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Nat'l Dialogue last resort for Ethiopia's future: Commission

BY ABDUREZAK MOHAMMED

ADDIS ABABA – Conducting an inclusive National Dialogue is crucial to bringing a lasting solution to the serious challenges that Ethiopia has been encountering so far, so said the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC).

One of the Commissioners of ENDC Yonas Adaye (PhD) told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the Commission will set conducive conditions for all Ethiopians, including those are armed, to participate in the National Dialogue without any discrimination because of their opinion as such dialogue is the last resort to get Ethiopia out from the current predicament.

Yonas asked everybody who claims to have a question to prepare them for the National Dialogue.

The Commissioner further said: "All Ethiopians must play their part in the first National Dialogue in our nation's history, as we have taken the lesson that the country's problems cannot be solved by war or other related alternatives." If trust is built between the people and the



Photo: Hadush Abreha

Commission and they work together for the successful completion of the National Dialogue, the result will undoubtedly be

fruitful, as to him.

The commissioners are traveling to different

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Activist urges Tigray Diaspora to stay away from T-TPLF

BY MENGESHA AMARE

ADDIS ABABA - Members of Tigray Diaspora have to prioritize the issue of Tigray people and stretch helping hands to soothe the severe situation from which the latter have been suffering instead of listening to T-TPLF's misleading propaganda, so stated an activist.

Speaking with The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), ethnic Tigray activist Nathnael Asmelash said that it is shame on some members of Tigray Diaspora as they organized festival renting costly convention centers at the time when numerous people

in the state are highly suffering from hunger, lack of medicine and other basic necessities.

He said: "If Tigray Diaspora are vigorously working for sake of Tigray people thinking out of the box, they will be committed enough to lift all state people from the grip of poverty and severe situation they find themselves in. However, the majority of the Tigray Diaspora are thoroughly supporting T-TPLF, not the general public in the state."

He further stated that organizing festivals and irrelevant gatherings do have no significance in benefiting the mass apart from adjusting conditions for expounding

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T-TPLF undermines proposed peace talks

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA – Terrorist-TPLF is using the proposed peace talks with the Ethiopian government as time-buying via playing the victim as usual apart from encouraging by the action of the envoys and ambassadors who were allowed to a round trip to Mekelle.

National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister Ambassador Redwan Hussien tweeted on Thursday that the team traveled to Mekelle were failed to press for unequivocal commitment for peace talks, rather indulging in appeasement and

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AUPSC welcomes Obasanjo's briefing on Ethiopia

BY ABDUREZAK MOHAMMED

ADDIS ABABA – The African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) welcomed the briefing of African Union's High Representative Olusegun Obasanjo on recent developments in Ethiopia, his efforts and the gains made toward a negotiated peace.

In a twitter message, the Council disclosed

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News

Confederation urges gov't to contain high cost of living for employees

• Organizes about 300 workers unions in three years' time

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - The Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU) urged the government to device a range of mechanisms to contain the prevalence of high cost of living.

Presenting three-year performance report of CETU at the opening of the 19th general assembly of the confederation yesterday, President of the Confederation Kassahun Follo stated that the confederation is exerting utmost effort to protect the safety, rights of various workers of private companies as well as that of public entities and to reply to their questions.

He said: "The confederation organized about 300 workers unions over the last three years and prepared five-year strategic plan (2014-2018 E.C) to undertake various tasks related to workers rights protection across



Photo: Eyob Teferi

the nation."

The confederation is working in 9 federations and 8 branch offices in the nation to secure all the government and private company's workers safety, right and fair salary gain across the country.

He further said that as forced child labor and illegal human trafficking have caused harm and severe hazards, the government and international bodies should take real actions to reduce such appalling steps in the country.

He urged the government and private companies to take viable measures to reverse the skyrocketing trend of high of living among citizens.

On the other hand, the confederation urged the government to bring workable solution to the challenges from which employees especially with low wage are suffering and even some workers are unable to make ends meet.

"The confederation has created awareness to employer organizations about employee right and benefit by discussing crucial issues and reached agreement to fulfill the workers' demand," he added.

Moreover, the confederation's three-year audit and finance report was presented to unions members, and workers compensation and fair salary dispute is being under court proceedings and is believed to get answer, he said.

Center graduates 12 autism children

BY TAMERU REGASA

ADDIS ABABA - Nia Foundation Joy Autism Center graduated 12 children and the Youth living with autism and facilitated jobs for the first time in the history of such citizens in Ethiopia yesterday.

Speaking at the event, CEO of the center, Elleni Dantew said that the center has been playing a great role in changing attitude of community towards people living with autism through creating awareness among the society and undertaking different doable means to help the latter have behavioral change themselves.

She stressed that the center has been providing various awareness creation for millions of people in different forms via

various techniques over the last two decades. Hence, currently, dozens of families who have children living with autism have got their children registered to enable help them get the service from the center.

She underscored that the 12 graduated children will be hired in the center to provide different services through being assigned at different positions.

She noted that the center used to undertake different activities on the graduated children to make them ready to do their works well.

Appreciating the effort of government to support the goal of the center, she said that it has provided the center with 5,000 meter square acre of land to construct a big Center



of Excellency for autism.

She called on all stakeholders to incorporate

people living with autism into the world of work.

Companies come up with proposal allowing Code-2 taxi service

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA - Two ride-hailing companies, ZayRide and WEZ announced that they have submitted proposal requesting government to allow them provide the public with Code-2 taxi transport service.

Discussing ideas with the Ministry of Innovation yesterday, the two companies presented their proposal to the Ministry and requested for support to boost digital transport service, which the Ministry of Innovation has also pledged to support so.

Photo: Gebabo Gebre



Briefing the proposal, ZayRide Founder and CEO, Habtamu Tadesse said the demand of transportation service in Addis Ababa is soaring though 100-200 thousand cars are actively functioning right now.

"The price of gas is sharply growing. The cost of living is also growing in parallel.

Accordingly, transport service is becoming one of mind-boggling issues in the capital. For this reason, we would like to recommend the government to allow all Code-2 cars to deliver taxi service so as to make the price of transportation relatively fine," he added.

Founder and CEO of WEZ taxi, Nardos

Addis on his part said that the government should learn from foreign experiences. The rise of service providers has direct impact on addressing the growing transportation demand in the capital.

He said: "As most of automobiles are being used to transport only drivers, we need to

make dual purpose system by certifying those automobiles to deliver taxi service as much as possible."

State Minister of Innovation, Huria Ali also said that the government will consider recommendations coming from private and public sectors.

News

Ethiopia's coffee export to China upsurges: Further Africa

• China treks from 33rd to 8th major importer of Ethiopian coffee at present

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopian Coffee export level to China has reinvigorated and the country has exported 5,879.34 tons of coffee to China in the first ten months of 2021/22 fiscal year alone to earn 30.4 million USD, so stated Further Africa.

Further Africa Website noted that China expects coffee import from Ethiopia to rank among the top ten destinations for Ethiopian coffee export among East Asian nations.

As to the information gained from Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority, diversification of markets for coffee export, particularly in new rising Asian markets, was among the major factor that helps the Coffee export bring in record annual revenue in the 2021/22 fiscal year.

The website further stated that Ethiopia has exported 5,879.34 tons of coffee to China in the first ten months of 2021/22 fiscal year alone and earned 30.4 million USD. Comparing with the past similar period, the country has registered 31 percent of growth. The increase has made China, which ranked 33rd in the previous fiscal year, the 8th major importer of Ethiopian coffee at present.

By the same token, "China was one main destination for Ethiopian Coffee," wrote



Ethiopian Coffee

Wu Peng, Director-General of the African Affairs Department at the Chinese Foreign Ministry, on twitter last week. He has also added that China's coffee imports from Ethiopia grew by 196 percent in 2021.

The Director-General said: "I was glad to know that Ethiopia's coffee production is

expected to flourish with high records in the coming harvest season and Ethiopian coffee was also 'highly appreciated by Chinese people.'

Ethiopia, which is known as the origin of Arabica coffee, is recognized worldwide for its rich coffee quality and variety of

flavors as well as making the demand for the commodity increase globally, he said.

It is to be recalled that Ethiopia obtained a record-hit 1.4 billion USD from coffee export in 2021/22 fiscal year. The top five coffee export destinations were Germany, the U.S., Saudi Arabia, Belgium, and Japan.

Nat'l Dialogue last resort...

parts of the country to effectively make clear to stakeholders about its objectives and activities and have addressed almost all states of the country except Afar and Tigray, he said.

According to Yonas, they will address the Afar and Tigray states as much as possible."

Yonas further reported that the Commission held productive discussions with government officials, contending political parties, and other stakeholders at various times.

Additionally, the Commission has gained

documents from countries like Colombia, South Africa, Kenya, and others that had successfully conducted National Dialogue, as well as countries that had failed in such processes like Yemen.

Since its establishment, the Commission has been carrying out its mandates independently and the participation of the people is admirable, he added.

The Commission recently disclosed that it is receiving strong cooperation and acceptance in various parts of the country in its efforts to introduce the objective of the Commission.

Activist urges Tigray...

futile attempts together.

"If one thinks arranging festivals would bring social, political and economic significance for destitute Tigray people, they are fool enough as bringing about a difference in such a way is unthinkable," he said.

As to him, those who requested genuine questions during the festival were given deaf ear and blind eye and even labeled as bodies standing against Tigray unity as well as their quests were entirely rejected.

Urging contending political parties operating in Tigray State to fight against

the oppressing T-TPLF regime, Nathnael said that it is high time to push the state to normalcy via consolidating efforts and reflecting the same stance that help get T-TPLF dwindled and revert its stance from chauvinist gesture to participatory fashion.

He also underlined that the elderly politicians thinking with obsolete mentality have to be substituted by new blood and fresh political actors to make stable and well-off state.

The youth in Tigray State have to do away with the anti-democracy, anti-participatory system and ever-living enemy of the people of Tigray—T-TPLF—instead of blaming other political entities crossing border.

AUPSC welcomes...

that Obasanjo briefed the AUPSC on the current situation in Ethiopia it welcomed the briefing.

It was also stated that the Council reiterated full support for Obasanjo's peace efforts in Ethiopia and called on AU and partners to extend all necessary support to the High Representative.

It is noted that Ethiopia showed its readiness for peace talks under the auspices of the African Union. And, Ethiopia's decision has got acceptance locally and internationally.

However, the terrorist TPLF group rejected the appointment of Obasanjo as a mediator and doubts neutrality of the African Union. And, the group insisted that any peace talks should be held under the auspices of Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta.

It is also to be recalled that the federal government of Ethiopia formed a seven-member negotiation committee headed by the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Demeke Mekonnen to lead peace talks with the T-TPLF.

T-TPLF undermines...

fulfilling preconditions placed by the other party.

He further stated that debriefed with international community expressing government dismay at course chosen by team of envoys and Ambassador in handling the matter when in Mekelle. "Regarding restoration of services, the will of the government has been reaffirmed and precludes for that have been reiterated that is creating enabling conditions and semblance of peace by beginning the talks."

Citing the team's joint statement, he stated that it rehashed the saga of "unfettered

humanitarian access" which has already been long addressed. "No limit on the number of flights; none either on the number of trucks carrying aid. The issue of fuel has also been addressed and hailed by all."

By the same token, Ambassador of Ethiopia to Djibouti Berhanu Tsegaye tweeted that although Ethiopian government's unremitting commitments to hold the peace talks anytime, anywhere and without any preconditions, the team of envoys and Ambassadors that travelled to Mekelle has continued to play the deceiving symphony of TPLF.

Opinion

Rejuvenating integration of the Horn to withstand external pressure

BY LAKACHEW ATINAFU

The land mass to the south of Egypt has been grabbing the concern of explorers, preachers and asylum seekers from every quarters of the globe. Historical incidents witnessed that how the quarter is geopolitically important and the tower watching the worlds logistics, economy and also a strategically significance in combating terrorism.

Ethiopia is the heart, part and parcel of the region as it is the habitat of Afro-asiatic linguistics the gate way to the ocean and sea politics though the then deliberate colonial demarcation and ticking time bomb left Ethiopia land locked and the region the most volatile for the interest of rapacious plan of the western.

Recently, the region began to be observed tracking footprints of Ethiopia in regional integration and rejuvenating the mighty geopolitics of the region. The administration of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed first envisaged the regional integration of the Horn Countries and astonished the world in settling disputes among east African fraternity. The effort he exerted to bring to end the “No War No Peace” situation between Ethiopia and Eritrea bears a living witness here.

Observing this effort, the world awarded the new Ethiopian leader with Nobel Prize in his governance formative years. However, as time gone by, some elements are still busy of defaming the smart move and initiatives and opted to travel on the track of pessimism and omen.

The new outlook has not been welcomed by some groups of the international community trading the fragmentation of the Horn for their deep rooted greedy interest and the intent to sustain colonial interest.

Deceived nationals, tribal Africans have also been paving the way for their white masters under the guise of religion and ethnicity.

Having passed through temptation and uphill struggles leftover of colonialism, the Horn seemed to have been on the state of the first awake to emancipate the volatile region from foreign external threat.

The concurrent political dynamics and multipolarism brought about the importance of strategic partnership and countries are pacing to collaborate with each other to end the era of suspicion and skepticism and thereby aspire to be the hub of investment for developers.

Having realized the nose poking intent of neocolonialists, the Horn countries in pieces and bits have started the long way to the inclusive freedom and thereby reach

the helm of prosperity.

As Ethiopia is the beacon for Africans who had been on the sea of darkness the symbol of African independence, it still manages to steer socioeconomic and political integration of the Horn and the whole continent.

The country has become an idol for the rest of the continent in effectuating the sovereign right of natural resources and always on the forefront for Africans wellbeing.

The International Community missed several opportunities that could have been effectively seized to change course in the Horn. Now there is a risk that the recently declared unilateral humanitarian truce by the Ethiopian government and the national dialogue initiatives may face a similar fate.

If so, the future will be worse than the past. Maximum caution is required. There is a need to leave emotions and the arrogance aside and constructively engage to make sure that these promising initiatives are not missed once again.

The imitative and inception to integrate the Horn and then whole continent is on the driving signal since the new administration of Ethiopia assumed power.

Countries began to follow the value of integration and unison against all odds. Nonetheless, it is also advisable to be on the alert to withstand formidable struggles waged by westerns.

Somalia which sometimes was called the crying child of East Africa opened its eyes and joined Ethiopia's ambition in integrating the Horn and culminates time of vengeance.

Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was on a state visit to Kenya to strengthen relations after recent tensions over trade and a maritime border.

Relations between Kenya and Somalia have been deteriorated in recent years. In December 2020, Mogadishu cut off diplomatic ties and accused Nairobi of meddling in its internal affairs after Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta hosted the political leadership from Somaliland, a breakaway state that Somalia's central government does not recognize.

Sheikh Mohamud's visit to Kenya is the first since the eruption of the maritime dispute, which involves a contested border. The International Court of Justice ruled that the border should be adjusted so that Somalia gets rights to most of an oil-rich part of the Indian Ocean. Kenya rejected the ruling.

Nairobi and Mogadishu agreed in October 2021 that an amicable resolution of the

maritime border dispute should be reached soon.

However be it as it may the intent to put card on the table and arguing in a civilized manner might be the beginning of wisdom in regional and international diplomatic spheres and the focal point of Ethiopia in regaining time of mightiness.

Besides, concurrently three east African countries, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Kenya ink an accord on the harmonization of TVET according to statements of Ministry of Labor and Skills Development.

Assegid Getachew, Representative of Federal Government of Ethiopia and the Ministry of Labor and Skills and a State Minister said it requires stronger institutional collaboration and coordination amongst all parties concerned at all levels. “I would like to add my utmost assurance that the Ministry is fully prioritizing and supporting the implementation of East African Regional Integrated Project (EASTRIP)”. This project will have quite a lot of benefits, including exploiting economies of scale to lower costs of training for individual countries on specialized and industry certified training programs, facilitating mobility of technology and skilled labor, promoting peer learning among countries and institutions, sharing good policies and practices, and targeting employment toward regional economic corridors such as the Northern and Central Corridor Initiatives and other mega infrastructure projects in the region.

Following our Ministers meeting with the EASTRIP family during the Mid Term Review of the project earlier this year, the three countries have taken on the assignment of expediting implementation and solving bottle necks.

Nature, so proportionate, symmetric provide livers with abundances that man could dominate and reign the cosmos accordingly. In precise terms, Ethiopia traveled distance in man's most Known history inheriting the ancient empire and civilization down south to Egypt and Meroe.

The complex creation of the Horn can be seen from the perspective of heterogeneity, diverse culture, geopolitics importance, potentiality for agriculture and even can be of great significance to watch over political economy of Africa and the Middle East.

Amid all these, the Horn of African countries, in addition to their common language, culture and religion, and their differences in blood, marriage, and climate change, force them to look at each other because of mutualistic differences in climate, natural and economic resources and products.

It is especially important for Eritrea and Ethiopia and Somalia. For years, the three

countries' leaders have been skeptical about these alternative means of communication. In fact, it has proved to be of little use to many, and it has cost many dearly.

Amid all this optimistic efforts, TPLF and other devastating forces turned to narrate touching individual stories to continue winning the hearts of the US and its allies.

Yuval Harari in his book titled “21 Lessons for the 21st Century” writes that in a moral dilemma concerning an issue, “Focusing on a touching human story that ostensibly stands for the whole conflict helps to generate false moral certainty. When you try to explain to people the true complexity of the conflict by means of statistics and precise data, you lose them”, but when you tell sad personal stories like amputation, rape, disfigurement; you will win their hearts.

We will see how far such stories, maybe imbued with lies and exaggerations, take the whole conflict saga and harden the influence that the target audiences of these stories exert on Ethiopia. But still, it is sad that civilians are the first victims of such conflict which is started by the very group supposed to advance the interest of the Tigray people. No matter how the magnitude of the harm inflicted on civilians is severe, this warmongering group thinks that it can still form its own nation out of the debris of Ethiopia.

The primary objective of any foreign policy is to maintain the security and national integrity of the country.

For countries like Ethiopia, domestic factors are arguably the most important determinants of foreign policy. Domestic problems increase the country's vulnerability for external interference and decrease its regional and global image and influence. This is exactly what is happening now in Ethiopia. Secondly, for Ethiopia to exert enduring regional influence, it has to achieve the required level of economic development.

Thirdly, Ethiopia's regional influence requires a well-articulated pragmatic foreign policy that considers the changing regional, continental, and global dynamics and realities. The Horn of Africa and the Red Sea region have witnessed unprecedented changes where major global and regional powers have made bold unilateral and concerted diplomatic measures to increase their presence. Some of such initiatives tend to exclude Ethiopia, thereby threatening to decrease its regional role and influence. Furthermore, the Horn of African region has become a geopolitical playground of major global competitors.

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Editorial

Prevalence of peace must be the leading precondition!

Going long distance, the Ethiopian government has exerted unreserved effort to make reality the peace talks on the issue of the country's northern part conflict. It boldly and with commitment expressed its willingness to sit on a round table anywhere and anytime valuing the prevalence of peace for the country in general and for the Tigray people in particular.

Unfettered humanitarian access addressed since long ago for the needy in the region indicates the high concern of government to the people. Government's stance in this regard stayed unchanged that peace should be given upper hand than destructive war since the earlier times of the brutal attack TPLF committed against the northern command of the Ethiopian defense force that followed by loss of many lives and destruction of properties and infrastructures worth billions of Dollar.

Again, permission the US and EU Special Envoys given to travel their first joint mission to Mekele, Tigray, to encourage the launch of talks between the government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) under the African Union's auspices reveals the government's widely stretched hand for peace.

On the contrary, TPLF's stagnant stance hanging up unnecessary preconditions showcases its rigid behavior cultivated since from the very beginning of its inception that lasted to date. With this odd behavior, it magnified its real inhuman identity when exposing its own people to death and starvation. Instead of putting peace as a dominant precondition, it raised other issues that can be addressed following prevalence of it. In fact, as per its track record indicates, the group could not develop habit of finding solution for serious

issues through peaceful talks. Rather, it used to find from the mouth of the gun though unable to do so in its late attempt.

Being the only enemy of Tigray people when putting preconditions and using as play cards, TPLF has gone long distance to externalize the matter as the accountability lies on the Ethiopian government. Doing so, it is fighting not for the wellbeing of Tigray people that is forced to face hardship life under its leadership; rather it is sacrificing children of the people for its existence.

Though it is uttering about readiness for peace talks, no practical signals seen yet that indicates its readiness. For instance, it has not listed out its negotiators yet. Besides, it continued raising questions on the role of the AU as a moderator that got acceptance by the US and EU Special Envoys.

Government's stance in this regard is clear that African solution is the best solution for African problems. Unfortunately, according to the Ethiopian government, the Special Envoys team failed to press for unequivocal commitment for peace talks, and rather indulged in appeasement and fulfilling preconditions placed by the other party.

Any entity or institution that claims for the prevalence of peace in Ethiopia, should take into account the efforts the government has exerted so far and the obstacles the TPLF is putting on the way to abort the peace talks. This is the best time to impose pressure against the party that is going contrary to the interest of the country as a whole and the Tigray people in particular. Moreover, Tigrayans residing inland or elsewhere, should consider the issue; feel the pain of the people and place pressure on TPLF to take peace as a dominant precondition.

Opinion

Is US, EU current policy on Ethiopia in their best interest?

BY DEJEN RAS

On the 30th of July, Sisay Agena of Ethiopian Media Service (EMS) hosted two political analysts at his TV show, Abebe Gelaw and Dr. Derese Getachew, to discuss the different armed elements that have been operating under the guise of "liberation fronts" while in fact, these groups are actively toiling to destabilize Ethiopia. In their show, the discussants briefly raised issues related to the TPLF, OLA as well as the two-some attempt of unholy marriage to Al-Shabaab.

They also commented on the current policy of the US and the EU on the Horn, especially on Ethiopia, as Samanta Power avoided Ethiopia from her itineraries while paying visit to the Horn of Africa. The pundits express their doubt if the US and EU have changed their position on Ethiopia after the reform movement in Ethiopia. Inspired by their argument, this piece would try to delve into the current possible strategy of the US and EU toward Ethiopia.

Is Ethiopia the key US and EU partner in the Horn of Africa?

The pundits, composed of three political analysts mentioned above, discussed the recent development in Ethiopia, particularly focusing on those happening since the reform time and the recent activities of the TPLF, OLA, and Al-Shabaab. They also emphasized the central role that Ethiopia played in the region during the TPLF-led government pledging allegiance to the EU and US.



They expressed their concern and doubt if Ethiopia is still at the center of the Horn of Africa being a partner for the Westerners. The latter are assisting the TPLF or the OLA hoping to bring about regime change in Ethiopia. On the flip side, Ethiopia is fighting against Al-Shabaab, a designated terrorist group by the westerners themselves. In the past, Al-Shabaab has aligned itself with Al-Quida and ISIS. There is no change of heart yet from the westerners towards Al-Shabaab.

On the other hand, TPLF, OLA and AL-Shabaab seem to have forged collaboration against what they perceive as a common enemy, the central government of Ethiopia.

Other key aspects that need to be studied in this regard take us to Kenya, a country that is becoming more preferable to westerners. Also, developments in Somalia are happening without Ethiopia having a central role as before. There seems to be a genuine concern. Is

Ethiopia a preferred country as before by the said entities?

The strategy of US and EU

The steps and measures being taken by the Westerners in the Horn of Africa (HoA) are reflections of the global context. Several key factors are defining the current global reality: China's economic dominance, Russia's influence on growth, and many other regional players are influencing relations between and among countries. Especially in Africa, the population is younger and there seems to come more of a new generation to leadership, challenging the previous kind of status quo, more specifically one that has been in place since colonial time. The recent developments in Ethiopia speak volume. The young prime minister that comes to power who seems to have been introducing unprecedented respect-based relations with the West can be an example. In this fashion, it looks like the era of boss-servant sort of relations have

ended.

As China and Russia are trying to consolidate more and more gains, the US and EU on their part are following a calculative and cautious strategies in the continent, especially in their relations with HOA. The transitions surfacing here and there in the different countries are fragile. They cannot play their game as they used to do it in old times. The new generation's awareness is not the same as that of the old times. Their steps are closely and critically watched. If they do not show respectful leadership, others are offering it instead. There are indications that the realities are understood. One can closely observe the swift changes of US's Horn envoys after envoys. They seem to have understood the consequence of their missteps.

US's support to the already fallen TPLF has become the subject of discussion among many in the region including scholars and journalists. TPLF's mouthpiece Getachew Reda publicly said the US was throwing support behind them including on the conditions they would control the capital, Addis Ababa. The US's position is potent to harm its own interest in the region.

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

Art & Culture

"The Rophnan Revolution" Expected to Impact African Music

Are We Heading for a "Rophnan revolution" in African Music?

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

When the legendary Bob Marley invented a new music genre known as reggae beats, the world never expected that in a few decades he would inundate the international music scene with new beats, melodies and new lyrics that became the weapon of preference for the rebellious youth generations of the 1960s and 1970s everywhere in the world. "Reggae, genre of contemporary Caribbean music developed in Jamaica in the late 1960s, one of the most influential styles of world popular music. The style often associated with political protest, combined elements of Jamaican folk music with American rhythm-and-blues music (R&B). The term reggae is of uncertain origin, but may come from the Jamaican word for "ragged man" or common person.

Reggae has its roots in Jamaican musical styles such as mento, ska, and rock steady. The origins can be traced to the 1940s and the emergence of mento, a hybrid folk-song genre that combines African-related folk music traditions with calypso, the national music of Trinidad."

Reggae is of course an international music phenomenon and remains so because of the beats are as popular as ever and the universal messages of protest against oppression and poverty are still relevant to our times. According to Encarta encyclopedia, "Bob Marley, one of the most prolific and influential reggae artists, was the next to rise to international popularity, and he eventually became reggae's biggest star. The Jamaican singer, songwriter, and guitarist combined soulful melodies with strident lyrics that were informed by the Biblical mysticism and Afro-Caribbean awareness of the Rastafarian religion.

During the 1970s, Marley and many other Jamaican musicians sang about black unification and liberation while advocating the smoking of ganja (marijuana) as a religious sacrament. Marley and prominent members of his band the Wailers, such as Peter Tosh and Bunny Livingston, openly embraced the "rebel" image that their music acquired over time. Marley gained mainstream recognition with his 1975 album Natty Dread. By the time of his death from cancer in 1981, Marley and the Wailers had won worldwide respect for their highly melodic, spiritually moving, and politically militant pop songs."

As the above-quoted information from Encarta indicate, reggae music could not have achieved an international status had it been a repetition or a variation of Western music or was based on Western themes and concerns. The revolution Bob Marley created consisted of doing the contrary; that is to say starting with Caribbean and African beats and themes and going to the Western tradition to impact it deeply and displace it from the seemingly untouchable position it enjoyed for many decades. In short, Bob Marley came with a new style that appealed

to grassroots audiences in the teeming streets of the Caribbean as well Africa, articulating the dreams and visions of the common people and calling for political change from below.

The upcoming Ethiopian musician is perhaps the most popular singer and composer at the time of this writing, with his recent success with a number of songs that strike delicate chords in the hearts of his fans who number by the millions right now judging by the numbers already released by music watchers in Addis. Rophnan is no doubt a new music star as he made his entry into the music world earlier in his life.

According to recent information, "At the age of ten, Rophnan Nuri released his first mix tape singing and playing the drums with his classmates, and he has not stopped moving to his own beat since. He self-funded his career with the money he made as a club DJ and over the years he learned the technical side of music and produced his own distinct sound." "I was always fascinated by the fusion of different instruments and voices and created a unique niche for myself by amalgamating traditional Ethiopian sounds from the past with futuristic electronic music," he says. Nuri's talent also saw him being one of the three African DJs chosen by South African to perform in Ibiza, Spain."

On July 13, 2022 the US embassy in Addis Ababa said on its Facebook page, "We congratulate Ethiopian artist Rophnan on his international success, including the drop of his latest album and his recent contract with Universal Music Group!" This is a big breakthrough as far as Rophnan's future career is concerned. Beside the financial advantage the contract will certainly bring to him, it will also lift his status to the international level where more prestige and more recognition are in store for him. He has already attained a relatively high level of recognition for a young man of thirty. According to available information, "Rophnan Nuri Muzeyin was born on 22 June 1990, is an Ethiopian musician, DJ, singer, songwriter, and audio engineer. Widely acclaimed, he is considered as one of the most influential artists in Ethiopia. Rophnan entered into the mainstream recognition after his ground-breaking debut album Reflection, which introduced a completely new style of Ethiopian music and pioneered electronic music in Ethiopia."

He began his career in 2014 at the age of sixteen and he slowly established himself as the country's biggest DJ while introducing the country to electronic music. "He had residencies in all the top clubs in Addis Ababa, often playing 3 shows a night. Rophnan kept his own music unreleased and made sure that the only place one could hear his tracks would be when he played them himself. One of Rophnan signature tracks, "Get to Work", a Guraige-based beat, was released this way and was played exclusively as part of Rophnan's own DJ sets, which made the song famous within Addis Ababa youth without having to release it. Rophnan played a pivotal role in the rise of electronic music and DJ culture

in Ethiopia. He continued to headline more and more events packing the biggest venues."

According to Encyclopedia Wikipedia, "In 2018, Rophnan released his debut album Reflection. This was the first electronic music LP to ever be released in Ethiopia. The album was released independently by RAEY Records. A shorter version of the album, named Reflection E.P. was released by the Ghanaian label Akwaaba Music. Reflection was deeply rooted in raw traditional Ethiopian music but also mixing futuristic aesthetics into the powerful songs which reflected Rophnan's generation and artistic vision.

Introducing a new musical message, the album took a little while to be absorbed by the Ethiopian market, but in just a few months, the album's reach expanded from clubs, to street corners, to radio stations and finally became the most played album of the year. Respectively, Rophnan became one of the most celebrated artists in the country. The release of the album coincided with a governmental change which brought consciousness to the youth of Ethiopia, and Reflection became the soundtrack of those winds of change. Soon after the album release, Rophnan has performed live in the popular Ehud Be EBS TV show where he delivered a 10-minute set of live music, becoming the first artist ever to not lip-sync on the show. The video went viral and was viewed by millions." The album won Rophnan three 2018's Leza Awards including Album of The Year, becoming a ground breaking release for an emerging genre. In his acceptance speech, staying true to the generation who brought him to this point in his career, Rophnan said, "Reflection is an album where I reflected myself, my country and my generation.... I want to say to my younger brothers and sisters, use the computers, internet and smart phones you have in your reach for bigger things."

The year, 2018 also saw world-famous music group Major Lazer feature the track "Get to Work" on their "Africa to the World" compilation, highlighting Rophnan's place in the forefront of contemporary African music. At the end of the 2018 Rophnan participated in Coke Studio Africa in Nairobi, where a collaboration with Zambian Rapper Chef 187 resulted in an original track named "All The Way". The powerful track and the use of ancient African instrumentation, together with cutting-edge sound design, drew positive feedback across the continent and became one of the season musical highlights.

Rophnan gained a sweeping number of fans by being a representative of a new generation's creative force in Ethiopia. This status manifested itself in an unprecedented scope of digital following, memes, fan art and social trends. The "Rophside", a side view picture which imitated the album art and Rophnan's favorite picture pose, itself derived from the long time tradition of Ethiopian emperors and rulers posing in profile became an internet phenomenon and



trending hashtag.

At the first half of 2019 Rophnan went on the My Generation national tour, packing up stadiums across the country with his "Phans". The opening show of the tour broke the attendance record for Ghion, with massive crowds showing up, thousands beyond the venue capacity, resulting in commotion and police brutality. The tour was the first to sell tickets via electronic means.

In July 2019, Rophnan was featured on Forbes Africa's 30 under 30 list in the Creative Category, [4] naming Rophnan as one of the continent biggest influencers that year. Rophnan is the first Ethiopian musician to be featured on the list. Judging from his early achievements, Rophnan is certainly set to revolutionize African music without ignoring his artistic roots. This is actually what is evident in his songs and lyrics that have philosophical edges to them while Rophnan is addressing issues that may be too big for his tender age. He has matured not only in using electronic music to convey his messages, but also in writing lyrics that are equally deep, appealing to the common people, touching issues near and dear to the common man of Africa and also dealing with the virtues of unity, diversity and universality.

In the coming few years, Rophana will no doubt conquer international audiences that will dance and enjoy to his unique blend of music that is eclectic, highly creative with philosophical touches. Last but not least, Rophnan is also set to liberate Ethiopian music to the traditional and hackneyed romantic style that is increasingly sounding passé.

Rophnan does not avoid serious issues in his music; he rather gives them new dimensions and new perspectives. His versatile talents as DJ, singer and songwriter as well as electronic music composer prove that the sky is the limit for his growing popularity as well as his timeless creativity. The challenge for him in the coming years might be to remain true to his callings and give his fans new tunes, new melodies and new dimensions that will lift them up from hopelessness by telling them that there are always lights at the end of the talents and that perseverance and hard work are the ingredients of final success. Like Bob Marley, Rophnan is also starting a new revolution in black or African music. It is only a matter of time to see how far his revolution will go in changing African and black music.

Law & Politics

Ethiopia-center of the Horn's politics

BY SOLOMON WASSIHUN

Times have indeed changed. Three decades ago, the global power dynamics were unipolar, with the US as the only superpower. Now things have become more complex and unpredictable. Geopolitical strategists predict the threat of the great-powers competition will merge with the worsening climate crisis to produce a world of heightened national-security risks. As the number of global power players rises, so do the incidents of global tensions. In fact, they would become so complicated as to defy explanation at times.

There are several geopolitical hot spots that are scenes of fierce competition among global power players. One of these sites is the Horn. Due to its strategic position on the world trade routes, and immense untapped resources, the Horn attracts intense interest and rivalry among the world's major powers. The Horn is the source of the Nile and the gateway to the Red Sea. Several Analysts agree that the international and regional competition for control over the Horn is at its fiercest.

Deep in the middle of this highly coveted region lies the giant of the Horn, Ethiopia. With its largest size and population mass in the sub-region, as well as unexploited, rich, and diverse natural endowments, Ethiopia has become the nation where the attention of the powers concurs. Besides, the fact that international agencies like the World Bank once recognized Ethiopia as one of the fastest growing economies has helped the nation to propel itself further towards the spotlight.

One analyst recently said the world power players were looking at Africa as the last unexploited place to make money and friends. This thought resonates more strongly in Africa's most troubled and tensioned areas such as the Horn, Great Lakes region, and Western Africa than anywhere else. Regarding Ethiopia, they consider the country not only as a key destination but as one of the strategic foothold serving as getting ways to the rest of Africa. Thus it would not be a surprise to see the recent avalanche of high-level delegations going in and out of Addis Ababa, the diplomatic capital of Africa. This situation in itself proves the ongoing race among world powers to maintain a stronger presence in the Horn.

Surprisingly, the latecomers, the Chinese are commanding a strong presence in Ethiopia. By any standard, the Chinese have established a multifaceted bilateral relationship with Ethiopia. China is arguably, the closest ally of Ethiopia and the largest source of foreign direct investment. The people-to-people relationship between the two has made a big leap in a relatively short period, a

few decades. It is not surprising to find Chinese somewhere in the far corners of the country involved in various development activities from agriculture to industry and construction.

Like the Americans, the Chinese are stepping up their involvement in the Horn by dedicating offices and experts specializing in the subregion. Last month [June] the Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Affairs of the Foreign Ministry Xue Bing held a meeting with diplomatic envoys of Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, Uganda, Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and other countries in the Horn. Similarly, a few days ago [25 July], the second China_Africa Peace –Security Forum Ministerial Meeting was held.

A day after that, the Russian foreign minister started the African tour that took him to four African nations including Ethiopia. In the months before his visit, Russia signed various political and military deals on the continent. After two months, the Russia-Africa summit would be held in Ethiopia, where trade and defense deals are to be signed to strengthen relations. According to a Russian politics expert, Russia aims to gain a foothold on the continent as a security broker to "confront the collective West" and project the image of a "defender of Africa".

But concerning Ethiopia specifically, Russia is rather trying to bring back the nostalgia of the Soviet era when Ethio –Russian relations covered almost all the important sectors during the period between the late 70s and the beginning of the 90s. From oil exploration in the east to the military expedition in the north; Russians, soviets at that time, were everywhere in the socio-economic activities of the nation. Several Russian professors, teachers, doctors, and engineers have been working with their Ethiopian counterparts in various corners of the country. Even school children used to sing, The Internationale, [the earlier Soviet national anthem], the Socialist Anthem, as good as the Ethiopian national anthem.

Still, Russia is Ethiopia's strategic ally and describes her deep relationship with Ethiopia as progressively developing traditionally friendly relations backed by trust-based political dialogue and overlapping approaches to pressing

international issues. Unlike the West, Russia has a proven unwavering genuine commitment to see Ethiopia's sovereignty and territorial integrity preserved.

Lavrov is a veteran diplomat working since the soviet days and knows the nook and cranny of Russian diplomacy. Behind what has been said in the cliché-riddled diplomatic news reports, Lavrov and the Deputy Prime minister must have taken an in-depth look at security issues. There is a pressing need for further advancing the military infrastructure of the Ethiopian Defense Forces, and making it a formidable deterrent against the looming threats of terrorism backed by foreign powers, who want to see the Horn as a permanent scene of carnage and humanitarian crisis.

Energy is one of the core areas of bilateral economic cooperation between Ethiopia and Russia. Thus the two countries' leaders have relevant topics regarding their partnership to develop an Ethiopian nuclear industry based on the framework agreement they made during the Russia-Africa Economic Forum in Sochi in 2019. The agreement involves nuclear project packages to be realized by 2029 including a center for nuclear science, the construction of a 3GW nuclear power plant, including reactors to create radioactive isotopes for medical, agriculture, and research purposes.

Hot on Sergey Lavrov's heels were a series of delegations of the Americans scheduled to descend on Africa and the Horn in particular. Only two days after Russia's Lavrov visit, the US Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Michael Hammer, landed in Addis to hold talks with the Ethiopian leaders. And another batch of American delegation had been paying a visit in the Horn, in neighboring Somalia, a few days earlier. It was the delegation led by the USAID Administrator. Surely the Americans would do their best to negate the anti-west advocacy Lavrov had been preaching in Ethiopia and Egypt last week.

What we are observing now is a struggle among world powers to win the attention of Africa in general, and get the upper hand in the game of the geopolitics of the Horn, in particular. A political analyst has recently described this situation as the new Scramble for Africa.-A sequel to the rush to exploit Africa's natural wealth near the end of the 19th century by the superpowers of that time. Unlike the African leaders of the previous generations, the present-day African leaders are wise enough not to take sides and instead maintain the middle ground whenever possible. And their previous experience has taught them who to trust and lean on if they have to choose. They would not let Africa be a battleground again for yet another round of cold war-like situations, as it had been in the past.

The Horn is the source of the Nile and the gateway to the Red Sea. Several Analysts agree that the international and regional competition for control over the Horn is at its fiercest

“Ensuring quality, access, affordability possible even in the absence of competitor,” speaks Ethio telecom CEO Frehiwot Tamiru

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Our guest for today is Frehiwot Tamiru, CEO of Ethio Telecom. The hard-working and humble Frehiwot has now been selected as one of African CEOs by the Business Executive, West Africa's leading magazine covering the economy, business, finance, investment, and socioeconomic development.

Frehiwot is Ethio Telecom's first female CEO who championed in bringing about various improvements to the company and has continued to apply her profound leadership skills to expand the sector to enable it contribute to Ethiopia's economy.

Frehiwot was mentioned in Advance Media's Top 100 Women African CEOs, presenting the most successful women CEOs among 21 African countries that continue to advance their companies in different sectors in Africa and the world. These women were selected based on profit, sustainability, and influence over their sector, industry, & community.

The Business Executive honors African CEOs in various business sectors for contributions to the SDGs. The magazine also hosts a variety of business forums where private businesses and public institutions such as business regulators and facilitators can network and form partnerships and alliances. For her contributions to Ethiopia's telecom sector, Business Executive has nominated Frehiwot Tamiru for Africa's Most Respected CEO award in the telecommunications category.

The Ethiopian Herald spent about an hour to learn the achievement and challenges her company has been facing on the way to realize digital Ethiopia. Have a nice read.

First of all, I would like to thank you for your willingness to make this interview possible.

Thank you.

Your company has been striving to ensure digital Ethiopia. Would you explain to us the progresses your company made so far in promoting digital technology in the country?

So far, Ethio telecom has provided basic telecom services. It has built infrastructure of various kinds to make telecom services accessible to the people at large. More recently, with a vision of using the infrastructure built effectively, we are able to create a system that helps accelerate financial services. Tele Birr, for instance, launched just a year ago. Some 21.8 million people have access to the service which is just unprecedented in the history of the telecom industry. Other companies have toiled for about a decade to attain this level. We transacted 30.3 billion Birr as over 21,000 business enterprises are integrated with our company. In short, it creates comfortable situations to transact money easily.

As a nation, apart from expanding telecom infrastructure and/or beyond connectivity, Ethio telecom is striving so as to bring additional services which will add value on service provision. Presently, Tele birr has been transferring and receiving money. As many stakeholders are now participating in the fuel sector, tele-birr is creating a conducive



Photo: Eyob Tefert

working environment through creating a system that manages fuel compensation at a grass root level.

Tele-birr has also eased the tax collection system. This year, for instance, Level C taxpayers have been paying tax using telebirr service. Vehicle drivers are also able to pay fines for traffic rule violations through telebirr. This means subscribers who previously used their mobile phone for voice and message are obtaining additional services on their mobile.

The 128 year old company, Ethio telecom, is by now the second giant operator in Africa and 26th in the world. We have also stretched network connectivity with 99 percent of population coverage. But the reason to embark upon this service is that beyond connectivity we have to engage in problem-solving services to the society. Tele birr for now is at its infant stage. We have a plan to come up with more services. Especially, we are striving to expand financial service access to those unreached ones. We will introduce this service soon.

We call all the trading companies to use the service. As we see, the cost of living is alarming. Using the limited resource effectively, we put the service in a place where it assists people. When the operation cost increases, it may influence us in paying employees a benefit package. If we are able to replace all channels or manual systems which we provide products and services with digitization, we can minimize our costs, we can use the money for development and gain public satisfaction.

We say digitalization improves productivity, creates new jobs, and develops working systems or other developments considering all these things. That is why we say ethio-telecom is realizing digital Ethiopia. When we apply 5G in some sector especially, the latest technology, we believe that it will have an impact in solving problems of some institutions. As of the new Ethiopian year, we will use digitalization widely in health, mining, agriculture etc identifying various sectors. In terms of creating remote reality

in areas where it creates opportunities to intensify productivity, we will intensify the service. Presently, 5G has been realized in Addis Ababa alone.

Apart from bringing new technologies, we have a vision of benefiting the society at large. Companies should understand that there is a technology that eases their working system and uses the technology. We better understood the importance of digitalization at times where COVID influences us. And many institutions understood the significance of digitalization after COVID -19 and this created a window of opportunity to promote digitalization. However, as it is a change of culture, it may take some time. Awareness-raising tasks should be done. If that is so, we are able to expand the technology at the grass root level.

As you said, the Cultural Revolution is coming and how do you evaluate social dependency on digitalization?

It is true. For instance, the fact that Tele-birr's close to 22 million subscribers is an indication that the society has shown interest. Other countries took a decade to reach the level we are even though the technology readiness now and at that time differs. Gaining such an active customer within a year is a thing that should not be undermined. Twenty two million is a great number. However, it is important to raise the awareness of the society on how to create value for itself. With the integration of many programs in this, using digital technologies will be a necessity. We replicate manual systems because there is no digital service. At times when there is no option of using a manual system, the transaction increases equally. Thus, it is decisive to do awareness raising tasks in a sustainable manner.

That is why we work on digital literacy. In the last fiscal year, we established a digital lab in 65 schools with a view to narrow digital divide. This does not mean that we have done enough as more tasks remain to be done. We have to strengthen the various tasks done with media institutions, schools and other stakeholders in order to upgrade societal knowledge about digitalization. We encourage Institutions to know digitalization and its use in their day to day activities.

This year, we are able to achieve 5.4 billion Birr cost optimization by applying a do-to-save system. Currently, we are running 217 projects. For all programmes, we have allocated capital and operational expenditures. But we have achieved our plan with less operational cost in the just ended budget year ---we call this --- do to save. It makes us come out of our comfort zone.

It is obvious that your company has made high revenue. How does this achievement come true?

Generally, the performance of 2014 EC is very attractive. We planned to raise the number of subscribers and has managed to increase the revenue. In terms of revenue, we have generated 61.3 billion Birr. In other words, we achieved 88 percent of our plan. The problem created in the northern part of the country has seriously affected the

Herald Guest



economy and our customers. Accordingly, 45 percent of our mobile stations, i.e. 3,473 mobile stations are not able to provide service due to the instability.

Apart from achieving success in terms of number, we pay a lot of sacrifices to achieve the target set. In order to rehabilitate war-affected areas, our employees have paid immeasurable sacrifice. At this time, we do not have access to 1,144 stations. At the plan period, we assumed that problems in the north part of the country would be solved shortly. Reversibly, instead of terminating, the northern instability is transcending to other parts of the country thereby many services providing stations are out of service. Within all these challenging situations, we have hit the target we aspired. Considering that it will have a greater impact on our customers, we are creating many options for them. We increased the number of customers to 66.59 million.

In order to ensure customer satisfaction, we provide 144 projects. Out of these, some 67 are new one. Other 37 projects are provided with making certain improvements. These projects have helped us to increase income and customer satisfaction. Some 217 projects are carried out so as to enable the previous projects?. Next generation business support system is one among the projects that consume huge amounts of money. 4G internet expansion has been made in 136 towns. Among other factors, the main reason for the success is the synergy between the management and the employees.

Could you tell us about the contribution of Ethio telecom to the national foreign currency earning?

This year's revenue is USD 146 million. This is the outcome of existing and new products that we introduced to generate foreign currency. In fact, it is only 82 to 83 percent of our plan, mainly because we

have lost the international call service to the northern part of the country. But compared to the overall situation the revenue is not to be underestimated.

Our discussion to receive payment in foreign currency for infrastructure sharing to the new telecom operator is successful. It is not included in the just ended fiscal year because this year we only signed the contract [but the payment] will be earned in the new fiscal year.

The stated amount of foreign currency is the result of newly added products. For instance, telebirr received remittance from 37 countries. But it needs a lot of promotional works to increase the flow of remittance via telebirr. In addition, we just obtained the license for foreign exchange remittance in November, which means the second half of the fiscal year. In this period, it received a remittance of one million USD. So, the contribution is not that big as it started somehow late.

When we talk about our success, we are not exaggerating them just to take the credit as leaders, but if you take the challenges, we under went in the year we would have lost even more than 61 billion. We have viable excuses if we fail to achieve our goals.

In addition to local problems there were also international factors like the shortage of containers to import inputs for our expansion projects. COVID has also affected the production of chip sets, devices and their supply to us. As a result, out of our plan to import 1.2 million devises and provide them on installment credit basis, we were able to import only 600 thousand of them due to the shortage of production. These 778 operators need supply to do their jobs. Furthermore, the import also needs a lot of efforts like negotiation skills. It has affected our projects timely completion. This has affected the revenue which we would have earned had the projects been completed. So, the intervention

we took has helped us compensate the loss.

But the accomplishment of our projects is noticeable. We have executed 217 of them which is 71 percent of the total. That is why we were able to supply 144 products and services to the market. When it comes to protecting our clients, we have also taken measures to ensure affordability so that our customers can cope with the economic pressure. This is because the economic pressure could affect customers to divert their attention to basic needs. Accordingly, we have introduced affordable packages that range from one birr airtime to unlimited. These days the value of one birr is almost insignificant that it cannot buy anything. But we made affordability an issue so that our customers can give priority to their basic issues. This is one of the success areas for us. Actually management principle argues that affordability is guaranteed only when there is competition. But Ethio telecom can boast of ensuring affordability in the absence of competition market.

This is because the objective of the telecom sector reform is to ensure affordability. When you have no competitors you can solely set the price for your services. As you can see during the last four years contrary to the market price hike, we have never raised service charge. We have managed to ensure affordability to our customers by reducing operational cost.

When you say that Frehiwot won an award, nobody knows me personally. But I was able to win the award under the framework of ethio telecom which succeeded in ensuring affordability. And affordability is implemented to benefit the people, improve life. Though we have not directly implicated the goals included in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) ultimately our works have realized that goal. My philosophy as a CEO is that it is not a must to have a competitor to ensure affordability and or do ethical business. Competition is not a must in order to deliver ethical business. No institution should seek unfair profit because there are no rivals. This is my belief. Every sector should gather profit that can only cover its expenses and they can ensure sustainability of the company. That is one of my principles for management. As you may remember I decided to cut the service charge by 40 to 50 percent only within a month or two after I took over this position. I did this because there is a need to consider the peoples' purchasing power.

This has challenged us because the sector is capital intensive and needs foreign currency too. We have been cutting our expenditure so that we can reduce service charge.

We have a lot of issues on our table but our approach to achieve them is by prioritizing the urgent ones. There are 200 or 300 ideas to work on. But we have to prioritize those that give the best satisfaction to our customers. This has played a lot of roles.

But beyond mere figures, Ethio telecom has played uncontested role in the economic development of the country. For example, it has helped organizations carry out their routines despite COVID restrictions. We have a reason when we claim that we are creating digital Ethiopia as we are marching towards digital connectivity.

We chose to do practical jobs before talking about our achievements. But by now we can

speak loudly about them. Yet that doesn't mean that we have finished our works. We are indeed realizing digital Ethiopia, and it will continue further.

What are you doing to cover neighboring countries?

Previously ethio telecom was established with a license only to provide basic telecom service inside the country. So, during the establishment of Telebirr we requested the amendment of the establishment proclamation so that we can be able to engage in financial activities as well as to operate out of the country. By now we have obtained this license to buy shares and operate out of the country. But we cannot engage in it in practice because this year we have come across urgent national issues. The main thing is to put in place the enabling environment. After sorting out factors like finance and human resource we can engage in that.

What were the major challenges to the service delivery of the company?

In the budget year, about 45 percent of our sites were closed. One challenge was lack of security. The other one was interruption of power supply. In order to launch new sites, we have to have power supply. So, we have put in place our own alternative power supply system. Accordingly, about 50 percent of our BTS use alternative power supply. Some 22 percent use solar power. We are delivering this alternative power supply as power is an integral component of telecom network expansion. Absence of energy doesn't only delay the network expansion but also affects quality of the service.

In areas like Afar and Amhara some stations are not accessing commercial power. But they are using alternative power for about 18 months. This is what raises our expense. Some 52 percent of BTS receive subsidy. The subsidy is part of our intent to benefit all our clients. With regard to quality, it is not a one-off job. It keeps on improving continuously. We optimize every time by looking at the network congestion. Currently, there is a continuous expansion work around Addis Ababa. As part of the 217 projects we are implementing, we continuously engage in network optimization. The rainfall also could affect some stations that operate on solar energy.

What were the major achievements of Ethio telecom in discharging its corporate social responsibility?

In the budget year, Ethio telecom has spent over 400 million Birr for its corporate social responsibility. This is done financially, materially ...etc.

In war ravaged areas we have renovated our facilities with our own budget and have restored them rapidly. This is part of our routine jobs and also a share of the problem that befell on our country.

We have also built 65 digital labs in selected secondary schools. In general, Ethio telecom's social responsibility activities are clearly visible to the society. In addition to the corporate contribution, our employees also contribute to nationwide noble objectives.

Thank you very much.

Thank you.

Society

Promoting peace, development in East Africa

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

The world today is undergoing profound changes unseen in a century. Peace and development are remaining the call of the times. The pressure to resolve conflicts, promote peace and realize development in each corner of the globe is becoming a common agenda that global actors are striving to achieve it. Following the reason that people across the world have become members of a community on account of living in the same global village, for their interests and securities are intertwined and they shared common destiny, the efforts to maintain peace as per the values and moral is fading out.

It is bold fact that we cannot develop without peaceful environment and arrange human capital in more productive fashion. The bottom line is that we live in the same earth village and; it is imperative for us to recognize that we share the same future. If not, the fate of the coming generation will remain uncertain.

Yes, peace is a pre-requisite for development as a whole because it creates an enabling environment for the fundamentals of a society's progress: human capital formation, development of infrastructure, upholding the rule of law, and so on.

It is clear that peace is a key component for sustainable development. At the same time a healthy business environment is an important element for development. However, in countries where peace is at risk and violated, business operations would be disrupted, development will be obstructed due to the unreliable social services and the prevalence of social problems such as poverty, hunger and inequality.

Understanding that peace is the most important ingredient for development, as it creates an enabling environment for the fundamentals of a society's progress: human capital formation, infrastructure development, to ensure the rule of law, and so on countries strive to sustain peace within their territories thereby build fair, just and peaceful communities.

Ethiopia has also been working aggressively to manage and resolve conflicts, maintain peace and advance development not only with in its border and in the region; but even beyond.



Of late, a forum - Entrepreneurial Forum for Peace and Development (EFPP) - that aimed at promoting peace and fostering development among member countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region was officially launched.

At the forum, which was led by former Ethiopian leaders and operating actively in Ethiopia's and IGAD region's peace and development matters, including President Sahle-Work Zewde, senior public officials and members of the business community took part. The participants shared their insights on ways how to promote peace and foster development in East- Africa as well as the role entrepreneurs can play in ensuring peace.

In her opening remark, President Sahle-Work said that across the world, including Ethiopia, the business community is the main victim of conflicts and war. Due to this, the business community should be actively in the efforts made to ensure peace and proactively responding to public's development demands.

Mentioning that the establishment of the Forum is timely, the President said that the Forum, which has officially commenced its work, will enable Ethiopia to stand by its own, and has significant contribution to maintain peace in the IGAD region; and the continent at large.

As to the President, because we did not accomplish the tasks that we should have been executed previously, Ethiopia has encountered plenty of challenges. However,

currently the government is undertaking inclusive peace and development efforts in which charity organizations and businesspeople are involved.

Sahle-Work stressed that the Forum should devise a strategy that enables to resolve induced droughts and disruptions in development activities that came to happen following the security threats in the IGAD countries.

The Entrepreneurial Forum for Peace and Development should work closely with the governments of member countries to enable Ethiopia and the IGAD region to get out of the cycle of conflict and war, she further said.

Similarly, it has to work jointly with those entities working in the area of peace and development so as to bring lasting peace in the region. The Ethiopian Government will provide the necessary support for the forum to enable it realize its goal, she affirmed.

Ethiopians, if determined and stand together, will undoubtedly ensure lasting peace in short time, the President said.

President Sahle-Work also called on entrepreneurs to practically prove their support for promoting peace and fostering development in IGAD region.

EFPP Executive Board Chairperson and former Ethiopian President, Mulatu Teshome on his part said that the business community has been the main victim of the problems that have come about in the country over the past years.

"The forum, by coordinating the business community, will work determinedly to resolve conflicts in peaceful manner, to prevent and mitigate the occurrences of conflicts, and if they occur, it will carry out rapid rehabilitation activities in order to help build transformative and sustainable peace, continue economic and social development activities on a regular basis," Mulatu elaborated.

EFPP General Assembly Chairperson, Belayneh Kinde also said that the country's current situation compels the private sector to join hands, and stand together for peace more than ever before.

Owing to this, he added, the business community is committed and determined to actively participate in the efforts exerted by the government and the people to ensure peace and sustain development across the country.

The "Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)" is an eight-country in the Horn of Africa. Currently, it comprises the countries of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.

This regional organization, based in Djibouti, supports its member states in their manifold development efforts, especially in the areas of peace processes and development.

IGAD was established in 1996. It succeeded the earlier Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), a multinational body founded in 1986 by Djibouti,

IS US, EU...

Redwan Hussien @RedwanHussien · 17h
 Debriefed with IC expressing gov't dismay at course chosen by team of envoys & Ambassadors in handling the matter when in Mekele. They failed to press for unequivocal commitment for peace talks, rather indulging in appeasement & fulfilling preconditions placed by the other party.1/4

Evidenced by a recent visit by team of envoys and ambassadors

Over the week, a team of envoys and Ambassadors from the Western nations have visited Mekele. The government has assisted them to travel there just to express the will of the government for the proposed peace

talks. However, the team who traveled to Mekele displayed different approaches. The team "indulged in appeasement," as it is expressed by the National Security Advisor of the Prime Minister Ambassador Redwan Hussien. They seem to enjoy their visit by taking selfies and sharing them on social

media. Some were expressing their disgust on the way the visitors behaved. To hang out with criminals, murders, and child soldier recruiters. However, these team members are showing their calculative mindset in public. They are trying to show sympathy and support for their previous lapdogs. In doing that they send a signal that they are faithful in their friendship. They as well seem to have used this relationship as a gambling/bargaining chip in their dealing with the central government.

Beyond the forces of division and destruction

For Ethiopia, the way forward should be to see the country's forthcoming bright future beyond the forces of division and destruction.

There is an enabling international environment for the bright future to come. In the past, we had a bipolar world—the capitalist and communist world. The world today has multiple poles. Different forces are dominating regional and global affairs. It is not only Russia or the USA, or the EU, but there are influencers like China, Turkey, India, Brasil., UAE, and so on. The days of one dominating different spheres like economic, political, technological, social, and even resources are over. It is not wise to depend on one only. We should not depend on the politics of Aid. Instead, the politics of mutual trade and mutual partnership should flourish. In this regard, the current position of the leadership of Ethiopia that promotes mutual interdependence based on the principles of respect would do the tricks.

Verbatim and Caption

AU is the channel for handling African problems



Debriefed with the international community (IC) expressing government’s dismay at course chosen by team of envoys and ambassadors in handling the matter when in Mekelle. They failed to press for unequivocal commitment for peace talks, rather indulging in appeasement and fulfilling preconditions placed by the other party. Regarding restoration of services, the will of the government has been reaffirmed and preludes for that have been reiterated: i.e. creating enabling conditions and semblance of peace by beginning the talks. Their joint statement rehashed the saga of “unfettered humanitarian access” which has already been long addressed. No limit on the number of flights; none either on the number of trucks carrying aid. The issue of fuel has also been addressed and hailed by all. The bottom line? The AU is the only channel and has been reiterated in no uncertain terms once again, Redwan Hussien, National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister.



“I was privileged to meet with US Senators Chris Van Hollen, Jeff Merkey, and Congressman Tom Malinowski separately. I briefed them about the peacebuilding efforts in Ethiopia’s humanitarian delivery to conflict and drought-affected areas, Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and democratization. We also had constructive discussion on issues of HR.6600 and S.3199 Bills and Ethiopia’s AGOA blockade which are against the longstanding ties of Ethiopia and the US. Thanks to the honorable lawmakers for their time and in-depth conversations, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ethiopia to the USA.”



Albeit the Ethiopian Government’s unremitting commitments to hold the peace talks anytime, anywhere and without any preconditions, the team of Envoys and Ambassadors that travelled to Mekelle has continued to play the deceiving symphony of TPLF, Berhanu Tsegaye, Ethiopian Ambassador to Djibouti.



Strong and timely statement by Ethiopian Foreign Affairs Minister & Nat’l Sec Advisor to the Prime Minister Ethiopia National Security Advisor about the failure of US/EU envoys in pressing for peace talks in Tigray. “Unfettered humanitarian access” long addressed as confirmed by the WFP. The AU is the only channel. Eyes on Africa, Journalist Hermela Aregawi.