting in defiance to the very Charter that it has approved as a legal basis for its existence. The UNHRC should urgently realize again that using UN facilities to recruit fighters is an international crime of the highest proportions. It is regrettable and alarming that this organ of the UN is interfering in the internal affairs of Ethiopia and that it is engaged in a betrayal of the mission for which it was originally established.

Ethiopia is the third-largest refugee-hosting country in Africa, sheltering 823,959 registered refugees and asylum-seekers as of 31 December 2021. The overwhelming majority originate from South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea. To date, 10,892 refugees have received COVID-19 vaccines, including 6,152 fully vaccinated.

Ethiopia does not deserve to be treated the way the UN systems are treating the country. This indeed needs to be checked.

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

Business & Economy

'Let Ethiopia produce' movement in the view of ten-year plan

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

During the last decade, the government of Ethiopia has strived to bring structural change in the economic arena by expanding manufacturing and enhancing its contribution to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, the sub sector registered only 14.1 percent on average.

Reasons for the substandard achievement include: limitations in terms of supplying industrial inputs and financial provision; weak value chain between industries; less productivity, limitation in executing capacity and sporadic violence here and there left the sector inefficient, Shisema Gebresilasie, the Inputs and Infrastructure Sector State Minister at the Ministry of Industry said.

He further said that in the last four years, Ethiopia faced challenges brought by the international economic crises, the outbreak of COVID-19 and others that left the manufacturing industry sector to be depressed. The challenge still continued and to come up with viable solutions step by step, the Ministry launched a movement to stimulate the sector and enable the industries to produce in their full capacity. To that end, all stake holders are comprised.

As to the state Minister, the movement known as "Let Ethiopia produce" has various objectives to be achieved and among others to make difference, resolving problems and upgrading the sector based on the international reality.

As to Shisema, the movement based its objectives on the nation's ten years perspective development plan and home grown economic reform. It has its own phases for industry development particularly for the manufacturing sector.

The phases include assessing the number of industries; what the industries do produce; how much foreign currency the nation earns from the sector; how many job opportunities can be created; how could import substitution can be scaled up and how structural change can be achieved. These all are the driving factors for the motto "Let Ethiopia Produce" movement.

As to Shisema, there are several study papers conducted by various think tank groups with regard to the industrial development. The limitations of the 10 years perspective economic development plan also identified. In addition, there are studies conducted by international researchers with regard to the 10 years perspective economic development plan. The studies also indicate that most industries in Ethiopia are producing by only 20 percent of their capacity and the average producing capacity is below 50 percent. Therefore, support should be rendered to the industries in order to enable them make use of their utmost capacity.

In fact it is impossible to up lift their capacity up to 100 percent shortly, but if it is possible to reach 60 to 70 percent of their capacity, it will bring tremendous achievement in terms of obtaining hard currency and job creation.



Ethiopia pushes for industrialization

Therefore, industries must produce as much as their capacity allows.

It is understood that all industries do not face challenges in a similar way. Each has its own managerial and human resource shortcomings and may have financial deficit and might indulged in to problem due to its own weakness or by external factors. Therefore, each firm needs the support of various institutions.

While carrying out the production process starting from utilizing inputs up to the final product and supplying to market, the industries may come across various challenges. Basically, an industry needs logistics to obtain input from the site of production up to the location the manufacturing industry is established and this is not an easy chores. It also needs storage facility and market linkage. For example, if an investor wants to engage in manufacturing industry, he has to get production place and to that end the establishment of industrial parks in this regard created conducive environment.

The investor needs also to plant machineries, employ workers, and supervise the quality of the products, provision of loan with hard and local currencies and logistics to transport the out puts and inputs. Hence, to assess the strength and weakness of the firm, it needs to check each process and identifying the problem.

Continuous checking is essential whether the system functions smoothly or not. According to the State Minister, assessment findings indicated that each firm has its own weakness as mentioned above including the Ministry itself. Each industry has its own weakness including in the due process of production and service provision. Other problems are cross sectors.

There are also various institutions under each sector. Both private and public banks have stake on industrial production, National Bank and the Ministry of Revenue have also their own stakes.

In order to relieve the challenges the manufacturing industry encounter, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration should also work in collaboration with the industries.

A firm which utilizes agricultural products as input should have to work collaboratively with the Ministry of Agriculture and related institutions.

Creating joint venture with the security institutions is also essential for the safety of the industry. It also needs to be aware that the firm will face competition from other industries in the international market.

For instance, a firm that produces shirt or shoes has to know that it is competing with other companies that are located in other countries and producing the same commodities. Thus, to become a winner in the market, it has to produce standard commodities with better quality and supply the products to the international market with affordable price and the support provided to the firm must consider such aspects.

The current industry policy also must be evaluated whether it goes in line with the international context or not; whether it is supporting the relevant producing industry or not, and whether the supported firm correctly utilized the support or not. All in all, the industry policy itself should be revised to overcome the challenges in a proper manner.

According to Shisema, the sector encountered problems occurred internationally in the past including the COVID-19 pandemic and the war broke out between Russia and Ukraine.

On the other hand, even though the country has been undergoing severe political and economic challenges in the last two and three years, various industries have been established. In addition to these, modern agro industrial parks are constructed and if all shades in the parks are occupied and start production with their full capacity, the aforementioned problems might be

resolved.

Asked whether the "Let Ethiopia Produce" movement is simply a campaign which lasts for short period of time or not, Shisema replied that the movement will continue for long without interruption until it meets its goal. Other countries' experience indicates that such venture enabled them to uplift the level of development of their respective industries.

The movement is led by higher officials of the government and takes long time to achieve structural change. The movement comprises educational and research institutions and enable to produce qualified human resource. The technical committee is already established and will carry out its duty for ten years. The movement also continues until enabling environment is created to do business easily for industries.

According to Shisema, promoting agro processing is a part of the movement. If the existing agro-industries fully engaged in the sector, 450 firms can start production. There are also other agro-industries located in various parts of the country. In line with this, there is high demand for agricultural products by the industries and others. By the same token, there is a weighty need for industrial products by farmers and consumers for local consumption; by exporters to earn foreign currency; and by other manufacturing industries for input.

Flouring mills and edible oil factories highly depend on agricultural products as they use it as input for production.

As to the State Minister, import substitution can be applied in steel production and mining sector. Until recently, ceramic products were imported from abroad but currently, they are produced locally. Agro-industries have great opportunities for their own growth. For example, if a given edible oil industry needs 1.5 million quintals of soya bean, farmers can benefit by supplying the product and through time they can increase their income and boost their production.

Art & Culture

Addis Ababa: A rising megacity of striking contrasts, 5G technology

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

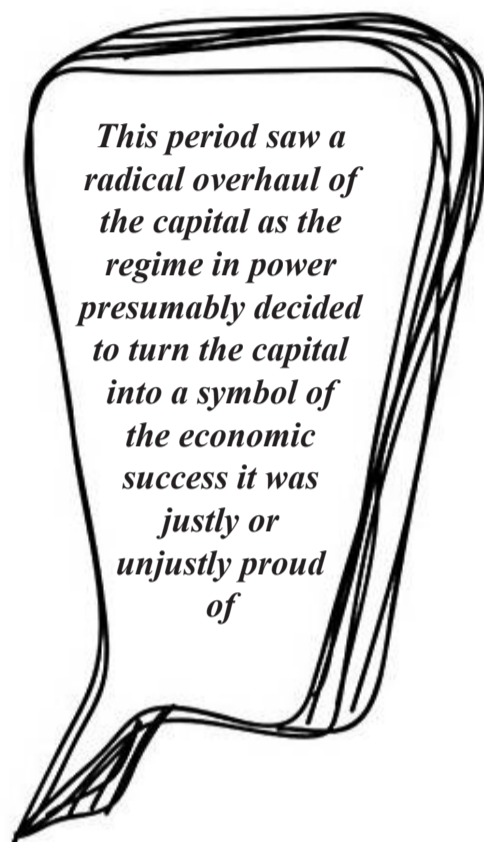
At the time of its birth, Addis Ababa was a small and sparsely populated settlement in the middle of forests and rivers, with no electricity and running water, no roads or telephone lines. In a little more than one hundred years, Addis has become one of the most dynamic and most promising African megacities, recently boasting of the latest generation of 5G telecom technology, a growing digital economy, a space station located up there on top of Entoto hills and some of the best hotels, restaurants and recreational facilities on the continent.

Addis Ababa is a rising mega city judging from the new skylines adorning the horizons of a once forested town as foreign visitors used to describe it in the early days following its founding by Emperor Menelik II in 1898. The forests of eucalyptus trees have now given way to the forests of mortar, steel and glass. Its architecture too has undergone a radical metamorphosis. The place of the old thatched huts is now taken over by modern high rises.

The Ethiopian capital also witnessed its first architectural revolution after the Italian occupation. The fascist authorities were determined to turn Addis Ababa, the *New Flower*, into the “New Rome” with wide squares, Roman architecture, bridges and streets, cinema houses and stores and market-palaces that reminded that brought to mind the prewar faces of most Italian cities. The Italianization of Addis Ababa was cut short after liberation although some of the old fascist-inspired architectures are still standing tall in the heart of the Ethiopian capital.

In a blog post about Piazza which is largely considered the most important part of the city built during the Italian occupation, Gabrielle Tesfaye, a travel writer starts her coverage of the Ethiopian capital “... in Piassa, the oldest part of Addis Ababa, rich in heritage buildings and original traces of the city before its expansion into the new construction being built now. My first time walking the streets of Piassa on my earlier trips was so refreshing, because I was used to being in Bole (the newer buildings, downtown area, mall etc) of the city. Not that I don’t like Bole, I do! But Piassa has its own style, a unique heartbeat, from its street shopping, vintage balconies to its historic cafes, Piassa is not to be missed if you are visiting in Addis Ababa.”

The second architectural revolution of Addis Ababa took place during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie who introduced new styles of buildings, streets and parks and public places. He built a new palace that imitated although remotely, European residences of monarchs and prime ministers. However, Emperor Haile Selassie was not Louis XIV of France and he had no ambition matching that of Versailles. In the post-Italian period, Addis saw its deepest transformations and modernization even though the old Menelik-era buildings and thatched houses were still surviving until well into the 1960s. Houses with corrugated



iron coverings had become popular and that was a relief to the low class residents of the city who were soaked to their bones with rain water during the wet seasons as the thatched roofs could not protect them from the elements.

The decade following Emperor Haile Selassie’s dethroning did not bring about significant changes in terms of Addis Ababa’s modernization. The military Derg was not so much interested in beautifying the capital. It was rather focused on building prestigious projects in agriculture and industry that was inspired by the Soviet Union’s Socialist era success.

The Derg left the capital largely untouched by Soviet -style architecture but started building the rudiments of condominium housing projects that were also inspired by soviet-style housing estates that were built for workers and rented at low cost. These housing projects were not however as widespread as they were during the succeeding decades of EPRDF rule when generous Chinese loans and assistance went into the construction new streets, overhead bridges and the first modern citywide railway system.

To give the devil its due, this period saw a radical overhaul of the capital as the regime in power presumably decided to turn the capital into a symbol of the economic success it was justly or unjustly proud of. Addis Ababa saw its greatest expansion and

renewal in this period. Modern high rises adorned the city’s skylines. Banks and malls started to be located in new high rises with modern architecture. The inner-city railway system completely changed the face of Addis Ababa. Hotels with impressive designs, such the Sheraton Addis saw the light of day and boosted the capital’s prestige in the eyes of foreign visitors. The Chinese put their architectural marks on Addis by financing the construction of the headquarters of the African Union. Condominium housing projects expanded in all directions and gave a new lifestyle to hundreds of thousands of residents of the capital.

In the middle of all this change, the old contrasts between shanty towns around the capital and the high rising buildings in the centre continued unabated. Even though the city authorities planned the expansion and modernization of the capital by displacing tens of thousands of residents in the old residential quarters and allocated them to low-cost houses. The plots of land they left behind were incorporated the real estate market that was controlled by the state and driven by new investment capital.

Dozens of private real estate companies came into being as they were inspired by the successes of the earlier years. This process is still underway as we write these lines, as well as the contrast between the old and the new elements in the capital’s architecture which is increasingly looking like a fortress of high rising building surrounded by shanty towns particularly in the north-western parts of the city. Demolished slums areas thus continue to coexist with shiny and glass and steel adorned apartment buildings. This has created additional problems on the demands for water and electricity in the expanding capital that has never been met even when the population had not attained its present size.

This has in turn given rise to lifestyle contrasts between the wealthier residents and the poorer ones whose consumption and spending patterns remained almost the same. Brand new cars continued to zoom on the newly built streets and avenues of Addis while most city residents continued to use their legs or an increasingly insufficient and inefficient public transport system to move around the capital.

The city infrastructures could not keep pace with the needs and demands created by the population boom that has shaken Addis over the last few decades. People from different parts of the country flocked in search of new economic opportunities in the rising metropolis. From a sparsely populated, calmer and less noisy city, Addis is fast turning into a vibrant and yet, noise-polluted, dusty and sizzling capital similar to other big African capitals as far as its vibrancy is concerned.

New and ultra modern hotels and restaurants came into being in the posh eras around Bole airport and the new residential quarters spreading around the capital. These hotels and restaurants serve a high class clientele with fat purses. On the contrary,

in the slum areas of Merkato for instance, unemployed and homeless residents go to low quality eateries as well as in alehouses serving locally brewed drinks. The contrast between the hotels and restaurants in stylish areas of the capital and those in poorer neighborhoods is simply mindboggling. What is common to all of them is the fact that traditional Ethiopian foods are served in almost all pricey restaurants as well as ordinary eateries in Addis Ababa.

Ethiopian traditional dishes are not created in Addis Ababa but were brought in from the various rural areas by migrant farmers and their families. As one blogger remarked, “Traditional Ethiopian cuisine bears a resemblance to Indian food, especially in its heavy use of spices. One of the most commonly used ingredients in Ethiopian cooking is *berbere*, a potent Ethiopian spice mix consisting of up to sixteen different spices like chili powder, cardamom, fenugreek, cloves, nutmeg, coriander, and cumin. It’s used to flavor many dishes when cooking Ethiopian food.”

Addis Ababa is certainly a city of many contrasts and in this increasingly digitalized world, the city is embracing all the features of telecom modernization. It is in the process of adopting a 5G telecom network while the 4G generation is expanding throughout the country. A foreign visitor to Addis Ababa recently described his impressions of the city in a travel blog site by saying that, “There is a bus service in Addis, as well as a metro, but in general, I find taxis the simplest way to get around – and that’s coming from staunch budget traveller! No Uber here (although the app Ride is new on the scene!), but the quickly recognisable blue vehicles are all taxis and tend to be very reasonable if you remember to haggle. With a name translated as *New Flower*, Addis Ababa, typifies a lot of what is so magical about Ethiopia, not least the country’s love for bringing a sense of the poetic and magical to everyday life.”

Recreational outlets in Addis Ababa also bear a stark contrast. Those located in the city centre are more popular for their hospitality, the quality of the foods they serve, the artists who perform during night times and the high-pitched music magnified by the loudspeakers.

Addis Ababa is no more the bucolic and sleepy rural town that used to be a hundred years ago. It has now become one of the 10 best global destinations for tourists and visitors. As one blogger recently noted, there are many things worth visiting in the Ethiopian capital, including among other things museums, churches, old and new architectures that bear the marks of the past and those of the future. Addis Ababa’s architecture will continue to improve with the introduction of new construction technology as the tallest building in the capital has recently demonstrated. Addis will keep on building, growing, inventing and adapting to the digital era on its way to becoming Africa’s top city that combines both its glorious past and its promising future.

The re-emergence of Al-Shabaab, the imminent threats facing East Africa

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Al-Shabaab-an Islamic insurgent group in Somalia is now re-emerging and expanding itself as the peace and stability of east African countries go downhill.

Harakat-Al-Shabaab Al-Mujahidin, known worldwide as Al-Shabaab, is a powerful and violent armed group mainly operating in Somalia but also uses its bloody money to carry out deadly attacks in neighboring countries in the East Africa region.

Al-Shabaab's long-standing links with Al Qaeda also mean an increased terrorist attack and operations in East Africa and beyond, said Endale Nigussie International Relations and Diplomacy lecturer at Civil Service University.

Why is Al-Shabaab re-emerging?

Al-Shabaab, the youth in Arabic, is the largest militant organization based in Somali and also operating in neighboring countries, most notably in Kenya. The absence of Injustice, lack of democracy and good governance, and weak North-South relations are some of the causes for terrorist groups like Al-Shabaab or other extremist groups to gain ground in the world, said an expert.

According to him, the westerners who promote equalities in other parts of the world don't apply them in their countries. If you take the concept of religion, for instance, they do not respect others' faith as they are considering their own to be a perfect one. Had the playing ground entertained all interests equally, everybody could have enjoyed the right without associating it with religion, race, and identity.

The absence of justice and inequality opens the door for extremist groups such as Al-Shabaab to emerge and flourish in the womb of a society even if their agenda is advancing political interests than addressing social bottlenecks.

Why does Al-Shabaab target East Africa?

As the East Africa region is a strategic place for trade connecting big continents (Africa, Asia, and Europe), the region badly needs sustainable peace and stability. Due to this reason, Al-Shabaab prefers to operate in the East Africa region, the place where a huge amount of trade exchange has been taking place.

Neo-colonizers who have a special interest in the horn want to sponsor weak governments in order to achieve their hidden desire be it political, economic, or social advantages. They also reward the terrorist group to weaken the state apparatus. This is a catalyst for any terrorist groups to destabilize the region.

Due to local and international pressure, Somalia has not been able to establish a democratic government for years. The western world wants to see the cleavage of Somalia. Even if some changes are



observed now, neo-colonizers made Somalia an unstable or failed state for 20 years fulfilling their greedy interest.

The on and off of Al-Shabaab

When there is a strong government in Somalia, Al-Shabaab gets weak and vice versa. In black and white, the terrorist group has no public support as no one gains profit from its deadly attacks.

The westerners are involved in the internal affairs of countries in the horn region especially when they conduct elections and other socio-economic issues. Such an influence elongates the lifetime of Al-Shabaab in Somalia and the horn as well.

Al-Shabaab's expansion to horn countries

Al-Shabaab has been exerting various efforts to expand to horn countries. However, as it has been expanding to Kenya, it could not do the same in Ethiopia. Ethiopia has a culture of establishing a strong government and managing its internal affairs without interference from others. This may not help it to gain ground in Ethiopia.

If you take the election carried out in Ethiopia, the public has not supported the effort of establishing a puppet government that works for the interest of westerners. They, on the other hand, tried to destabilize the nation using TPLF as a tool.

Here, I am not saying Al-Shabaab has not been trying to expand itself in Ethiopia, but it cannot operate and destroy Ethiopia as it has been doing in Kenya.

Kenya's government structure is a fertile ground to fulfill the interest of neo-colonizers. There is a high level of foreign interference there. This state of affairs helps Al-Shabaab to easily move inward and outward of Kenya. If you count the number of damages caused by Al-Shabaab, what has happened in Kenya is more than that of Ethiopia.

Even if Kenya is an economically strong country, the enforcement mechanism of the country is not stronger. The case in Ethiopia is totally different as Al-Shabaab comes and goes repeatedly as there is no fertile ground to be incubated. This terrorist group previously worked with terrorist TPLF. However, its chance to interfere in Kenya is more open and wide.

Why did horn countries fail to eliminate the terrorist group?

There are two reasons for this. One is that countries are not effective in managing their internal affairs, ensuring democracy, good governance, and the like. They lack for the capacity to coordinate with the public at large and fight against this rogue group.

The other thing is the interference of foreigners. Al-Shabaab is a wing of Al-Qaeda. This means the group is operating worldwide. As it has its own network with influential people and groups who have a special interest in East Africa, it gains unwavering financial and logistic support. Thus, the response to Al-Shabab requires the concerted effort of all countries in

the world. The effort of dismantling the terrorist group will not be successful if the task is left to a given country alone.

The western media is also another factor contributing to the strengthening of the terrorist group. These media outlets provide in-depth coverage of the terrorist attack but do not cover the operation carried out against Al-Shabaab.

The people living in the East African countries should be taken as one community sharing common values, and norms with one another. Unless countries work to strengthen regional organizations like IGAD, independent efforts of countries will never weaken the spread of Al-Shabaab to horn countries.

What should be done?

There is no option better than toiling in unison to make the fight against Al-Shabaab successful. As it is beyond the capacity of horn countries, the international community should provide every support to east African countries and strengthen the move to eliminate Al-Shabaab.

Countries need to take all the necessary measures to conduct a study on the matter. The response should be given as per the progress level of this terrorist group. Otherwise, Al-Shabaab makes changes in its operation and carries out its activities by concealing itself with the public. As it is not connected with a given religion or society, countries need to take multiple measures on socioeconomic and political aspects.

Law & Politics

Responding to Africa's dire humanitarian crises

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Africa faces daunting humanitarian crises due to man-made and natural causes. Conflicts and droughts coupled with other factors leave millions of people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. The scale of the crises is bigger than the capacity of the continent requiring the support of the global community.

The humanitarian crisis has long been Africa's major setback in its path to socio-economic and political developments. In fact some of the causes that have been triggering dire humanitarian situations have to do with social, economic, and political factors. The challenge has gone transnational and global with millions of refugees crossing into other countries and even continents in need of much-needed food aid and shelter.

The limited resource and policy issues have also made the rehabilitation process and coping measures difficult and ineffective. This subsequently has been extending and exacerbating the crisis giving African nations trying times adding an unbearable burdens to other existing problems.

Albeit the charitable donations do not help them achieve sustainable wellbeing, African nations have been coming to blows with humanitarian crises. Other than that, conflicts that arise in the aftermath of ethnic marginalization, poverty, human rights violations, bad governance and corruption, and natural causes can result in catastrophic humanitarian crises.

It is no secret that most African nations have been in need of further assistance with humanitarian needs unfolding in various parts of the continent of Africa. With sadness, most of the continent of Africa falls into deep trouble in the aftermath of catastrophic drought, climate change, internal conflict, civil war, inadequate rainfall, lack of good governance, absence of democracy, and more of the same.

As things stand at present a number of nations in the continent of Africa have been moving heaven and earth to meet the basic food commodities, water, food production, and livestock necessities in the midst of the outlandish starvation.

As drought conditions have been getting worse in the continent of Africa owing to natural and manmade causes, humanitarian aid should rise more than ever before to save lives. If donor nations failed to do so, making the cherished goal happen would be easier said than done.

As things stand at present, some African nations have been grappling with quite a lot of predicaments as compared to other regions of the world and thus fighting with a number of humanitarian challenges that needs a quick fix.

In a similar vein, as humanitarian needs have been growing in Africa owing to a wide spectrum of internal and external reasons in the continent of Africa, donor nations should place emphasis on Africans.

Notwithstanding the fact that humanitarian



The humanitarian crisis has long been Africa's major setback in its path to socio-economic and political developments

assistance on many occasions has been delivered to Africa, the continent is not able to meet its demand as a consequence of inadequate humanitarian assistance. In consideration of the foregoing, donor countries and other non-governmental organizations should turn the spotlight on additional humanitarian assistance.

Despite the fact that humanitarian assistance plays a huge role in ensuring peace and tranquility apart from rescuing lives and pacifying anguish in the continent of Africa, the latter has been wrestling with countless crises that can pour cold water on the development endeavor of the continent and the lives of millions of Africans.

The issue has now been attracting the attention of African leaders requiring collective action and global remedies.

Speaking at the 15th African Union (AU) Humanitarian Support and Convention Summit in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) called on the international community to enhance the humanitarian support to Africa.

Addressing the Summit, the Premier highlighted that the Horn of Africa is one of the worst-hit regions in the world due to global climate change and drought.

"Therefore, a lot of work is being done with partners to reduce the risk of natural disasters."

Abiy further noted that strong drought prevention measures are crucial as previous droughts in the region have shown their worst impact. "Ethiopia will strengthen its efforts to withstand the challenges of climate change by planting billions of seedlings a year under the green legacy program.

Accordingly, despite the global economic

crisis the country continues to provide unreserved humanitarian assistance to millions of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), he emphasized.

Lately, the African Union (AU) announced that some 113 million people are waiting for emergency assistance in 2022.

The AU unveiled the number of affected people during its Extraordinary Humanitarian Summit and Donor Conference held in Equatorial Guinea's capital Malabo.

Speaking on the occasion, the African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat said East Africa and the Horn of Africa are currently hosting 4.5 million refugees, more than 75 percent of whom have been affected by the reduction in food rations in 2021. Over the past two years, in this same region, food needs have increased by 70 percent, and more than 25 million people are food insecure.

"This is the highest level of food-insecure people also found in West and Central Africa since 2016 accounting for 58 million." In addition to this, the Chairperson said, more than 14 million people need humanitarian assistance in North Africa.

According to the Chairperson, the major reasons for the increment in the number of emergency aid needed people are the unraveling of refugee empowerment efforts by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. The AU has developed normative and operational instruments to improve the living conditions of refugees and internally displaced people in the continent.

Faki further noted that the Kampala Convention adopted in 2009, and regional

plans to manage refugee crises have been put in place at the normative and operational level respectively despite the low fund requirement for the implementation. "It is a moment of intense emotion in view of the existential fragility of our brothers and sisters trapped in forced displacement, exile, and statelessness for various reasons. They wait with anxiety and impatience for our generosity and our duty of humanity to come to appease their multiple sufferings."

The organization of the Extraordinary Humanitarian Summit which will be followed by the Donors' Conference demonstrates African Union's commitment to continue its efforts to reduce the grief suffered by refugees and internally displaced persons on the continent, the Chairperson remarked.

With the humanitarian situation expected to get worse with worsening climate and other man-made factors, Africa should pull more resources and devise a sustainable policy to cope with the problems and redress the main causes of the humanitarian crisis.

Although eradicating the humanitarian crisis proves impossible, African nations need to toil in solving the causes through collective action. On the other than the world cannot afford to see millions of Africans wallowing in the quagmire of humanitarian problems. In this regard, a global effort is a must if the world is to grow together and meets sustainable prosperity.

For the sake of truth, no matter how hard humanitarian originations tried to meet the demand of African problems, humanitarian assistance has not been met yet. Therefore, donor nations should work around the clock to satisfy the need of African nations through financial mobilization and technical support.

Women in Focus

Digital media, stereotypical gender representations

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

Various studies have found that media, be it the traditional media to current online media, influences people's perceptions and ideas highly towards the role of girls and women in society.

Some media, being one of the entities that tend to perpetuate gender inequality, they are still influencing people's outlook, especially children, by the gendered stereotypes that they are presenting to them; for the reason, gender specific features and representations in media do have an influence on how we perceive gender roles.

As to the studies, exposure to stereotypical gender portrayals and clear gender segregation correlates with preferences for 'gender appropriate' media content, toys, games and activities, to traditional perceptions of gender roles, occupations and personality traits, as well as to attitudes towards expectations and aspirations for future trajectories of life.

It is true that in many countries, women's ideas and opinions tend to be terminated, not receiving proper attention or disregarded; and usually they are not trained or encouraged to ask questions and be part of public debates.

Having little or no information, women not only lack the knowledge about their rights, but they also fail to exercise them, especially with regard to their rights to education, to property, etc. as well as challenge existing norms and stereotypes, though, access to information empowers women to claim their rights and make better decisions.

Taking the aforementioned facts into consideration, recently the Ethiopian Media Women Association (EMWA) in collaboration with US Embassy held a discussion as well as recognition program under the theme: 'We strive to enhance women's participation in media'.

The Ethiopian Media Women Association granted appreciation and recognition certificate to its members who have contributed a lot during the worst and better situations where the association has passed through so far.

Ethiopian Media Women Association (EMWA) is an association that was established in 1999 with the objective of strengthening women's capacity. For the past 22 years, it has been undertaking number of activities and has been offering several trainings for media personnel in collaboration with its partners and stakeholders to enhance the capacity of women in the profession.

The recognition certificate was given to Tekabech Assefa and Selome Desta who are said to sacrifice their time, money and knowledge for the betterment of the association since its establishment.

Apart from Minister of Women and Social Affairs, Ergoge Tesfaye, prominent



Journalist Yeshewa Maseresha

“Despite the opportunities that the digital media has brought about, the need to organize such event is of important because women as well as people with disabilities are still victims of online media; and efforts should be exerted to enable them prevent the difficulties.”

individuals such as Amare Aregawi, Tamerat WoldeGioregis, Selome Tadesse, and others were also given appreciation certificates.

During the event, Alemitu Oumed, State Minister for Ministry of Women and Social Affairs noted that the participation of women

in media is progressing well adding that her office is undertaking several activities to encourage and motivate them.

“Though the association has come too far through enhancing the participation of women media professionals, there are many

activities that ought to be implemented to achieve its major goals. To this end, the Ministry would exert its responsibilities so as to enable the women achieve their goals, and help the association realize its mission,” she underscored.

The major aim of the discussion was said to create access to women who are working on digital media to share experience, as well as to reflect their view on ways how women could use the available good opportunities and curb challenges.

Journalist and Board Member of Ethiopian Media Women Association, Yeshewa Maseresha stated that giving recognition to prominent women media professionals has a paramount significance in terms of encouraging those who are already in the profession, and those aspiring to join the occupation.

She further emphasized that the association is striving to curb maladministration and biased system thereby create strong women media professionals.

Similar to its opportunities, social media has brought about challenges for women, thus, she noted that various trainings should be offered for women.

As to her, media houses should take the issue of women seriously aside from marking March 8 annually; because merely celebrating the day and entertaining women's matter once a year could not bring the desired outcome.

“Despite the opportunities that the digital media has brought about, the need to organize such event is of important because women as well as people with disabilities are still victims of online media; and efforts should be exerted to enable them prevent the difficulties.”

Moreover, she emphasized that though media should have been used as a weapon to fight biased systems, unfortunately, she noted that women who work in the digital media are still the victims of biased and blurred perceptions.

To this end, it is crucial to join hands with professionals and partners; and exert utmost efforts towards curbing the challenges, as to her.

Critical discussion was also held under a title ‘Is digital media an opportunity or a challenge?’ and attendants reflected their ideas on the matter.

Similarly, talks were also held with respect to the attention that is given to person with disabilities and women in the digital media as well as pointed out ways how these segments of the society could prevent the challenge.

Women media professionals from Sidama, Harari, Amhara, Oromia states including from the two city administrations media houses took part and shared their experiences at the event.

Society

Youth's active participation in building peaceful Ethiopia

BY TEWODROS KASSA

The UN World Population Prospects estimate that there are 1.3 billion 15-24 years old in the world and nearly one billion live in developing countries where conflict is more likely to have taken place. In such demographic realities, the potential youths hold for change and positive action is the subject of growing research agenda, and this is particularly the case with the recent wave of social upheavals and humanitarian crises in different parts of the world.

For much of human social interaction, the category called 'youth' has been perceived as a historically constructed social category, a relational concept, and as a group of actors that is far from homogenous. A myriad of factors make childhood and youth highly heterogeneous categories in terms of gender, class, race, ethnicity, political position as well as age. They also have multi-faceted contributions. Youths can be heroes as well as victims, saviors and courageous in the midst of crisis, as well as criminals in the shantytowns and military entrepreneurs in the war zones. Yet, as a category, youth are often approached as a fixed group or demographic cohort.

Ethiopia is a country its demographic makeup is characterized by a large youth population. As studies indicate, over 70 percent of its population is under 30 years of age who have immense economic potential. Owing to this and other similar reasons, working on youth is the most practicable and instrumental task to ensure comprehensive development. It is known that Ethiopia, within its broader effort to build and consolidate democracy, has embarked on a series of political and institutional reforms nationwide.

Speaking to *The Ethiopian Herald*, an elderly man from the Sidama community, Wondwossen Kassa said that senior citizens should discharge the responsibility to provide the youth invaluable lessons and share their experiences that would put the country on a solid foundation. "If the elderly do not lead the young wisely, it would be difficult to keep intact and pass down cultures, norms and entrenched values to the next generations. Thus, we, at any cost, should move towards changing the outlook of the new generation."

According to Wondwossen, nowadays, divisions and being green-eyed are rife in Ethiopia and some people are demonstrating these unhelpful feelings. Therefore, every parent should shoulder the responsibility of teaching children about communities' longstanding values and cultures such as, forgiveness, love, tolerance, sovereignty, productivity, and compassionate aspects. Indeed, the new generation should draw important and influential lessons from forefathers



Youth, Peace & Security

“Youths have great talents and are always desirous to fulfill their ever-increasing demands. However, unless the society or the government put in place the right response to help them satisfy some of their demands, the youths are likely to develop deviant behaviors. And the complaints of senior citizens cannot stop somewhere”

and foremothers about nationality, arts, culture, love, unity, and sense of national belongingness.

Tagay Artist Adugna Dumu (PhD), 68, said for his part that leading the youth through constructive ways should not be left to a single body; it rather requires the combined effort of families, communities, educational institutions, government agencies, and the like. Also, giving serious attention to culture has been underlined as it is of paramount importance in shaping the new generation to develop a positive attitude towards the home nation.

“Ethiopia has been facing immense challenges due to the terrorist TPLF faction. Following this devastating scenario, a number of innocent citizens are killed, millions are displaced and

immeasurable private and public properties were looted and damaged. However, the incumbent has attached due emphasis to homegrown matters, cultures, productivity paths, language and others. Yes, it is the right time for the elderly to educate and shape children, the youth and the community at large as rightly as possible,” Tagay underlined.

Meanwhile, in a discussion held at Bonga Town with youths and various sections of the community, Negash Wagesho (PhD), Deputy Chief Administrator of South West Ethiopia Peoples' State said with the effort exerted to sustain the unity and peace of the country the part the youths play is crucial.

As to him, the young generation is not only a successor for tomorrow, but leading

today's Ethiopia and shaping its future is in his hand. Thus, this generation should put its fingerprints in the country's overall paths to development, unity and peace. He also underscored the need to safeguard the peace and security of his surrounding and the nation by developing rational thinking.

Mentioning the role, the youth can have in country's transformation and the role of the media in making information accessible, he urged the young generation to put on their potential in nation building efforts; and be watchful on issues that are beneficial to nation building.

In sum, youths have great talents and are always desirous to fulfill their ever-increasing demands. However, unless the society or the government put in place the right response to help them satisfy some of their demands, the youths are likely to develop deviant behaviors. And the complaints of senior citizens cannot stop somewhere.

This segment of the society can be a powerful development force if and only if provided with the necessary skills, knowledge and civic virtues. Indeed nowadays, youths are playing a prominent role involving in innovation, research and scientific studies for the betterment of our planet. Hence, their contribution is massive in transforming the world's economy. Ethiopia being the second populous nation in Africa offers the youth with various opportunities. Scaling up the good practices and overcoming the challenges, the nation will continue being a safe haven to the youth in the years to come. The 2017 World Population Data Sheet states that the world youth population (ages 15 to 24) is projected to rise to 1.4 billion by 2050 from 1.2 billion now. Similarly, Africa's youth population will be projected to 35 percent from 20 percent today.