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Skilled, knowledgeable diplomacy constitute Ethiopia's success in global politics: Hailemariam

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA - Today's Ethiopia diplomacy is being run based on knowledge and the approach that could go alongside with the current global political dynamics thereby sharpening its efforts to safeguard the national interest, the former Premier said.

The former Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn gave the training yesterday to the diplomats at the African Leadership Excellence Academy in Sululta. He covered a range of topics on international relations and national interests

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Representative pushes for Ethiopia's renewed access to AGOA benefits

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA - Representative Don Beyer has urged United States Trade Representative (USTR) to consider initiating an out-of-cycle review regarding Ethiopia's eligibility for benefits under the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

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Three bottled water companies to export products

• 1.2 bln. Birr water bottling factory inaugurated in Sululta

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – The Ministry of Industry disclosed that three water bottling plants have finalized preparations to supply products to the export market apart from serving the ever-growing local demand.

The 1.2 billion Birr Sport Purified Water Factory, a sister company of Belaya Industrial PLC, was inaugurated yesterday in Sululta town of the Oromia State in the

See Three bottled ... page 4



News



Huriya Ali

Ethiopia to host 17th Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA - The Ministry of Innovation and Technology disclosed that Ethiopia will host the 17th annual Internet Governance Forum (IGF) from 28 November to 2 December 2022.

Ethiopia's advancement in the sector and its opening of the telecom sector for foreign companies are factors for the country to be chosen as a venue of the forum, Innovation and Technology State Minister Huriya Ali told local media.

The number of Ethiopian mobile subscribers which is expected to exceed 64 million, of which more than 20 percent are internet users, happens to be one of the reasons that the nation obtains the chance.

The state minister further stated that lesson was taken from previous forum in a bid to make the upcoming event more successful. To this end, discussion was made with the UN's Head of Economic and Social issues on ways the forum to address Africa's challenges.

By the same token, consolidated efforts are underway with different government agencies including Prime Minister Office, Addis Ababa City Administration, Immigration, Finance and Tourism Ministries as well as Federal Police for the successful conduct of the forum.

As to her, hosting such kind of global events would have a meaningful impact in displaying the reform Ethiopia has made in the telecom service and attracting a substantial amount of foreign currency. The event will also allow Ethiopia to promote its tourism destinations thereby enhancing its aim of becoming a center of conference tourism in Africa.

High-level officials from the United Nations, Head of States, investors, as well as professionals who are engaged in the internet arena are expected to be part of the forum. "Ensuring a secured internet service, curbing poor internet connection, utilizing artificial intelligence, governing data, connecting societies using data and among others are among the major areas of the week-long event," Huriya remarked.

It is to be recalled that the 16th annual IGF meeting was hosted by Poland in Katowice from 6-10 December 2021, under the theme of Internet United.

Expert gives insight into gov't holdings' privatization importance

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - Privatization of government holdings has a substantial benefits to build a competitive economy and reduce investment loans, loss and others, an economist said, adding that government's decision to transfer state-owned enterprises to private capital is encouraging.

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), the economist Costantinos Berhetesfa (PhD) stated that the government should strengthen the number and expand the opportunities that the private sector can work on. It is encouraging that the Ethiopian government is making decisions that strengthen this idea in telecom, finance and land issues.

If the government enters everywhere, the profit will be a loss. When the government has investments, it borrows. Even for ethio telecom, 3.5 billion USD loan was taken from China and it is being paid now. When Safaricom came in, it also paid dollars and the government got income,

When the government monopolizes organizations here and there, it is



Costantinos Berhetesfa (PhD)

also vulnerable to looting. But when the private sector participates, it is not a loan, but an income and it also reduces embezzlement. Therefore, the government should maintain its control and strengthen the private sector and the experience of other countries also shows this, Costantinos added.

"When I was working at the United

Nations, there was a debate to privatize the telecom in Nigeria. Later we consulted and convinced them and they entered it. Currently, the country is getting 19 billion USD from the sector. Therefore, it is feasible to release development organizations to private and foreign investment."

When the private sector comes into the country, it brings resources. It should be experienced with the local investor as it will involve more professionals and procedures to help the sector.

The process of privatizing the government's holdings in the telecom sector, finance and

economy as well as transportation and other investments will help the economy to be strong, the economist emphasized.

It is to be remembered that the government issued an international tender to privatize 40 percent of ethio telecom. In addition, the government has announced that it will open the banking industry to foreign firms.

Cultivating Pan Africanist generation crucial to counter imperialism

BY TAMERU REGASA

ADDIS ABABA - The efforts of cultivating an active Pan Africanist generation have a significant contribution towards successfully defend Africa and thwart the imperialist forces, according to an expert.

Oromia State Education Bureau Head Tola Bariso (PhD) told *The Ethiopian Herald* that strengthening Pan Africanism is instrumental to free African countries from Neo-colonialism practices.

Accordingly, some global powers are still showing high interest in the internal affairs of sovereign African countries.

Currently, preparations are underway to host the second Pan Africanism football game slated to be held in Uganda between teenagers less than 16 years old.

It is to be recalled that Congo hosted the first Pan Africanism football game in 2021.

As to him, the game is very helpful to penetrate the ideology of Pan Africanism into the mind of the new generation.

Thus, the state education bureau is working actively to select Pan Africanist youths that will participate in the game.



"Ethiopia has played immeasurable role in the history of the foundation of Pan Africanism. The country has been working for the development of the Pan Africanism ideology through organizing various institutions by the name of Pan Africanism," he said.

The establishment of African Union, freedom of all African countries from colonialism, and freedom of South Africa from apartheid system are the result and

success of Pan Africanism sentiment.

More importantly, the central goal of Pan Africanism is to free African countries from any special interest groups' pressure, he added.

Though all African countries are free from colonization, there are a lot of assignments that should be done by African scholars to free Africa from neo-colonialism attitudes that have been reflected in different forms, he stressed.

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Editorial

Reaching out needy Tigrayans with humanitarian aid unhampered

War brings on its sway death, mayhem, destruction, displacement, alienation, trauma and hunger. It turns victims' life topsy-turvy.

Needless to mention silencing the gun helps to address the aforementioned challenges. All the more so if the peace deals happens to be an enduring one brokered by disinterested parties.

But the task of bringing things back to normal regretting lost lives is as much taxing if not multiplied over.

It is in cognizance of the exigency of outreaching victims with the necessary humanitarian aid—food and medicines on top of the list—the government is doing its level best to facilitate support to needy people.

Obviously, those innocent people of Tigray caught in the crossfire with nowhere to retreat have been suffering the brunt of the war. They tasted the bitterness of the war to the full and knew first hand war-wrought hunger is mightier than the sword. That was why they were full-throated in the request of aid to the level of galvanizing global support. They were looking forward to the sought—for peace that ushers in a stable life.

Knowing full well the magnitude of the challenge, the accountable and peace-votary incumbent has been seeing to the task that all possible routes and all possible means are in full gear to let humanitarian-aid delivery and disbursement a green light as per the peace deal of Pretoria. As such all possible corridors of humanitarian delivery for land transport are made accessible. Happily, the land transport is bolstered by the air transport.

Yet, getting out of the framework of the peace agreement, in a botched attempt some individuals and quarters are trying to belittle the government's commitment to the case in point with a false accusation that the latter is tardy in victims-outreaching task. But this accusation is in dissonance with the statements of international donor organizations.

Allegations that could not stand the glare of light serve no purpose than taking things back to square one. Hence the global community must take claims with a grain of salt. It has to keep on the task of troubleshooting the tragic scenario.

To substantiate the government's commitment it suffices here to see the latest developments. According to World Food Program (WFP), along the Afar corridor more than dozen of trucks are surging to Tigray to outreach the needy. Two fuel-carrying trucks are accompanying the fleet. WFP corroborated as well that other donors too are ferrying food-related items as the hustle is taken out of the aid delivery to Tigray in the wake of the peace deal.

With a strong spirit of cooperation and heightened humanitarian gestures the Afari people and their state are catalyzing donors' outreaching task in Tigray. Furthermore, relief food nutrition and medical cargo have followed suit via all routes.

Test flights to Shire were conducted to transport humanitarian workers, WFP did confirm. Additional flights to the same effect are on the pipeline. Early this week, the International Committee Red Cross (ICRC) did disclose the arrival of the first convoy of aid supplies in Mekele.

The return of quite not only help fast track the redressing of humanitarian crisis, it will also lend impetus to the reconstruction and rehabilitation task.

Media outlets must play due role in reflecting facts on the ground. To spare themselves twinges of conscience journalists must throw light on the fact not to gamble on the life of innocent citizens.

With a concerted effort those who were on the extreme ends of the war and citizens within and outside Tigray, diaspora community as well as donors must show commitment to the translation of the peace deal to the letter.

Opinion

Energizing Ethiopia for sustainable development

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Access to or lack of natural and modern energy resources has more than ever become a critical factor in the development of world economy. A number of energy crisis that occurred in the world, for instance in 1974, had triggered social revolutions across the world. Even the modest increase of 10 Ethiopian cents per liter of benzene in Ethiopia, along with natural calamities of 1974 resulted in apparently irreversible mass upsurge against the imperial order.

The recent war between Russia and Ukraine has further exacerbated the condition of the energy market in the world resulting in hiked price of oil seriously affecting the global economic status.

Although the potential is there, Ethiopia cannot continue to rely on fossil fuel primarily because it is expensive and emits huge amount of carbon into the atmosphere which would ultimately affect the livelihood of the population in so many ways.

Ethiopia's Climate Change Resilient Green Economy Policy and Strategy is based on the utilization of the country's renewable energy resources to produce carbon free energy which could be obtained from different natural resources easily available in the country.

In addition to mitigating climate change, stopping deforestation and forest degradation and supporting sustainable forest management conserves water resources and prevents flooding, reduces run-off, controls soil erosion, reduces river siltation, protects fisheries and investments

in hydropower facilities, preserves biodiversity and preserves cultures and traditions. With all that at stake it is clear what has to happen. With all the services that forests provide both to humanity and the natural world, there is now widespread understanding. It has now become obvious that forests are more important if retained, than cut. Out of that understanding has come the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility the government has designed.

Although Ethiopia is one of the few countries in the world endowed with diverse energy resources, the country has not been able to tap and adequately use these resources for national economic development. Regrettably enough despite the huge amount and variety of resources some of which are enumerated below, the country has remained in utter energy poverty.

According to the National Energy Policy issued in 1994 E.C and revised after more than two decades in 2015, by the Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Electricity, Ethiopia possess a potential of more than 45,000 MW, 10,000 MW geothermal, 100 GW of wind farm resources, 8 TCF of natural gas, oil shale deposit of 253 million tons, coal 300 million ton of coal deposit and Ethiopia is endowed with various and diversified renewable energy resources, and sola power irradiation ranges from 4.5 kWh/m²/day to 7.5 kWh/m²/day.

In terms of electricity, the current generation capacity in the country, according to the policy document has reached 4,300 MW with hydropower resource accounting for

92% of the country's electricity production in normal operation. To date less than 10% of this hydropower has been exploited. Three major hydropower plants with total installed capacity of more than 8.4 GW, GERD at 6,350 MW, Koyishaa at 2,160 MW, Genale Dawa III at 254 MW are all under construction.

According to Mengistu Tefera in his research work entitled "Energy and Economic Growth", wood biomass resources which were extensively used across the country have been depleted due to the over dependence of the population on firewood for household use. Accordingly, wood biomass resources in Ethiopia amount to about 13.8 million Teals in terms of standing stock and 930 thousand Teals in terms of annual yield. Keffa, Illubabor and Bale Zones occupying less than one fifth of the country's land area account for half of wood biomass resources of the country.

Oil and gas in Ethiopia has a history of just over a century. The first actual exploration of oil and gas was conducted in 1915 by the Standard Oil Company of the US followed by another exploration in the Ogden in 1945 under the permission of the Late Emperor Haile Selassie only to be aborted by a massive riot in opposition to the project conducted in Warder Areas of Somali Region. Later on a German oil firm, Gewerkschaft Elwerath built roads and conducted exploration operations in 1959, within the Ogden basin again. Between the years, 1950 and 1995, approximately 43 wells have been drilled in the Ogden region.

In 1972-1974, an American company called Tenneco Oil Exploration drilled the first exploration well in the Elkuran area and discovered an estimated 68 million cubic meters or 2.4 billion cubic feet of gas.

The years 1977, 1978 and 1988 saw war between Somalia and Ethiopia for control of this resource rich region, making it impossible to develop the discovered gas.

Soviet Petroleum Exploration Expedition or SPEE confirmed extensive gas reserves in the Calub and Hilala areas of the Ogaden basin in 1980's estimating them at 118 billion cubic meters.

The Ogaden basin has since been divided into twenty one separate blocks making it easier to award concession. Blocks attributed to oil are located throughout Ethiopia, in the northeast, southeast and southwest of the country.

Companies such as Petronas from Malaysia, South West Energy Ltd. from Hong Kong, Pexco Exploration from the Netherlands, Lundin East Africa from Sweden, Afar Explorer from the US, Africa Oil from Canada, New Age (African Global Energy) Ltd. from the UK, China's Zhongyuan Petroleum Exploration Bureau, Poly-GCL Petroleum Investment Limited (China POLY Group Corporation and Hong Kong-based Golden Concord Group) from China, and the British Tullow Oil Ethiopia

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

News

Iran underscores Ethiopia's peace benefits for World

ADDIS ABABA - The peace in Ethiopia will definitely benefit the region and every corner of the World as the peace, security and development are globally interlinked together, Iran's Ambassador to Ethiopia, Samad Ali Lakizadeh said.

In an exclusive interview with *ENA*, Ambassador Lakizadeh said the peace agreement is a wise decision which will benefit all Ethiopians, the region and all corners of the world.

Congratulating the Government and all Ethiopians, he said "I hope that this wise decision will also be very easily implemented and will benefit with much more prosperity to all Ethiopians."

Stating that the peace deal is in line with the principle African Union—i.e. African solution to African problems, he said that Iran will support this wise principle.

The ambassador also said that his country is ready to take part and assist the reconstruction efforts in the war-torn areas.

Noting that the peace agreement is an important decision for Ethiopians, he said "Of course, I encourage all Ethiopians



Samad Ali Lakizadeh

to use this opportunity to make their country much more prosperous for all Ethiopians as a whole."

Highlighting that Ethiopia is a multicultural country with diverse, culture, religion and language among others, he said as a federal country, diversity is a big asset for Ethiopia.

The ambassador indicated that his country will provide support for the full implementation of this peace agreement.

The peace deal is a step forward and has far-reaching implications to global peace and security, development as well as prosperity, the ambassador pointed out.

"Every country's security links with others. The peace in Ethiopia will definitely benefit the region because the peace, security and development in the world is interlinked together," he said.

He further said: "This peace agreement of course will also serve much more for security, peace, prosperity and development not only for Ethiopia but also for the Horn of Africa and of course every corner of the World."

The Government of Ethiopia is fully committed to implementing the peace agreement, according to the statement Government Communication Service issued recently.

It is to be recalled that the peace agreement signed between the Ethiopian Peace Talks Delegation and TPLF in Pretoria, South Africa, has reiterated respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ethiopia and to upholding the constitution of the country. And, in consistent with the constitution, the agreement also reaffirmed that Ethiopia has only one national defense force.

Representative...

Rep. Don Beyer wrote a letter to United States Trade Representative (USTR) Ambassador Katherine Tai raising concern about Ethiopia's peace agreement and cessation of hostilities mean rebuilding can now begin.

As to him, renewed access to AGOA benefits would help Ethiopia's economy, exporters, and workers.

Rep. Don highlighted hopes that the recent truce brokered by the African Union, which allows unhindered humanitarian supplies to Tigray, will lead to Ethiopia's swift reentry into AGOA.

"We appreciate the work USTR have already done to ensure that the Ethiopian Government is aware of what it must do to meet the AGOA eligibility criteria."

He urged USTR to maintain an open dialogue with counterparts in Ethiopia on the benchmarks that must be met for Ethiopia to come back into compliance, and that these do not deviate from AGOA's eligibility requirements."

For the last two decades, AGOA has served as one the most important tools in strengthening U.S. - Ethiopian ties. It has also accelerated Ethiopia's economic growth and improved living standards.

"Ethiopia's inclusion in AGOA helped foster the growth of a burgeoning manufacturing industry, which provided stable employment for tens of thousands of Ethiopian workers. Its membership in AGOA also dramatically expanded Ethiopia's importance as a U.S. trading partner, with imports from Ethiopia to the U.S. growing 406.5 percent between 2009 and 2019," he added.

After losing its AGOA benefits, Ethiopia has seen firms scale back expansion plans, close factories, and begin laying off thousands of workers.

Pushing the nation deeper into poverty by continuing to exclude them from AGOA could further destabilize the country and severely weaken the U.S. - Ethiopia relationship, he added.

Meanwhile, the 2022 election was a turning point for the Ethiopian Diaspora: 32 of the 35 candidates won their races. "We now have friends of Ethiopia in legislative offices across the US," said American-Ethiopian Public Affair Committee.

Skilled,...

under the theme of the day: "The Paradox of National Interest: Balancing Collaboration and Competition."

Hailemariam further noted that the current Ethiopian diplomacy is on the right track and the activities should be supported by skill and knowledge. Ethiopian diplomats need to prioritize the protection of national interest, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country.

Commending the commitment and consistency of Ethiopian diplomats in defending the national interest, he called on the latter to embrace the country's past, value and build on all the good deeds of previous generations, and steer clear of politicizing differences that weaken the people's unity.

"Diplomacy is all about negotiation, give and take it is not based on one sided benefit and it must be in a way to protect the core benefit of the country and at the centre of our national interest. The country has achieved huge diplomatic success so far and there are also gaps which need to be improved."

Despite several challenges and pressures being exerted on the country, Ethiopians consistently protected their long-term interests. The construction of the GERD and the commitment of the Ethiopian people in protecting the project and use of the resource has always been in the national interest of the country.

Noting the growing interest of superpower in the Horn of Africa and their competition might also affect Ethiopia, the ex-PM

indicated Ethiopia's interests in the region or elsewhere should always reflect its aspirations to combat poverty, terrorism and realize prosperity of citizens.

Senior Advisor of International Law at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Muktar Mohammed told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the training is timely and centred at the protection of the national interest on the basis of current diplomatic nature of the world. The training has also a paramount importance in cognizance of diplomats to protect the national interest of the country and beyond.

"Ethiopia's diplomacy is in a better position and the peace accord that was signed between the federal government and TPLF is the result of the country's diplomatic success."

Three bottled...

presence of high-level government officials. Speaking on the occasion, Industry Minister Melaku Alebel said that the number of factories that are producing bottled water in Ethiopia reached 110 including Sport Water. The annual production capacity of the plants is 9.75 billion liters, which is unsatisfactory when compared with the national demand.

The minister further noted that the sector has created over 124,000 permanent and temporary jobs. "If we make transportation and bottling expenses competitive, bottled water would be one of Ethiopia's prominent export products."

As to him, three water bottling plants, including the newly-inaugurated Sport Purified Bottled Water, have finalized the necessary preparations to export products thereby boosting the country's forex earnings.

Melaku noted that the government has been paying due attention to attract private investments in the water bottling industries and to improve competitiveness by providing various supports including removing the use of Masterbatch. Removing Masterbatch from bottled water enabled factories to improve production capacity and reducing

expenditure helped the country to save 50 million USD annually.

Moreover, research and study activities have been underway to enable factories to use recycled plastic water bottles and after nine months, recycled plastic water bottles would be available in the market. The government has been taking various measures to support manufacturing industries via economic reform, ease of doing business, solving finance, power, inputs and other problems. Currently, these measures are bearing fruits in increasing production.

The minister called on investors to utilize

the opportunities in the manufacturing sector to substitute imports and generate foreign currency.

Belaya Industrial PLC General Manager Anmaw Alemu said that Sport Purified Bottling Water has a significant role in providing jobs for the youth and supporting the national economy. While employing 420 citizens currently, the plant would provide 1,200 jobs when it is fully operational.

Currently, the plant has been producing 48,000 plastic per hour and employed new robotic, compressor and water treatment technologies, it was learned.

Opinion

The Belt and Road Initiative: Is China-Africa Cooperation a Neo-colonial “Trojan Horse”?

BY BIRHAN EYAYU

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) launched by China in 2013 as a new development strategy has provided fresh opportunities for China to reach out to the world. In the past nine years, the BRI has evolved from an initiative covering only roads and maritime corridors in Asia and Europe into a broader program connecting almost all of Asia, Africa, and Europe with numerous projects in those regions. In response to China's increasing influence in Africa and its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative there have been significant discussions on whether this is too much of a good thing or if it actually presents some benefits. While some see Chinese investment as an opportunity for improvement of infrastructure on the continent others consider it as nothing more than a Trojan Horse designed to make sure that China will be able to control access to African resources.

The BRI and Africa: Is China investing too much?

One of the most common arguments against the BRI in Africa is that Chinese investment is too much. Already, Chinese investment in Africa is estimated to be on average twice that made by the U.S. annually. But the concern is that with the BRI China will outstrip investments to the extent that Africa will become overly dependent on Chinese investment. While the BRI may bring some problems for Africa, the argument that these are too many investments is somewhat misleading. The BRI and subsequent investment from China is not a one-way street.

Is the BRI a tool for China to control African resources?

Some have argued that the BRI is a tool to control African resources, especially minerals. This is a view that has been particularly prevalent in the past because of China's historical focus on commodities in its investment in Africa. Others have also argued that China's control of the Suez Canal, with its ownership of the Port of the Canal, will give it control of the flow of commodities between India and Africa. However, despite these concerns, the BRI is not a tool for China to control African resources; indeed, Chinese investment in Africa is to a large extent motivated by need rather than greed. China's increasing demand for commodities like copper, which it needs for its ever-growing economy, are met with an ever-decreasing supply, necessitating investment in new sources.

What is China actually investing in Africa?

Another common argument against the BRI in Africa is that China is investing in low-return projects. Others have also argued that Chinese investment is likely to be so significant that it will displace African investment. However, it is important to remember that the BRI is not one



China-Africa cooperation redefines true friendship

coherent entity, but a massive movement of investment from China to all parts of the world. Within Africa, Chinese investment covers all kinds of projects, from airports and railways to solar power plants and hospitals. The BRI does not have a pre-set agenda for what China should invest in, but is a product of the needs of each country, with the level of investment dependent on how much the host country is able to provide as an incentive.

Opportunities for Africans through the BRI

The BRI, as a scheme that connects China with the rest of the world, also brings opportunities for Africans. The BRI offers African countries a chance to use their comparative advantage to access the Chinese market. The friendly economic and trade exchanges between China and Africa have supported the development of African countries through investment. One of the good sides of Africa-China relations is defined by mutual interest boosting the economic and trade cooperation unlike the Africa-West relationship which was defined by superiority complexes and various imbalances.

African countries are also keenly aware that completely copying the Western development model and being divorced from their national conditions is not only useless to Africa's development, but may even hinder their development. In a sense, the development of African countries can only choose their development path according to their national conditions. Chinese modernization road respects national conditions, emphasize diversified development path, and do not interfere in other countries internal affairs. Above all, the Chinese model pays attention to mutually beneficial cooperation, welcomed by the masses of developing countries.

The Belt and Road initiative once again tells the world that China does not pursue

hegemony. Its goal is to build a “community of shared future” with neighbouring countries and a China-Africa community of shared future so that China and African countries share development and people-to-people connectivity and interests are integrated. In the past, China-Africa friendship and cooperation were mainly provided with more assistance at the national level. What the new era requires is a market mechanism of cooperation, exchange, common development and mutual benefit. Driven by the new model of China-Africa cooperation under the Belt and Road initiative, the situation in Africa has been stable in recent years, and the investment environment and business environment have gradually improved.

The BRI is a massive development strategy that aims to link Asia, Europe, Africa, and Oceania. It is a broad initiative that will bring billions of dollars of investment to the world and will have significant impacts on all of the countries that are connected through it. Now, China-Africa cooperation has entered a new era. In the past, China-Africa friendship and cooperation were mainly provided with more assistance at the national level. What the new era requires is a market mechanism of cooperation, exchange, common development and mutual benefit. Driven by the new model of China-Africa cooperation under the Belt and Road initiative, the situation in Africa has been stable in recent years, and the investment environment and business environment have gradually improved. China-Africa cooperation has mutual needs and advantages. The initiative will have an impact on the world for decades to come.

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

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The friendly economic and trade exchanges between China and Africa have supported the development of African countries through investment

Business & Economy



ATEX, a boost for intra-Africa trade

African countries should use the innovative Africa Exchange Trade Platform (ATEX) and boost digital trade in critical commodities under the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

ATEX is a digital business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-government (B2G) exchange platform developed by ECA and the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), in collaboration with the African Union Commission and the AfCFTA Secretariat.

“ATEX will certainly avail access to essential commodities at affordable prices to African countries that look set to be hit the hardest by the global food price crisis with severe implications on economic and political stability,” Hanan Morsy, Deputy Executive Secretary and Chief Economist of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) said at the presentation of the Africa Exchange Trade Platform (ATEX) on the sidelines of COP27 at Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt.

Opening the discussion session on “Finance for climate resilient trade and Africa Trade Exchange ATEX: Pathways toward a Greener Africa”, DES Morsy emphasized that the ATEX platform was an opportunity for African countries to collaborate in boosting commodity trade as a response to the multiple challenges of climate, fertilizer and food crisis.

“Africa needs to leverage the AfCFTA and available climate financing to enhance the resilience of the African food system and mitigate vulnerability to disruptions in global food supply,” said Morsy.

The global climate crisis has affected food security, imperative for African countries to enhance food production through the supply of critical inputs such as fertilizers. Climate-change-related risks in Africa have included flooding, drought and heat waves which have reduced food production and agricultural productivity.

Morsy noted that climate change has increased and amplified risks to food security for the most vulnerable countries. Four out of the eight key risks induced by climate change have direct consequences on food security.

Besides, inflation in most African countries

continues to rise with many of them facing double digit inflation rates, reaching well above 20 percent. This comes on the back of sustained global high food and fuel costs, supply chain disruptions and the ongoing Ukraine crisis.

“One of the main implications is that the global fertilizer prices have significantly risen over the last year because of surging input costs, supply disruptions, and export restrictions,” Morsy said, warning that price spike in fertilizers and shortage would affect the planting season in 2023 unless urgent action was taken to channel the fertilizer where it is needed most in Africa at an affordable price.

“Africa should activate its Marshall Plan, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)” Morsy told participants, explaining that the full implementation of the AfCFTA will boost intra-African trade by nearly 40 percent in 2045. With the agrifood sector namely cereals and crops, milk and dairy product, sugar, and processed food experiencing the most gain.

“Our presence here is a testimony of our support to ATEX and most particularly its emergency response phase as an African-driven response to the global food crisis,” she said.

Morsy highlighted that ATEX can strengthen Africa’s economic resilience as pooled demand will ensure Africa’s ability to negotiate competitive prices and attenuate the impact of the disruption in the food supply chain.

“There is a dire need to reduce the cost of agricultural inputs, especially fertilizer,” the DES noted, indicating that ATEX offered a huge potential to enhance intra-Africa trade in fertilizers. The value of Africa’s total fertilizer exports has outpaced imports by 2.6 times in 2021. Besides, four northern African countries were among the top five fertilizer producers on the continent.

Morocco and Egypt cumulatively exported USD 6.23 billion in fertilizer in 2021 which is 70 percent of Africa’s total.

Morsy urged African countries to enhance sharing information on demand and supply of critical commodities, facilitate the participation of suppliers (Private Sector) of critical commodities and to register and start

trading through the ATEX platform.

“This goes without saying that redirecting fertilizer within Africa is key to fill the gap left by the Ukraine crisis, specifically for nitrogen and phosphate-based fertilizers, said Morsy noting that sourcing fertilizers and food commodities from within the continent would help cushion Africa from the debilitating impacts of recurrent shocks.

Currently, 134 suppliers have been on boarded on ATEX (including 104 African companies) and 249 African buyers. The commodities available on ATEX are Fertilizers (NPK, Urea, Phosphates Fertilizer Compounds, and Agricultural chemicals), Agricultural products (Cashew Coffee, Oilseeds, Wheat, Maize, Rice and Barley), Processed Food products (Wheat products, Bulk commodity and food products) and other industrial products (Construction materials, Chemical products and Fuel products.

Global fertilizer company, OCP will donate and sell 550K tones of fertilizer to African countries in the context of the Africa Relief Programme. In the second phase of the programme, OCP committed 4.3 million tones available for the continent to nearly doubled production capacity and hope ATEX can help address the logistics and financing challenges, so we do not miss the next season.

The ECA and Afreximbank will work with key international players to ensure fertilizer is channeled where it is needed the most in Africa through ATEX.

Yusuf Daya, Director of the AU/AfCFTA Relations and Trade Policy, shared that the AfCFTA offers an opportunity for Africa to produce and consume goods within the continent, thereby reducing its carbon footprint. Implementing the AfCFTA should therefore be a priority for all African economies. He shared that by aggregating demand across the continent and supported by Afreximbank’s financing, the ATEX can contribute to food security and mitigate the impact of current global supply disruptions.

Daya said the ATEX platform has helped Africa respond to the Ukraine crisis by enabling the trade of key critical inputs, including food, fuel, and fertilizers. He said in the long term it was envisaged the platform would enable businesses to tap

into new markets on the African continent and increase intra-African trade in line with Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals.

Maximo Torero, FAO shared that Africa was already facing chronic hunger and malnutrition due to climate, water and energy crisis and the disruption in the supply chain has aggravated the food security issues. The ATEX platform will boost supply of inputs and critical commodities in Africa, reduce transaction cost, and accelerate the mobility of crops to minimize food loss.

Torero further explained that Africa has enormous opportunities and several challenges. Proposing that ATEX can help solve some challenges but there should be precise data on the demand and supply side at the continent. FAO is open to share data to fine tune the platform to manage the demand and supply in ensuring that critical commodities and fertilizers are delivered where it is needed the most.

Frick, WFP shared that WFP supports food value chains and intra-regional trade in Africa through several initiatives including local and regional procurement, school feeding programs, smallholder farmers access to markets, as well as initiatives like the “Save Crops Operation” and FARM launched in 2022. He shared that WFP in collaboration with governments, International Financial Institutions, UN agencies and private sector contributes to ATEX objectives, aiming to reach the most vulnerable communities within the context of the global food crisis.

He explained that the number of people experiencing acute hunger has increased steadily between 2019 and 2022, mostly driven by conflict, climate change, and the Covid-19 pandemic. Stressing that there is the need to strengthen local markets and producers to eliminate food loss during production and transmission and reduce food insecurity. That may require timely access to the market which can be made possible by ATEX.

“It is said never let a crisis go to waste. This initiative does that by taking from the crisis we are facing and how we can come together with solutions that will lead to a better life for Africans,” Morsy said.

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Planet Earth

Satisfying housing demand to harmonize rapid urbanization

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

This week the Addis Ababa City Administration has announced summer volunteerism activities. The activities include renovation of old houses, road traffic services, blood donation, tutoring students, assisting the disabled, and supporting patients in medical facilities.

In fact, voluntarism is the practice of giving time and skills for the benefit of others rather than for financial benefit. It is also a principle of providing time and energy for the benefit of other people in the community as a social obligation rather than for any economic reward. In this regard, the renovation of old houses by the youth, apart from supporting the needy, is an ideal way towards urbanization and a modern way of life.

This is mainly due to the growing population and rapid rate of urbanization pressure on housing amongst the lower-income people of the cities. Affordable and good quality housing significantly challenges city people while the process of urbanization poses tremendous socioeconomic problems: high value of unemployment, high incident of poverty, poor sanitation, homelessness, and

so on.

The challenges for lower-income households to obtain a house are multidimensional since most of them lead them to a life of hustle and bustle. Even the house that has been built in the city are below quality standards and lack adequate space. In addition, most of the houses in Ethiopia lack provisions for standard water supply, electricity, toilet, drainage system, and so on. The lives and health of people living in these houses of such poor quality and inadequate provision for water, sanitation, and drainage are under continuous threat.

Unlike developed countries, the number of people living in such conditions in developing countries is increasing every year. Ethiopia is the second most populous and the least urbanized nation in Africa while the growth of urbanization, along with population growth, has been increasing at an alarming rate. Hence, the growing population and rapid rate of urbanization have put pressure on housing, particularly amongst the lower-income people in the cities.

Taking housing problems for lower-income households into account, Addis Ababa City

Administration has made various efforts to solve the problem in the city.

Addis Ababa City Administration Mayor Adanech Abebie said that the government has made several efforts to solve the basic housing needs of the city's residents. For instance, the city administration has been implementing 40/60 and 20/80 as well as prefabricated housing programs which are imperative to harmonizing the demand for housing and urbanization.

The city administration has handed over houses which are built in 40/60 and 20/80 housing programs. But the delay of the construction, the rise of price on construction materials, illegal activities, not building in line with the program and schedule, lack of quality, and so on are some of the problems of the housing sector.

Hence, preparations are underway to build cost and energy-effective, modern, and sustainable houses. Because traditional construction methods not only require extra materials and increase waste but also hinder the process of urbanization by encouraging slums and traditional shelters, she added.

Addis Ababa City Administration Housing

Development and Administration Bureau Head Yasmin Wehabrebi explained that the city administration acted accordingly to fulfill the housing demand of the people.

Hence, to alleviate housing problems, the city administration is introducing new practices and options in the housing sector. Besides, the necessary preparations are underway for the construction of the various houses which could be done quickly, and efficiently.

According to Mayor Adanech Abebie, housing is the main problem of city residences. Hence, considering this problem, the city administration is working to improve the supply of houses by designing various housing programs. The administration has also discussed new 70/30 housing modalities with Banks operating across the country.

Indeed, cost and time are important factors in constructing houses. So widening the construction of house options is significant to fulfill the demand for housing. It is not only the best alternative to satisfy the demand for housing but to harmonize the rapid growth of urbanization.

Energizing Ethiopia...

are among those which were conducting operations in the gas/oil/petroleum sector in Ethiopia.

The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum received the first gas reserves certificate today, August 26, 2022, following the completion of a four-month study verifying the extent of Ethiopia's oil and natural gas reserves and how to extract them.'

The certificate was presented to the Minister of Mines and Petroleum, by the American company that conducted the study, Netherland, Sewell & Associates, Inc (NSAI), an American based petroleum property analysis and consulting firm with offices in Dallas and Houston, Texas. The Government of Ethiopia has already started to advertise the certificate in a bid to invite foreign companies to take part in actual production.

For more than a century, as stated above, Ethiopia's desire for fossil fuel exploration was always dwarfed by conspiracies and undesirable secret manipulations that the country had to undergo. Lack of resources and the technology needed for exploration as well as absence of well-trained manpower in the field had continued

to force Ethiopia to look into other renewable resources as the country continued to expend 30 to 40 percent of its foreign exchange earnings to import fossil fuel products from overseas.

When it comes to energy consumption in Ethiopia, biomass accounts for 87%, modern fuel 13%, hydrocarbon 10.4%, electricity 2.6% based on the study made by the Ministry in 2017. Per capita electric consumption of Ethiopia is 100 KWh far lower than 521 KWh for Sub-Sahara Africa. According to the Ministry household share of power is 88.2%, transport sector 8.4%, industry and construction 2.3% and service sector 1.2%. A lot has changed since 2017 and the figures can change accordingly.

Three sugar factories in the country are already producing ethanol which is blended with benzene in a given percentage to increase the amount of fuel to be provided to the public.

The Waste to Energy program that has started in Addis Ababa in a smaller scale has not only provided employment opportunities for hundreds of persons in the city but is already making a modest contribution to the electric supply for the city.

Ethiopia's efforts to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes can certainly not be ruled out in the long run. Already Ethiopia has signed an agreement with the Russian Federation to provide the nation with nuclear powered energy resource. With huge potential of uranium in different parts of the country, this dream could come true probably after a couple of years.

Ethiopia, with its diverse ecosystem and climatic conditions is endowed with 12 river basins, vast expanse of areas with huge potential of solar energy, access to resources for utilization of bio-gas particularly in the rural areas. These resources can be installed at household level with initial modest investment and can be managed by family members with little effort. The national electrification program of the country has already proved to be not only a source of huge energy but also a potential resource for generation of hard currency needed for the economic development of the country.

Moreover, the implementation of the country's Ten Years Perspective Plan largely depends upon the pace in which the country can develop its energy resources that are demanded in

all the economic sectors. This creates both challenges and opportunities in promoting diverse energy resources during the plan period. Providing world standard training for all involved in the sector is critical to manage and exploit the energy resources of the country.

In terms of the production of a variety of energy resources, the future is bright for Ethiopia but funding has remained the main obstacle challenging the progress. Foreign support and mutually benefiting cooperation is the way out in the entire process.

Ethiopia's energy sharing with the neighboring countries of Djibouti, South Sudan, the Republic of Sudan, possibly with Somalia and Eritrea and other Horn of Africa countries will promote economic integration in the region and will promote economic pan Africanism.

Ethiopia has a comparative advantage of producing multiple kinds of energy resources by setting an example for the rest of Africa in resolving African energy needs in the African way. Dependence of African countries on fossil fuel resources is not proving to be reliable and clean.

Art & Culture

Local art works can improve literacy, shape generation

BY KFLEEYESUS ABEBE

The practice of oral literature in Ethiopia is strong and has contributed greatly in shaping generation of the past. As a child it is fair to assume an Ethiopian had taken some lessons from folksongs, stories and legends. This stories helped the child to form a certain acceptable behavior and gain traditional wisdom. For instance, the story of Queen of Sheba and Solomon was a relevant historical and religious story to understand Ethiopia's past glory and zeal. Other stories of Aleqa Gebrehanna and others have greatly impacted attitude and perspective of my generation. As time goes by the mechanism should have been changed to writing stories, poems or even novels that have social significance.

In the Emperor Haile Selassie's reign, it seems the monarchy had taken seriously as many writers. The prolific Kebede Michael, the distinguished Blatten Geta Heruy Welde Sellase and the great poet Kegne Geta Yoftahe Negussie emerged. Anyone who reads their works finds emperor Haile Selassie's message either in the introduction or the after word. The writers also dedicate their works to the emperor as they have role in maintaining the ideology of the state and producing generation that can realize the ambition of the country. The emperor has great affectionate bond with these writers. For instance, emperor Haile Selassie described Heruy in his autobiography as a "brilliant and strong-willed author", included the following words in his elegy at Heruy's funeral:

"My colleague and friend Herui, as you depart after successful completion of your service to your country, if I fail to say 'you are great', your works would give the lie to my words. Although the storm generated by wicked people destabilized the world and buffeted you, it did not defeat you. Yet you had to obey the rule of the Great and Kind Lord. We are all subject to this eventually."

First-ever winner of the Haile Selassie I Prize Award in Amharic Literature, Kebede Michael has attempted to show humility, wisdom and faith of Ethiopians in his ninety plus books. In poems and stories that have alegorical nature, Kebede attempted to spread and make those values contagious among generation. Indeed, the emperor initiative and encourgment brought other giant writers whose influences reach to this time.

The poems and plays of laureate Tsegaye Gebremedhin, the novel of Haddis Alemayehu, Gebrekirstos Desta's poem and paintings and most honored world laureate meter artist Afewerk Tekle's paintings can be used to inspire and empower coming generation. But the inclusion of these materials are very rare. Ethiopian schools especially at elementary level seem to be detached from local wisdom. Text books tend to focus on introducing foreign literary figures like William Shakespeare,



Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Leo Tolstoy and Chinua Achebe.

The exclusion or inadequate use of local materials disconnect pupils from their surroundings. They can't be able to communicate easily with their fellow citizens; and their contribution will also be affected. Since they don't know what they have, they may lack sense of patriotism and be attracted to outside than being proud of who they are and what they have. It is for sure s/he that reads laureate Tsegaye Gebremedhin's "Petros yachin seat" or Gebrekirstos Desta's "Hagere" will have regrets about Ethiopia's present condition as they can see the beauty of Ethiopian landscape, the strong social bond with the community and the characters' commitment to their faith and their country. Therefore, children can sustain the good in the society and bring what is best from the outside world without leaving what is theirs.

At this precise moment in time when literate and disciplinarry citizens are in high demand for the existence and development of the country, the

government should see how the future generation is being shaped. Are the instrument we are using enough? Do the modules reflect Ethiopia and its future? It is worth to appreciate that there is construction of state of the art library. But it is also significant to encourage writers and culture of reading through inclusion of interesting and worthy books I mentioned before and others.

Another thing that is affecting literacy in the country is our attitude towards literature particularly to local literature. For many parents, reading fiction, poems and short stories seems a waste of time. Drawing and painting are also considered distractors. But the reality is totally opposite to what Ethiopian parents think. Art in any form helps educational activities. Art makes learning interesting and unforgettable.

Educator Anna Reyner in her intro to school books writes this: "Art activities are a great way to promote literacy and language development. Children who draw pictures about stories they have read improve their reading comprehension,

story understanding and motivation to read new materials they have not seen before." There urban parents understand the value of reading beyond limit. The problem here is they don't value local literature as they encourage children to read foreign literary works. Children are exposed to reading notable works outside. Their undersanding of the world is impressive but they struggle to read and understand local works. That alinates them from the society around them. Even if they are thoughtful and have the potential, they can't contribute to their society as they have limited or no exposure to their native culture, wisdom and talent. Accordingly, they would belittle what is inside the country and yearn to the outside.

Therefore, it is auspicious time now Ethiopia as a state to promote local literature by recognizing its artists and their works. At least coming generation should get the chance at the schools, the media and other means. It is at the ideas of great thinkers and artists nations evolve and became influential. Like Kebede Michael and others.

Society

Societal partaking drives public transformation, revives peace travel

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Unequivocally, community engagement promotes advocacy as well as makes peace deal a success, raises public awareness to make a difference. Without a shadow of doubt, citizens play an indispensable role in alleviating disagreements and disparities among one another and between each other as every aspect contributing to disagreements and clashes could by no means out of their reach. Their participation in various peacemaking treks is of paramount importance in bringing lasting serenity among the community in particular and in the entire nation and beyond in general.

This has to be well hammered especially in developing countries like ours where conflict is more likely to have taken place.

For much of human social interaction, myriads of factors make all community members peculiarly the youth highly real change engines and viable weapons to bring about change in all aspects, with a special focus on coming up with peace and tranquility.

As members of the community have had multi-faceted roles in fostering various aspects, they have been heroes and courageous ones in the midst of crisis.

This writer approached Solomon Dansa, who is a graduate of Political Science and International Relations working for a certain NGO as a social worker. He said, "Public participation is considered to be an empowerment tool in which local communities can take responsibility in identifying and addressing their own problems through collaboration with different stakeholders in the administration like local government. It enables people to realize their rights to participate in problem-solving and decision-making processes regarding issues that affect their day-to-day life in the communities in which they live."

He also stated that within the challenging fluidity of post-conflict environments, the community members social, political and economic navigation has been a weapon in fueling transformation as well as renovating of societal norms, values and structures so that they can find a voice and place in the emerging structures of post-conflict settings.

As to him, what needs to be underlined is that the entire society should be conceptualized as agents of positive peace. Not only is this bold move instrumental in addressing challenges of physical violence, but it is also vital in overcoming cultural violence, and fostering broader social transformation via consolidating relationships and



Public participation helps make a difference in all aspects

attitudes into more participatory and inclusive ones.

True, recognizing the society as socio-economic and political actors is of significantly useful in fostering peaceful approaches that aim to boost common understanding among citizens; and importance of community engagement is instrumental in driving social transformation, he underlined.

It is an undeniable fact that community participation is important as it takes action to influence concerned bodies to implement public projects and policies that primarily benefit individual communities and drive social change.

Solomon describes features of peace making which distinguish it from peace-keeping, and suggests the appropriateness of peace-building strategies in dealing with vertical conflict and with the very nature of low intensity conflict. He further stated that peace-building is 'an associative approach attempting to create a structure of peace both within and among nations – a structure that removes the causes of war and provides alternatives to war.'

He said, "Community participation in peace building efforts is of paramount importance in reducing or resolving conflict between groups by improving communication, understanding, and relationships as well as decreasing tension, anger, fear, or misunderstanding. The importance of multi-track efforts to the success of formal peace agreements has to be well capitalized on."

Maereg Deresse, a sociologist from Haramaya University, on his part said that public participation is one of the key ingredients of an empowered community

to bring about peace and help citizens breathe a sigh of relief. It entails active citizen involvement in all aspects of strategic plan development and implementation of viable projects.

He said, "Community participation helps focus on making places vibrant, inclusive, accessible, and adaptable to meet the needs of people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. Hence, all citizens have to strengthen ties, inclusion and opportunity for all people in community and nurture creative and innovative approaches towards building a strong and peaceful community and a nation at the end of the day."

He said, "Economic and social reconstruction is crucial to the success of the peace process. In addition to advancing human rights, social participation has a crucial role to play in rebuilding and reconstructing civil society for long-term peace and stability. Not only is societal participation important to democracy, but it also has a significant role to play in consolidating the peace process in the country making the transition from war to peace a success as the community often provides the necessary foundations for democratic institutions, agencies and non-governmental organizations to make a pivotal contribution to post conflict efforts for peace."

Community based peace building efforts can be undertaken in support of a peace agreement with a view to providing a sufficient level of internal security to enable economic activity to recover, encourage internally displaced people to re-establish themselves, and persuade the business community to invest to strengthen the government's capacity to carry out key activities, he stated.

As the peace deal would assist the return of internally displaced persons, he stated, support the rejuvenation of household economies, especially by strengthening the smallholder agricultural sector, assist the recovery of communities, through projects that address social and economic infrastructure as well as rehabilitate physical infrastructure of crucial importance for economic revival, such as roads, communication systems, major transport systems and promote national reconciliation, on which every citizen has to capitalize.

However, to achieve peace deal, certain dynamics must be understood which can be illustrated by examining this strategy through an ethical perspective as active community participation improves the use of local knowledge, produces a more equitable distribution of benefits, and promotes local resource and helps.

There are a number of social relationships involved in the process of peace process. The obvious relationship, which is the primary focus of peace deal, is the one between the opposing groups at the time of conflict.

The government of Ethiopia should ensure that any peace process is based on promoting, protecting and reflecting Ethiopians' values, including human rights, rule of law, and multicultural tolerance.

Since the peace deal respects social and cultural integrity, it is of the utmost importance in dealing with problems emanating from conflicts, rivalry and hostility.

Maereg said, "There are a number of frameworks, methods, tools and processes being used by a variety of development actors to achieve and monitor such peace-building strategies. We now turn to an examination of the particular strategies and benefits that community based approaches to peace-building can entail."

In identifying and making use of local resources and capacities, community participations are becoming instrumental in getting sources of conflict dried forever in a bid to nurture the value of cultural integrity.

As to Maereg, depending on the type of community engagement and level of influence given over public decision making process, societal participation strives towards deliberative democracy which facilitates a collaborative exchange regarding a set of policies or actions. Besides, lessons learned from wide community intervention are bearing fruits to make citizens beneficiary.

Law & Politics

Living up to the Pretoria peace deal

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

On the heels of the landmark agreement that has been signed in South Africa, Pretoria between the Federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front a diverse range of heartwarming changes have been witnessed on the subject of the humanitarian situation in Tigray State. As a matter of fact, following its positive moves and firm stance, the incumbent has been receiving a pat on the back from various relief agencies and humanitarian operators.

Other than that subsequent to the peace deal the whole thing in the Tigray state has been making progress in the right direction and pursuing the desired goal at the earliest possible time. Apart from giving the green light to the free flow of humanitarian aid via air and road, the government has been engaged in accelerating the restoration of broken social infrastructural amenities comprising power and telecom services with success.

By the same token, quite a lot of experts in the area have been working at all hours of the day and night to achieve the sought after goal in the shortest possible time. In fact, right after the signing of the peace accord, everything in the northern part of the country has been moving in the right direction for the most part in Tigray, Amhara and Afar states on the grounds that they have been returning to normalcy.

Regardless of the fact that some displeased Diasporas came up with several smear campaign against the peace deal, the incumbent has continued putting the whole thing into actions.

At the present moment, the government has been going to the ends of the earth to attain the desired objectives at the earliest possible moment and return the country to its former grace. In actual fact, the country has passed through a number of ups and downs, lows and highs as well as twists and turns to reach where it is today. In the present climate, right after the Pretoria peace agreement, the government has been playing a paramount role in implementing the peace process with the intention of ensuring peace and tranquility all over the country.

In a similar vein, the government has been reconnecting people in the Tigray state to the power grid and the war-ravaged areas. As a number of institutions have been working morning, noon and night to restore the social infrastructure in the Tigray state, the desired goal is being achieved with flying colors.

As things stand at present, the restoration of power lines in various parts of the state is under construction making the people of the region feel on top of the world. Besides, quite a lot of workers have been playing a part in fixing the power via exerting maximum efforts in the Tigray state. As high voltage generator or distributor is one of the highly damaged lines, workers deployed for this purpose have been smoothing the progress of regaining



the service time and again at the earliest possible juncture.

The sad thing is failing to learn from their past blunders, the discredited international media outlets have been working in close collaboration with some foreign entities to distract the breakthrough peace deal with their usual fictitious stories giving the cold shoulder to circumstances on the ground.

In a similar manner, some Ethiopians residing in the United States of America, Europe and other parts of the world have been making a supreme effort to besmirch the peace deal signed in Pretoria between the federal government and the Tigray People Liberation Front.

In the same way, in the aftermath of the peace deal some of them have been spreading cooked up stories aimed at winning the hearts and minds of the wider international community. Dismayed by the fruitful peace deal some entities have been sparing no effort to up the ante working hand-in-glove with war entrepreneurs. However, all their efforts have been going as a consequence of the unwavering stance of the government and the people of Ethiopia.

In its Twitter message, WFP stated that critical relief food will now be delivered to communities ... in the coming days. More relief food, nutrition, and medical cargo will follow immediately via all routes possible. 15 WFP aid trucks entered Tigray state.

While on the subject, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) disclosed that the first convoy of aid supplies arrived in Mekelle, Tigray state on Tuesday. "Our first convoy of aid supplies has arrived in Mekelle. Two trucks delivered medicines, emergency, and first aid kits to support health facilities in Tigray to treat patients with conditions that need urgent care," ICRC tweeted.

The restoration of power lines that pass through Humera, Welkait and Shiraro are underway, Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP)

stated lately.

EEP Communication Director Moges Mekonnen told Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the war-ravaged power lines that used to transmit high and low voltage are being repaired in a bid to restore power soon.

"Around 200 EEP workers are now deployed to fix the power interruption via exerting utmost efforts in Humera and Shiraro."

As Welkait's high voltage generator or distributor is one of the highly damaged lines, EEP workers are right now doing their level best to regain the services.

Moges indicated that every necessary preparation has been made to complete the restoration in shortest time possible.

The local community is also active in the maintaining of the restoration works, it was learnt.

The government is working to ensure that the AU-led peace accord would be implemented per agreed terms, the Government Communication Services said.

In a statement, the GCS recently indicated the fact that Ethiopia is exerting efforts to deliver humanitarian assistance to most of the Tigray region which is under ENDF command.

It further stated as basic services are slowly being restored in some areas. In other areas, a conducive environment is being created to repair damages to basic service infrastructure caused by rebel fighters. Side by side to these efforts, the commanders of the ENDF and the TPLF have discussed on the detailed plans for disarmament of TPLF fighters, according to the statement.

Discussions have culminated with an agreement on the plans for disarmament and entry of the ENDF into Mekelle according, as outlined in the peace agreement. The Government urges that all

parties involved in the implementation of the plan fulfill their obligations under the agreement.

It is to be recalled that head of the Ethiopian delegation for the peace talks and The PM's National Security Advisor Redwan Hussein tweeted: "70 % of Tigray is under ENDF. Aid is flowing like no other times." He added that even to the areas not held by ENDF, 35 trucks of food and 3 trucks of medicine arrived shire, and flights are allowed. Redwan also indicated that services are being reconnected.

The recent flow of humanitarian aid to Tigray is unmatched even in areas that are not under the government's administration and essential services are being restored, the Prime Minister's National Security Adviser said.

The Adviser Redwan Hussien (Ambassador) tweeted that aid is flowing like no other times, and trucks of food and medicine had been sent to Shire. Besides, as flights are being allowed into the areas, 35 trucks of food and three trucks of medicine arrived at Shire. "The agreement just provides places under the control of ENDF with opportunities to enhance services."

He added that no hindrance whatsoever regarding aid, some corners do not seem happier by the fact that African Wisdoms brought a success in Pretoria and hustling to spoil the spirit.

By the same token, briefing journalists Associate Spokesperson for Secretary General of United Nations (UN), Stephanie Tremblay said: "We are resuming aid. The humanitarian colleagues are mobilized to provide food nutrition, health and water treatment in Tigray.

Humanitarian assess across northern Ethiopia has improved due to the cessation of hostilities. UN partners have started to provide humanitarian assistance to people in need. We are ready to provide more because the means there are immense," she stated.



Ephrem Endale
Contributor

Between you & me

Conversation with God (with apologies to N.D. Walsch)

I think it's time for some 'conversation with God;' (with apologies to Neale Donald Walsch.) Look one wouldn't be blamed if for turning the house upside down trying to find your second grade geography exercise book. "Euphrates! Where the hell is that! Yes that has been the 'top word' over the past several weeks you tube has exploded with all kinds of 'End Times' narratives some even going as far as telling the timelines; time lines which translated into words say something like "You know the 'final call' is just around the corner!" timelines of when it actually happen.

The Common Man: - God, I hope you wouldn't take as me going too far trying to talk with YOU.

The Almighty: - Of course, in that part of the world giving me surprises by the tones I can handle one more. What makes you think I'll misinterpret your actions?

C.M:- No, I'm not saying YOU will misinterpret things. Not on my soul! But God, YOU know all that Tower of Babel story.

HE: - What about it?

C.M:- Well I just wanted to tell you I don't have the slightest intention like those guys trying to build Tower of Babel had.

HE: - You guys really know how to dig up things, don't you! Anyway, I'm glad you started that way. You know, many of you have got this problem of presenting whatever you want to say clearly directly. Your first sentence is not what 'it is' but

what 'it isn't.' Do you get my point?

C.M:- Well.er...

HE: - Let me put it this way; First you want to convince your listener how they shouldn't interpret your thoughts. Only then do you go to the main point.

C.M:- God, again please don't misinterpret my intention...

HE: - There you go again. Why would I misinterpret anything? Or maybe, just maybe may I say you're questioning my intelligence.

C.M:- "No! No God! How could I be so stupid!

HE: - Ok! Let's forget that. You must have a very good reason for seeking my audience at this time when there are so many things I should look into. You know, you're not the only ones knocking on my doors.

C.M:- Yes, I've many good reasons. God the world has become more nervous these days than it had ever been.

HE: - And why is that?

C.M:- Everyone is talking about the End Times. People think the prophecies are about to...

HE: - And sorry for interrupting. Could you tell me what I've to do with that!

C.M:- God, you are the only one who could make things go away forever. Unless YOU intervene half the world will perish with fear.

HE: - So it's that bad!

C.M:- Yes it's that bad.

HE: - You just said something about prophecies, didn't you?

C.M:- Yes, I did.

HE: - Correct me if I am wrong. Prophecies aren't something you could just right off. If it is prophesized, it's bound to happen. Isn't that what you believe?

C.M:- Yes God; but then YOU could make it all go away!

HE: - Well I'm not sure I have the power what is written in the scriptures. But I can say you seem to be overblowing even the slightest thing. That's what you're feeling everything is about to just be blown away.

C.M:- But we're hearing so many scary scenarios we couldn't help it. God, at this time there are so many prophets scaring us and telling us all kinds of horror stories it has been quite some time since we enjoyed a few hours' peaceful sleep.

HE: - What can I do about that! You are the ones who have given them the status of being prophets and now you are trying to lay it on me! Not fair.

C.M:- May I ask one question?

HE: - You can ask a hundred questions.

C.M:- You mean none of them have anything to do with you.

HE: - Any answer I may give you would be controversial, so sorry. But you can form

your own views.

C.M:- My view is that since what should be said has already been said I don't think you have any need for more of them.

HE: - Maybe I should make you my spokesperson! Anyways, don't you think your world has a lot of things that makes prophecies trivial?

C.M:- Like what?

HE: - In almost every place in there are wars. You are killing each other by the tens of thousands; hunger kills, famine kills, diseases kill, hate kills...what I'm trying to say is you should be worrying about these things rather than bickering over prophecies which might not happen in another thousand years. I think we've had enough; can we call it a day!

C.M:- Of course, God!

Look, call me a pessimist but with the complex and largely scary attitudes much of mankind seem to be having these days such an audience would be no more than hallucination. Over the past several months talk of 'prophecies' seem to be driving all other timely and serious issues to the margins. If I have anything about prophecies I'm not saying. What I know is unless this world gets back to its senses we needn't worry about prophecies whether we believe in them or not. The reality is that this world is choking itself so violently talking about prophecies might sound like luxuries. What we need in this senseless world is a little bit of real sense!

No bright stars over there!

The other guy has his own beliefs. You might not like them. In fact you might abhor them. But then it is only logical to accept that he has every right to voice his thoughts whatever discomfort they might cause to others. Respect; that is the magic word. But unfortunately respect seldom happens. This is an old culture where everyone believes they have truth by their side. It is not only in politics. But in multiple instances most of us can talk endlessly while paying attention to the views of others even if for only a few minutes tests our patience. By the way voicing one's thoughts and trying to appeal to the senses of others is one's right. It's that simple.

By the way, when you speak about your rights many sneer and even laugh at you. "This guy must have come from another planet!" A fellow goes to this place where his case has been considered and was in the last stages of being sent to the boss's office. That, I mean the boss's office, is a whole of a different story.

The fellow's documents were on the table of one lady who seemed she was brawling with life. And when it comes to the likes of her who are brawling with life nothing seems to work out. So all the lady was supposed to do to verify a couple of points, which wouldn't have taken a full five minutes.

So on the day he went to the place to collect his final documents she didn't even look at him while she was giggling with a couple of other colleagues. He tries to get her attention telling her has been coming repeatedly. She looks up at him and blurts out, "Stop pestering me!" Whoa! At that time the way the fellow tried to make his case he would have been voted 'the humblest person of the month!' And she accuses him of pestering her! The guy was at first a little taken off guard. He responds he wasn't pestering her and firmly adding, "I'm only asking for my rights." She looks up at him with that "Here comes another one of them!" sneer and bursts out laughing. "Oh, it's you right! You're scaring me!" and she goes into another round of that knife-edge laughter meant to work on the nerves of the other person.

Now the guy wasn't like many of us who just hangs his head and run to the nearest watering hall. He goes to headquarters and demands to talk with the GM. After the usual leg-dragging the boss agrees to hear him out. The fellow explains to the GM what actually happened effing his narrative with other faults he has seen at the place. Then he launches his ICBM; "Sir such things might appear on the social media and give your office a bad name. It was a direct hit. To the surprise the fellow and everyone the GM accompanied by

two members of the brass and they rush to the branch office. There was one hell of a scene when the lady was ordered to go to her home and only come when she gets the phone call. Her immediate boss too got some dressing down and warning was given the next time clients complain those responsible would be shown the door. The fellow walks out a few minutes later with his documents signed and sealed.

Several months back another person went a step ahead at an office where he wasn't treated fairly with, "I pay my taxes!" the whole lot of them laughed at him! But he too didn't take the abuse lying down. The next days all sorts of things happened with multiple staff being slapped with warning letters. You just wish for better or worse we need more citizens demanding "I'm only asking for my rights." "I pay my taxes!" Well a stranger is a stranger. I'll tell you when you'll be thinking of a long walk to the nearest tree shade of the Amazon; when the person you have known for three decades suddenly turns into incomplete stranger, a stranger who talks as if some chip has been inserted into his whatever and refuses to give you that breathing space to say a word or two. Of course the change is so sudden and so determined you wouldn't find even a little speck of what the fellow used to be. The other shocking is the fellow seems to

have slid so low you just can't believe the things he's saying. How in the world could someone as well-informed as he was end up in such a mess!

You know he has things all wrong but unlike previous times you know you can't say any such thing to him. "Look I'm not saying that you're wrong. But I think whoever told you that didn't have the facts right." Watch out. You are not talking to even the caricature of your former friend. You are talking with a complete stranger who might have dropped from one planet or another. It might be the end of decades of friendship when you tell someone who thinks he knows anything and everything he/she has it all wrong. Of course you might think "After all, he's an innocent guy misled to believe his sources are second to none. He might not be misleading others deliberately. So maybe it would be nice to pull him aside out of earshot of everybody else and whisper, "look, I'm afraid to tell you what you just told us is all false." Good for you. Had things these days been maybe all the bickering would have been reduced by more than half. But, they aren't that easy.

When people think they can kick around clients with impunity; when people think the world should listen to them and keep its mouth sealed, there'd be no bright stars over there.

In Pictures

Honoring the peace delegates

(A breath of fresh air)

BY DARGIE KAHSAY



Following the peace agreement between the Government of Ethiopia and TPLF in Pretoria, South Africa two weeks ago, to discuss the details on the implementation, Ethiopian military officials and TPLF military officials met in Nairobi last week. The Ethiopian delegation was led by Chief of the General Staff of the Ethiopian Defense Forces, Field Marshal Birhanu Jula.

After five-consecutive-day discussion they agreed for the implementation of the agreed terms and signed an implementation document. The Ethiopian delegation arrived in Addis Ababa last Sunday. While the team landed at Addis Ababa Bole International Airport, higher military officials led by Ministry of Defense, Abraham Belay (PhD) welcomed the delegates and greeted them with flower wreaths. The above image shows Dr. Abraham Belay, Defense Minister, proffering flower wreath to Field Marshal Birhanu Jula, Chief of Staff and delegation leader, while alighting from the plane at Bole Airport.

Standing behind Abraham are seen higher military officials with military protocol to give a military salute to the Chief of Staff and his delegation. In addition, a military man behind the two military officials is preparing additional flower wreaths meant for the delegates. On the other side, behind Field Marshal Birhanu, immediately in the staircase of the plane is Redwan Hussein, Security Advisor of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia and Head of the Peace-talks delegation.

On the left Field Marshal Birhanu is flanked by Ambassador General Bacha Debele, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Ethiopia to Kenya while on the right by a security person.

Walking with a sunny face after the peace agreement!



Field Marshal Birhanu Jula, Chief of Staff and Dr. Abraham Belay, Defense Minister are walking side by side at Addis Ababa Bole International Airport after the delegation led by Field Marshal Birhanu arrived at Bole Airport. He was received by Dr. Abraham Belay and other senior military officials upon arrival from Nairobi. Looking at each-other, Field Marshal Birhanu and Dr. Abraham are displaying smiles of contentment that followed after a time of disturbance. Behind the two senior officials are senior military officials attired with Ethiopian military uniform.

Briefing to Ethiopians about the peace negotiation development



In this picture, Field Marshal Birhanu Jula is briefing the media about the developments of the talks between Ethiopian higher military officials with TPLF senior officials about the peace agreement Nairobi, Kenya. Field Marshal Birhanu holds briefing immediately after arrived in Bole Airport.

The delegation, that include both civil and military officials are standing behind him wearing a flower wreath to honor them while arriving in Bole Airport. Ambassador General Bacha Debele stands immediately to the left of Field Marshal Birhanu while Ambassador Redwan Hussen stands at the right side.

Diplomatic brief on peace developments for foreign military attaches in Addis Ababa



These pictures were taken during a briefing to military attaches of different Embassies in Addis Ababa by Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) about the peace agreement between the Federal Government of Ethiopia and the TPLF.

The picture on the right side depicts Major General Teshome Gemechu, ENDF's Director of External Affairs and Military Cooperation, delivering the development on the peace process to the military attaches. Media mikes with different media logos are placed in front of him.

On the left side are sitting military attachés gathered from Addis Ababa-based Embassies of different countries attending the briefing by Major General Teshome. Sat in circles they were attending the briefing with due attention. Some are seen in the picture taking notes while others are jotting the update from the horse's mouth—the briefer.