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Abraha Girmay



Bisrat Gebremichael



Lij Solomon

T-TPLF gambling on hunger: Eyewitnesses

BY ABDUREZAK MOHAMMED

ADDIS ABABA – Despite the available of enough relief food and medicine in Tigray state of Ethiopia, the terrorist - TPLF is gambling on hunger via denying food aid to the People in need for political gains, Ethnic-Tigray youths disclosed.

It was learnt that these youths gave the information recently having crossed into the border of neighboring Amhara state fleeing terrorist TPLF.

The youths told local media that the terrorist group is gambling on the food aid and

medicine sent for the needy.

Mekelle University Employee Abraha Girmay said that the T-TPLF is betting against the people of Tigray by seizing the humanitarian supplies and feeding its soldiers with the food aid.

Sadly, the people are being forced to give food to the fighters of the terrorist group, as to Abraha.

He further explained that the people of Tigray are now in serious problems and are eagerly waiting for the peace talks between Federal government and the T-TPLF or the entry of the Ethiopian National Defense

Force (ENDF) into Tigray state.

According to Abraha, the terrorist group is still recruiting children forcefully for another round of war, he said adding, now is the time for the Tigray people to say 'I will not send my children to a senseless war in order to save a few criminals.'

He also called upon the youths of Tigray to re-think and start to fight against the group that is upsetting the people of Tigray.

Resident of Adwa Bisrat Gebremichael on his part indicated that it is very difficult to get food aid and medicine in Tigray because

See T-TPLF Page 3

Diplomat stresses strengthening solidarity over GERD

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA-The Ethiopian diplomat emphasized the need for strong national solidarity as some external forces are still attempting to hinder the construction process of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Public Diplomacy Director, Ambassador Dina Mufti told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that all Ethiopians home and abroad should be aware of the visible and invisible conspiracies of foreign enemies.

As to him, Ethiopians should stand together in defending the false accusations of the enemies and enhance national solidarity, peace, and harmony to counter all odds more than ever.

Those who refused to collaborate with Ethiopia's initiative on GERD have been digging deep to stop the GERD construction, he underscored.

However, the Ethiopian government has been fulfilling its part to reach on a win-win agreements over the dam, he said.

"Ethiopia, the 86% Nile River water



contributor is constructing the Dam to brighten and change the lives of millions, not to harm the lower riparian countries. Some Egyptians are immersed with accusing Ethiopia though they understood GERD will not have an impact on their water shares," he noted.

Currently, the successful accomplishment of the GERD third round reservoir filling

and the operation of second turbine have changed the non-stop Egyptian's baseless narratives.

Accordingly, the GERD will reduce the disastrous flash flood risk in Sudan and Egypt and allow them to get sufficient electric power if agreed to deal with Ethiopia peacefully.

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WHO chief in spotlight over breaching UN's code of conduct

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom (PhD) has brazenly

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Gov't invites investors to bid for eight sugar enterprises

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- The government has invited investors to submit expression of interest to tender in process of eight sugar

See Gov't invites Page 3

News



Institute focuses on utilizing GERD tourism potentials

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA- Hotel and Tourism Training Institute announced that intensive research is being done so as to exploit and utilize the tourism potentials of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), the Institute Deputy Director Gezahign Abate said that the institute is doing study aiming at benefiting out of the tourism potentials of the GERD that will be created upon its completion.

Accordingly, preliminary researches were underway in a way to exploit the tourism potentials thereby helping the nation benefit out of the sector, he said.

He further stated that apart from generating power and other benefits, the GERD will have significant impact in boosting the tourism potentials of the country via offering the country with a range of benefits. Different islands and other tourism sites will be created up on the completion of the GERD and those islands will create huge economic potential in tourism sector, he noted.

“At the vicinity of the dam, hotels, water transport corridors, fishing centers and other water transport services will be created. Those things are sources of tourist attraction sites,” he said.

Cooperating with concerning stakeholders such as Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Labour and Skills and others, the institute is working to make various areas one of the best tourist destination by providing all necessary services which befit the project areas in particular and the country in general. Apart from attracting tourist, the area will create ample jobs for citizens, he stated.

The study consists of different issues ranging from creating jobs, attracting tourists, facilitating conditions for investors and other related issues. Accordingly, the institute is undertaking preliminary activity to train and provide skilled human resources that serves in areas of resorts, spas, hotels, tour operators and other service providing institutions, he indicated.

Minister calls on compatriots to keep cultural values

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

DEBRE TABOR - Conserving and developing the country’s diversified cultural values will have significant socio-economic contributions, Minister of Industry Melaku Alebel said.

During the celebration of 4th round *Buhe* festival at Debre Tabor Mountain Eyesus church, Minister Melaku said that the Ministry of Tourism and its subsequent offices should fulfill their responsibilities of promoting the country’s ancient cultural and religious values to the rest of the world.

As to him, well promoting the cultural values will have an indispensable role in supporting the country’s endeavors to register a sustainable socio-economic growth.

“Our forefathers/mothers sacrificed a lot to inherit us these essential values. To this end, tourism bureaus, concerned institutions including the society should exert their responsibility to promote and preserve these values,” he said.



This year’s *Buhe* festival celebration is unique where Ethiopia has successfully defended the internal and external enemy’s sabotages to disintegrate it, he added.

Moreover, *Buhe* celebration organizes and unites people from all walks of life and

efforts should be exerted to promote similar festivals given their societal roles.

Accordingly, numerous participants have attended the celebration and the minister also expressed his best wishes to the participants and all Ethiopians who celebrate *Buhe*.

Agency inks MoU to reconstruct education, health institutions

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA-The Ethiopian Diaspora Agency (EDA) Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Health in a bid to reconstruct education and health institutions which were severely affected by the Terrorist TPLF.

Briefing journalists, the agency Director General Mohammed Endris said that the main objective of the agreement is to increase the active participation of the Diasporas community in country’s overall development.

Accordingly, the EDA has been carrying out various activities during the past three years by coordinating the Diasporas community.

So far, the Diaspora community has contributed 3.46 billion Birr for the past three plus years, of this, some 1.6 billion Birr secured in the current Ethiopian fiscal year.

As to him, though the Diasporas community has been contributing a lot in fostering the development of the nation lack of adequate collaboration and modern system are challenges to obtain more benefit from the Diasporas community during the past years.

The MoU would play significant roles in realizing the reconstruction of health and educational institutions by creating the platform and trust to the Diasporas community to support the motherland, he said.

He called upon the Diasporas community to contribute their part in the country’s overall



Photo: Hadush Abreha

development endeavours.

For her part, Health Minister Lia Tadesse (MD) said that the Terrorist TPLF group has caused massive damages on the health sector.

Following this, numerous people have been exposed to difficulties of accessing health services, she added.

To reduce this challenge the Ministry has been carrying out various activities in collaboration with various stakeholders.

As to her, the Ministry has collected over 600 million Birr from various supports to realize the reconstruction of the health institutions.

“Out of damaged 42 hospitals in Amhara state, 10 hospitals are renovated and now providing full service. Currently, 134 health centers have been providing daily services out of 458 health centers after reconstruction process,” she noted.

Likewise, there was massive damage on two hospitals in Afar state, according to her.

In addition, out of 41 damaged health centers in the state only 20 are commenced service partially.

Thus, such agreement is hopeful towards facilitating the speedy reconstruction of health and educational institutions, she added.

Education Minister Prof. Berhanu Nega said that the agreement will play an indispensable role to realize the reconstruction process through providing financial and in-kind supports.

“Three Thousand schools are damaged fully where 1,300 schools are damaged partially,” he said.

Accordingly, the Ministry of Education has been carrying out various activities to realize the reconstruction process during the past six months.

News

Ethiopia's value added avocado exports seen rising: MoA

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA- Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) stated that value added avocado exports have seen rising and the country is now attracting a number of local and foreign companies to involve in such business as well.

The value added avocado product is being produced in Agro Industrial Parks and exported to Middle East countries and others, it was learnt.

MoA, Horticulture Development Executive, Abdela Negash told local media that for instance in Yirgalem Agro Industrial Park, YBM Company exported 130 tons of processed avocados and earned 845,000 USD, while Senvado Company exported 240 tons of avocados and secured 1.5 million USD.

He added that last year Amhara state supplied 170 tons of avocado products to



market whereas Oromia state supplied 20 tons of avocados to market and totally 190 tons of avocados were exported.

He noted 30,000 ha will be promoted into 100,000 ha and plan to produce 81 million tons of avocados, and a project design has been developed for 15 year project is being undertaken and all states will get equal benefit in producing avocado following the model move.

Fruit Development Team Leader in East



Shoa Zone, Wolde Ebyssah said that they have organized local farmers in cluster level to massively export the avocado products.

He said, "We have been distributing the improved avocado products to the farmers and they are getting productive. We first commence in two woredas and expanding into other six ones."

Tesfaye Bedada is a farmer. He is producing avocado products in small plot of land in East Shoa Zone. He said, "I am supplying



avocado for local and foreign markets and have earned about 800,000 Birr in the just ended year. I am becoming productive right now."

Worku Bedada is another avocado producer in the area. He said: "We are exporting the product through cluster organization."

The avocado product has been exported to Europe, Middle East and neighboring nations, it was learnt.

T-TPLF fears peace, prefers conflict as survival strategy

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA-The Terrorist TPLF continues its aggression on peace and proved that it will always choose war and have no intention of negotiation with the Ethiopian government, so stated Addis Qnie (MD).

Addis Qnie tweeted that the Terrorist TPLF group can only survive if there is an active conflict.

In this regard, the terrorist group has exposed massive children to cannon fodder during the northern conflict.

However, the leaders of TPLF have no

compunction about sacrificing as many Tigray youth as needed, he noted.

Their system is one that converts these sacrifices into more time for the TPLF system of oppression.

Accordingly, the very nature of the terrorist group is committed crime against humanity such as slaughtered human beings, disseminated false narratives, demolished infrastructure, looted and destroyed public and private properties in the neighboring states of Amhara and Afar.

"TPLF backed by formidable western allies failed to deliver Addis and apparently lost their unqualified support. With thousands

sacrificed with nothing show in return, TPLF is stuck between a rock and a hard place," he indicated.

Cognizant that in mind, the group has been getting ready to launch an all-out attack against Afar and Amhara states instead of drawing important lessons from last mistakes which proves why the group would not be alive without conflict, according to him.

"This time the primary or at least the initial focus seems to be Afar. After all Abala is very close to Mekele and their supply line will not be overstretched as it was in North Shoa. TPLF knows that if Abala remains open, with aid flowing in freely, there will

be little or no appetite for Tigray youths to join its ranks or not turn against it. By attacking Abala, TPLF is trying to maintain its only remaining big fabrications alive."

Moreover, the terrorist group has been accusing the government of Ethiopia and international humanitarian aid agencies issues about not providing adequate humanitarian supply in Tigray state.

Besides, the group giving precondition is impossible to make effective negotiation in Ethiopia.

Accordingly, the humanitarian trucks have been shifting for the TPLF forces instead of providing the people in need.

T-TPLF gambling...

of the cruelty of the T-TPLF.

As a result, a large number of people of Tigray are fleeing into neighboring Amhara state in search of a better life, he added.

Apart from preventing the people from getting humanitarian assistance, the T-TPLF is enlisting children that are under the age of 15 by detaining them and threatening their

families, so said Lij Solomon, resident of Shire.

In his recent meeting with civilians, T-TPLF leader Debretsion Gebremichael (PhD) stated that any able ethnic-Tigrayan, who does not take part in the war, will not have full right to live in Tigray, and will not enjoy the same privileges as those who participate.

WHO chief...

violated the United Nations' (UN) code of conduct politicizing his position in order to push terrorist propaganda, so remarked Political Analyst.

In his recently published article, political analyst and journalist Andrew Korybko stated that: "Tedros is playing the race card exploiting the West's indisputably racist policies in order to manipulate the public into pressuring their governments to do more to revive their terrorist campaign against his own homeland. That is because the Ethiopian people successfully thwarted this existential threat."

According to him, Tedros is furious that their Western patrons have failed to provide more support for their Hybrid War of Terror on Ethiopia and will never accept that his compatriots united to successfully defeat

the TPLF. "Now, he is attempting to turn Westerners against their government by manipulating them into thinking that their authorities are racist against people of Tigray."

The scaling back of support for the terrorist TPLF as evidenced by the comparatively less intense information warfare against Ethiopia as of late, he stated.

As to him, proxy forces have been defeated by the Ethiopian people throughout the course of the nearly past two years of conflict that the West itself provoked. Its racist intentions to divide and rule the country so as to perpetually exploit them in economic ways remain intact.

Despite Tedros being from Africa, he is nowadays indisputably nothing but a Western neo-imperialist asset, he noted.

Gov't invites...

enterprises.

In its press release issued yesterday, Ministry of Finance (MoF) stated that both international and domestic investors are openly welcomed to participate in the tendering of 8 state-owned sugar enterprises namely Omo Kuraz 1, Omo Kuraz 2, Omo Kuraz 3, Omo Kuraz 5, Arjo Dedessa, Kessem, Tana Beles, and Tendaho.

Explaining the reasons for the auction, MoF stated that the government initiated a holistic sugar sector reform aiming at increasing private sector participation in the ownership and control of sugar companies to sustain rapid and inclusive economic growth by laying the ground for economic transformation that leverages the increasing role of the private sector.

Accordingly, the bid is aimed at improving competitiveness and increasing sugar production to meet domestic demand.

"This will save Ethiopia from spending substantial foreign exchange used in importing sugar.

The improved performance of the sector will in turn increase incomes and improve

the standard of living for the population that relies on sugar cane plantations as the main source of livelihood in sugar-growing regions of Ethiopia," it was stated.

The proposed transaction presents an excellent investment opportunity to interested investors to acquire up to 100% of the sugar enterprises, most of which are newly constructed factories with built-in trunk infrastructure, abundant water, land resources, and excellent cane-growing agro-climate conditions.

In addition to sugar production, the enterprises engage in the production of ethanol and electricity for internal use and to supply to the national grid, *The Ethiopian Herald* learnt.

To ensure a transparent and efficient transaction process, the government of Ethiopia appointed Ernst & Young LLP as the lead transaction adviser to assist with the transaction process.

Interested local and international firms or consortia can register their interest by submitting an Expression of Interest (EOI) to participate in the proposed opportunity, MoF announced.

Opinion

Perception is reality in political affairs

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Political analysts think that “perception is reality in politics” The real performance of political parties could be analyzed using conceptual distinctions between “democracy as a means of interest optimization, democracy as a way of fostering civic orientation among citizens, and democracy as a mechanism of popular choice and control of government.” Based on the first two distinctions, Paul Webb points out that parties appear to be largely failing democracy, but they remain important mechanisms by which a significant degree of popular choice and control can be achieved. However, it is believed in Ethiopia that they are “more” challenged and less appreciated than was once the case. This may reflect “changes” in popular perception in the country than a shift in the real performance of parties. That being the case, it is not clear if institutional reforms in Ethiopia that aim to improve party performance will necessarily achieve their goal.

Political parties in Ethiopia, as in so many other developing countries, are seen as disappointing in their performance. Some of them even fail to fulfill the requirements to register as parties. Moreover, there is evidence of detachment, alienation, indifference, boredom and apathy among citizens regarding political parties. There is, therefore, an urgent need to study the causes of public disappointment in political parties. There is also an urgent need for explanations and for means to put things right. Normally, the blame for such political crises is piled on several groups. These are parties and politicians that operate secretly. Thus, the political system is bound to face criticism from several quarters. Also, the blame lies on the mass media, and occasionally even on the public itself. Studies should examine the nature and causes of public discontent and disappointment by addressing the failings of political parties and interest groups “real and perceived.”

To what extent one classifies parties as failing depends largely on his/her perception of democracy. In this regard, observers consider it useful to identify basic elements of democracy. The first democratic element is interest optimization, the second civic orientation, and the third popular choice and control. These three perspectives are used to analyze the current performance of parties in the developing countries to find out if they are failing. With regard to interest optimization, the political party has to be democratic, and for that “rules or procedures” must be employed to bring about results. These outcomes promote or defend the interests of the largest number of people involved. From this perspective, there are basic roles of parties in fostering democracy. These roles focus indirectly on the political functions of expression and combination of interests. Any failure in fulfilling these roles relegates parties as

incompetent.

In party politics there is an increasing role of “interest groups” as articulators of perceived public demands. For some, this represents a major challenge to parties, as it reflects their failure to perform their perceived but unrealistic goals. Interest groups, however, are problematic from the perspective of political parties. They tend to take drastic measures as organizations than parties. The increasing number of single interest associations is part of the problem for the aggregation of related interest groups. However, in any democratic political system, political parties have to bring together several group interests into coherent policy packages. This process involves prioritization of interests and generates coalitions of support. This is essential to the effectiveness and stability of the political system. But, politicians are quick to note the problems caused by an explosion of interest groups which is not matched by a rise in “accommodative” capacity of a political system.

Studies have confirmed that the expansion of political agendas to accommodate new debates over social development, economic progress, environmental quality, multiculturalism and other social and cultural issues make it very difficult for governments to satisfy most of the people most of the time. However, it is difficult to see any alternative or a substitute to a political party for the aggregation of political demands. Single issue groups may rival parties addressing several issues, but they are not able to bring together a multiplicity of interests into a coherent program. Thus, interest “aggregation” remains a major but difficult party function. It is virtually impossible to satisfy people’s demands in an optimal way, unless policy is made in pure two party contexts, but this is unrealistic in Ethiopia as there are so many parties contending for power to lead the country to prosperity.

The second element of democracy is “civic orientation.” Democracy is not fully realized until citizens express their shared interests. Participation in the democratic process is vital to the political enlightenment of citizens if they are to develop civic orientation. Activists have, therefore, placed political participation and enlightenment high on their criteria for the evaluation of democracy and its institutions. Also, the aggregation of demands which expresses the public interest is important to this approach.

Contemporary political parties in the developing countries, including Ethiopia, are unlikely to perform well by these criteria of standards. In addition, there are a number of issues to be raised. It might be argued that parties are inimical since they tend to articulate and foster narrow group interests to the detriment of the wider community. It can be argued that contending parties in a country can do little to instill such notion of civic orientation.

With focus on parties in the real world of today, the vision of a one and indivisible people is a high standard, which is not realistic and, therefore, unnecessary. Political scientists agree that there has never been a time since the onset of democracy when one could say that it was fully realized. And yet there was clearly a time when parties and political elites were more “favorably” looked upon by the people in both the developed and developing countries. This, however, does nothing to help understand why parties have fallen into such disfavor in the real world of today. But, any kind of community consciousness, including group identity based on region, class, religion or ethnicity, may qualify as existing in the current real world. In this situation, parties play a central role in fostering such community identities in many countries, including Ethiopia.

The demise of identity politics and mass parties based on social groups or religious denominations is currently reviving from its dormant situation. Some citizens now feel themselves to be wedded to particular parties as an expression of social identity and interest. Their perceptions of social interest depend critically on the presentation of politics by the mass media. The political parties may “not” be able perform the role of the media in the social integration of certain groups or citizens.

Consequently, parties become more vulnerable to the impact of political mass media that converts the perceptions of parties into a reality. This is caused by the “failure” of political parties to channel and foster political participation of the party members and the people at large. It is possible to point to the increased participatory rights which parties have offered their members to elect leaders. But, it is not possible to ignore the decline in membership.

Decline in membership has been a threat to the survival of political parties in the developing countries. Most of the registered electors were members of the major parties with nationwide branches. By the time of the general election, less than a few percent were able to vote. The tremendous decline of membership has been the result of diminishing levels of party activism, declining level of interest in politics and disinterest of party apparatchiks.

Electoral turnout appeared to have moved in the same direction. All of this suggests that political parties are at best irrelevant, at worst downright uncontrolled, obsessive and irrational. It is not surprising that one of the major sources of attack on parties today comes from the party members and alternate leaders that move against party programs. These are mainly aspirants that failed to secure real power within the party hierarchy.

The alternate party leaders who failed to rise to the apex of power argue that the solution

to the perceived problems of democratic systems lies in the absence of participatory opportunities. They propose that political reforms must provide for greater direct engagement in politics. Those who failed also argue that the political system has failed to keep pace with social changes and developments. As it is managed by elites detached and disengaged from those they are supposed to serve, many of party supporters are, therefore, turning away from politics altogether. The solution to this problem may be the creation of a “culture” of political engagement in which leaders and decision makers extract direct input from citizens.

The citizens may be given the right to “initiate” legislative acts, public inquiries, reviews and hearings. In this regard, Information Technology/IT may allow citizens to directly participate in political decisions.

Despite efforts by political parties, there is a trend in political apathy, cynicism and declining participation by citizens. But, politicians desire for profound and widespread political commitment of the people. The principal reason for growing political disaffection among Africans, including Ethiopians, is the rising expectation they have of governments that could not satisfy the needs of the people.

People’s demands are difficult to satisfy with meager productive resources that are at the disposal of the state. The tax base is narrow and revenues of governments are not enough to meet the demands of people. Moreover, the abuse of power and misuse of scarce resources by the bureaucrats discourage the citizens. People lose faith in the politicians that failed to correct the civil service they guided while in power. Unfortunately, the politicians seemed to encourage corruption and theft while they were in power. They might “not” perceive of coming to power through re-election.

These perceptions are real and most pronounced among the young, the better educated and the more affluent. These are likely to benefit from the spread of affluence. Their expectations increase the most, as their tendency to criticize political elites, institutions and processes are on the rise. The purpose of their criticism is to discredit the political entities before election and claim access to power. Authority and power in Africa, as well as Ethiopia, is a useful means of amassing wealth. Most of the young political aspirants want to have access to power to distribute a nation’s wealth to party apparatchiks, friends and relatives through appointments at all posts of government. These posts are instrumental in accessing resources of the country by the party officials. They do not represent a threat to neither the ruling party nor the leader.

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

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The Ethiopian Herald

Editorial

Misusing high profile to twist truth is unethical !

Despite the fact that the Ethiopian government has exerted its maximum effort to provide humanitarian assistance in collaboration with the aid organizations, WHO Chief Tedros Adhanom (PhD) has kept up propagating terrorist TPLF's rhetoric stance that is aimed to impede the intended peace talks. Misusing his high position in the international organization, Tedros purposely covered TPLF's role in isolating Tigray people from the rest of Ethiopians and its heinous activities to inculcate abominable feeling among its own people towards its brothers and sisters.

People of Tigray, on the contrary, showed its fraternity with the rest of Ethiopian people when seeking shelter in the neighboring Amhara region fleeing TPLF's suffocative control. Dr. Tedros wrongly used the expression that Tigray people have been under siege from Ethiopian and Eritrean forces. It would be right if he used it to the terrorist TPLF the group that has stolen and misused humanitarian food aid during the war and used it to forcibly conscript youths.

According to the recent media briefing from Office of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, using the race card and multilateral position to garner sympathy of global north for personal partisan politics is quite unethical for such a high profile position. However, unethical statement made by the WHO Chief is not surprising, as to the office.

Ethiopia's government, as of the PMO Press Secretary, has no doubt that the UN will review the continued breach of the UN's office by Tedros. The office clearly requires UN staff to act with impartiality and independence.

If the WHO Chief wishes to continue amplifying and reflecting

rhetoric of terrorist designated organization TPLF, it is advisable to resign himself from the high level of global position.

Furthermore, the recent T-TPLF accusation or narrative coming from it or the other side is no less than a mechanism to deflect from or not to engage in peace talks. However, Ethiopia's government is ready to engage in it.

It is vividly clear that if the issue of peace talks is aborted, it would be because of stubborn behavior of the T-TPLF as the government has demonstrated on several occasions the confidence building measures that it has taken to facilitate peace and to create an enabling environment for peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Despite WHO Chief's accusation against the Ethiopian government, stating that humanitarian assistance to the Tigray people has been denied; various partners are confirming humanitarian assistance reaching Mekele, Tigray for the intended beneficiaries as a result of the humanitarian truce that had been enacted by the government.

One can easily understand that the war mongering propaganda from the side of the terrorist group and the defamation of the WHO Director General are indicators that party is not ready for the peace talks. Rather, they are repeating the dangerous track record that has been immersed Ethiopians, the government and the Tigray people into many complications.

Unless the terrorist group turned back from such destructive trajectory, the damage to happen against the people will be irreversible. Thus, the international community especially the UN has to back the government's effort to prevail peace for the sake of benefit of both sides and stability of the region.

Opinion

You're either with us or against us: A mockery of multilateralism!

BY YEDAALA SHOTTE

People still remember the statement of former U.S. President George W. Bush at the launch of his anti-terrorism campaign following the September 11 attacks. He said, "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists". Under normal circumstances, the phrase "You are either with us or against us" is undiplomatic, generates polarization and belittles partnership. But extraordinary challenges, as they say, call for extraordinary measures. And President Bush was right back then.

It was terrible, what the terrorists, particularly Al-Qaeda, did to American citizens. Without doubt, it should have been similarly condemned if it had happened anywhere else. It was not unexpected to witness individuals from practically every country on the globe empathizing with the American people in their sorrow, wishing them sincere solace and understanding the indignation and anger of the American government.

However, it is ludicrous and equally concerning to see that the US routinely uses the adage "either with us or against us" to further many of its goals years after the September 11 attacks. To even a distant onlooker, it seems "You are either with us or against us" is becoming the modus operandi of the United States' foreign policy. The absurdity of the situation is increased by the UN's refusal to acknowledge the clear

evidence of unilateral coercive actions that undermine the basic justifications for its existence.

Finding examples shouldn't take too much time or effort. Do you recall the 2019 discussions between Ethiopia, Sudan, and Egypt over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam that the United States attempted to mediate? Ethiopia declined to sign the paper that the US Secretary of the Treasury had created to arbitrate the parties to the negotiations in Washington. Ethiopia thought the paper was prejudiced and that Egypt may have initialled it. What did the Trump administration do? It placed Ethiopia under sanctions by denying it access to a \$200 million fund. In an impolite and arrogant manner, President Trump openly recommended that Egypt bomb the Renaissance Dam. To make matters worse, the UN was hauling Ethiopia before the Security Council as though the development project of the GERD was a worldwide security problem.

We are aware of how the US handled the "issues" that encountered in Iraq and Libya. While Libya was destroyed as a result of a unilateral action taken by the US and its allies, the invasion of Iraq was made feasible by falsifying information and hiding behind the UN's institutional guarantee. The countries were shattered beyond measure in a unilateral move that was made against the principles of the UN Charter that promised peace and security, the rule of law and the protection of human

rights for its member states.

We are currently seeing examples of how the UN charter's tenets are being disregarded in order to serve the interests of the West, particularly the United States. It is sufficient to observe how the conflict between Russia and Ukraine is portrayed. The G7 meeting's conclusion, which portrayed China as a security threat, was also an affront to multilateralism, which was promoted as a means of fostering the world's much-needed international cooperation. Even against the One-China Policy that the US accepted long ago, the unwarranted escalation of tensions, as seen in Nancy Pelosi's recent visit to Taiwan, would only endanger global peace and security.

Powerful nations have always engaged in fierce competition for supremacy. This fact could not be changed in terms of the rivalry between China and the United States. However, the destructive length to which the United States is willing to go to undermine China in order to safeguard its global geopolitical, economic, and commercial interests endangers the growth and security of less developed countries.

One of the tenets of the United Nations is to promote global development. China is doing that brilliantly. In contrast to China's concrete infrastructural development, the United States offers developing countries a "one size fits all democracy" as an alternative. The US's standard answer when emerging nations express a blatant

preference for China's non-interference policy in the internal affairs of sovereign nations is, "You are either with us or against us." This is the question: Is it possible for nations to independently support or oppose causes that affect their security, progress, and sovereignty?

When all you have is a hammer, you tend to perceive everything as a nail, and that's how the United States has been acting. Being powerful and wealthy does not give you the right to oppress people and crush others at your whims. That made it necessary to form both the League of Nations, which utterly failed to fulfil its objectives and the United Nations later on. The League of Nations is no more because of the conceit of certain nations, who used it to further their own goals at the expense of other countries like Ethiopia.

History teaches us only when we are teachable. Only if we adhere to the principles of multilateralism we will be able to prevent the United Nations from suffering the same fate as the League of Nations. If the UN actually wants to defend its principles, it should discourage unilateral coercive actions. Unilateral measures will only take us back to square one: insecurity, mistrust, and anarchy.

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

Art & Culture

In the age of fake news, how social media sabotage ethical journalism

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

According to some media pundits, the rise and growth of social media nowadays are increasingly creating both opportunities and perils to society at large. On balance, the opportunities outweigh the perils although the latter are becoming more dangerous to the life, stability and aspirations of people around the world. In Africa, social media is fast becoming the number one negative phenomenon to destabilize the traditions, cultures and peaceful coexistence of otherwise closely interconnected communities.

For that matter, all social media activities are not destructive to African societies. Yet, a few of them are causing disproportionately greater harm to them. According to the same media gurus, one of the problems is the underdevelopment of media culture and the fragility of democratic ethos.

The absence of media professionalism in Ethiopia has always proved a serious stumbling block on the road to ethical journalism. Since its advent back in the 1940s, the media in Ethiopia have suffered and still suffering from lack of professionalism for many reasons. One of the reasons is the absence of well-trained or educated journalists in the field. Until very recently or before the establishment of the department journalism under Addis Ababa University, there was no local institution with the mandate to produce professional or ethical journalists in the country.

True, there were a few individuals who returned from Western countries, mainly from the United States and Britain after completing studies in journalism as a profession. These people formed the first batches of trainees in modern journalism that subsequently played influential roles in the print as well as broadcast media. During the three decades before the Ethiopian revolution of 1974, these professionals shaped and promote a media culture, particularly in print media, based on the main tenets of ethical journalism even though they were hired by the government or worked as a group of highly competent writers news stories or featured articles.

Historically, media competence and professionalism started to decline after the 1974 revolution when student activists from the University started to play the role of informal sources of public information through their various on-campus political publications that were also circulating outside the walls of University campuses. The authors of these publications were educated youngsters who had little knowledge of public information and less media ethics and responsibilities. Their publications were not newspapers per se, but leaflets and fliers focusing on the burning issues of the time meant to agitate the public and mobilize it for action.

During the years of military government in Ethiopia between 1974 and 1991, the media continued to be exclusively owned

and controlled by the government. Only publications carrying information lauding the achievements of the revolution and the revolutionary government were allowed to circulate. Most of the writers, editors and broadcasters who worked in the state media had no basic training in media culture or media ethics and reflected only the official views of the government or the then ruling single party.

The end of military rule in 1991 and the establishment of the EPRDF-ruled government had created some hope for media diversity and tolerance. However, such a hope proved short-lived as the Press Law narrowed the boundaries of freedom although it allowed the emergence of a private press in the history of the country. The private press flourished as a consequence without giving sufficient attention to the training and professionalism of the journalists working for private newspapers and magazines.

Amateurism was therefore the basic characteristic of journalism in the government as well as the private press. Media ethics was disregarded or completely ignored. Politics took the upper hand and shaped the views and modus operandi of the journalists. Ethical journalism was either unknown or overlooked and amateurism set the standards of print as well as broadcast journalism. This trend has continued and even becomes worse with the advent of social media platforms that turned anyone with a computer and an internet connection into a "journalist". No doubt that the development of media technology has improved the pace and reach of the social media.

Yet, it has done this at the cost of infringement of the basic principles of media ethics such as truthfulness, objectivity, impartiality and plausibility in news reporting or feature writing and broadcasting. Ethical journalism thus continues to be the soft underbelly of Ethiopian journalism whose infringement of professionalism has become one of its distinctive features as a result of the subversion of social media that do not respect any laws or moral standards and are conducted by blind emotion, partisanship, not by reason, national interests or objectivity. Public interests are therefore sacrificed on the altars of sensationalism and the search for financial gains at the cost of information, communication or knowledge.

However, it is not still too late for Ethiopian journalism, both private and official, to evolve in the direction of ethical journalism if they aspire at all to serve as public watchdogs or promote freedom and democracy. Ethical journalism involves, among other things, avoidance by journalists a conflict of interest in their profession.

Conflict of interest occurs when journalists try to live up to commitments or obligations that violate their standards of professional behavior or whenever they try to accommodate their political preferences or accommodate their egos and personal interests in an environment of divided

loyalty.

The strong symbiosis between politics and journalism in Ethiopia was, as we saw above, and continues to be, one of the threats or challenges that have been leading journalists to behave both as politicians and newsmen; something that contradicted the basic principles of impartiality or undivided loyalty to the profession.

Through time, it would definitely be in the interest of the profession for journalists to separate these two distinctive roles. It is bound to require more time and maturity on their part to de-politicize their profession and make it free from the pitfalls of fierce partisan conflicts.

In this time of growing social media influences, journalists cannot act in the way of politicians without compromising the core ethical principles of their profession. Someone may be an athlete and a politician at the same time but one cannot play the role of journalist and politician at the same time although journalists might have political opinions of their own. They should however take care not to color their journalistic work with political opinions in the course of their news reporting in particular as it is often the case in these times of growing social media influences that are often contrary to national interests.

In the recent past, most journalists of the private press operated outside the direct influence of politicians or parties although some of them might have strong links to the latter. The convergence of opinions between newspaper editors and politicians was largely a reflection of the hostile attitude some of the former Derg party cadres maintained and spread after they assumed key positions in the nascent private publishing business.

This was a phenomenon common to most post-communist societies in Eastern Europe where former communist party cadres found themselves in a position where they could use their money and connections in the old unreformed communist bureaucracy to promote their businesses and make money in the process.

The other quality required by ethical journalism is competence. Journalists working both in the government and the private press need to raise their levels of knowledge and skills if they aspire to serve the public, the truth, freedom or democracy in a better and more effective way.

The prevailing tendency in Ethiopian journalism is the false sense of competence and achievement bordering on arrogance that prevailed among many journalists of both the government and the private press. As a consequence of this, many of them failed to look at their activities rather critically or strive to make serious improvements.

There was also an acute lack of striving for better professional standards. The prevalence of an exaggerated sense of achievement even among the relatively

more experienced journalists had prevented ethical journalism from becoming a reality. Competence or lack of it, may be the number one ethical problem in the field.

Journalists cannot obviously make any impact on their society or the way it is governed unless they do away with their sense of false pride and strive to learn, learn and learn. Journalists are not obviously saints who do not commit professional sins. They are ordinary mortals and in a country with complex political and professional challenges and with so little experience in professional journalism, they are expected to sin more often than not.

Journalists should nevertheless have the courage to face their own shortcomings or their professional incompetence and display equal determination to improve their skills and knowledge of their profession. Journalistic ethics thrives on quality and not on mediocrity.

One of the biggest challenges facing Ethiopian journalists today is also winning respect and distinction from the public and if possible from the government through ethical and quality work. These are serious times when journalists need to learn and relearn the tools of their trade in the context of changing political environments. As a case in point, terrorism is increasingly becoming difficult not only to contain but also to report about. Therefore, journalists need to balance objective reporting and national interests.

As one critic noted, "Some critics suggested that the media might avoid excesses by delaying reports on terrorist attacks. Journalists, with few exceptions, argued that the public had a right to know what was happening and that to delay or black out reports could lead to wild rumors and panic...some news organizations adopted formal guidelines calling for full coverage of the news but for responsible restraint to avoid playing into the hands of terrorists."

The speedy growth of social media might be irresistible from the technological and economic point of view. Yet, the destructive impacts of negative social media activities should be contained by laws that would undercut their influences and discourage their subversion against society. Many African societies are being rocked by conflicts and wars that may not be started through social media but are aggravated through the so-called political activists bent on misinforming, misleading and messing up their lives.

For African journalists operating anywhere, the major task is to preserve traditional media ethics and fight tooth and nails against amateurism, mediocrity, irresponsibility verging on media sadism. Professional should therefore be defended against the amateurish, ignorant and sadistic activities of all those bent to destroy communities, societies or national entities by spreading falsehood, baseless rumors and character assassinations and hate speech.

Law & Politics

Incumbent's unflinching resolve towards peace in the face of T-TPLF's war-mongering acts

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Notwithstanding the fact that the criminal enterprise has continued beating the drums of war and mystifying the international community with fictitious stories that do not reflect the existing reality on the ground, the incumbent has been many a time and oft moving heaven and earth intending to make peace happen.

Though the federal government has been going to the ends of the earth to restore peace and stability, the ragtag group has sustained getting itself involved in saber-rattling undertakings. As nothing makes the criminal enterprise happier than moving the country into uncharted waters, playing the victim card, and laying the blame on the federal government, the group every so often has been coming up with layers of conspiracies as usual to perplex the international community.

For the sake of truth the wicked deeds of the ragtag group sooner rather than later brought forth a humanitarian crisis in the northern region of the country at the earliest possible juncture. Among other things, it should not be forgotten that the belligerent group has played a part in summary killings, gang rape, ransacking, making huge infrastructure and other criminal deeds happen.

On the heels of the unwarranted pressure from the international community and the criminal acts of the low-rated international media outlets' fabricated stories, the Terrorist TPLF group has turned the lives of noncombatants residing in the northern region of the country upside down. It is not an overstatement to say the criminal enterprise's nefarious deeds have nosedived the nation into socioeconomic and political challenges.

In the face of the unceasing evil deeds of the criminal enterprise aimed at moving the country into uncharted territory and turning the lives of noncombatants into a living hell, the federal government has been extending an olive branch emphasizing on ensuring peace and tranquility. As sitting down at the peace talk table for the ragtag group is tantamount to a bitter pill to swallow, it has been coming up with a wide spectrum of lame reasons to distance itself from the proposed peace deal by the government.

In addition to ruling with an iron fist in pursuance of staying in power in the region, the disgruntled group has been making use of the people of Tigray as cannon fodder and human shield. Albeit the people of Tigray protest against the criminal deeds at all hours of day and night, the latter has been giving them a hard time giving the cold shoulder to the prevailing situation on the ground.

As things currently stand, the incumbent has been making every possible effort to get to the bottom of the problem in an atmosphere of calm and deescalate tension unfolding in the northern part of the country. It is noteworthy to mention the federal government managed to declare a unilateral truce and withdraw its troops from the Tigray state after undertaking



the law enforcement operations with flying colors.

It is no secret that the envisioned target of the law enforcement operations was to demilitarize the criminal group, put law and order into effect, bring outlaws to justice, and do other things of a similar kind.

Disappointedly, in spite of the unflinching stance of the government for peace, the Terrorist TPLF group kicked off invading the Afar and Amhara states and incurred human and material damage. But above and beyond giving peace a chance, the incumbent released TPLF's infamous frontrunners from prison in addition to giving the green light to unfettered access to humanitarian aid.

Following the positive moves of the government, humanitarian assistance embarked on entering the Tigray states via road and air at the earliest possible time. In consideration of the foregoing, the people of Tigray have been getting much-needed humanitarian assistance more than ever before and saving millions of lives. But as the group does not believe in sitting for peace talks and making peace happen, it has set in motion again and again perplexing the international community with imaginary stories.

In a similar vein, the group has sustained its belligerent acts against the federal government's unreserved efforts for peace.

The Peace Committee has underscored the need to conclude a ceasefire agreement as soon as possible in order to ensure a sustained provision of humanitarian aid, facilitate the resumption of basic services, and resolve the conflict peacefully.

Meanwhile, the Peace Committee established to lead the peace talks with the Terrorist TPLF group briefed the diplomatic corps residing in Addis its progress to date, the current situation in the northern part of the country, and other related issues.

It was learnt that the Chairperson of the Committee and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Demeke Mekonnen as well as members of the Committee Justice Minister Gedion Timothewos (PhD) and Security Advisor to the Prime Minister Redwan Hussien has extensively discussed government's commitment to resolve the conflict in northern part of the country peacefully and recent developments regarding

the peace talks.

Demeke restated that the federal government has made several attempts to peacefully resolve the conflict, and undertaken various confidence building measures. For instance, he added, it has declared a unilateral humanitarian truce, lifted the state of emergency, halted the advance of its troops to Mekelle, released detainees suspected of being affiliated with the T-TPLF, and established National dialogue Commission, among others.

According to press release given to media, on top of these measures, the government is endeavoring and making a serious effort to ensure enduring peace. The Committee, in its discussion has emphasized the imperative of alleviating the suffering of citizens in the conflict affected parts of the Tigray, Afar and Amhara regional states.

The Committee has underscored that there is a need to conclude a ceasefire agreement as soon as possible. To expedite this process, it has deliberated upon and adopted a peace proposal that would lead to the conclusion of a ceasefire and lay the foundation for future political dialogue.

The Committee has decided that the proposal should be communicated to the African Union High Representative as soon as possible. Furthermore, the Committee has noted that to facilitate an expedited resumption of basic services within the enabling environment that would be created once a ceasefire is concluded, all necessary preparations are being undertaken.

According to the Committee, all effort is being exerted in collaboration with the African Union so that it would be possible to determine the venue and time for talks and to begin peace talks quickly and to conclude a ceasefire agreement shortly.

The Committee has urged the appropriate subcommittees and taken note that the federal government already instructed service providing institutions to carry out the necessary activities for the implementation of these decisions.

The Committee has commended the support that Ethiopians have shown to the peace effort and calls on the public at large to strengthen and continue this support. The Committee has also called upon the international community to stand with the African Union and play a

constructive role towards the success of the peace effort.

Prime Minister Office Press Secretary, Billene Seyoum, in a press briefing said: "The Government of Ethiopia affirms it is ready at any time and at any place suggested to engage in peace talks under the auspices of the AU led process....The issue of restoration of services comes up again and again as if there is an on and off switch centrally located. This is an erroneous and dangerous view of how service that is disrupted due to conflict and related damage is administered."

Terrorist TPLF is solely buying time for being capacitated under the name of peace talks as it has publicly refused to disarm and forwarded prerequisites that make the proposed talks to be unsuccessful, so remarked an ethnic Tigray activist.

Speaking to local media, activist Natnael Asmelash said that as he has been struggling T-TPLF and on several occasions expressed his discontents about the group for long time, he is well aware of the true nature of T-TPLF's leaders and cadres.

"Terrorist TPLF is good for nothing and the people of Tigray have never supported T-TPLF except some opportunists sharing every benefit with the group." Talking about the current situation in Tigray, he stated that T-TPLF has made the entire Tigray in general and Mekelle in particular living hell, and devoid of everything as well as the thugs have violated the constitution as they set up military unconstitutionally since the constitution stipulates that states only do have militia and other lower security forces.

As to him, it is not surprising that T-TPLF slaughtered northern command and innocent civilians since they killed their colleagues asleep and reached this level under the guise of negotiation. T-TPLF groups by their very nature have never believed in peace talk, peaceful way and amicable fashion. And the peace talk might be effective if they disarm and hold headmasters of severe crime accountable.

He said: "Ethiopia will be peaceful and safe when T-TPLF leaders vanish for good or become willing to disarm and comply with Ethiopian national rules and regulations." Responding to the question revolving around the issue of Diaspora, he said the Tigray Diaspora have to think twice to give a sigh of relief for the remaining Tigray people as the lives of about 600,000 youth had been claimed.

"Now Tigray is converted into an earthly hell, a source of all evil as many are dying live, devoid of every infrastructure and other necessary things due to the multifarious problems created by themselves since they solely struggling for assuming power," he added.

He also said that they should know that they have created all this havoc and come to the peaceful track for the wellbeing of all Ethiopians in general and that of Tigray people in particular.

If companies want to be competitive, they have to embrace quality

Gift Mbaya

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

With the coming of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), a lot of opportunities are likely to be created for enterprises. But the opportunities are not going to come alone. They are going to be accompanied by many challenges, ups and downs.

Companies or enterprises with experiences would play a pivotal role in facilitating the smooth functioning and progress of development under the framework of AfCFTA. BASF, a German company engaged in diverse fields of manufacturing advises the business community to give due focus to the issue of quality, among all other factors.

Herald Guest for today is BASF, one of the biggest chemical companies producing a lot of chemicals in the world. Based in Germany, the company was established 150 years ago. Today, it has factories and businesses all over the world. Globally, it has 85 business units. Textiles, toothpaste, soap, hair, food, and beer products used BASF chemicals as ingredients.

In short, it assists companies of various kinds by supplying chemicals and expertise to produce quality products.

The Ethiopian Herald spent less than an hour with the company's Business Lead and General Manager Gift Mbaya to know more about the company and how the company operated and the value it brings to Ethiopia's development. Excerpts;

The company has opened a new office in Djibouti and come up with a new system. Would you tell us about it in brief?

Recently, the company opened a free zone in Djibouti which is located 23 kilometers outside the capital on the road that takes to Ethiopia. We have our warehousing. So, the purpose of establishing this facility is to minimize the time it used to take from the production until the end user part. Previously, Ethiopian clients would purchase their products directly from Germany. A need to shorten the lead time from 120 days to 45 days, therefore, became necessary to enhance access to BASF products and services in the growing Ethiopian market.

Easier access to Letter of Credit (LC), Shorter lead times, the possibility of partial shipments, an office set up

in Djibouti to support the logistics process, and foreign currency burden is eased with this process to ensure efficient services to our customers in Ethiopia.

How do you protect the quality of products that are imported to African companies?

Our quality is the same. The quality in Germany is identical to the quality you get in Ethiopia. BASF is an innovative company that spends a lot of money on research and development (R&D) before a product comes in. For instance, from the synthesis of the first molecule until we see it in a bottle, a given agricultural product may take ten years. When the product comes here, the government of Ethiopia asks us to spend three more years of trials on Ethiopia farms before the chemical product goes to the market. The reason the product passes through those processes is to ensure its quality. So, the quality you find here is the same as anywhere else as long as the product is coming from BASF. That is what keeps us going forward.

Research and Development (R&D) is one of the mechanisms applied to protect customers from being deceived by others. We are here for the last 150 Years to defend our product.

Our customers have been with us for the longest time and they know what to expect from BASF, they stand by the quality despite the turbulent times as they also know Consumers also expect good products. They do not use the shortcuts that are available in the market.

There is a shortage of foreign currency to import such chemicals. So how do you deal with the challenge?

It is a big challenge. However, the government continues to address that. The company exporting products as a foreign currency will not be a problem. We, customers, do have the challenges of acquiring foreign currency. That is why this Djibouti project becomes important for us. We are bringing products from Europe into Djibouti on our own and customers can get smaller parcels and can buy less than they require for today.

Instead of spending six months to have a chemical product, they buy it within one month and then wait for another allocation of foreign currency as the product becomes available.

But now they do not have to put out a lot of money in terms of clear cash



flow buying a lot of products which they will use for six months or a year.

Now they can buy what they want from Djibouti which is two days away from them in terms of transportation. So that is another idea which we considered as saving the Djibouti office to help us.

The Djibouti office is assisting more simplified service to our customers when it comes to documentation and Inco terms. For example, we are using X-Djibouti, X warehouse for on track which means once the customer documentation has been finalized, they can bring their trucks in and we load the goods on top of the trucks.

This will minimize the hustle, cost and time. Within two days, customers will be more than happy to do business with us.

If I want to import products today, I have to deposit money to my bank 100 % of the equivalent in dollars. That is a cash flow which I put into the bank and wait a long time until my goods arrive for it to be dispersed. Now, we are saying instead of putting so much there today, you can put in little by little and it helps you with a cash flow which is an important saving for the customer.

They are not lodging the full amount

of what they need for one year or six months with the bank. They are only going to do I am going to require or I am getting an allocation, a small allocation of foreign currency so I deposit a small amount of birr to my bank, it helps them manage their cash flow in a business because the product is nearby they don't need to invest in a lot of products today which they will use in six months.

Ethiopia has a plan to be an industry hub. What will be the contribution of your company in realizing the country's goal?

Our contribution is the innovation we bring. We are operating in many countries in the world, companies, and industrialized countries and that kind of science can only benefit BASF in Ethiopia as well as the industry here.

And not only that, we are talking earlier with our colleagues about the interest of science even in children. We have a kid's lab. Kid's Lab is a program in which we bring children from various schools into a lab for two to three hours to excite them about chemistry as they are the future. So, we need to train our children in science. Children who are in primary school must not be scared of mathematics, biology and



Herald Guest



chemistry. Africa requires scientists and thus we have to invest in that. BASF has a program called Kid's Lab which we have introduced in Ethiopia. Time and again, we bring children and tell them about science and chemistry as they are the posterities. In this regard, we are partnering with the government.

Why has BASF opened its office in Addis Ababa?

We have been here for a long time since the 60s and when BASF closed some of its offices in all of Africa we were quick to open it here because it is the place to be. With the rising population, we see that Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa next to Nigeria and notice the government's plan for industrialization.

By 2050, the world will have 20 billion people and 70 % of them will be living in cities. We need to increase our agriculture by 50 %. We need to increase our electricity by 35 % and all those things touch Ethiopia. As the population is increasing, the needs for electricity, food, and the need for living in the cities are equally increasing and the industrialization and chemistry of BASF fit very well. We have a part to play as BASF in partnering with the governments to bring industrialization because we require it. We are here to see the market for our products.

As you said earlier the company was staying for a long, if BASF is discharging its social responsibilities here in Ethiopia, please mention some of them.

Our kid's lab is one of them. The training we give to our children is also another. Our sister company, RAT where we are doing in the Amhara region, where we are putting the production plant for vegetable seeds for exports with over a 10 million euro investment in the region.

We are affecting the community, employing a lot of staff over the peak season and have over 100 people working in that facility which is affecting the community around us.

Please tell me the challenges that BASF is facing.

Remember, we do not sell directly to the market. Our partners or the manufacturing companies are buying from BASF and we are linking those companies with it.

The challenges they face are being addressed. One of the groups of companies we belong to on the agriculture side, we are part of the group life as a business we are part of the European Union Business Forum of Ethiopia where any challenges we have, we engage governments that way as a group and have seen a lot of positive changes with customs, the finance ministries and the government is aware

of the challenges and willing to listen to. We have seen improvements over the years working with them through making intensive dialogue with the government. We have a very good relationship with them to address some of the challenges such as foreign currency and other issues. We know the government is tackling those issues as we go along.

The challenge we have locally here is what has resulted in us appearing in Djibouti. All those challenges with the local forex, the logistics as I said are important with the production with the pre-shipment delays, container shortage and the freight.

All those challenges have constituted our office in Ethiopia as a whole. To be part of the solution, we need compatibility to be close to our customers to have easy access to us. So we are seeing the challenges, we have been part of the solution opening the office in Djibouti.

When we came up with this idea, officials from the Investment Commission, revenue and customs authority, and the Ministry of Trade showed a very welcome idea as they understood how it was going to make processes easy for local manufacturers. We take time to talk to not only our customers but beyond about how this can make their business easy in a time when the economic situation is not very good.

What does BASF expect from Ethiopia to flourish its business?

We desire to grow the market. For the market to embrace the science and chemistry we bring as they could do much more. We can do much more than we are doing right now if manufacturers embrace the science and want to learn what we want to know. Sometimes some of the manufacturers we talked; they just want to know how much the price is. Considering the competition is going to come, they should ask "How can I improve my product? How Can I Improve My quality?" Africa is going to be one market soon and when competition comes, you need to be associated with the quality and we can offer that. So if more customers embrace our chemistry, more customers learn from us and improve the products.

How does BASF encourage its customers to export from Ethiopia as an African free trade area on the way to opening up the market?

AfCTA is an opportunity for our customers to export their products. If companies want to be competitive, they have to embrace quality as they compete with all of Africa as the market is wide-open and that is what we keep encouraging them to embrace

quality and the value that comes from having quality products. And then you are trusted by the consumer and supporting business group.

Why does BASF not open its manufacturing line here in Ethiopia?

It could cost a lot of money-Billions of dollars to have. If we take across Africa, we would have smaller production sites in South Africa and Morocco due to the huge cost, it does not make sense.

They need to become very expensive for the market here. But, if the capacity grows for us much bigger then that will be considered like we have done before previously in there but we have sold that business.

We had a factory in Kenya. It was a production site for construction chemicals as we have seen the business. If an opportunity arises and it warrants us to open a factory BASF look into that. We have a lot of products like I told you, we have a production site generator when you go to an easier place like in Europe because it's a production site for vegetable seed production.

It can be done but it requires a lot of resources for us to do that. What we are doing is bringing our technical expertise, going to customers carrying out the production and supporting them looking at their facilities to get more innovative whatever they have. We bring the technical expertise here as you look for opportunities and also eventually manufacture the number and the volumes per meeting. However, now, we work to develop the local manufacturers.

How much the company makes itself ready to use business opportunities about Africa's free trade area is bringing to Africans?

This is coming and that is why we are emphasizing that for manufacturers here in Ethiopia. To make it they need to embrace quality, technical expertise which BASF can give for like 10 years in developing our products.

We have the know-how, the zeal and the capacity to do the product which we are making. Can we improve these products, can we improve the whole materials, improve the quality so that it can be accepted in the market because of the competition is coming.

What are you trying to do on a day-to-day basis? Along the way, we also train our staff so that BASF, we want to have an educated workforce in the field talking to our customers. So that together we can come up with a plan and say anything we can do to improve the quality of our products in the market for ourselves as well as for our customers.

Thank you.

It is my pleasure.

GERD for improved lifestyle, beyond

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Currently, energy is becoming the turning point to catalyze development, attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) aside from improving the quality of life of citizens; mainly those who have no electric access and living with energy poverty even to carry out their day to day activities, including preparing food.

Evidently, power supply has direct household-level impacts. It brings equity among gender disparities, reduces pressure on natural resources, and enables access to a health facility. These fundamental human needs that are accorded in the UN universal declaration of human rights are now very luxurious to the majority of Ethiopians.

Undeniably, millions of Ethiopians still live without electricity which poses multifaceted challenges in their day to day activities. Especially women and girls, who are duty bound to travel long distances to fetch water on a daily basis, gather fire woods and cook food through burning wood and dung, encounter greater danger on their health; in addition to their economic deprivation.

To this end, Ethiopia has been working persistently to develop and utilize its water sources for energy production, improve the life style of its citizens, and make sure that they live a dignified life.

The construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in this regard beyond generating power and lighting has incalculable benefit. It relieves women and girls who are still suffering under the yoke of poverty and impacted hugely for the reason they are responsible for all household's burdens.

True, energy for Ethiopians is not of a luxury commodity, preferably a hard fight choice to live a dignified life. GERD is a long-awaited dream for millions of youth for an employment opportunity, and bread for the impoverished drought-hit pastoral communities. It is also a long-awaited dream for the rural shepherd who used to chant slogans and sorrows against the bad deeds that the Blue Nile has caused over his ancestors' land. Above all, it is a quest for equity and shares over one's natural resources.

According to Ethiopia's Ambassador to France Henok Tefera, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is a project of development, cooperation and clean energy.

In an exclusive virtual interview with local media, Ambassador Henok



noted that the dam is a great source of energy which will contribute towards alleviating climate. It will generate electricity that is essential for the country's development since energy is essential for all sectors of the economy.

The country could also generate hard currency by selling electricity to neighboring countries and thereby strengthening its cooperation with neighboring countries.

Above all, the project is vital to extricate people from poverty, provide electricity to millions of Ethiopians who do not have access to electricity.

The Ethiopian Diaspora has played a vital role in the growth and stability of the country through direct and indirect financial contribution to support mega-projects across the country, Ambassador Henok elaborated.

"The Diaspora in France as elsewhere is strongly mobilized more than ever for the support of this dam," he pointed out.

The Abay water has now started to flow over the top of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam for the third time.

Accordingly, the height of the middle part of this mega-dam has reached 600 meters above sea level and the left and right sides were 611 meters. With its two turbines going operational, GERD generates 375 MW of electricity.

While speaking the socioeconomic benefits of the dam following the announcement of the accomplishment of the third phase of the dam filling,

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said that when the construction of the dam is fully completed, it would have substantial economic potential. Over seventy islands will be formed because of the dam; forty of them have over 10 hectares of land, some have from 800 to 2000 meters of hectares and the smallest ones will be 5 hectares of land. The dam also has the potential for fishing activities.

Documents confirm that the dam has enormous benefits as more than 60 % of Ethiopia's population lives in areas without electricity. Due to this and other reasons, the GERD project is viewed as the best solution to alleviate the problem and extricate the people suffering from energy poverty.

GERD, for Ethiopians, is a symbol and a sign of self-reliance and a fight back against colonization. It is a sign of resilience and self-esteem, praising the power of unity. It is a dream come true, abolishing the walls of impossibility. It is a seal and a sign of every Ethiopian. Everyone has put his/her legacy on the tower and walls of the dam. Ethiopia, on the other hand, had repeatedly expressed its positions against a colonial water agreement signed and motivated only for colonial spirits. GERD, which is being built on the Blue Nile (Abay in Amharic), is serving as a patriotic aspiration and national pride, drawing all walks of life together for its completion. Many Ethiopians believe GERD as a second ADWA, where an African power had defeated the western colonial aggression. GERD is

a symbol of overcoming abject poverty and decolonizing themselves from impossibility.

According to the document, Ethiopia, as a nation, has experienced a survival threat from frequent seasonal drought (every ten years) and weather fluctuations due to El Nino. El Nino is becoming a hard fact for nature dependent nomadic communities causing massive water and pasture scarcity. To reverse this natural order, the country needs to show resilience and invest in renewable energy.

GERD is part of the quest for survival as 23.5 % of the total population in Ethiopia is living below the poverty line, where the majority of them are living in rural villages. These populations are either dependent on traditional farming or following nomadic life. On the other hand, Ethiopia has only 40 % of electricity coverage, and power rationing is considered as normalcy. Power generating dams' capacity was going down during dry seasons and failed to support the ever aspired rural transformations and an industry lead development plan. The Egyptians, and Sudan, who are dependent on the Blue Nile for their freshwater needs, have a 100 % electricity coverage and created commercial agriculture. The depth and extent of poverty in Ethiopia are not comparable to Egypt. Ethiopia needs a "sword" to beat poverty and inequality. Ethiopia has no alternative except using its water resources and generating the most awaited energy that is expected to lift its people from abject poverty.

Verbatim and Caption

Buhe festival

“Religious and historical resources should be preserved and transferred to the future generations. To this end, the culture and tourism offices in every level should fulfill their responsibilities effectively to make the Buhe/ Debretabor festival trans generational. Our forefather’s tribute to preserve traditional, cultural and religious values such as Buhe festival is unique. This year’s Buhe/ Debretabor holiday is special to us because this time, tribute to our coordinated federal and regional security forces, we are able to festive without any threat posed from the TPLF to the city of Debre Tabor unlike that of the last year edition,”

Minister of Industry Melaku Alebel.



Various people centered projects inaugurated in Addis Ababa

“We have the trust that we will change our city for the better, while making the people of Addis Ababa have a modern home and a modern lifestyle, without the need to relocate them from their residences. I would like to assure you that we will work together with all the residents of our city to make the future of Addis Ababa brighter by taking the experiences of the projects that we made them happen and replicating them in a better way. Leaders and employees at all levels who worked day and night for the success of this work, dear investors who coordinated resources, energy and time and did something beneficial for the people. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere respect and gratitude to all the residents of Addis Ababa who have been on our side in all our work,”

Addis Ababa City Mayor Adanech Abiebie.



Business people set to develop GERD reservoir

“I felt extremely happy that the 3rd round of water filling of the dam was successfully completed. In addition to the energy benefits that will be generated when the construction of the dam is completed, it will generate a large amount of income in the hotel and tourism sector on the shores of the lake and the islands that are going to be created after the huge manmade reservoir. I am interested in participating in the development of the sector when the dam is completed and ready to support my part so that the construction of the dam is fully completed,”

*Belayneh Kinde,
an Ethiopia Business Tycoon*



Commission signed agreement signed with local companies registered capital of ETB 430+ mln.

“The government of Ethiopia is working hard to attract local investors who have the capacity to engage in industrial parks. In the past two months alone, four investors have been persuaded to engage in various sectors in the parks as a result of the reforms taken to encourage local investors. The investors expressed that the agreement they have with industrial parks will help the country to get the economic benefit from the sector in a short period of time by creating a favorable working environment for the investor. In addition to creating job opportunities for many citizens, it shows that it is possible to produce various products in industrial parks and supply them to foreign markets,”

*Industrial Parks Corporation CEO
Sandokan Debebe.*

