



# The Ethiopian Herald

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## Russian foreign minister Lavrov in Addis for working visit

BY STAFF REPORTER

**ADDIS ABABA** – The Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov arrived here yesterday for a working visit to Ethiopia.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Demeke Mekonnen and other high-level government officials welcomed the Russian Foreign Minister upon his arrival at Bole International Airport.

During his stay in Ethiopia, Lavrov is due

to consult with high-ranking government officials on matters that will strengthen the ties between the two countries.

It is to be recalled that Demeke Mekonnen, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of

*See Russian foreign ... page 3*

## Homecoming challenges meet objectives successfully

BY ABDUREZAK MOHAMMED

**ADDIS ABABA** – Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia (MoFA) disclosed that the country has achieved its objectives during the two homecoming challenges.

This was noted yesterday at a consultation forum with the members of the Diaspora community under the theme: “The role of Diaspora on the National Dialogue and the experience of other countries.”

The forum was organized by Ethiopian Diaspora Agency (EDA) and Eid-to-Eid Homecoming Challenge Coordination Committee, it was learnt.

Addressing the forum, MoFA State Minister Ambassador Birtukan Ayano said that the nation has achieved socio-economic, diplomatic, and economic objectives through the Great Ethiopian Homecoming Challenge for Christmas and Eid-to-Eid



Photo: Tsehay Nigussie

Homecoming Challenge which called on Ethiopians and friends of Ethiopians all over the world to pay visit to Ethiopia.

As to her, such challenges have great role in transferring knowledge and technology, reviving country's economy, and enabling

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## Gov't renews call for peace talks

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**ADDIS ABABA**- Government's initiative and commitment towards engaging in peace talks with terrorist TPLF is still on the table so long as the other side is willing and committed to be part of it, stressed the Security Advisor to the Prime Minister.

In an interview with a local media, Security *See Gov't renews... page 3*

## Ethiopia's external debt reshuffling crucial, timely: Economist

BY TSEAGYE TILAHUN

**ADDIS ABABA**—An economist stated that Ethiopia's external debt payment reshuffling by donors and taking other economic measures would give a breakthrough for reducing its current economic impacts.

Addis Ababa University Economics Lecturer Birhanu Dinu (PhD) told *The Ethiopian Herald* that conflict, instability and inflation along with external debt will cause high economic burden. Taking necessary measures would lead to economic recovery. For instance, extending external debt, maximizing production, sustaining peace and stability, applying economic reform, controlling inflation, taking monetary and budget policy measures have a paramount importance in addressing the

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# News

## Oregon victory portrays strong unity among Ethiopians

• *Ethiopian athletics delegation to be accorded warm welcome*

BY HAILE DEMEKE

**ADDIS ABABA** - The Ministry of Culture and Sport announced that Ethiopian Athletics delegation that participated in the 18th Oregon World Athletics Championships will be accorded with warm welcome upon their arrival at Bole International Airport.

Ethiopia has ranked 2nd in the World Athletics Championships medals.

In connection with Ethiopian athlete's grand victory and welcoming preparations, Culture and Sport Minister Kejela Merdasa said that Ethiopia ranked 1st in Africa with 4 gold, 4 silver, and 2 bronze medals with total of ten medals.

As to him, the Ethiopian delegates will be accorded warm welcome by the Ministry of Culture and Sports, senior government officials, Office of the Prime Minister and President, and others stakeholder's upon their arrival at Bole International Airport.

"All the delegates have showcased an outstanding achievement through



registering a shining victory. This victory is unique to our country as it is passing through different internal and external challenges and witnessed Ethiopians unity more than ever," he said.

Ethiopian athletes have portrayed the spirit of unity and shined at the international level which is very interesting and timely in strengthening the spirit of unity among the people of Ethiopia and beyond.

The delegates and athletes deserve

huge recognition. Special prizes will be provided to the delegates, athletes and other concerning bodies based on their contribution.

For his part, Advisor to State Minister Solomon Aliye said that all Ethiopians from all walks of life should welcome the delegates and celebrate the victory together.

Accordingly, the celebration will take place in different main streets of the capital starting from Bole International Airport.

## Authority prioritizes heritage reparations

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** - Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage (ARCCH) revealed that it has been carrying out applicable activities in repairing heritages which were seriously affected by terrorist TPLF aggression and turning them into former status quo.

Authority Deputy Director General, Abebaw Ayalew (Assistant Prof.) told *The Ethiopian Herald* that there are 68 movable heritages and 11 fixed artifacts immediately affected due to the northern conflict.

As to the Director, the Authority has carried out surveys so as to identify the level of the damage of the heritages in the conflict affected areas, but its survey didn't incorporate areas such as Gondar and Sekota due to political instability.

He further stated that the Authority has planned to maintain the heritages permanently and temporarily accordingly. It has also given due attention to churches and mosques which were seriously damaged by the conflict.

Accordingly, the Authority has planned to maintain the heritages by obtaining 159,000 USD from World Bank as part of the Socio-economic significance.

"The Authority has been working with Customs Commission and Security bodies to get the stolen artifacts back. The Authority will identify the level of damages after conducting full-fledged research in the near future," Abebaw emphasized.

The Director further noted that the Authority has also been working with various states to develop the heritages especially centering their economic advantage. For example, Jimma, Harari, Dre Dawa, and Oromia and Amhara states are areas with which the Authority has worked closely to develop and well conserve the heritages appropriately.

He called on the community to give relevant information to the concerned bodies like Police to realize the conservation and protection as well as the restoration of the stolen heritages.

## Consolidating solidarity pays off: Haile Gebrselassie

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

**ADDIS ABABA**—The victory that the country has recorded in international competition with firm team spirit of its athletes has to be replicated in other sectors for the growth and prosperity of our country as unity and teamwork pays off, so said Athlete Major Haile Gebresellassie.

Talking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) about the recent victory gained at Global Competition 18th edition of World Athletics championships held in Oregon, USA, he said that the shining results that were attained by Ethiopian athletes should be quadrupled in other multifarious sectors in the country.

He further said that resisting all the



challenges they have been through, all athletes have given priority for their

country and have come up with marvelous results.

Drawing important lessons from athlete's unity, coordination and sense of respect, all citizens across the nation have to develop a culture of listening to one another, peaceful coexistence and working in collaboration with neighbors and fellow citizens towards making a prosperous nation.

"I strongly believed that Ethiopia will be made a great nation with the cooperation and firm commitment of all its sons and daughters whom everyone would prefer to live and work within the shortest time possible. What matters here is we all are expected to move in unison to create this preferable east African nation," he underlined.

## Committee urges U.S. to return Ethiopia to AGOA

BY TAMERU REGASA

**ADDIS ABABA**- American Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee (AEPAC) has called on US to return Ethiopia to AGOA and lift anti Ethiopian bills(H.R.6600 and S3199) in recognition of the efforts of the country towards peace buildings.

According to the information obtained from Press Release of the committee, opposing the bills, the committee said that the bills will further damage Ethiopian livelihoods and do nothing to support peace rather it

obstruct investment and total economic development in the country and it urged the U.S. to recognize that the TPLF and Shene forces are the responsible terrorist groups hampering peace in the Horn of Africa.

The committee also called on U.S. work to ensure all Ethiopians to have an opportunity to build a prosperous nation, while condemn the war crimes, including rape as a weapon of war, the use of child soldiers by the terrorist TPLF and ethnic-based attack by Shene.



Chairman of the committee Mesfin Tegenu, said that Ethiopia and the U.S. have stood shoulder to shoulder for so long, and in Ethiopia's hour of greatest need, However, recently the relationship between the two

countries has felt to many challenges because of the United States, turning its back on Ethiopia adding that suspending Ethiopia from AGOA and seemingly offering tacit support for terrorist TPLF. The U.S. has been acting against the Ethiopian people and supporting the humanitarian crisis in Amhara and Afar.

Explaining the mission of the committee he said that the committee has been working to strengthen and enhance the century-old relationship between the two countries based on the common interests and mutual benefits.



# News

## IGAD assesses Ethiopia's refugee education implementation plan

BY TEWODROS KASSA

**ADDIS ABABA-** The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in collaboration with German Cooperation (GIZ) and the Ministry of Education organized a two-day consultation meeting on Ethiopia's National Education Response Plan for implementation of the Djibouti Declaration on Education for Refugees, Returnees and Host Communities.

In a press release sent to *The Ethiopian Herald* IGAD highlighted that IGAD has been tasked with supporting the development and implementation of multi-year national response plans in education to ensure inclusive education for refugees, IDPs and returnees as well as host communities.

Representing IGAD Executive Secretary, IGADHealth and Social Development Division Director FathiaAboubakerAlwan said that the assessment meeting enables to identify challenges and opportunities in the implementation process of the costed national Ethiopian education response for inclusive education.

Education stakeholders recommended various ways and means to ensure access to quality education for refugees, returnees and host communities using the costed plan, she said.

As to her, Ethiopia has been doing a commendable role in the efforts of implementing IGAD initiatives.

“We have achieved a lot in the past four years, but we also have a long way to go. We



therefore urge all partners and stakeholders to continue to exert maximum efforts to achieve the objectives set in the years to come,” she stressed.

She assured that IGAD and its partners have been supporting both the development and implementation of the Djibouti Declaration since its adoption in 2017.

Ministry of Education Strategic Affairs Director General Mezgebu Biazen said the Ministry was working with all stakeholders

to ensure quality education for refugees through regional and national commitments.

The deliberations and outcomes of this national consultation meeting will inform and guide the commitment to further harmonization and integration of refugee education, he emphasized.

IGAD Education, Science and Technology Program Senior Coordinator Kebede Tsegaye (PhD) said that IGAD has been working

with Member States and partners to develop costed plans implementation.

Accordingly, IGAD Member States jointly signed the Djibouti Declaration in which in 2017 among other areas of action, the development of a Regional Qualifications Framework (RCF) was identified as one of its five strategic interventions. IGAD's regional education interventions are informed by the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact on Migration.

### Russian foreign...

Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia paid a visit to Russia in 2021 to discuss collaboration and strengthen relationships.

Similarly, Sergey Lavrov visited Addis Abeba in 2018 and signed agreements to boost relations between Ethiopia and Russia.

The Russian foreign minister had earlier visited Egypt and the Republic of the Congo.

### Homecoming...

the Diaspora to invest in the country.

Amb. Birtukan also stated that the coming of large number of Diaspora around the world responding to the call positively helped them to understand the current situation in the country and to be a part of the solution.

The economic benefits that the nation secured from the Diaspora community have also great significance for the development of the country, she said adding, Diaspora involvement in the country's affairs will be continued in a strengthened way.

Many countries held such challenges to involve their Diasporas to contribute their part in the overall development of the respective countries, according to the State Minister.

### Gov't renews ...

Advisor to the Prime Minister, Ambassador Redwan Hussein underlined that the government of Ethiopia has been expressing its readiness and firm stance towards engaging in peace talks apart from carrying out several activities before the conflict in northern Ethiopia broke out.

Taking into account the disastrous outcome of such kind of conflict on the peace-loving citizens and the country as a whole, the government has been undertaking various activities to resolve differences through peace talks in the first place, as to

him.

One of such efforts was made by Ethiopia's Inter-religious Council and Elders Consultative Forum which tried to mediate the government with T- TPLF. By the same token, the withdrawal of Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) from Mekelle were made for sake peace as well, he added.

He, moreover, said that the unilateral declaration of humanitarian truce as well as the establishment of peace committee by the government are part and parcel of

the ongoing relentless efforts to deal with difference through peaceful dialogue.

However, he stressed that the government is working tirelessly for peaceful resolution in the meantime it has a big responsibility of upholding the country's sovereignty and security.

In this regard, he noted that though the government is committed towards realizing peaceful dialogue with T- TPLF, he indicated that it would not mean it will sit ideal and see the nation falling into chaos.

### Ethiopia's external ...

existing economic challenges.

Applying fiscal policy, reassessing monetary policy and sustaining peace would help control inflation. The key solution for the recovery of the economy is sustaining peace via avoiding conflict as it causes several problems, and strengthening peaceful negotiation and law enforcement activities are key remedies, he said.

As to the expert, debt payment reshuffling measures would give breakthrough for reducing the existing economic burdens in Ethiopia. However, empowering the economic capacity of the country is a key

measure to repay the debt.

“Donor countries support heavily indebted countries through canceling their debt, why because countries will face bankruptcy and this in turn causes problems for the global economy.”

The breakthrough time will give a chance to recovery and reduce timely economic impact. This will give a chance to take economic reform, monetary and budget policy measures.

“Extending credit facility for heavily indebted countries needs a meeting of supply and demand. Controlling or reassessing

unproductive monetary policy is also an additional factor. When foreign and local investors perform their tasks peacefully, inflation would be under control within a short period of time. This will enable us to repay debt, control inflation, and improve the lifestyle of citizens,” he added.

He furthest pointed out that those financial institutions particularly Ethiopian banks should focus on allocating their credit to productive sectors as its unproductive usage has multiplied effects on the economy especially, it soars inflation, and they should also follow proper utilization of their credit.



# Opinion

## National Dialog towards healing Ethiopia's unity tumor

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Addressing any problem via holding discussions and close talks is undeniably the symbol of civility and being up-to-the-minute. Cognizant of the fact that tabling all sorts of disparities, disagreements and variations on discussion helps bring about lasting solutions to the problems across the nation, Ethiopians from all walks of life have planned to hold an inclusive dialog at national level. Yes, it is crystal clear that Ethiopia has been challenged by heaped problems for centuries especially until recently following the wrong seed sown by irresponsible and greedy officials who were leading the nation burying their hidden agenda—dismantling it—solely serving their masters' interest at the expense of the mass and the sovereignty of the country.

Since the recent regime was relentlessly working towards widening differences via expounding falsehood fabrications, distorted narratives and utterances promoting gaps instead of bridging minor disproportions for the sake of unity of Ethiopia, situations have been aggravated and reached at a climax mayhem. All these resentments, hostility preaching, sense of jealousy and lack of patriotism have called on an inclusive national dialog. This dialog is strongly believed to get the sources of all deviations, diabolic spirits and antagonistic moves dried for good.

If handled and managed well, the national dialog would unequivocally bear fruits. It has emerged in recent years as powerful tools for peace-building across Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. A national dialogue is used as mechanism to bring the major stakeholders together when political institutions and governments are in a state of tumultuous scenario. It is also increasingly used in transitional societies as a means of collective deliberation upon key issues essential to progress, development, unity, cooperation and prosperity.

Peace-building by the means of a national dialogue is a demanding and arduous process with great possibilities—but only when attention to the details and process precedes action. Given such a golden opportunity for national dialogue, those who are going to present queries and reservations must consider factors for success as there are countries tried to make national dialog a triumph foiled.

Knowing that national dialogue is a tool for resolving intractable conflicts as it is proved effective in resolving incongruences in Benin, Congo, Mali, Togo, Chad, Poland,

Germany, South Africa and the likes, issues to be resolved must be genuine and gritty in an inclusive consultative forum; here the scope of the dialog should also be clearly defined so that it will be realistic, achievable, manageable by the body responsible for dialogue and comprehensive as well.

Furthermore, the process leading to the organization of a national dialogue must be democratic, inclusive, inviting, extended to include all key stakeholders in society, religious fathers, political parties, opinion leaders, armed or unarmed resistance movements or oppositions and citizens of all walks of life by and large. No doubt, the democratic mode of organizing a national dialogue doesn't guard against certain undemocratic outcomes.

It is a hard fact that national dialogue is an increasingly popular tool for conflict resolution and political transformation. It can be broadened debate regarding a country's trajectory beyond the usual elite decision makers; it can also be misused and manipulated by leaders to consolidate their power. Principles to strengthen national dialogue processes and considerations for international actors seeking to support these processes need to be well eyed at with a view to making the process an indispensable remedy to country's cancer.

The national dialogue would provide the nation with the potential for meaningful conversation about the underlying drivers of conflict and ways to holistically address the multifaceted problems the country has been facing directly or indirectly. There is jeopardy, however, that national dialogues can be deliberately misused by infiltrators, betrayals and irresponsible officials or leaders shouldering hidden mission targeting at further consolidating their grip on power.

As unanimously agreed wherever in the globe, there is no one-size-fits-all model, but this writer would like to propose that national dialogue will have a higher likelihood of success if it incorporates fundamental elements like inclusion, transparency and public participation, a far-reaching agenda, a credible convener, a means to hear the voices of all as much as possible appropriate and clear rules of procedure, an accommodative trajectory and an execution plan.

For example when the writer cites the case of inclusion, all key interest groups—women, youth, and other traditionally excluded groups should be invited to participate so as to maximize the dialogue's potential to address the real drivers of conflicts. Prior to the commencement of the process begins,

an inclusive, transparent, and consultative preparatory phase has to set the foundation for a genuine national dialogue.

As it is recurrently heralded, national dialogue is of significantly useful in serving as a tool for breaking political deadlock, and transforming complex skirmishes.

Bearing in mind that the above pivotal elements must be adapted to national contexts and changing battle dynamics, a national dialogue should incorporate them in a bid to meaningfully contribute to political transformation, viable tranquility and long lasting serenity.

The government has repeatedly announced that the national dialog would take place outside of the existing institutions of government ordering tracks. Truthfully, national dialogue is often convened because the sitting government and existing institutions are unable to resolve the major issues at hand, either because they are seen as neither legitimate nor credible, or because they are unwilling to challenge the current situation. A national dialogue will have its own set of procedures and rules for making decisions, which should be transparent and carefully tailored to the composition of the group and the nature of the issues.

A clear mandate lends purpose and authority to a national dialogue whatever the way it has been set up. For example, citing the case of some countries which have been successful in holding a well-defined national dialog is quite important. Tunisia's instance is worth mentioning along this line. The clear mandate of Tunisia's national dialogue allowed delegates to make steady progress toward four goals: selecting a caretaker government, approving a new constitution, establishing an electoral management body, and setting a timetable for elections.

As far as the understanding of this writer is concerned, national dialog by and large requires clear execution plan as without a clear implementation plan, a national dialogue risks consuming extensive time and resources without producing any tangible results and agreeable trend.

As national dialog is not a magic bullet to hit the screened target, it would seriously call for unreserved effort to bear fruits and deserves superior attention as a tool with the potential to facilitate peaceful political transformation, to help the country seize the next level of success and attain all benefiting national ambitions. National dialogue is one of the most invaluable steps along the lengthy and strenuous path of building a peaceful society even in the most fruitful instances.

National dialogue is of paramount importance in stalling democratic processes, bolstering political elites' efforts to maintain the status quo, and assuaging the citizens' grievances without any real intention to act on concerns expressed.

The very thing that must be well comprehended in this regard revolves around responsibility. Here, in due course of running national dialog, solely concerned citizens from all walks of life if possible or crucial representatives have to table discussions and national authorities should bear the primary responsibility for foreseeing, establishing, smoothing, and sponsoring the national dialogue. Although international assistance can fill important gaps, assistance providers must take great care to leave the fundamental responsibilities in the hands of national authorities and prime local actors. In some instances, perhaps, the international community might participate in the misuse of national dialogues either in offering support or approval to national dialogue that is erroneously run to buy more time for repressive administration so long as it serves their interest.

However, it doesn't mean that international actors could hardly offer important support on the follow-up to national dialogues as they can contribute a lot to the effective process via taking the form of donor commitment to provide funding and technical guidance to implement the policy priorities that emerge from a national dialogue. Be that as it may, leaving the main responsibility and decision making on the entire process of the national dialog to be in the hands of national actors is equaled by none.

In one way or another, local ownership is central for success. What matters here is having a reliable and responsible commission for this beloved country—Ethiopia. Yes, without a strong, dependable, responsible, respected national facilitator and real archetypal body a national dialogue is unlikely to come up with the anticipated change.

In sum, the Ethiopian government and all citizens who would love to have peaceful, prosperous and sovereign nation are expected to move in unison for the successful accomplishment of the far-sighted national dialog withstanding the cunning and ill-intended steps of Ethiopia-loathing emblems to have NEW ETHIOPIA.

Ethiopia and Ethiopians prevail!

**Editor's Note: The third part of this piece was published in the last Sunday's edition.**

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## Editorial

### Justice surely stands in midst of challenges

The last three years had been the most challenging moments for Ethiopia; and the times that Ethiopians had been attested by various overt and covert pressures.

Ranging from actual military action to orchestrated misinformation campaigns, several ill-conceived activities exercised against Ethiopia targeting to distort the reality on the ground, misled the global community and put the country at the crossroads.

As a result, even though it is not at the desired level, Ethiopia's internal and external enemies can twist the truth on the ground, deceive the global community; make them stand by their side and supporters of their intentions.

Luckily, nowadays, the situation in the country is improving increasingly for the reason that the diplomatic and international community has started understanding the truth about Ethiopia and Ethiopians.

Accordingly, nation's diplomatic, political, social relations and economic cooperation with other countries are growing significantly. This, of course, is the interest of Ethiopia and the issue that the country has been endeavoring for centuries- to build mutually beneficial partnerships with all countries, work together in a manner to pursue peace and stability thereby realize prosperity.

Needless to say that Ethiopia is one of the countries that basic human needs are still unfulfilled. Now as well as before, close to 60 percent of its people languishes in darkness. Owing to this, what matters most is prioritizing and lifting up its people from the abyss of abject poverty and improving their livelihood. The country is

also obstinately working to achieve this goal by setting number of directives.

In this regard, the nation, as always remain committed to join hands and work in partnership with all peace loving countries, be it with countries of the region or beyond so as to realizing its development aspirations and ambitions, in addition to sustaining peace and stability.

It is a well-known fact that over the past three years, justice has been denied to Ethiopians for the reason some global actors turned a blind eye to crimes committed by T-TPLF and the misinformation campaign launched against by some sects.

In truth, such betrayal is not the first experiences for Ethiopians. Here, mentioning Emperor Haile Selassie's appeal to the League of Nations in June 1936 can be cited as a good instance in this regard.

Because of this, Ethiopians know the feeling and pain of being betrayed and the harmful effects of injustice very well. Unless, it is just to say it, nobody understands like Ethiopians do with regard to the harmful effects of injustice.

Therefore, Ethiopia sides; and has been siding with justice hoping for the better. It also works as a reliable partner with all members who stand for justice, respect international peace and security matters and act accordingly. Regarding to this, it is also willing to discharge its due regional and international responsibilities.

However, as our forefathers had done it for centuries, under no circumstances, we accept coercion and arm-twisting or would not allow things that embarrass our country come to happen.

## Opinion

### Africa's free trade area offers promise for cities-but only if there's investment

The African Continental Free Trade Area came into operation on 1 January 2021. This is a considerable achievement. The free trade area is now the world's single largest market for goods and services, when measured by number of countries, after the World Trade Organisation. It is also the largest in terms of geographic area and population size.

If implemented as foreseen by the agreement, the free trade area will unlock significant growth for the African continent. The World Bank has estimated that by 2035, trade between African countries could expand by 81%, boosting output by US\$450 billion, raising wages by 10%, particularly benefiting women, and lifting 30 million people out of extreme poverty.

These expectations, based on research into the links between trade and economic growth, have generated excitement and political impetus around getting the free trade area working.

Less well understood, however, is the fact that for the agreement to fulfil its promises, the continent's cities are key. They are hubs for production and consumption, and will become significantly more so. But their current set-up, lacking the necessary infrastructure and services, means most of Africa's cities are not yet ready to benefit from and support the free trade area. This will require substantially greater investments in the continent's cities.

This link between urbanisation and trade is analysed in the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's recently launched publication, *Cities: Gateways for Africa's Regional Economic Integration*.

The importance of cities in unlocking the benefits of the free trade area is premised on three well

established advantages of the economic density that cities can provide.

Firstly, firms, which are the primary vehicles for producing goods for export, prefer to be in cities. There, they are closer to a larger pool of labour and to each other. This proximity enables them to specialise but still have access to inputs for their production processes from other firms. They can also learn from each other, which spurs innovation.

Secondly, cities are the physical locations from which most trade takes place. Cities provide the main transport links, including road junctions, ports and airports.

Think of the Port of Mombasa, which serves not only Kenya, but also Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. It is also difficult to think of a major city that is not served by an airport.

Cities also provide their own internal markets. Rapid urbanisation, with an estimated 900 million people set to enter African cities in the next 30 years, creates a large upcoming consumer pool. This is the third advantage of density.

Particularly in the African context, it is not only the number of consumers that will make the difference. As evidence shows, when people move to cities, their diets change as well. For example, there is a greater demand for goods with higher value addition, such as refined grains and processed foods. This is an opportunity for Africa's farmers to gain, too, as this value addition will fetch a higher price.

Substantial investments in infrastructure are needed for cities to be able to unlock the benefits

of the free trade area.

Most notable is the paucity of paved roads. Currently only an estimated 800,000km out of 2.8 million km of the continent's roads are paved. This statistic is critical because an estimated 80%-90% of African trade takes place by road. This raises the costs of African trade. For example, while it costs about US\$2,000 to ship a container from China to the port in Beira, Mozambique, it costs more than double that amount, namely US\$5000, to move it 500km further inland to Malawi.

This lack of infrastructure is a hindrance in cities too. In particular, according to the UN Economic Commission for Africa report, the cities that should drive the largest portion of trade and reap relatively larger benefits from the free trade agreement's provisions are small to medium size ones, especially those located close to borders.

These are also the cities that have had comparatively less investment to date. Without basic infrastructure, they will not attract firms – the drivers of production, value addition and export.

Whatever happens in implementing the free trade area, rapid urbanisation will continue across Africa. Consumption preferences of the continent's population will shift. If African firms can't meet these demands, imports from other regions of the world will do so.

Under this scenario, other countries will disproportionately gain from Africa's new urban consumer population.

The current political support for the free trade agreement is significant, with all but one African country having signed the deal and 43 countries

already having ratified it. Harnessing the combined effect of trade and urbanisation could positively transform the African continent's economy.

This will require not only the signing of policies but their implementation.

To date, only Egypt, Ghana and South Africa have readjusted their national regimes to implement the customs rules under the agreement. Well-managed urbanisation is still not a primary policy focus in many countries. The result is that populations are settling in cities quicker than planning and investments are happening. Rather than benefiting from well-managed density, major African cities are characterised by the proliferation of slums and congestion. On top of this, substandard infrastructure is deterring large firms.

Each of these challenges has its own host of policy reforms, programmes and actions that need to be taken. But to unleash the combined benefits of trade and urbanisation, it will be important to build on the political momentum that the free trade agreement has set in motion. This will ensure that national legislation is centred on the agreement's impacts on cities, and on the needs of cities.

Similarly, in planning for urbanisation, particularly intermediary and border towns, investments should focus on unleashing their comparative advantages in relation to the free trade agreement.

Source: *The Conversation*

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



# Business & Economy

## Bringing new insights into the agro-food industry

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Different researches indicate that Ethiopia is suitable for bumper crop production, especially *Teff* and wheat. Ethiopia has more than 70 million hectares of arable land but only cultivates 12 million hectares of land. The country embraces large arable land and water potentials that can feed more than its current population if latest agricultural technologies are utilized and appropriately promote large-scale private investments in the sector.

However, the country is prone to continuous drought and water scarcity. This Horn-of-African nation is home to numerous trans-boundary rivers, including the famous Abay River (Blue Nile).

Currently, the Ethiopian government is moving towards ensuring food and nutrition security of the ever-growing population with the available arable land through successful agronomic practices. However, the country still harvests below its potential and is repeatedly affected by the severe droughts that caused millions of displacement and hunger. Although the country has registered double-digit economic growth in the past decades, depending on the rain-fed traditional agricultural system and harvesting once a year, may not be enough to ensure food security for its large population.

Different experts recommended that changing the current household-level traditional harvesting system, introducing new agricultural technologies, establishing new agro-food industries, and inviting successful sector investors, among others are important to realize the country's journey towards ensuring food security.

To this end, the private sector involvement is vital in the efforts to fulfill the growing population demand for food through increasing supply with affordable price.

*Bekema* Cake, Cookies, and Bread Bakery Founder and Owner Kesetebrehan Araya is one of the investors that joined the agro-food industry three years before in 2019. He was born in Dessie and grew up in Addis Ababa around Sidest Kilo. He attended his primary education at Emperor Nakutoleab School. He also completed his secondary education at Teferi Mekonnen Secondary School. After joining Addis Ababa University, he obtained an Advanced Diploma in Building Engineering from the College of Architecture in 1999.

After that, he was employed as a technical assistant lecturer at the same university and studied civil engineering in the evening educational program, and received his bachelor's degree in 2005. After working as a teacher at Addis Ababa University for 3 years, he worked with French contractors



for 3 and half years in Gefersa Dam Project.

Moreover, he has been working for various public and private companies in Ethiopia and abroad. He moved to Nigeria and worked in a company known as Salini for a few months and joined another Nigerian road construction company called Setraco Construction, where he worked for seven years.

Kesetebrehan has been dreaming to open his own business with his wife Etsegenet Birhanu. Then, he come back to Ethiopia and decided to start a furniture business. However, the furniture business idea failed due to the investment land problem. During this time, he tried other businesses and finally joined the bread bakery in 2019.

Kesetebrehan and his wife bought the bread machines they needed and imported from Turkey. In February 2019, they opened a state-of-the-art cake, cookies, and bread bakery called *Bekema* in Addis Ababa around Shola market area with an initial capital of 3 million Birr and 30 employees.

Considering the lower local experience in bread making, the company hired a Syrian professional bread baker who could do the whole job and teach the process to local employees. Then the company started to provide small-sized loaves of bread to the community with 2 Birr and 50 cents price. The price of single bread is now 5 Birr which is more affordable compared to other bakeries in the city. The company said it will review the price of bread if it harvests wheat itself and the price of other bread inputs such as oil and fuel is settled.

In the process, the company continues to produce and supply different sizes of bread, cookies, and cakes. Local employees also become competent with the baking process and substituted the Syrian man after a few months.

Currently, *Bekema* Bakery expands its branch into four locations in Megenagna,

annual cake, cookies, and bread sales is said to have reached 78 million Birr from 42 million Birr in the past year.

The bakery is 24/7 operational and strives to meet the Addis Ababa city resident's demand. Currently, it has the capacity to produce more than 40,000 small-sized loaves of bread and 2,000 *Enjera* per day using its four branches. The company also created more than 140 permanent jobs for youths and women in various fields.

Kesetebrehan said that the company uses high-quality flour for its products and takes great care to maintain quality so as to ensure customer satisfaction. To produce the products, the company uses two bread machines and one cake machine bought and imported with an estimated cost of 7.5 million Birr from abroad.

According to Kesetebrehan, the company plans to increase the current bread production through entering to the agricultural sector investments and solve the problem of wheat supply which is the main input for bread production.

"Doing this will enable the company to solve the bread input problem and promote its production. More importantly, the company gives more priority to deliver quality bread with affordable price through increasing the number of branches and manpower," he said.

Regarding the challenges and opportunities in the bakery sector, the biggest problem of the sector is lack of wheat in the country. Since the bakery input is directly related to agriculture it is possible to increase the supply of wheat through undertaking large-scale agricultural mechanizations in the country.

The ongoing summer wheat production in various parts of Ethiopia is progressing well and expected to fulfill the country's growing demand for wheat. The summer wheat cultivation undertaking in the lowlands of Afar, Somalia, Oromia and other states is bearing fruits.

Although the government has started to increase the supply of wheat and to reduce the import there is still a lot to be done. It is important to replace other ingredients of oil, yeast and sugar, which are mostly imported from abroad to produce bread.

Accordingly, expanding the availability of wheat and other bread inputs will have a significant contribution to supply bread into the market with affordable price.

Currently, the company is communicating with expatriate partners from India to launch and harvest its wheat inputs in the next two years. It will also continue to fulfill its social responsibilities through supporting the needy.

***Bekema utilizes more than 600 quintals of wheat per month and more than 7,200 quintals of wheat per year.***



two shops in Sholla, and in Kasanchis. The company has finalized preparations to open its 6th branch in Addis Ababa. It also plans to reach its bread products to regional states outside of Addis Ababa in the coming years.

*Bekema* utilizes more than 600 quintals of wheat per month and more than 7,200 quintals of wheat per year.

After joining the market, the company's annual income has been growing. The

# Art & Culture

## The culture of hard work in Gurage communities-A model to emulate

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

Foreign writers often point at what they call the “paradoxes of Ethiopia’s development and underdevelopment” by pointing at the contrasts between the abundant natural resources the country is naturally endowed with and the inability of its people to turn these resources into the motors of economic development for the benefit of all. A case in point was the many famines that have visited Ethiopia in the past in the middle lush vegetations, overflowing rivers and green landscapes. Famines caused by natural calamities such as droughts, floods, wars and other natural and man-made crises are understandable. It however difficult to understand are the famines that occurred in the midst of natural abundance.

Many sociologists and anthropologists converge on the causes of “poverty in the middle of plenty”. Some of the researchers point at the income inequalities and or a disproportionate allocations of resources to some areas as potential causes for famine and poverty in general. Others see a very weak work culture or work ethics as a possible cause of poverty among communities that live in naturally abundant communities that often get what they want relatively easily and lose the incentive to work harder.

This view is corroborated at the global level by the success of some countries that are resource-deprived but hard working and imaginative enough to turn the negatives into pluses and transform their communities into wealthier ones. The classic example of this is Japan which is considered generally “resource-poor” in mineral raw materials in particular but has developed its industrial base by importing minerals from other countries while the exporting nations remained as poor as they were since the creation of the world. How Japan developed is a huge topic in its own rights and requires volumes of reading to grasp the essence of its past dilemma and present wealth.

To go back to the issue of Ethiopia’s development paradoxes, we can perhaps say that poor work ethics is and was always the cause of poverty or food shortages in Ethiopia. There are also other political, economic, social and cultural factors behind high levels of poverty and food crisis among the other communities of Ethiopia such as those living in the northern parts of the country where land shortages and low productivity combined with ecological crises has led to catastrophic famines in the past. However the Gurage people have rarely witnessed such large scale famine crises that led to massive human displacements or ecological breakdowns.

The Gurage are a Semitic-speaking ethnic group inhabiting Ethiopia. They

inhabit the Gurage Zone, a fertile, semi-mountainous region in central Ethiopia, about 125 kilometers southwest of Addis Ababa, bordering the Awash River in the north, the Gibe River, a tributary of the Omo River, to the southwest, and Hora-Dambal in the east. According to the 2007 Ethiopian national census the Gurage can also be found in large numbers in Addis Ababa, Oromia, Dire Dawa, Harari, Somali, Amhara, Gambela and Tigray Regions. Since the last national census is relatively old, it is assumed that the Gurage are now present in all of Ethiopia’s regions and towns in greater numbers and are engaged in various activities the chief one being small and large-scale trading.

The Gurage are first and foremost very able, creative, resilient and smart business people. However this is true for Gurage who leave their native villages and migrate to other areas. Those who stay behind in the villages are no less enterprising and hard working. In fact, the migrating Gurage inherit the culture of hard work from their parents and grandparents who built those village communities.

Encyclopedia Encarta says that “According to the historian Paul B. Henze, The Gurage origin is explained by traditions of a military expedition to the south during the last years of the Kingdom of Aksum, which left military colonies that eventually became isolated from both northern Ethiopia and each other” This is not however the whole explanation of the origins of the Gurage people. Many historians and anthropologists have written extensively about it.

Since our focus here is on Gurage culture, we can start by saying that “The Gurage are mainly Christian—members largely of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church—and Muslim. Settled agriculturalists, the Gurage centre their lives on the cultivation of their staple crop, the Ethiopian, or false, banana (*Ensete ventricosum*), prized not for its “false” (or inedible) fruit but for its roots.”

According to William A. Schack’s book entitled, “The Gurage, a People of the Enset Culture” “The Gurage socio-ecological production landscape in Ethiopia is characterized by a mosaic of different ecosystem types such as forests, home garden agroforestry system, cereal crops, grasslands, woodlots, wetlands, surface water, and roads, as well as human settlements. The Gurage people are a group in Ethiopia that formed village settlements based on the ecological conditions linked to Jefoure roads and Enset culture.”

Schack further noted that, “They assimilated with the local people and developed diverse

tribes and languages/dialects. Although the Gurage people adopt various languages/dialects and religions, they share a similar set of artifacts, technologies, modes of production, house building designs, settlement patterns, and economic and social organization”. They adapted Enset crop cultivation mechanisms, producing the root crop in abundance as an indigenous staple/co-staple harvest in the region”

Nevertheless, the availability of fertile soil and Enset may not fully explain the success of the Gurage people in warding off major famines or food shortages. The Gurage, as they are known throughout Ethiopia, are hardworking people and women in particular play a leading role in the cultivation and preparation of the crop. This is basically why food crisis is something alien to the people although demographic explosion of recent years has contributed to pressure on the land and decline in average production of the food crop.

As we said above the Gurage are migrant people dispersed throughout Ethiopia in search of better opportunities. Addis Ababa is particularly the mainstay of the Gurage who congregate around big markets such as the historic Mercato, dubbed the “biggest open-air market in Africa.” Tens of thousands of people animate the market every day and the presence and importance of the Gurage for the capital’s economy can be seen during religious holidays when the people go back en masse to their native villages, leaving behind a city deprived of its vibrancy and animation. Addis Ababa regains its vitality once the Gurage return from their villages after enjoy holidays of abundance and happiness.

It may be difficult for other communities to emulate the culture and lifestyles of the Gurage but it is not impossible to spread the cultivation Enset as a drought resistant crop that could be cultivated in other famine-prone parts of the country. One may not also imitate the work ethics of the Gurage because it is rooted in their culture and handed over from generation to generation. A Gurage boy usually leaves his native village early in his life and travels near and far to make a living, starting from shoe shining and going up the ladder of success to become an entrepreneur and then an investor and house builder or hotel manager. The biographies of many Gurage people are filled with amazing stories of success through hard work. Their examples are also inspiring other people from different communities to work harder and achieve more. This is of course a culture worth emulating throughout Ethiopia because it can serve as one of the basis of a truly and genuinely home-based development model.

***The Gurage are first and foremost very able, creative, resilient and smart business people. However this is true for Gurage who leave their native villages and migrate to other areas***



# Global Affairs

## Exploiting existing potentials crucial to advancing AfCFTA

BY YOHANES JEMANEH

Since it was launched on July 7, 2019 at the 12<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Summit of the African Union (AU), the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) has seen gradual progress. The AfCFTA was intended to establish a single market for goods, and services, facilitated by the movement of persons to deepen the economic integration of the African continent. The agreement is also to facilitate sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development.

After all, the AfCFTA came into effect in January 2021. However, despite the wide expectation to have a huge significance for the improvement of African economies, the free trade area agreement has not been advancing well due to various reasons mainly related to legal limitations and poor infrastructural facilities.

Except for Eritrea, all African countries have signed the AfCFTA. Currently the countries are discussing legal frameworks that deal with the source of product, said Tadesse Mulugeta from Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration.

The next dialogue will be on charting export products with their tariffs. The continental free trade agreement is an important stride to improving the quality and market value of local products in the African market that is intended to serve more than one billion people.

Currently, various countries are working on the implementation of the continental free trade area through inking agreements and facilitating infrastructures. These efforts are being made either in a bilateral or multilateral cooperation between nations. On 30 June 2022, the Finance Ministerial meeting of the Horn of Africa (HoA) Initiative adopted Regional Trade Facilitation Roadmap, as a framework of action for strengthening trade facilitation in the HoA region.

This came out of the Finance Ministers' meeting held through video conferencing on June 30, 2022, to review the status of project preparation and implementation under the Initiative. They discuss policy actions to promote regional integration and look ahead at the priorities for the coming period. The meeting further directed that the roadmap be accorded top priority to effectively serve as a guiding framework for comprehensive regional trade facilitation reforms over a three-year period.

The meeting was attended by Ministers of Finance and Trade of Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti, Somalia, and South Sudan along with high-level representatives of partners including the World Bank, EU, AfDB, and the IGAD.

At the conference, Ethiopia called on partners to support the implementation of the HoAI Regional Trade Facilitation roadmap. The country also demonstrated



# AfCFTA

readiness to play its part in the application of the Initiative. Finance Minister of Trade and Regional Integration Kassahun Gofe expressed commitment to implementing the roadmap by employing the necessary governance and consultation mechanism.

The Horn of Africa Initiative was launched at the end of 2019 by Horn of Africa countries, to deepen their cooperation and integration to deliver development results for the sub-region through the support of the African Development Bank, World Bank, and European Union by focusing on four pillars. Among the pillars of the HoAI, fostering trade and economic integration is one.

This Initiative has an immense role to hasten the implementation of the AfCFTA if the countries utilize its opportunity to accelerate economic cooperation and trade. Therefore, such regional trade cooperation ought to be developed more to assist the continental free trade agreement that would enable the nations to secure better income by providing plenty of their products to a continent-wide market.

Recently, Ethiopia also announced its pilot project of creating a free trade zone in Dire Dawa city. As announced by the Ministry of Transport and Logistics, the first free trade zone will be established in Dire Dawa which will be followed by other cities and towns in various parts of the country.

Transport and Logistics Minister Dagmawit Moges said that Dire Dawa was chosen as the first destination of a free trade zone taking into account the city's proximity to Ethiopia's major outlet, the Port of Djibouti. She also mentioned that the task of creating free trade zone incorporates various partners such as the Ethiopian Maritime Affairs Authority, Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Service Enterprise, Custom Commission, Ethiopian Airlines and other stakeholders.

For Dagmawit, Ethiopia needs to utilize its potential to be the major trade, investment, industrialization and logistics hub in the Horn of Africa. Free trade zone prioritizing areas including trade, comprehensive logistics service, export processing zone and export facilitation. "It facilitates the nation's internal trade as well as the neighboring countries import-export corridor," she said.

The establishment of a free trade zone will help the products to enter into Ethiopia

within a short period of time, reduce spoilage, ensure the overall development of the country and play a paramount role to increase the country's participation in international trade, Dagmawit explained.

A detailed work plan has been prepared and discussions were held to realize the free trade area stating that the areas of focus in Dire Dawa free trade area are general trade activities, comprehensive logistics services and import-export of the manufacturing sector.

The establishment of the free trade zone is crucial to reduce cost and time, improve urbanization and industrialization along the corridor. "It is vital to economic boost to the corridor and support economic development of the nation," believed Ethiopian Maritime Affairs Authority Managing Director Yehualashet Jemere (Eng.).

Ethiopian Airlines, one of the partners in the establishment of the free trade area, is believed to play its role in hastening the trading process. Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mesfin Tassew said Ethiopian Airlines Group has a wealth of experience in cargo and logistics. Mesfin added that it will play a critical role to the free trade areas urging the need to strengthen and expand the free trade areas benchmarking best experiences of successful countries. In addition to Dire Dawa, other towns identified for future establishment of free trade zones Modjo, Adama, Moyale, Kombolcha, Bahir Dar and Hawassa.

Cities are hubs for production and consumption. They will become significantly important to advance market with value chains. But their current set-up, lacking the necessary infrastructure and services in which most of Africa's cities are not ready to benefit from and support the AfCFTA. This will require substantially greater investments in the continent's cities.

The importance of cities in unlocking the benefits of the free trade area is premised based on the well-established advantages of having firms that are primary vehicles for producing goods for export. This proximity enables firms to specialize and add value. Cities are also spots in which most trade takes place. Therefore, efforts to establish free trade areas in cities as Ethiopia did, need to be strengthened and expanded by other African nations to enhance continental

trade and pave the way for the effectiveness of the AfCFTA.

Research is being conducted to identify bottlenecks to trade and issues preventing the easy movement of goods across the continent. Countries must improve their infrastructural facilities and trading processes to hasten the implementation of the continental free trade area. Moreover, the nations need to focus on continental trade equal to or more than their bilateral trade exchange.

"For the AfCFTA to work, we don't want to just understand what countries need to do to improve their business environment, but what they need to do at a cross-border level," said Vera Songwe, Secretary General of the ECA and UN Under-Secretary General.

The Regional Economic Communities had done "a fantastic job" in opening up trade. However, there are still challenges. For the Secretary-General, it is important to find out what hampers trade and creates blockages at borders as well as how the situation could be properly monitored.

ECA research shows the opportunity offered by the free trade area, assuming its successful implementation by 2030. Increasing the road network will better connect areas of production and consumption. Currently, Africa's road network is about 2.8 million kilometers.

A study conducted by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization indicated that the top 1 percent of trading firms in Africa account for over 75 percent of the total value of exports. Given this fact, governments and business associations should form representational groups to allow these larger companies to address the challenges that they confront in cross-border trade. In this way, they could form a powerful body to pressure for full implementation of the AfCFTA, much as larger companies did in the creation of the European Single Market in the 1980s and 1990s.

The Agenda 2063 flagship initiative of AfCFTA is a continental geographic zone where goods and services move among member states of the AU with no restrictions. The AfCFTA aims to boost intra-African trade by providing a comprehensive and mutually beneficial trade agreement among the member states, covering trade in goods, services, investment, intellectual property rights and competition policy. Other continental frameworks include Boosting Intra African Trade (BIAT) which aims to deepen Africa's market integration and significantly increase the volume of trade that African countries undertake amongst themselves from the current levels of about 13 percent to 25 percent or more within the next decade.



# Law & Politics

## Blowing the lid off criminal enterprise's conspiracy on humanitarian assistance

BY ADDISALEM MUALT

In the wake of the federal government's unwavering commitment, dedication, and hard work, humanitarian assistance has been persistently satisfactorily entering the Tigray state. Despite confrontations posed by the criminal enterprise in several instances, the incumbent has been putting its best foot forward intending to attain the envisioned target and end hunger at the earliest possible juncture.

On the basis thereof, the federal government has been receiving a pat on the back from every walk of life. Notwithstanding the fact that the government has been burning the candle at both ends to smooth the progress of humanitarian assistance in the Tigray state, the terrorist TPLF group has continued playing the victim card and mystifying the international community with fictitious stories.

Since the onset of the declaration of a humanitarian truce by the government, quite a lot of humanitarian organizations have been sending the much-needed humanitarian assistance to the Tigray state by means of road and air transportation.

In spite of the fact that the much-needed food deliveries have been reaching the people of Tigray by convoys of trucks carrying humanitarian help and public health services, the group has sustained playing a part in a smear campaign against the government by spreading cooked-up stories that do not reflect the unvarnished truth surfacing on a national scale.

Apart from playing the victim card in multiple instances for the love of political gains, the terrorist TPLF group has been turning the lives of noncombatants residing in the Tigray state into a living hell. Despite the group's provocations, the incumbent has been going to the ends of the earth to give peace a chance.

Rather than putting an efficient solution that can get to the bottom of the problem in the shortest possible time, the criminal enterprise has been bending over backwards to distract food deliveries and place the blame at the incumbent's door.

Though noncombatants residing in the Tigray state have been grappling with humanitarian disasters, the group has been persistently rubbing salt in the wound by purchasing armaments and bracing itself for another round of war in the northern part of the country.

As things stand at present, as the broader international community has realized the government's positive action measures that would help reverse the humanitarian catastrophe confronting the people of Tigray, all and sundry have embarked on lauding the successful efforts of the former.

In times gone by as the evil deeds of the criminal enterprise's nefarious deeds has no borders, civilians in the northern part of the country have been struggling with a huge number of life challenges. The deceitful group had been distracting food aids to feed



its fighters while others suffering from hunger and shortage of food.

In the same way, the criminal enterprise has been tarnishing the country's image as if the government has been denying access to humanitarian aid and closing humanitarian corridors.

Regardless of the terrorist TPLF effort to smudge the image of the country under the veil of humanitarian assistance, the international community has been praising the praiseworthy work of the incumbent for allowing unfettered access to humanitarian assistance.

Albeit the whole thing on the topic of humanitarian assistance is moving in the right direction in the northern part of the country, international donor originations should increase humanitarian assistance on the grounds that the number of civilians that need urgent assistance has been on the rise time and again.

In the same manner, the international community should stand by the side of the federal government that has been moving heaven and earth to bring about lasting peace in the northern part of the country. Above and beyond, the international community should urge the terrorist TPLF group to come to the negotiating table placing emphasis on respecting the fundamental national interest and constitutional order.

Ethiopian ambassador to the US, Seleshi Bekele met recently with Ambassador Michael Hammer, the United States Special Envoy to the Horn of Africa.

The two exchanged ideas on the current developments in Ethiopia such as humanitarian supply to conflict and drought-affected areas in various parts of Ethiopia, the National Dialogue, the AU-led peace-building process, and recent updates regarding the trilateral negotiations over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, as well as AGOA exclusion of Ethiopia, HR6600, and S3199 Bills.

While mentioning the issue of humanitarian access, Ambassador Seleshi indicated the government's continued commitment and cooperation with partners in creating unhindered delivery of support in the conflict and drought-affected areas.

US Special Envoy Michael Hammer expressed his appreciation for the tremendous

improvements demonstrated by the Ethiopian government in facilitating timely and unfettered humanitarian flow.

He also reiterates that the US government recognizes the positive and encouraging efforts being taken by the government of Ethiopia.

On another note, Ambassador Seleshi briefed Hammer on the status of the AU-led peace initiatives mentioning the government's unwavering commitment to install lasting peace and stability in the country.

He also said that despite the all-around efforts by the government to give peace a chance adding that equal commitment is paramount by other parties to bring sustainable peace.

"Hammer on his part expressed the USA's readiness to support the Ethiopian people and see the peace process successful."

By the same token, despite the terrorist TPLF group has been continuously getting itself involved in a smear campaign against the federal government of Ethiopia on the topic of humanitarian assistance, the international community has been lauding for the commendable job.

Italian Journalist Francesca Ronchin has confirmed that the World Food Program (WFP) has been sending humanitarian aid to the Tigray state.

The Journalist met with some drivers hailing from Tigray at Semera aid compound, Afar state. The driver told her that there has never been a blockade on aid. The WFP also said: "Every day we leave and bring humanitarian aid to Mekelle".

However, the mouthpiece of the terrorist group, Getachew Reda, and WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom have been always lying about humanitarian aid to Tigray and falsely accusing the WFP and the government of Ethiopia.

It should be borne in mind that WFP has recently stated that humanitarian supplies have been flowing into Tigray since the truce came to effect and it has delivered food that is enough to feed 5.9 million people per month.

OCHA Ethiopia weekly reported that the highest number of trucks have arrived in Mekelle in June since July 2021 with 12 convoys totaling 2,525 trucks including 10 fuel tankers.

This represents 107,950 MT of humanitarian cargo on behalf of 26 partners, and 437,158 liters of fuel, as to the report.

In Tigray state, since the resumption of the humanitarian convoy movement from 1 April 1 to July 19, 4,308 trucks have arrived in Mekelle via Afar through 30 humanitarian convoys including food, water, sanitation, hygiene, agriculture, and 1,081,155 liters of fuel.

On 17 July, the first consignment of 262 MT will benefit at least 145,000 farming households and on 19 July the second consignment of 1,990 MT of fertilizer arrived in Mekelle. These are part of about 7,275 MT of fertilizer already dispatched to Afar to be transported to Tigray.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), announced nearly 55 million USD in additional food-security assistance to Ethiopia.

According to a press release sent to The Ethiopian Herald lately, Ethiopia is currently experiencing increased food insecurity due to higher food and fertilizer prices. USAID will utilize this new funding to help Ethiopians overcome the current food crisis and to build further resilience to prevent and respond to food-related shocks in the future.

The release further stated that this new investment in the people of Ethiopia is part of President Joe Biden's pledge—made in late June during the G7 Leaders' Summit in Germany—to provide 2.76 billion USD in additional U.S. government resources to protect the world's most vulnerable populations from the escalating global food security crisis.

It was learnt that in Ethiopia, USAID would use this new funding to reach over two million Ethiopians most affected by the Ukraine crisis. This population includes farmers whose water and supply systems were destroyed by the conflict in northern Ethiopia.

Accordingly, USAID would help boost Ethiopia's current food production supply by rebuilding water supply systems, granting agribusiness loans, training farmers' unions, bolstering seed and fertilizer distribution networks, and helping farmers purchase vital farming equipment.



# Planet Earth

## Leaders accomplishing environmental feats in the month of “July”

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

July or Hāmīlē is unique for Ethiopians. The month pushes the government, and the people either as individuals, or communities to plan and do a lot. Schools are closed, and students do various activities such as helping their parents, attending study classes, visiting relatives, and so on.

The farmers also farm their land since Hamile is the rainy season for Ethiopia. Besides, the government plans since it is the beginning of the Ethiopian fiscal year. The fiscal year is one of the important parts of the calendar in time management.

Apart from implementing government plans and social gatherings, Hamile is currently known for greenery work and voluntary services. Following the post-2018 political reform of the country, Ethiopia has intensified its green legacy work. When July/Hamile comes both the people and the government plan to plant tree seedlings and renew old houses for the people who have no financial capacity to do it.

Accordingly, planting tree seedlings, and management, and forest management, as well as voluntary services, in this Hamile, have become a public agenda. The government is a key factor that plays

an imperative role to lead, mobilize the general public, and supply with necessary inputs while the people regardless of age, educational background, and so on participate in various ways.

Hence, the efforts of the country are could be taken as the most exemplary forest sector development since Ethiopians plant many tree seedlings on Hamile/ July. For this, the leaders of Ethiopia and Regionals States presidents are using this month to take advantage of it. They lunch various Ethiopian winter program activities including planting tree seedlings.

For instance, the Head of Government of Amhara Region Dr. Yelikal Kefale, and the Head of Government of Benishangul Region Ashadli Hassan have planted tree seedlings in the border area of the two regions.

In this planting tree seedlings program, 60500 hectares of land have been covered by the seedling planting program in the Amhara region and more than 5 million people have participated. The region has planted more than 13.4 million fruits and vegetables.

In the Oromia region, 400 million saplings are being planted overnight. The program

was launched by the Governor of the Oromia Region Shemels Abdisa, Minister of Agriculture Omar Hussain, and senior leaders of the region. In 2014, it is planned to plant 4.3 billion saplings in the Oromia Region as part of the Green Legacy Program.

Harari Regional State Deputy Governor and Head of the Agriculture Bureau Misra Abdullah said this year’s Green Legacy program creates a great potential to increase the fruit productivity of the region. Over 70 percent of the 3.2 million seedlings planted in the region, this year, are fruit saplings.

She pointed out that attention has been given to fruit cultivation based on the needs of the local farmers, and about 100,000 improved varieties of avocados have been hybridized. Apart from ensuring the farmers’ food security, the plantations will also benefit the farmers.

Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute Director Dr. Meles Mario in his part recalled that before the implementation of the green legacy initiatives, the institute used to plant more than one million tree seedlings every year when July comes. Nevertheless, the launching of the green legacy initiative is a good move to make double its efforts.

Accordingly, the institute is using this “July” opportunity to support the sector even after the implementation of the green initiative was started as a movement in the country.

This year, for the implementation of the 4th round of the Green Legacy Program, more than 2 million indigenous tree seedlings have been prepared and entered into the implementation phase. This helps the institute to preserve indigenous plants, he added. Therefore, July is a very important season for the institution to plant tree seedlings which are important for food, health, ecosystem, and so on.

Indeed, it seems the public understood and has taken the July activities across the nation. Now the narration is different, planting tree seedlings is seen as an integral part of the economic development of Ethiopia. Almost all Regional states and industries assigned part of their land, prepared tree seedlings, and waited for July/Hamile to plant them. Today the public including mothers, fathers, children, businessmen, and so on speak about the value of planting tree seedlings in the same language. Hence, the government’s top to lower leaders should lead and manage properly to have July’s intended result.



## Published Weekly in Collaboration with Haramaya University

### “Grand challenge research projects on top of Haramaya University’s ten years strategic plan”

- Esubalew Tsehay-HU Planning, M&E Director

BY HAFTU GEBREZGABIHER

From a general perspective, HU has been able to set a plan that was really participatory in its approach. Thus, in our ten years strategic plan, as a university, due focus has been given to the areas in which the country has sorted out. It can be said that the ten years plan of Haramaya University can be taken as worthwhile, says Esubalew Tsehay, the University’s Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating Director.

As the fact that Haramaya University is differentiated as agricultural university from its inception, therefore the focus will be given to support the agricultural transformation efforts at the national level. This is the university’s focus to show as distinct competence in the coming ten years in its post graduate teaching, research and community services. The second focus area is health. Haramaya University is excelling in the health sector as well.

The Director pointed out why Haramaya University chose these two areas of focus for the coming ten years is that first agriculture is still the sector which lags behind transformation. Hence, to transform the agriculture sector, significant amount of human resources engagement and budget will

go accordingly. The agriculture sector should have to support the foreign trade and create ample employment. To this end, HU has been doing to ensure that the agriculture sector is still backbone of the economy in many ways.

“In relation to this, our university is engaged in producing qualified human capital and research outputs in order to support national efforts so that the problems of the society get solved.”

The other focus is in the teaching-learning process. It has been identified that students have competency and behavioral change limitations. Thus, the activities in our ten years journey will be centering on solving these two identified problems in order to improve competency and skill of the students and help the national educational efforts in producing qualified human capital to transform the country in all sectors. This will be geared at improving the analytical thinking, skill and competency of our students. Here, the HU is set to implement extra-curricular methods to improve the teaching methodology, assessment and evaluations process, Esubalew adds.

Regarding research, due emphasis will be given to integrated research approach to solving the grand challenges in Ethiopia. The university will be giving attention to high skill and grand research approaches to produce



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problem solving and high quality findings that can solve multidimensional challenges.

On top of the plan, the focus will be targeted at grand challenge research projects in order to solve multidisciplinary challenges. The research grants will be grand and the findings will be multidimensional problem solving.

As far as the participation aspect is concerned, the director states that the strategic plan was set after several forums at university level, national level and at the community level. The feedback from the ministry of education, the university community and the neighboring regional states are taken in to consideration.

Esubalew adds: What makes the research projects grand is that our research projects will have four years term. In terms of budget, there will be Birr a million for a single year.

That means Birr four million is allocated for the grand challenge research project. The government focus will also be expected to go high accordingly because Haramaya University is differentiated as Research University.

In addition to the university’s budget, “we are also working to push for increased budget from the government side and from external grants. There are only ten grand challenges research projects at the pipeline. This seems insignificant in terms of number, but we are trying to create huge impact from the results.”

There are also some curriculum related challenges that are contributing to the competence related and behavioral problems in our students, Esubalew sorted out adding that these could be resulted from curriculum. Our curriculums are not geared at building the emotional, social and cultural intelligence. There had been several changes in this regard in the under graduate and post graduate levels.

The other is that our research teaching methodology is not supported by technology. There other thing that will be given emphasis in doing so is that utilization of endogenous knowledge. We will not be teaching the community, we will also be able to learn from the community as well.