



# The Ethiopian Herald

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Demeke Mekonnen

## Deputy Premier briefs diplomatic community on TPLF's war

BY STAFF REPORTER

**ADDIS ABABA-** Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Demeke Mekonnen met with the diplomatic community based in Addis Ababa yesterday to brief them on the state of current affairs in Ethiopia.

According to Demeke, the Federal Government has been encouraging peace-building steps to bring about sustainable peace and ending the war in the country's north. The declaration of the unilateral humanitarian ceasefire and the humanitarian truce paved the way for the provision of unrestricted access for humanitarian operators, including more fuel and cash to the Tigray State.

Also, the Demeke discussed how the government had appointed a high-level peace committee to pursue positive engagement and sincere approaches to the peace discussions. "Unfortunately, the TPLF continued to militarize humanitarian supplies that were intended to support civilians, while failing to recognize the government's peace measures."

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Abraham Belay (PhD)

## Defense Minister emphasizes Tigray people's role for peace

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**ADDIS ABABA-** Regardless of the deep desire of the Tigray people towards the peace talk, the terrorist TPLF group resumed another war, the Defense Minister Abraham Belay (PhD) said, calling the people of Tigray to enforce the faction to adhere to the truce.

In his social media post, the minister further highlighted that the people of Tigray should make a meaningful contribution in

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## WFP, UN condemn T-TPLF's fuel stealing

• Once again, thugs reveal true character: A Tigrayan Diaspora

BY HAILE DEMEKE

**ADDIS ABABA-**The UN World Food Program (WFP) Executive Director David Beasley said Tigrayan authorities stole 570,000 liters of fuel which was meant for WFP operations in the Tigray Region, calling the situation an 'outrageous and disgraceful' act.

Noting millions will starve, the program does not have fuel to deliver food to the needy people in the areas; Beasley urged the immediate return of the fuel.

The UN Secretary-General Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said for his part that the stocks of fuel were to be used solely for humanitarian purposes, with the distribution of food, fertilizer and other emergency relief items. This loss of fuel will impact humanitarian operations and supporting communities in all of Northern Ethiopia. "We condemn any looting or confiscation of humanitarian goods or humanitarian premises and call on all parties to uphold their obligations under International humanitarian law and to



David Beasley

respect humanitarian personnel activities, assets and goods."

"On August 24th WFP Warehouse in Mekelle was forcibly entered by Tigrayan forces who took 12 fuel trucks and tankers with 570,000 liters of fuel. The team on the ground unsuccessfully tried to prevent this looting," he elaborated.



Stéphane Dujarric

Commenting on the issue, Negasse Beyene, a Tigrayan who lives in the Diaspora, said that the timing of the provocation and looting of the WFP 12 tankers of fuel speaks volume about the characteristic feature of the group.

"I know the group from the inception. The

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## Ethiopian-American journalist appeals to WHO Chief's abuse of authority

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA-** An Ethiopian-American Journalist, Hermela Aregawi has recently wrote a letter to the World Health Organization Director of Communications, Gabby Stern, insisting the WHO is weaponizing its global health platform to push TPLF's ethno-fascist propaganda.

"It is a known fact that Tedros Adhanom, Director General of the World Health Organization is a leading member of TPLF, and the TPLF is a brutal ethno-fascist organization that kills in the dark and

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Free trade zone a robust opportunity to boost the economy

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Ending child stunting

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# News

## Debre Birhan honors Survival Campaign participants

BY ABDUREZAK MOHAMMED

**DEBRE BIRHAN** – The administration of Debre Birhan RegioPolitant City has honored and recognized members of the security forces and residents of the city who participated in the Survival Campaign.

It was learnt that the City Administration has held a gratitude and recognition program to honor the public and security forces that participated and sacrificed their precious lives in the campaign.

Besides, various private and public institutions, which supported the joint Ethiopian security forces during the campaign by raising and providing money and items, have been recognized for their noble contribution.

Addressing the recognition ceremony, Debre Birhan Deputy Mayor Kassahun Embi'ale said that the people of Ethiopia have a proud history of fending off aggression and repulsing belligerence. "Our forefathers and foremothers inherited us an independent country to us through arduous struggle. This victory became a symbol of freedom and independence not only for Ethiopians but also for all black people around the world."

Noting Ethiopia has been facing challenges from internal and external enemies, the deputy mayor stressed that the Terrorist TPLF group is working day in and day out to dismantle the country by conspiring



Photo: Hadash Abraha

with Ethiopia's historical enemies. "Many Ethiopians along with the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF), Federal Police, and regional forces have been sacrificing their precious lives to curb the evil intentions of this terrorist group."

As their fellow Ethiopian brothers and sisters, residents of Debre Birhan City and neighboring people has made their contribution to save their country by marching to the warfront to fight the terrorist

group and providing all necessary supports to the joint security forces, he elaborated.

Prosperity Party Amhara Branch Head Girma Yeshitila on his part indicated that the contribution of all Ethiopians has played a significant role in foiling the invasion of the terrorist group.

Ethiopians deserve great recognition for the victory achieved by their sacrifices made for the sake of their country. Ethiopians from all corners of the world should stand

by the side of the security forces and show their solidarity as they did during the law enforcement operation and Survival Campaign held earlier.

The recognition ceremony was attended by, among others, senior government officials, members and officials of the ENDF, Federal Police, Amhara state security forces, as well as religious fathers, elders, invited guests, representatives of various sections of society.

## Converting media challenges into opportunities crucial for dev't: EMA

- *Modernizing media should be accompanied with freedom, accountability*

BY MENGESHA AMARE

**ADDIS ABABA-** Ethiopian Mass Media Authority (EMA) stated that freedom and accountability has to be ensured in due course of making media modernized as these two elements are indispensable in the era of technology.

Ethiopian Mass Media Authority, Director General, Mohammed Endris said that the issue of freedom and accountability has to be taken into account whenever media outlets are running towards modernization.

As to him, as the era of technology has been changing industries and other socio-economic steps, the media has been by far changed and transformed, too. Besides, the media has to do all its best to provide citizens with relevant and reliable information accompanied with freedom and accountability as the latter two elements are highly intertwined with media modernization.

"If there is no information freedom, the development of media is unthinkable and strong information could hardly address citizens, and information diversification could never be thought of. The presence of irresponsible and non-accountable media and media professionals would severely hamper the reform and hinder the right of the public to get information. Hence, media



freedom and accountability has to prevail to be compatible with the technology era."

He further said that though media freedom has both negative and positive repercussions, Ethiopians have to well utilize and consolidate the constructive part.

Both the mainstream and alternate media need to follow legitimate frameworks as well as ensure freedom and accountability to well serve people and secure acceptance and reliability.

Online media has been solidified following the prevalence of internet technology, and this helps the media bring about change in terms of role, layout and content. The existing ever changing digital technology and its boundary less cyber status helps people influence governments and other institutions, he added.

He said, "We are expected to utilize the media sector for the development of the nation via converting challenges into opportunities and incorporating freedom and accountability."

## Addis endeavors for containing youth unemployment

- *Launches on-the-job training for 49, 000 youth*

BY HIZKEL HAILU

**ADDIS ABABA-** Addis Ababa City Administration Job Enterprise and Industry Development Bureau announced that it has created an internship program for about 49 thousand young people to address unemployment in the metropolis.

Speaking at a press conference organized under the theme 'Biqat On-the-job training for the youth,' Addis Ababa City Deputy Mayor and Head of Job Enterprise and Industry Development Bureau Jantirar Abay stated that the program aims to benefit young people under the age range of 18 to 25. As to him, the program is particularly aimed at supporting the youth whose education doesn't surpass 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and could hardly receive much attention in the capital.

The "Biqat On-the-job training for young people", is a program taking place in collaboration with some 14 TVET centers in the city. "32 % of the total population of Addis Ababa is between the age of 18 and 25. The project can directly support those parts of the society; women have a share of more than 60 % in this opportunity."

Financed by the World Bank and Urban Productive Safety net Program in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor and Skill, the three year project is applicable in



Jantirar Abay

36 districts of 11 cities across the nation to help get 70,000 youth employed, he noted.

Noting that 1 thousand 505 institutions have been identified to offer the training voluntarily, he mentioned that the on-the-job training will take 6 months. He said that depending on the conditions of the institutions and the qualifications of the trained youths, there is a possibility that they may be employed after 6 months.

Currently 27,000 youths are identified and registered to get the training and some 200 have already joined the program. Some 12,000 youths will get the same internship opportunity next round. The head further explained that the participants can get life skills, technical skills, basic computer skills and other skills during their six month stay on the training.

# News

## Establishment of free trade zone instrumental to FDI: Expert

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA-** The launching of free trade zone is meaningfully useful in stimulating impact to attract foreign direct investment and the Dire Dawa Industrial Park, has re-established as the first Ethiopian Free Trade Zone, which will be one of trade hubs in the region, so said senior economist.

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency, a senior economist Wasihun Belay said that as the Dire Dawa Free Trade Zone is geographically close to Djibouti Port, it will allow investors to trade products without any special costs.

The decision to launch the Free Trade Zone is instrumental in making the import-export trade more extensive. The removal of regular and usual costs will stimulate private sectors to engage in importing and exporting goods in

larger amounts, he stated.

As to him, the global trend is based on the customary laws of trade and the newly adopted free trade zone will contribute a lot to balance the demand-supply gap witnessed in the market.

Free Trade Zone requires industrial centers accessible to airports, train roads and proximity to trade ports. Accordingly, Dire Dawa Free Trade Zone has been established on the right corridor, he said.

Enterprises operating in Industrial Parks will also have the opportunity to trade their products easily. Parallel with this, the government will secure more income by avoiding unnecessary costs, he noted.

The Dire Dawa FTZ should be taken as a touchstone to expand more trade zones in other parts of the country, he suggested.



Wasihun Belay

### Defense Minister...

supporting government's efforts of resolving the problem in a peaceful manner. The issue of Tigray can only be settled through discussion and peaceful mechanisms and the TPLF declined and ignored the government's unwavering commitment to engage in the peace talks.

As to him, the people of Tigray should also denounce the devilish act of the TPLF and put on the pressure into the faction to involve in the peace talk. "Each member of the Tigray community around the world has to take part in this regard. Nobody could better understand the devastating effect of war than the people of Tigray. TPLF

should never gain its personal interest at the cost of the youth of Tigray."

Sharing the above rationale, Balsillie School of International Affairs Director Prof. Ann Fitz-Gerald tweeted that TPLF's war provocation is a 'Tragic but expected news'. The group's recent statements, its resistance to the peace process, and the heightened disinformation warfare sadly pointed to the current situation.

Fitzgerald went on saying that given the unequal application of sanctions, silence and a one-sided ceasefire, the outcome was inevitable in the face of the international community.

### WFP, UN condemn...

TPLF thrives in war and looting. It hasn't an iota of humanity. It has long considered the youths of Tigray as a mere instrument of war."

Despite the federal government's continued effort to conclude the matter in peace, the group knows that it benefits from war and pillage, he added.

The truth is that there is a government in Ethiopia that is working hard to part with poverty for good. Through bringing the people together and embarking upon various dearly needed projects, the incumbent is aiming at detaching the people from

aid dependence. And at this juncture, one has to understand that there are antitheses of the development. "They don't want such governments to appear in Africa."

The international community must truly denounce the group's despicable acts, Negasse pleaded.

Negasse said despite the rocky road towards it, the people of Tigray have to raise their voice of "enough is enough". Moreover, if Tigrayans in the Diaspora, if they really want peace in Tigray, they should denounce the heinous acts of the TPLF. They must create pressure on the group to fully resort to peace.

### Ethiopian-American...

pretends to be "liberating" in the light," Hermela stated on the letter. While the group was a rebel in the 1970s, they first killed anyone in Tigray who went against their evil ideology before they did the same in the rest of Ethiopia and eventually got to the top of government.

As to her, the people of Tigray, as the rest of Ethiopians, are suffering because of the WHO and its ethno fascist head – Tedros Adhanom. "It [terrorist TPLF] is his criminal organization that is holding the people of Tigray as collateral in the hopes of ruling millions against their will."

"As we saw World Food Program confirm, aid has been flowing into Tigray since April - yet the Guardian newspaper is reporting that women and girls in Tigray are being forced into sex due to hunger. Who is weaponizing the aid, TPLF members, local people in Tigray or NGO staff?" the journalist posed the question.



### Deputy Premier...

Aside from belittling the Ethiopian Government's peace efforts and endangering the wellbeing of the people, the group rejected the AU's efforts for peace, he added.

Demeke urged the international community to promote the AU-led unconditional peace talks and denounce the TPLF's destructive behavior.

The government, according to the Deputy Premier, is prepared to defend the nation's territorial integrity and sovereignty, but it is equally committed to using peaceful means to put an end to the conflict and collaborating with humanitarian organizations to lessen needless suffering.

# Opinion

## Eyes on Africa: The Dawn is Apparent

BY EWNETU YINEGER

The growing understanding of interdependence between and among actors gave impetus to the rise of the notion of partnership, which symbolizes the idea of multilateralism in addressing issues of common concern.

In pursuit of its cause or purpose, the UN is bound by the principle of subsidiarity. As it is stated under chapter 8, article 52(1) of its charter, the UN recognizes the existence of regional arrangements as well as the need for partnering with them as long as their activities are consistent with its purpose. This legalization of partnership in turn suggests the need for different and subordinate partnership schemes to address issues of common concern.

The African Union (AU), being one of such schemes, has been vested to propel development as well as ensure good governance over the continent, unlike its predecessor, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which was vested to decolonize the African States. In the same vein as the UN, in the pursuit of its purpose, the AU is bound by the principle of subsidiarity.

In fact, from its inception, the AU stipulated the need for various forms of partnership through its vision of “Building an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena.” In particular, the inherent assumption behind the last component of the vision, i.e. “... Representing dynamic force in the international arena,” entails the need for partnership with other regional groupings, international organizations, and states to market Africa’s position, acquire support to enable the attainment of Africa’s objectives, increase Africa’s international standing, and obtain the global leverage that would enable the continent to maximize its impact on the world stage.

In order to convert what is envisioned in the vision of the AU into fruition, the framework for Africa’s strategic partnership has presented four distinct forms, namely: continent to continent partnership, continent to country partnership, partnership in demand/upon request of states or regions, and AU partnership with other institutions.

Taking the aforementioned different forms of partnership into account, since the establishment of the AU, the period between 2004 and 2008 has been distinctly marked by the initiation and launch of a series of groundbreaking partnerships as well as the redefining and invigoration of existing partnerships. These growing partnerships are evidence of Africa’s increasing prominence in the international arena. And this has been attracting eyes in Africa. Moreover, the development of Agenda 2063—a strategic framework for Africa’s long-term socio-economic and integrative transformation that aspires to be a strong, united, resilient, and influential global player and partner—has made the dawn for Africa more apparent by keeping the momentum in terms of partnership growth. In this regard, Africa’s partnership with Russia, which started in Sochi in 2019, is an active showcase.

### The revamped Russia-Africa partnership

In fact, the relationship between Russia

and Africa predates 2019. Many African governments have long-standing positive ties with Moscow. They include those that came out of liberation movements that the Soviet Union supported during the Cold War. South Africa, Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe are all examples of this. The Soviet Union was considered to be supporting liberation. The Soviet Union largely withdrew from the continent after its fall in 1991. However, Moscow has been establishing fresh alliances and reviving old ones since the turn of the twenty-first century. The changes that are unfolding in Africa and globally call for a recalibration of the partnership.

The Russian presence in Africa has returned under President Vladimir Putin. Since his first trip to the continent in 2006, there has been a slow, gradual increase in engagement, which culminated in the first-ever Russia-Africa summit in 2019, which was attended by 43 African heads of state. A total of 10,000 attendees from all 54 African nations were present.

### Where do Russia and Africa’s interests intertwine?

The Russia-Africa partnership is a mix of short-term transactional interaction and long-term strategic alignments. Since Africa today is one of the most attractive markets and promising regions for long-term investment, growth in economic transactions is registered between the two partners. Trade between Russia and African countries has doubled since 2015, to about \$20 billion a year.

Africa primarily imports cereals from Russia (30% of total imports), particularly wheat, which makes up about 95% of the total imports of cereals. The most populous nations on the continent—Egypt, Sudan, Nigeria, Tanzania, Algeria, Kenya, and South Africa—consume more than half of Russia’s wheat exports. Africa also buys mineral fuels from Russia, including coal, oil products, and gas, in addition to cereals. In total, these make up 18.3% of imports. Africa, on the other hand, primarily sells its partners edible fruits and vegetables, aquatic products, organic chemicals, and precious metals.

Russia is also hoping to secure access to the natural resources and raw materials found in African nations. Diamonds are mined in Angola and platinum is extracted in Zimbabwe by Russian mining companies. Guinea, home to the largest bauxite reserves in the world, is where aluminum producer Rusal has mines. Russia is starting collaborative projects to gain access to Africa’s reserves of raw materials.

Africa also seeks Russian assistance for the advancement of electricity and energy. The continent has received investments from businesses like Rostec, Lukoil, Gazprom, and Rosatom. For instance, Rosneft agreed to deliver liquefied natural gas to Ghana in 2018 through a contract. Rosneft also has oil and gas projects in Algeria, Egypt, and Mozambique, whereas Lukoil has businesses in Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, and Nigeria. A nuclear power plant is being built in Egypt by the national atomic energy agency, Rosatom. The company has signed contracts to set up two more power plants in Nigeria and has nuclear power deals with a number of other African nations,

including Ethiopia, Ghana, and Kenya.

Although trade between Russia and Africa is still expanding, China is the country with which Africa does the most business. Relations between Moscow and Africa are more pronounced in the political-security sphere. The following strategic partnership provides a more comprehensive explanation for the resurgent interaction between Africa and Russia.

### Alternative vision for “the rule-based” international order

Along with a number of other foreign powers seeking to expand their engagement on the continent, including the US, China, and Turkey, Russia is vying for its fair share of influence in Africa. Unlike its predecessor, the Soviet Union, Russia no longer has an alternative ideology to spread or an established sphere of influence in Africa or elsewhere. In contrast to the West’s attempt to impose globalist and liberal values, they nevertheless insist on the significance of sovereignty, state equality, and self-rule.

Russia wants to increase its influence on the international stage by forming partnerships with African nations. Russia is making an effort to reclaim its position as a major world power and to demonstrate that it is a significant player in most world regions. African nations make up the largest portion of the UN membership and provide Russia with a network of allies to counter the continued global dominance of the US and other Western superpowers. The voting patterns of the African states demonstrate that this has been somewhat successful.

In return, African leaders request Russia’s (as well as China’s) backing in their long-standing demand for the continent to have greater representation on the United Nations Security Council. Africans believe the current system is unfair and that their continent needs to be a part of the architecture for world peace and security.

Russia has consistently supported strengthening Africa’s position in the multipolar architecture of a global order that should be based on the UN Charter’s principles and take into account the world’s diversity of cultures and civilizations. Russia supports pertinent UN platform initiatives fervently. Therefore, the first strategic area of mutual interest is the redefinition of the global system, a post-liberal, multipolar order on the part of Russia and more inclusive global governance on the part of Africa.

### Strong military positioning through Security Assistance

The second strategic objective focuses on security cooperation. Security remained a serious threat to African states’ territorial integrity, sovereignty, and overall ability to function. In the communique of its 1000th session, the African Union Peace and Security Council expressed grave concern over the continuation and resurgence of conflict and crisis situations in some regions of the Continent, including the growing threat posed by terrorism, violent extremism, and armed groups.

The recent wave of military takeovers, another sign of the continent’s waning political stability, has only exacerbated the deteriorating security situation. Furthermore, security issues

increase vulnerability to outside intrusions as well as internal governance disruptions. There is a propensity for supporting insurgent armed groups militarily and diplomatically whenever there is superpower fallout with the central government. A strong, well-equipped, and well-trained national army is now viewed by an increasing number of African states as the best way to move forward. Of course, with other strong institutions as well.

As a result, on the African side, there is an increasing need for modern weapons and security assistance. Russia can maintain its pre-eminent position in arms deals thanks to connections from the Soviet era. With 35% of all arms exports to Africa, Russia has surpassed all other countries as the continent’s top supplier of weapons.

More than twenty new bilateral military cooperation agreements between Russia and African nations have been signed since 2015. With forty different African nations in total, Russia has military agreements. For instance, Russian-made weapons and military gear are largely used by the armed forces of Ethiopia, Algeria, and Angola. African nations are drawn to Russian weapons because they are less expensive than American weapons.

The security interests of Russia extend beyond its desire to dominate the global arms trade, though. Over the years, Russia has sought to establish its maritime security presence in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea region, which, according to experts, would represent a long-term distinctive footprint to compete with rivals like China and the United States. At least six African nations are where Russia is continuing to work toward establishing military bases. Russia seeks to establish military positions outside the Black Sea, particularly in Libya (having NATO’s south flank in mind), to significantly boost its capacity for its confrontation with the West.

In conclusion, Africa’s growing geostrategic prominence has made the continent’s foreign policy a priority for Russia, while the less conditionality of Russia as well as its diplomatic support for projects in African countries so far has made it an appealing partner for Africa.

Regular dialogue mechanism, established by the secretariat during the first summit in Sochi, has signaled that the partnership is future oriented. The second Africa-Russia summit is expected to expand and diverse areas of cooperation particularly in terms of trade and investment. Beside the cancellation of debt and the creation of system of preferential treatment for traditional export goods of Africa, the inking of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Eurasian Economic Commission and the African Union on economic cooperation further signaled the need to forge the economic partnership during the second Russia-Africa Summit set to be held in October, 2022.

**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

### Thugs thrives in war, looting

Giving a cold shoulder to the peace initiatives and the olive branch extended by the Ethiopian government, the Terrorist TPLF group has already breached the humanitarian truce declared by the federal government as it recently attacked the Ethiopian army positions on different fronts.

In what could be said a slap in the face of the AU-led peace process, the unlawful group has restarted its belligerent act and continued undermining international laws by stealing WFP fuel stored in Mekele town. The disgruntled organization has been showing contempt and utter disregard for the international community when it repeatedly looted dearly needed humanitarian supplies which are meant to save lives.

Doubling down its disgraceful action, the criminal enterprise looted 12 full tankers with 570,000 liters of fuel which are meant for humanitarian purposes. In fact, robbery has been in the DNA of TPLF since its inception. The clique before its ouster had stolen billions of Birr during its 27 years of tyrannical rule. Its recent plundering of humanitarian aid and ransacking of public properties has been part of decades of using hunger as a weapon of war.

By stealing fuel and other humanitarian aids, the clique has belittled the international community and gambled on the lives of people who need urgent assistance. Partly, the silence of the international community has played in emboldening the group to continue perpetrating its unlawful deeds. Later in August 2021, the thug looted warehouse of the USAID, as the mission director Sean Jones told state broadcaster EBC in a televised interview. Several hundreds of WFP trucks were also commandeered by the terrorist TPLF for war purposes, just to mention but a few.

In fact, since the declaration of the humanitarian truce, the group has been carrying out forced conscriptions and holding the people

of Tigray hostage and using them as human shields to carry out its evil and treacherous acts against Ethiopia. The empty bravado and hypocrisy of the group however brought nothing but catastrophe and mayhem to the Tigray people. The result of its recent provocations will be no different.

The selfish and tyrannical entries has been showing disregard to human lives and property destruction of the Tigray state. In fact, the rogue element's criminal activities have not been limited to the Tigray state. The group has perpetrated merciless atrocities in Afar and Amhara states during its brief period of invasion. Before receiving a humiliating defeat at the hand of the Ethiopian Defense Force, the disgruntled clique committed unspeakable crimes including summary execution, gang rape, and robbery in the two states.

On the other hand, the Ethiopian government after pushing back the group to Tigray has been taking strings of measures to de-escalate the tension and find a peaceful resolution to the TPLF-provoked conflict. The truce paved the way for the provision of unrestricted access for humanitarian operators, including more fuel and cash to the Tigray.

Besides allowing unhindered humanitarian access to Tigray state, the incumbent has declared a humanitarian truce to give peace a chance. But, the hawkish element has been using the truce to regroup and make extensive military maneuverings in a different position.

While the Ethiopian government has time and again expressed utmost readiness to find a peaceful means to the conflict. This is something that must be supported. On the flip side, the Terrorist TPLF's provocative acts and its gambling on the lives of millions of lives of people of Tigray must out rightly be denounced.

## Opinion

### Time to clean misguided narratives of war in Tigray: A response to Mr. Joseph Borrell's latest op-ed.

BY SILEWNET BEL

Over the previous two years, the EU's High Representative, Joseph Borrell, has been extraordinarily ruthless in his charges against Ethiopia. Despite his failure to persuade EU member states to take significant action against Ethiopia, he has done everything in his power to sanction Ethiopia for alleged human rights violations, for which he has openly expressed his disappointment at failing to gain EU member states' backing.

Mr. Borrell criticized the EU member states for failing to agree on sanctions against those alleged war crimes in Ethiopia's conflict, expressing frustration over Europe's failure to give an effective policy response to "large scale human rights violations" in the Tigray region. The EU's response to the conflict in Ethiopia was "one of my biggest frustrations" of the year, said Borrell.

However, we are all aware that the majority of sanctions are based on injustice, misinformation, dishonesty, double standards, and hypocrisy. This is why so many Ethiopians castigated him as "the poster face of bigotry, ignorance, and passionate hatred for Ethiopia, a proud black nation!"

Though it may be hard to tell the exact reason for his inherent bias against Ethiopia, one thing is sure: he has been consciously ignoring Ethiopia's confidence-building measures and other significant signs of progress on the ground. His consistent disregard for the positive steps taken to address the humanitarian, human rights and peaceful resolution of the conflict in Ethiopia signals that he plays favoritism.

Since Mr. Borrell appears to have been subsumed by the TPLF lobbyists' narratives and disputed Amnesty and Human Rights Watch allegations of human rights abuses, we are left to question his integrity as the senior official of the EU or view him as a TPLF activist.

Naturally, there are many reasonable grounds to believe that Mr. Borrell's partiality is intrinsically linked to the arguments put forth by TPLF activists and lobbyists, depicting why he persistently and blatantly mischaracterizes Ethiopia's case and presumably implying that he is on to something beyond moral concerns for Tigray region but also of a policy objective against Ethiopia. Is this an irrefutable fact? Yes, perhaps!

His recent op-ed, Titled "Time to stop the forgotten war in Tigray", which mostly dwells on the same old allegations against Ethiopia, clearly showed that he is in deliberate denial of the humanitarian and peace efforts of the government in Addis. Of course, what's fascinating is that this piece of writing, which I'm not sure he wrote himself, is so topsy-turvy and full of mumbo jumbo that it's difficult to grasp the message he's trying to convey. It's all full of unfounded concerns and feels like Mr. Borrell hasn't been well informed about the crisis in Northern Ethiopia.

"Mr. Borrell's Article" seems to deliberately ignore the fact that Ethiopia has made a public commitment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict, as evidenced by significant confidence-building measures undertaken in the past few months, which include, among other things, the release of detainees and prisoners of war, the establishment of the National Dialogue Commission, and an indefinite humanitarian truce.

The government has also been building mechanisms to peacefully resolve issues with the TPLF and has humanitarian supply provision cooperation, which has been lauded by the African Union, European Union, and US officials and high-level delegations that have recently visited Ethiopia. Even recently, the government came out and said "Ethiopia is ready for unconditional talks with the TPLF anytime, anywhere", but the TPLF continues in its

defiant belligerence, denying the youth the right to live in the Tigray region if they are not engaged in military mobilizations.

If Mr Borrell does not live in deliberate denial of the fact that the TPLF is the principal hurdle to the peace negotiations, he should press the TPLF to unreservedly resort to a peaceful settlement of the conflict rather than lulling its subversive actions in the name of humanitarianism.

Furthermore, Ethiopia has already accelerated the supply of humanitarian aid, including fuel and cash, to the Tigray region. And since the declaration of the humanitarian truce, significant improvements in humanitarian access and support have enabled aid agencies, including WFP, to deliver lifesaving goods to the Tigray region.

*Nevertheless, turning a blind eye to all these endeavors, and resorting to saying that "since the onset of this war, the EU has made its key demands very clear to the Ethiopian government: a negotiated ceasefire, including uninterrupted humanitarian access, and the full resumption of services in Tigray, as well as accountability for atrocities committed by all parties, is a prerequisite for reviving our partnership with Ethiopia"* does nothing to help facilitate the peace-building process in Ethiopia. Above and beyond, Ethiopia has well responded to the same call previously, not just for the sake of the call but mainly because Ethiopia badly needs order and stability.

He further underlines that "The restoration of basic services and free movement of people, goods, and services can neither be disputed nor negotiated." If not repeating the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson briefing notes, the spokesman noted in his press briefing last Thursday that the government does not make the activation of essential services in Tigray a precondition for the negotiations. It is Ethiopia's firm position, not the

EU's or Borrell's unequivocal ethical stance alone, that allows the reinstatement of basic services, free movement of people, and basic rights not to be used as bargaining chips.

The government has already said that it is ready to continue essential services to the people of the Tigray region and adjacent areas in the Amhara and Afar regions when adequate security arrangements are made.

But why is it considered unnecessary to discuss how to get all service providers in the region to start providing services? These are legitimate requests, in my opinion, because it's not a simple matter of turning on a switch from the palace in Addis or somewhere else in the country.

Generally, it shouldn't be difficult to understand that the resumption of essential service infrastructure during post-conflict is a complex undertaking. The requirement for rehabilitation, and how the systemic approaches meet the local needs in a sustainable and resilient way, should be a matter of discussion with Tigrayan political elites!

Given the changing circumstances in Ethiopia and the fact that punitive measures often fail to achieve their objectives and have a substantial detrimental impact on human rights, democracy, poverty, healthcare, and basic living conditions, Mr. Borrell should strive to play a constructive role if he is truly trying to support Ethiopians, particularly the suffering Tigrayans, rather than aiming at something too much of.

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

# Business & Economy

## Free trade zone a robust opportunity to boost the economy

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Free trade zones are part of special economic zones and accommodate companies which provide logistics services with value addition, production works and trade activities.

In addition to these, it has no inhibitive environment to conduct trade. Investors function with reduced tariff and tax.

Recently, The Dire Dawa Free Trade Zone Park was inaugurated by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed which is believed to improve Ethiopia's entire economy by boosting the import and export trade of the country.

The establishment of the free trade zone is one of the initiatives set in the 10-year Perspective Development Plan of Ethiopia.

Dire Dawa is selected to be the first free trade zone due to its proximity to ports, market potential and huge cargo gravity as well as suitability for multimodal transport and logistics operation.

"Increasing the economic and technological capacity of our country while traveling in the same old way is a cumbersome journey. We need to follow new and innovative pathways. The world is changing exponentially. Trying to accept the new world with old thinking is considered as good as carrying our youth on our shoulders in the same way we carried them as children," the Premier said.

Earlier to the inauguration of the park, a discussion was held focusing on the establishing of free trade zone in Ethiopia by various stakeholders. On the occasion, the Minister of Transport and Logistics, Dagmawit Mogose said that the establishment of free trade zones in the neighbouring countries played a pivotal role on conducting business in a speedy manner. However, Ethiopia, with huge economy, vast geographic zones and population, is unable to establish free trade zone. As the result, it found itself in the disadvantageous position and the Dire Dawa free trade zone can change the situation to the better.

The reduction of tariff in the free trade zone attracts investors and will make them advantageous to gain profit and accumulate capital; creates new jobs and bureaucratic hurdles also will be minimized.

Cognizant of the value of free trade zone and its multiple effects on the economy, the government identified the weakness and strengthened the logistics and transportation sector. In addition, it analysed the external challenges and opportunities and subsequently, prepared the national strategy helpful to modernize the sector.

The document has 6 main parts and 22 sub-strategies and 98 initiatives that intended to raise the status of the Ethiopian logistics



and transport sector improving its rank in the world from the current 144th to 40th in the coming 10 years. In addition, it intends to establish huge free trade zone in the mentioned period.

Based on the strategy, in the last two years broad study has been conducted and proved that the vitality of the strategy and the national logistics council endorsed the establishment of the economic zone and the Dire Dawa economic zone is taken as one pilot programme. If the project is successful, it improves the nation's logistics system; boosts the Ethiopian trade in the world market; supports industry and urban development; creates job opportunities; reduces living cost and boosts total economic growth.

The Addis Ababa University Vice President Mateos Ensermu (associate professor) on the occasion said that free trade zone has various names and among others industry free zone and export processing sites.

He further said that there are 54,000 free trade zones in the world. For example, the China Shenzhen and Hainan export processing zones are freely conducting their business without bureaucratic hurdles and intervention from the government offices.

The establishment of free trade zone in Ethiopia can be mentioned as exemplary to other countries and brings socio-economic benefit to the nation and its people.

The free trade zone mainly focuses on three basic sectors. The first one is related with the productive sector including supplying its products to the local market or export to the foreign markets. The second one focuses on import and export firms which include raw materials and finished goods. Importers store their goods in the free trade zones, process and re-export it.

In addition to these, to facilitate the business services such as Banks, insurances, dry loads and consultancy services will be provided in a coordinated manner.

The revenue system and other laws implemented there also facilitate the business. Investors working in the free trade zones such as importers and exporters will benefit by obtaining high revenue from their business.

This again attracts both local and foreign investors to work there. In line with these, securing hard currency from banks, boosting export, increasing diversification of export products and attracting foreign investment will be realized. Enhancing government's revenue, enabling knowledge and technology transfer and advancing workers' skills will also be possible.

The Sea Logistics Service Organization Executive Director Roba Megersa on his part said that, the establishment of the free trade zone brings good opportunities to his organization and the Dire Dawa dry port which earned 78 million Dollar before tax and 100 million Dollars after tax creates more chances to boost the economy.

As to Roba, the establishment of free trade zones in Africa facilitates trade connections between the countries. In addition, through enjoying free tax chances, countries will benefit more.

As Ethiopia is a landlocked country, its bulky goods are mainly imported and exported through port of Djibouti and Dire Dawa is located in the nearest place of the port. There are sufficient rail and road transport facilities for the trade from and to Djibouti which makes the free trade zone advantageous.

The Ethiopian Maritime Authority Executive Director Engineer Yehualashet Jembere on his part said that about 70 items imported from abroad via Djibouti and stored in the eastern part of Ethiopia and 50 of the items are stored in Dire Dawa. Because of these, establishing free trade zone in Dire Dawa has significant value.

"In Dire Dawa, there is the Dire Dawa industry park which is well developed and

completed four years ago and the nation still pay the debt owed due to the construction of the park. However, because of the delay of investors in starting business there, they could still be unable to share the cost and left the burden to the government," Yehualashet said.

Therefore, the establishment of the free trade zone necessitated the availability of industry parks in Dire Dawa. The availability of rail transport, infrastructures, industrial parks and dry port created good opportunity to realize free trade zone. The road that connects the industry parks to the dry port is eyeing its completion. The availability of other basic necessities such as electric power, telecommunication services, feeder roads, piped water made the city to be preferable to establish the free trade zone.

Kiya Tekalign serves as Strategic Advisor in the Industry Park Development Corporation. As to him, the formation of the free trade zone has been conducted with the cooperation of the concerned government profit-making organizations.

For the last months, formulating of laws and regulations helpful to swift doing business has been carried out and it has finished its preparation to kick off the operation.

There are more than five thousand economic zones in the world and play a pivotal role for accelerating doing business and boosting the economy in the developed countries. They facilitated job creation, substituting imports and knowledge transfer.

Kiya also said that free trade zones played a vital role in African countries such as Djibouti, Somaliland, Kenya and Ethiopia drew lessons not only from these countries but also from Far East and Turkey.

Though study is still going on, towns such as Mojo, Adama and Sumera are preferred for establishing free trade zones in the future because they are located in the trade corridor of Ethiopia-Djibouti.

# Art & Culture

## Endalegeta Kebede: Another writer taking Ethiopia's literature to international stage

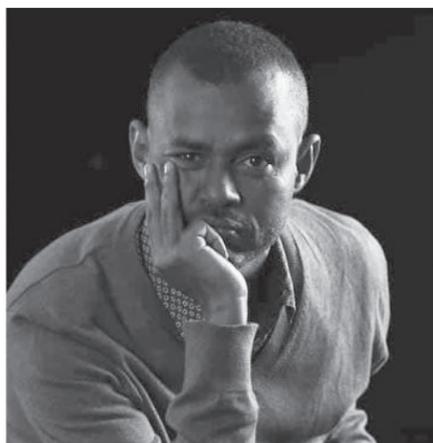
BY KFLEEYESUS ABEBE

Ethiopia has a long history of writing and recording as it is among 21 nations in the world that have their own alphabets. The Ge'ez alphabet makes Ethiopia the only African nation with its own alphabet and tradition of writing. Ethiopia has also multiple gifts that could help thrive literature in the country. Geographical and weather contrasts, culture, customs, languages, traditional wisdom and other diversities are among the assets Ethiopian writers can further exploit. It is also a land of many mythological stories, legends and fables even as Greek fabulist Aesop considered to have sourced stories from Ethiopia or himself is Ethiopian.

Despite the histories and gifts of literature, according to Encyclopedia Britanica, Ethiopian modern literature began lately in 19th century. Encyclopedia Britanica documented the inception of modern Amharic literature as follows: "With the restoration of Ethiopian independence after the Italian occupation of 1936-41, a great impetus was given to Amharic literature, with Emperor Haile Selassie encouraging authors to produce many types of books, especially on moral and patriotic themes. Writers of merit during this period were Makonnen Endalkachew (who produced allegorical novels and plays), Kebede Mikael (verse dramas, some history and biography), and Tekle Tsadiq Mekuria (histories)."

Since then many Ethiopian writers with different literary gifts began to emerge. Due to language barrier and other reasons, Amharic literature was however confined to local audience and writers' influence and recognition was limited inside the country. But some writers with distinguished skills were able break the barrier into publishing their works by UK based Oxford printing press and US based African Writers series. Sahle Sellassie Berhane Mariam's *The Afersata* and Daniachew Worku's *The Thirteenth Sun* appeared on African Writers series while Abe Gubegna's only English novel *Defiance* published by Oxford printing press.

Not only signing with big publishing companies, some Ethiopian writers were also successful in collecting continental and international awards and thereby promote Ethiopia's literary richness. For instance, Tsegaye Gebremedhin received United Poets Laureate International, and many other international awards. Daniachew Worku who is known outside Ethiopia for his English novel *Thirteenth Sun* in 1967 became one of 12 writers to join the first year of the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa. Solomon Deresa, Abe Gubegna and Getachew Tarekegn were also among participants of this



**Endalegeta is versatile in writing successful novel, short story anthologies, anthology of poetry, itenary, biographies and contributes articles for local megazines and newspapers**

writers exchange event after Daniachew.

For a long time, Ethiopia has just been represented at international stage by its Diaspora writers such as Maaza Mengsite, Dinaw Mengstu and Lemn Sisay. It was rare local Ethiopian writers to even to be known at continental level. But this week prolific writer Endalegeta Kebede become another Ethiopian writer to participate in International Writing Program at Iowa.

Endalegeta is versatile in writing successful novel, short story anthologies, anthology of poetry, itenary, biographies and contributes articles for local megazines and newspapers. *Zagol, Ke Tekur Semay sir, Derso mels, Ker Shado and Bealu Girma Hiwotu ena sirawochu* are among notable works of the author. The author is also known for his participation in literary events and helping emerging authors. In fact, he has Book bank called Walya which collects books by organizing various events and donates books to schools in parts of the country. He established library in his hometown. He was also making utmost effort to instill reading culture among young generation. Through his every saturday program many authors have got opportunity to promote their new books and make contact with their readers. Hence, Endalegeta isn't just literary figure. He is also literacy activist.

In its congratulatory message, American Embassy in Addis Ababa said the program allows Endalegeta to share his experience, gain others experience in return and establish connection with international writers.

"We congratulate Ethiopian writer, folklorist, and philanthropist, Endalegeta Kebede (PhD), for being selected to participate in the 2022 International Writing Program. The selection process was highly competitive, including 115 nominations from 64 countries. The U.S. Department of State will cover Endalegeta's expenses to join University of Iowa's 10-week fall residency program. His participation in the program will allow him to share his experience with other established international fellows and join a network of international writers."

Endalegeta as he is in his young age he would have much to contribute for the growth of Ethiopian literature. The international experience is anticipated to postively affect Endalegeta to promote his further country differently that is being associated with. His success will also be an inspiration to young writers who aspire to reach and be recognized at international stage.

### I'm a product

BY KFLEEYESUS ABEBE

It wasn't an issue

Not even a matter

It was easy,

trivial,

simple,

as human nature

Man is a product,

of a man and a woman

He multiplies biracial, multiracial, interracial

Very existence always to mix

Of a clan, out of a clan, of a color, out of a color

Of a religion, out of a religion

Of a language, out of a language

It is mix, a mixture, a variety, heterogeneity

But they want me to be linear

Singular, Alienated,

One of a side, single hand

Choose one over the other

Embrace one; blend doesn't have a chance

To be of a tribe, of a language, of a religion

When in fact nature is mixed

Fellas, wake up!

How could I be just one rejecting the other?!

Call your logic!

Don't you know I can't even be born?

I can't be convinced if the other wasn't there

How can I desert my very me?!

Like the blood, the vein you care

Know a mixed is mixed

I know I know

This is the law of the land

A mix is a criminal

Diversity is a lie

Standing all alone is the new beat

Of a clan, of a religion or a tribe

A restriction on self, cuffs on leg

To the wide, open land left untrodden

In the end, our minds lost peace

our stomach left empty

# Science & Technology

## Why African scientists are studying the genes of African species, and how they do it

DNA is the blueprint of life. All the information that an organism needs to survive, reproduce, adapt to environments or survive a disease is in its DNA.

That's why genomics – studying DNA and genes – is so important. It involves sequencing species' parts or the entire genome. This is a scientific method to determine an organism's DNA by breaking these components into fragments and determining their compositions or sequences. The fragments are then aligned and merged to reconstruct the original sequence.

This arms researchers with critical information. They can learn how to treat or prevent diseases, for instance, or how to breed crops and animals with better traits. Those traits might help species adapt better to the environment (more crucial than ever in the era of climate change) or improve their yields, making them more profitable.

But there's a large gap in genomics research: barely anything is known about the genomics of African species. This is despite the continent's rich biological diversity. It has plants and animals that aren't found anywhere else in the world.

These species have provided people across Africa with food, medicines and a way of life for centuries. For example, people in the continent's dry regions have long kept indigenous cattle, sheep and goats. The animals are a source of food and income in places that cannot support crop production.

African species have been neglected by the global genomic community. Scientists tend to focus on their own regions or countries. Africa's own genome sequencing and bioinformatics capacity is limited, so the continent's scientists haven't been able to do the necessary work. To date only a fraction of species endemic or indigenous to the continent have been properly sequenced and adequately characterised using other scientific methods.

The African BioGenome Project (AfricaBP) wants to change this. It's a pan-African project that seeks to sequence Africa's endemic and indigenous plants and animals. That's an estimated 105,000 species. We are three of the more than 109 African scientists involved in the project and recently published a position paper in *Nature* outlining the consortium's vision for the next 10 years.

The sequencing of the human genome, a US-led effort, shows how many direct and indirect benefits there are to this kind of work. The Human Genome Project led to advancements in genomics and precision medicine. It spurred new innovations in equipment, technologies and infrastructure that generated US\$265 billion annually for the US economy by 2019.

AfricaBP also aims to attract more students and early career researchers to genomics and related fields – and to encourage them to stay on the continent so that African countries benefit from their skills. This process



could be achieved by working with African institutions to provide permanent positions in genomics and bioinformatics.

### A crucial investment

Genome sequencing is a complex process. Species must be sampled and collected from specific locations; processed and quality controlled; sequenced and then carefully studied.

AfricaBP works closely with its scientific communities and partners to select species for sequencing. We will be sending out several calls to scientists across Africa to nominate species. Some have already been selected: these include the Checkered Elephant Shrew (*Rhynchocyon cirnei*) in Central and South-East Africa and the red mangrove tree (*Rhizophora mangle*) in West Africa).

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Researchers are asked to explain the species' scientific, cultural and economic significance. We want the species we sequence to be useful to a particular community or communities, perhaps by providing food or medicine, or to be culturally significant. They could also be endangered, making their documentation through sequencing efforts even more urgent.

Some may raise their eyebrows at the project's projected cost: about US\$1 billion over the next 10 years to complete the planned sequencing, develop infrastructure and train more scientists. It might seem like an unjustified expense given Africa's urgent needs, such as food security.

But genomics can help to address some of these needs. Providing nutritious food to an ever increasing human population will be made possible by new technologies that reduce breeding times and select for the traits that make crops hardy, adaptable and nutritious. For example, the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas in Rabat, Morocco, screened 5,780 wild crops, like sugar beet and pea; it found that many of these can cope with major desertification. These crops' genes could be transferred to related crops to help deal with arid conditions.

This sort of science has also been shown to drive economic growth through related fields such as biopharmaceuticals, diagnostics, new medical devices and through providing health care in new and innovative ways. The human genetics and genomics sector in the US has been found to support more than 850,000 jobs and contributed US\$265 billion to the US economy.

### Retaining African talent

African science stands to benefit from this initiative. There are already 109 African researchers involved in AfricaBP; most of them (87) are based at 22 institutions across the continent, in countries including Morocco, Nigeria, Cameroon, Kenya, and South Africa.

Developing better genomic infrastructure in African countries is a way to keep researchers on the continent, harnessing their skills for their own countries and regions. It is also crucial to get more African scientists involved in initiating home-grown research projects that focus on national priorities.

In the next decade we hope that AfricaBP will be part of efforts to prioritise genomic sequencing – and help reap its benefits for the continent.

(Source: *The Conversation*)

# Society

## Ending child stunting

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

Improved nutrition and healthy diet have tremendous potential in terms of supporting healthy growth and development, reducing the risk of chronic diseases and creating healthy citizens which in turn contributing significantly to sustainable economic growth by accelerating productivity.

Owing to this, investing in food systems and improving diets at every stage of a child's life is a priority matter for countries to ensure the proper growth and development of their citizens, create healthy citizens; thereby accelerate their economic development.

With this intention, the government of Ethiopia is undertaking various activities to make quality and safe food accessible to the citizens by solving food and nutrition problems in a sustainable way. As part of this effort, it is working aggressively through designing various plans and mechanisms, focusing on, especially, in food insecure areas.

The Seqota Declaration is one of the areas where the government is working aggressively to eradicating the underlying causes of chronic undernutrition; and ending stunting among children under two years by 2030. The Declaration, which is a multi-year plan is currently being implemented through a multi-sectoral program involving nine different sector ministries.

As studies indicate, Sekota Declaration has a 15-year roadmap and is divided into three phases.

Recently, a forum that evaluates the 2021/22 budget year plan implementation and expansion impact of Seqota Declaration as well as discusses the next direction was held in Seqota Town of Amhara State in the presence of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen, senior federal and state government officials, and pertinent stakeholders.

According to the impact assessment report presented during the meeting, the effort has registered encouraging outcome in terms of improving the nutrition system of the country and reducing stunting.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke said that even though we are in challenging moments, the efforts we exerted to improve the nutritional system and end up stunting, we have witnessed encouraging outcome.

Demeke, who is also the Patron of the Seqota Declaration, added that in the past few years, it has been possible to implement programs that can ensure food security and nutritional system; and bring about basic economic reforms.

Especially, by implementing the Seqota Declaration, which has a 15-year road map and divided into three phases,



A forum held in Seqota town of Amhara State

Photo- MoH



tremendous coordinated efforts are carried out to benefit the community and practically and sustainably.

“To fully and successfully implement the Declaration, an integrated operating system has been established among concerned key federal institutions. In turn, the system has laid a strong foundation to achieve meaningful results. It was enabled to witness promising achievements in reducing stunting,” he remarked.

He also confirmed government's commitment and determination to realize similar national plans and goals saying: “the government will give priority to the plans set by national programs, to ensure lasting peace in all areas, and implement them committedly to achieving the desired goals.”

He also stressed that directly or indirectly, cultural values have a significant role in creating awareness among the mass, arresting food insecurity and the

challenges of stunning. For instance, yearly festivals like Shaday, Ashendaye and Solel, can be used as an instrument to mobilize the mass, eliminate hunger, to ensure the peace and development of the country as well as ensuring food security.

As it was stressed by Deputy Prime Minister Demeke, integrating cultural values have a key role to mobilize the society. As a land of varied indigenous cultural values and practices, Ethiopians have century old experiences of getting together, sharing experiences and joining hands in overcoming challenges. In this regard, the annual festivals (Shaday, Ashendaye and Solel) can be used as voices to create awareness among the society.

Health Minister Dr. Lia Tadesse on her part said that addressing the challenges of nutritional food, especially for children, has multifaceted benefits with regard to supporting them to have proper growth and cognitive development, physical appearance, prevention of infectious and non-infectious diseases and maintaining good health. Further, as to her, improving nutrition is crucial to enhance children's ability so as to achieve education and learning outcomes.

Therefore, if a nutritional system-based integrated program is implemented in more coordinated manner than before by involving all parties, especially the community, in a way that can change the lives of families at the district level, it will be possible to secure the children, who will be the future of the country, from the problem of food scarcity, the Minister remarked.

In earlier times, the program had been implemented in 40 districts in two states. And at present, by expanding and furthering the coverage in all states, it is being implemented in a total of 240 districts, it was learnt.

It was in July 2015, the Government of Ethiopia announced the multi-year plan, the Seqota Declaration, to end stunting in Ethiopia. The Seqota Declaration commits to eradicating the underlying causes of chronic undernutrition and ending stunting among children under two years by 2030.

The Seqota Declaration has been endorsed and embedded into the National Growth and Transformation Plan, making it among Ethiopia's highest level commitments.

The Seqota Declaration builds on the “Cost of Hunger” study commissioned by the government in 2013, which showed that the annual costs associated with child undernutrition in Ethiopia are equivalent to 16.5 percent of its GDP. Eliminating stunting in Ethiopia is therefore a crucial underpinning to the country's growth and transformation agenda, studies indicate.

As it is indicated by both the Deputy Prime Minister and Health Minister, addressing food related issue is one of the priority areas of the government and effective results are witnessed. This is especially true for children who are victims of stunting. While ensuring the effective implementation of Seqota Declaration, working to realize the peace and stability of the nation is given special attention.

# International News

## Nigeria suspends 53 TV and radio channels causing an outcry in the media world

African News-Two organizations filed a complaint on Wednesday in Nigeria, targeting both the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and President Muhammadu Buhari, to prevent the closure of more than 50 radio stations and television channels in the country.

The announced suspension of 53 radio and television stations has provoked a storm of reactions in Nigeria.

The chairman of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), however, insists that this measure has “nothing political”.

At a press conference in Abuja last Friday, he explained that the broadcasters concerned had not renewed their licenses in time.

He said they owed more than six million euros in total. He gave them 24 hours to pay up or stop broadcasting.

Faced with heavy criticism, the National Broadcasting Commission finally decided to give more time to the media concerned, which are still broadcasting for the time being.

To prevent their closure, two organisations on Wednesday filed a lawsuit, arguing that such action would be an impediment to freedom of expression and information for millions of Nigerians.

## Angola awaits election results after opposition casts doubt on ruling party's early lead

Ballot counting was underway in Angola on Thursday in a tense atmosphere after provisional results from a parliamentary election gave the ruling former Marxist party a strong lead and the opposition dismissed them as unreliable.

Election officials said in the early hours of Thursday that preliminary results from Wednesday's election showed the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), in power for nearly five decades, had garnered 60.65% after a third of the votes were counted.

The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola's (UNITA), the opposition party led by Adalberto Costa Junior, gained 33.85%, election officials said, without providing key data such as regional voting distribution or voter turnout.

If confirmed, the MPLA's majority would easily give President Joao Lourenco a second five-year term.

Political analysts saw Wednesday's election as UNITA's best-ever chance of victory amid growing anger among young Angolans at the MPLA for being sidelined in profiting from their country's oil-fuelled booms. The MPLA has been in power since Angola gained independence from Portugal in 1975.

Thursday's announcement of provisional results by the National Electoral Commission (CNE) was surprisingly soon after polls closed; in 2017, the elections' final results were announced two weeks later.



Image: Reuters

Abel Chivukuvuku, vice-presidential candidate for UNITA, said the early results were not reliable.

“Our polling centres (give) clear provisional indicators of UNITA's winning trend in all provinces of our country,” he told a news conference.

UNITA and the MPLA have been rivals since before Angola gained independence from Portugal in 1975. The two sides fought a civil war intermittently for over 25 years, in which hundreds of thousands of people were killed.

The last, decade-long bout of fighting was triggered in 1992 when UNITA contested election results giving the MPLA a clear majority. That triggered a re-start of the civil war which lasted until the two sides made a peace agreement in 2002.

Recent ballots, including the last one in 2017, did not spur widespread violence as

MPLA's lead remained solid, but a report by the Institute for Security Studies said that if an MPLA win is perceived as fraudulent, unrest could follow.

“Voters reacted with a lot of incredulity and disbelief,” Angolan political analyst Claudio Silva told Reuters on Thursday, noting that photos of results sheets taken by voters contradicted the provisional count of the CNE.

Several videos emerged during the night of angry voters at polling stations complaining that the result sheet was not shared with the public for consultation, a requirement under Angolan law.

Reuters could not independently verify the footage.

UNITA's leader Costa Junior had told Reuters on Sunday that contesting the election result was not off the table if the process was deemed undemocratic.

## Russia and India no longer need US dollar – BRICS president

RT NEWS- The two countries have successfully established a mechanism for mutual settlements in rubles and rupees, Purnima Anand says

Russia and India don't need the US dollar in trade, having turned to national currencies to conduct mutual settlements, BRICS International Forum President Purnima Anand told reporters on Thursday.

“We have implemented the mechanism of mutual settlements in rubles and rupees, and there is no need for our countries to use the dollar in mutual settlements. And today a similar mechanism of mutual settlements in rubles and yuan is being developed by China,” she said.

“That means that the BRICS countries are opening up to Russia, offering the opportunity for the country to overcome the consequences of sanctions,” Anand added, as quoted by RIA news agency.

The BRICS president said mutual trade between India and Russia had grown fivefold over the past 40 years. Moscow supplies a rapidly growing volume of oil to India, and in return gets large quantities of agricultural products, textiles, medicines and other products.



Getty Images / PM Images

Anand also noted that New Delhi considers itself a neutral party in the current sanctions war between the West and Russia, and despite sanctions pressure, will continue cooperation with Moscow “in any areas where necessary.”

“When Russia's military operation in Ukraine began, naturally there was pressure on India to stop importing Russian oil. But the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had to reject this pressure. The Russian side was assured that supplies would not be stopped and the sanctions regime would in no way affect

the relationship between our countries,” the forum head stressed.

BRICS an international socio-economic and political forum incorporating five member nations: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.



# This is Ethiopia

## Festivals, beyond cultural and religious values

Spring festivals represent celebration of the transition of the season that are associated with the integral aspect life which depends on the seasonal change time where the gloomy rainy season or “*kiremt*” leaves for the sunny beautiful summer day. The sunny season instills happiness which is expressed by happy thanksgiving like celebrations those take place among different ethnic groups of the country.

As we explore different spring festivals carried out in the country, we will also try to explore the traditional hand-woven Ethiopian dressings that accompany the season within this article and many more to come in the series, stay tuned with us at [ethiopianclothing.net](http://ethiopianclothing.net) as we wonder through our country’s unique moments that define the very source of our identity and pride. Ashenda or Shadey is a one very colorful celebration that mainly takes place in mid-August in northern Ethiopian areas of Tigray and Amhara states, Agew area where it is called Ashenda and Shadey respectively. The festival is also celebrated in areas of Wollo called Raya and Kobo where it is called (solel). The festival has also other names in parts of Tigray such as Ayniwari in town of Axum and mariya in the town of Adigrat.

The day is also celebrated in neighboring country Eritrea which shares very similar traditions with the above areas of the northern Ethiopian regions which showcases beautiful green flowery traditional Eritrean dresses being worn by the girls who celebrate the day.

The event marks the end of two week fasting or known as (tsome filseta) to honor Virgin Mary of Zion by Ethiopian and Eritrean Orthodox Christian faith followers. That is why it is said holiday of the girls where they go around singing and dancing in groups adorned with their beautiful cultural *Habesha kemis* (Ethiopian and Eritrean traditional dress) around their towns and cities collecting gift from strangers for three days.

“The beauty of a woman is not in the clothes she wears, the figure that she carries, or the way she combs her hair. The beauty of a woman is seen in her eyes, because that is the doorway to her heart, the place where love resides. True beauty in a woman is reflected in her soul. It’s the caring that she lovingly gives, the passion that she shows & the beauty of a woman only grows with passing years.”

And that is what you see during the Ashenda or Shadey festival - the happiness of the girls, one that can only be felt by seeing it not reading about it. So, I highly recommend being a part of it at least once



**During the Ashenda or Shadey festival - the happiness of the girls, one that can only be felt by seeing it not reading about it. So, I highly recommend being a part of it at least once in a lifetime**

in a lifetime.

The title Ashenda denotes the water channel system that is used to pass water off the roof of a house to the ground while Shadey is a tall grass that grows during this season in the above mentioned areas. You can see some of the girls having the grass tied around their waist as they sing and dance. As it is the end of the rainy season and the beginning of spring, you might call it Ethiopian spring break festival.

There are also other festivals during this season celebrated by other ethnic groups of Ethiopia such as the *Irreecha*, and *Fichee-Chambalaalla* festivals celebrated by Oromo and Sidama ethnic societies of Ethiopia respectively, which they adorned themselves with their traditional attires, ornaments and other beautifying objects.

Ashenda or Shadey is a much underrated cultural event which can become a world heritage for girls around the world in which the day is dedicated to girls and young women only where the rest of the people stand and appreciate their efforts in adding colors to boring day to day life.

If one may ask what about the boys do they have any holidays? The answer is yes; and they do have and it is called “*buhe*” or “*Debre Tabor*” another spring celebration which marks Gods sign of light on top of the Mount Zion for his people in despair. This holiday is also celebrated around the same time of the year the Ashenda is cel-

ebrated. They actually differ by few days, as the girls and the boys also would dress up in there “*Ejetebabs*” which is Ethiopian cultural clothing for men and would go around the neighborhoods singing and chanting praising the people where they are given gifts such as traditionally baked bread called “*mulmul*” or money.

On the eve of the day, the boys would sing their song “*Hoya Hoya, Buhe Belu*” all day and; as the sun goes down another exciting part of the event, that is the bonfire ceremony to remember the light God cast on top of Mount Zion. The boys would run around the bonfire singing and cheering ‘*Hoya Hoya*’ sometimes accompanied by firecrackers.

All these spring festivals lead the main holiday of the season the Ethiopian New Year, ‘*Enkutatash*’ another grand event which will be celebrated all across the nation which is also a legacy of the country’s unique calendar system devised by ancient scholars. This is too a moment where everyone would set out to receive it in their new Ethiopian traditional clothing.

The word *Enkutatash* is heavy with symbolism as it not only means the ‘gift of jewels’ but also represents the end of the rainy season - the time of year during which the Ethiopian landscape is covered with bright yellow flowers called *Adey Abeba*.

Source: <https://ethiopianclothing.net/blogs/news/ashenda-shadey>