



The Ethiopian Herald

Vol. LXXIX No 052 10 November 2022 - Hidar 1, 2015

Thursday

Price Birr 10.00



EEP eyeing to secure 145 mln. USD from power export

• Working tirelessly to fully restore electricity in North Ethiopia

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA –The Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP) stated it has planned to obtain over 145 million USD from power export to the neighboring countries in this fiscal year.

EEP Communication Director, Moges Mekonnen told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that Ethiopia has been working hard

based on viable research to sell the electric power for neighboring countries.

In this regard, the country has been exporting electric power to Sudan and Djibouti over the past ten years. The country has also successfully completed the electric transamination line with Kenya to export electric power this November.

According to the Director, EEP has planned

to succeed over 145 million USD from electric power sales to Sudan, Djibouti, and Kenya this fiscal year. Depending on the country's share, Ethiopia will obtain 55 million USD, 41 million USD and up to 50 million USD from Sudan, Djibouti, and Kenya in that order. Particularly, as far as Kenya is concerned, the power export will

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Dereje Demissie

Jurist suggests transitional justice to post-war recovery

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Atrocities and crimes that were committed during the past two years war cannot be adequately addressed in the regular court system, an international jurist said, adding transitional justice is the instrument to heal the wounds through reconciliation.

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CoHA important concession for TPLF: Lawrence Freeman

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA –The recent peace accord between the federal government and TPLF is an important concession for the group towards maintaining sustainable peace and order in the country, a noted analyst in the area said.

After the Permanent Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) inked in South Africa last week, a new round of talk has resumed in Kenya between senior commanders of the government and TPLF forces to discuss the implementation of the CoHA.

Speaking to local media, a Political-Economic Analyst for Africa Lawrence Freeman said the signatory parties are expected to be fully committed to the implementation of the peace agreement so as to rebuild the devastated northern Ethiopia. The provision of food, medical equipment, services, reopening of school and other things in the area will also determine the

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Mekdelawit Messay

Ethiopia's green initiative promising to mitigate climate change: Expert

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA—Ethiopia's large scale green initiative efforts can fight world climate change beyond creating conducive environment and increase water volume in the continent, Water Science Researcher said.

Water Science Researcher and Florida University PhD candidate Mekdelawit Messay told media that Ethiopia is home to communities that are trying their best to make sure green growth.

She added that the nation has huge water capacity to produce clean energy and hydro power energy and grow the crop in good manner.

Moreover, Abay Dam is one of the real examples of mitigating climate change impacts if it is well strengthen and effectively completed, and will become source of renewable energy to shift the global energy into renewable energy, she stated.

See Ethiopia's green ... Page 3

Diasporas ready to bring difference in U.S. election

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopian Diasporas in the U.S. have vowed to make their voice heard in Congress and bring a difference in the upcoming election by electing a political party that would pursue a favorable policy direction towards their home country.

Accordingly, Ethiopian American Civil Council (EACC) Chairperson Deacon Yoseph Romanwork told an international media that that Diaspora Ethiopians in the U.S. are making their voice heard in congress in Colorado and other election areas to show their stance. There are enough Ethiopians, Eritreans and other African Diasporas who are collaborating to political capital to make a difference in the election.

The chairperson put a good example for this is the election held in Virginia was shifted and the ruling Democratic Party to be defensive about the case regarding

Ethiopia. “Now if we do what we made in Virginia, they will not believe us, even though six months ago we were terrified by the couple of bills HR 6600 and S3199 in senate.”

For Amsalu Kassaw, a Colorado-based Ethiopian Diaspora, the draft bill is one of the most damaging and draconian and its damage will irreversibly impact in impeding efforts to rebuild war affected states such as Amhara, Afar and Tigray. “Habit on the table is more useful than to put pressure on Ethiopia and pass in floor then essentially creates diplomatic systematic even though democratic party draft this bill.”

“Now the U.S. lawmakers are trying to make the case and we are telling them that we will not out here to damage the relationship between the two countries.” Ethiopians can make a difference in the upcoming election by organizing in massive to impact Washington’s perception on the



country of their origin, he added.

Some countries which have good relationship with Ethiopia get sanctioned because of their solidarity with the latter. “Diaspora

Ethiopians including me can be averted this draconian measure that was stipulated in the bills. We fought anyone who is competing on those districts and promoting those ill-conceived draft laws.”

Greenhouse implementation crucial to ensure food self-sufficiency

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA—implementing high technology plastic greenhouse agricultural farming system is of paramount importance in pushing Ethiopia’s plan of ensuring food self-sufficiency forward, so stated an expert.

Having a stay with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Horticulture and Crop Expert Gizachew Abate said that the greenhouse farming system in Ethiopia is growing from time to time as the country has envisaged food self-sufficiency. Farmers in Ethiopia, Amhara state are widely implementing high technology plastic greenhouse agricultural farming system as a viable mechanism of ensuring food self-sufficiency.

He further elucidated that witnessing the benefit of plastic greenhouse farming system well, most of the local farmers are implementing the mechanism and changing their livelihood. Previously, the farmers had no awareness about the system and engaged in usual farming system. The implementation of greenhouse agricultural farming system has paramount importance in ensuring food self-sufficiency, he said.

Farmers are currently growing a selected variety of crops like tomatoes, watermelon, potato, beetroot, cabbage, peppers, carrot, rhamnusprinoideis and lettuce under high tunnel poly greenhouses. Even though there is implementation of greenhouse, still a lot remains to be done towards widely implementing the system, he stated.

Kefale Hunegnaw is a role model farmer implementing plastic greenhouse farming system. He said, “ Right after the experts

provided us with training I started implementing the plastic greenhouse farming system in which most of the local farmers are experiencing. Previously I have no clue about the system,” he said.

Kefale stated that the system is very important in changing the livelihoods of the farmers. The farmers are collecting three times within a year in which about 70 ETB is being collected from vegetable sale. As the greenhouse farming system is implemented in small areas of land it is profitable, he said.

“Growing our own vegetables can be a great way to help keep the environment and save some pennies spent for buying products. In addition, we can choose any products produced in our garden and won’t have to rely on supermarkets and shops to get your vegetable consumption.”

Kunzila Integrated Land Management and Sanitation Project Bahir Dar Office Manager Tekeba Tebabelon on his part said that the introduction of modern plastic greenhouse farming system is being implemented in collaboration with concerned stakeholders.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Netherlands has allocated about 15.5 million Euro to finance Kunzila Integrated Landscape Management and WASH (ILMWA) project. The project is being implemented by the consortium comprising the Water and Land Resource Center (WLRC) of Addis Ababa University and, Netherlands Development Organization (SNV), in Amhara National Regional State.

Ethnic Tigray politicians give thumb up to peace deal

BY TAMERU REGASA

ADDIS ABABA— Apart from renewing commitment to working for durable peace, ethnic Tigray politicians have appreciated the peace agreement between Federal government and Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) concluded in South Africa.

Speaking to *The Ethiopian Herald*, the politicians said that they are pleased with the agreement as they would be more beneficiary out of the agreement.

Tesfaye Alemayehu said that the agreement could benefit all people in Tigray as it will help them peacefully live in different parts of country with the spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood with all Ethiopians having different ethnic background.

He said that the people of Tigray have played a great role in Ethiopia nation building history and they want unity with other ethnicities for their own benefit and national interest.

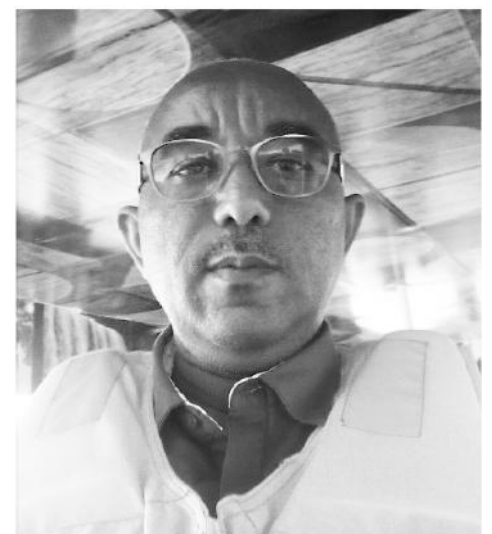
He underscored that the agreement is instrumental in accelerating humanitarian aid in Tigray state, and both parties need to be committed to properly implement the agreement so as to promote lasting peace in the country.

He recommended that federal government should take care of situations while incorporating TPLF’s arms into government security institutions keeping the constitution of the country.

Tsegzeab Araya on his part said that such accord had delayed as it should have been signed before the deaths and displacement of a number of people of the country as well as destruction of private and public resources.



Tesfaye Alemayehu



Tsegzeab Araya

He urged the federal government to exert utmost effort to rehabilitate Tigray state and other neighboring states.

He has also called on religious fathers to discharge their respective responsibilities to help politicians come up with constructive ideas so as to sustain the ongoing development progress.

Forum discusses Ethiopia's untapped investment opportunities

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA—Ethiopia has called on Canadian investors to use opportunities created following the reform in the country including the country's Homegrown Economic Reform and the investment potentials.

Speaking at the 4th Ethio-Canada business and investment forum held at Toronto, Ambassador Fistum Arega said that following the current reform and peace agreement in Ethiopia, the country has called on Canadian investors to spend their finance and take advantage of the existing investment opportunity, as to Ethiopia News Agency.

At event, Ethiopia has invited Canadian investors to invest in areas of construction

equipment and building supplies, heavy machinery, mining, agro-processing and food products, textiles and garments, leather and leather products, and travel and tourism.

Trade and Regional Integration state Minister Kasahun Gofe, in his message explained that the way the bilateral trade relation of the two countries will be more strengthened by promoting Ethiopian domestic potential to the investors.

The State Minister expressed in social media that the forum has played an indispensable role in expanding export product destinations for Ethiopia. It is able also to promote the opportunities Ethiopia has possessed.

The Trade and Investment Forum was organized by Canada-Africa Chamber of Business, Wafa Marketing and Promotion,



and the Ethiopian Embassy in Ottawa. Leading businesses and high-ranking officials from Ethiopia participated in the forum and presentations on doing business

in Ethiopia, panel discussions and case studies with successful businesses, and ad hoc meetings with members of the Ethiopian delegation were made.

CoHA important concession for...

success of the truce.

Having signed the agreement, the TPLF has accepted the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ethiopia which is asserted by the notion that there cannot be two armed forces in a single country. "Everyone should respect Ethiopia's territorial integrity and the thirty day of disarmament is a very important concession for the group."

Commenting on the accountability of individuals who have allegedly committed atrocious crimes, Freeman stressed that

the situation will take much time due to the difficulty of identifying the actual perpetrators. "Before this, we have to keep the people alive and we have to get them medicine, food, and relocate them to their houses, so as to avoid extra suffering."

The government succeeded in ensuring the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ethiopia and ending the suffering of the people who have been ravaged by the conflict in the northern part of the country, he remarked.

Jurist suggests transitional...

Speaking to local media, the Jurist Dereje Demissie stated that the transitional justice is the best system to address the issue as it is a process that follows large scale atrocities involving hundreds or thousands of people.

"Basically, traditional justice is needed when the country is going to enter a new era to do something by which atrocities can be addressed; victims will have some type of redress. There is also going to be reconciliation to make sure it does not happen again."

Dereje further highlighted that the main thing that distinguishes the transitional justice that would be implemented in Ethiopia from the regular court system is that it has an element of reconciliation and the end goal is not punishment. Conversely, the purpose of the regular court process is punishing the violator of law and to ensure law and order in the society. "Indeed, the existing Ethiopian problem cannot be addressed through such system."

By the same token, the regular court cannot handle thousands of combatants and to ensure a legitimate and fair trial

for each defender and the process is duly unmanageable. The prime option is to do what is needed to do first and it is restoring rule of law.

As to him, transitional justice includes healing processes using customs and traditional dispute resolving mechanisms and it is very viable in the Ethiopian context. The signed peace deal also refers to the African transitional justice policy which is something that was working since 2008 and concluded in 2019 in Addis Ababa.

The transitional justice is not going to happen overnight and like any process that involves reconciliation and healing, it is going to take a significant amount of time. During the transitional period, it needs to bring victims and perpetrators together by delineating areas. So, a large scale training for people who would oversee the process should be formed and a commission that would oversee the process should be abide by the African Union directives, the jurist recommended.

Ethiopia's green initiative...

She added that developed countries should support the developing ones in the effort geared towards reversing the impact of climate change effort to create conducive world. Because developed countries have financial and economic capacity to mitigate climate change and must reach on consensus on that arena.

"Since greenhouse gas emission comes from developed nations, they should support the effort of developing countries. The biggest agenda on Cop27 summit of United Nations Climate Change in Egypt needs to focus on mitigation of climate change, adaptation of climate change, and cost and damages," she said.

There is big disparity regarding who is suffering from climate change caused by developed countries as they use fossil fuel and run big industries in the world.

She said: "The problem is pushing or asking developing countries to apply a green initiative but green growth needs money to make it fruitful, and there is not appropriate support. Hence, the summit being held in the cop 27 summit should well hammer the issue."

Developing countries are discussing the issue with developed ones though the latter have caused problems revolving around climate change."

EEP eyeing to secure 145 mln...

increase gradually and the agreement is also made in that regard; hence the amount of revenue from power export will rise.

"In terms of carrying grids and releasing power, both sides (Ethiopia and Kenya) have checked and confirmed the absence of problems. When the test distribution is finalized, electricity will be regularly released to Kenya. As Kenya's power installation is capable of carrying 2,000MW, it will make Tanzania and Uganda beneficiaries. However, depending on the agreement, Kenya will take 400 MW at present," he added.

The Director Further stated that neighboring Countries such as South Sudan, Somalia, and Somaliland are repeatedly requesting to buy energy from Ethiopia. Of the various

advantages of exporting electric power to the neighboring countries, reducing forex challenge, boosting amicable ties with respective peoples of the states and expanding infrastructure development.

He further stated that EEP has continued restoring the damaged electric infrastructure in the northern parts of the country. Hence, Woldia to Alamata restoration was fully completed and residents began utilizing electric power. However, people who are living in areas around Doro Giber up to Afar state haven't yet been electrified as the substation was looted.

Therefore, he said, EEP is working harder than ever to restore the electric power in the conflict affected areas, among others, Hara Gebeya, Chifra, Welkait, and Humera.

Acquiring lesson from post conflict experiences

BY GETACHEW MINAS

After civil war countries face two main challenges; economic recovery and avoidance of renewed conflict. Economic recovery is an important determinant of peace. Higher economic growth and development prolong the duration of peace and thus stabilize the country. After reviewing the incidence of conflict in fragile states, observers analyzed the situations of economic recovery after war. There was a strong evidence of a peace dividend showing that countries grew at “higher” rates during the post-war period. Initially, however, countries such as Ethiopia faced enormous social needs, as they have very little resources to address them. Foreign aid has been used to meet these needs. However, it is strongly believed that longer-term aid should be minimized in order to avoid aid “dependency” and the associated political pressure. In the past, countries, including Ethiopia, relied heavily on external aid for their survival. This forced them to be under the control of Western neocolonialists.

The West discouraged good governance which was important for the capacity of citizens in the poor countries to improve their standard of living. Where poor governance had been rampant as in Ethiopia, the ability of the people to lift themselves out of poverty had been severely limited. The prevalence of poverty is high in fragile states where their citizens are poor and dependent on food aid. Ethiopia had been dependent on food aid provided by the West for over six decades. It is estimated that about a third of the world’s poor lived in fragile states even though they only account for a fifth of the global population. In these states fragility and poor development are closely interrelated. There is a wide gap between fragile and conflict-affected states and other conflict-free countries. In Ethiopia, conflicts had been indeed major obstacles to its growth and development. Currently, the people and government of Ethiopia have immense confidence in their ability to overcome poverty, after ending the war in the north. They knew that poverty is an excuse for the West to subjugate them with the provision of food aid.

A fragile state has weak capacity to carry out basic functions of governing for the people and its territory. It lacks the ability to develop constructive relations within the society. A fragile state is unable to provide security and economic opportunity for the people. The basic role of the state is provision of security to its people through maintaining its authority. The experience of fragile states indicates that when the government fails to provide peace and security competing “political” parties challenge it. Also, violence may emerge and the country may descend into civil war. As a regulatory body, the government plays key role in economic activities. It serves society as provider of public services such as transport infrastructure,

health and education. But, in a fragile state, these services are almost non-existent due to unresolved armed conflicts and civil wars. These conflicts and wars involve “organized” and violent opposition to a weak government.

Most fragile countries experienced armed violence, civil unrest and communal violence. In some other countries that were under the rule of autocratic regimes, any political opposition was violently repressed. It is, therefore, assumed that almost all fragile states have a history of civil conflict or war. It is shown that post-war economic recovery is important because most of the countries that experienced civil war “reverted” back to war within a decade. There is strong evidence for a “conflict trap” in all countries that suffered from one civil war and experienced at least one conflict thereafter. It is argued that recurring civil wars have become the dominant form of armed conflict in the world today. Studies indicated that every civil war that has started has been a continuation of a previous civil war. Thus, countries with a violent past are more likely to experience new conflicts unless the government is very “strong” and democratic.

There are other factors that made a country more prone to conflict. Evidence has emerged that economic characteristics are important determinants of conflict. Income levels and growth are strongly associated and interrelated with the start of conflict. Hence, the strength of the “economic recovery” is critical in escaping a cycle of war and economic crises. There is strong evidence that countries have enjoyed high economic growth once the civil war has ended. This is known as the “peace dividend.” Studies reveal that it takes slightly over two decades for these economies to recover, and to revert back to pre-war income levels. However, this peace dividend is not automatic. In many countries low level violence continued after the war ended, indicating that there was no peace dividend or growth was no higher than in other countries. Thus, in order to catch up countries “must end” low levels of armed conflict by force.

Some countries maintained positive income growth throughout and after civil war, while others suffered from low income prior to the war. After the war most countries recovered while others faced minor armed conflict. Recently international aid organizations have focused their attention on fragile states. Almost half of the global aid went to fragile states, indicating a strong commitment to help countries affected by conflict and fragility. There is very little research on the causes and prevention of state fragility and how fragile states can be assisted due to lack of data and poor information in fragile states. The concern here is whether aid has helped to increase the peace dividend. There is a need to “examine” the relationship between aid and its effects in post-war situations. There may be some degree of policy environment

that influences the effectiveness of aid. It is crucial to examine which type of aid may be most growth enhancing in post-war economies.

There is a debate on the economic impact of aid on growth. Some economists have found that although aid has in general “no impact” on growth, it does enhance growth in good policy environments that promote budget surplus and trade. Studies indicated that better policies do “not” necessarily result in more growth. They, therefore, suggest prioritizing countries with good policies when allocating aid. This should be based on researches that inform and influence policy makers. They may, however, conclude that there is no relationship between aid and growth. They also find no evidence that aid works better in better policy environment. It is “difficult” to assume that aid helps in stabilizing post-conflict countries by enhancing their peace dividend. However, it is helpful to explore these links further through research. Making comparative cross-country assessments of growth, researchers have found that aid may probably have a positive effect on growth in post-war economies.

It has been established that aid in violent post-war situations has “no effect” on growth as policy reforms do. Countries with good policies achieve higher growth, but no evidence that aid is more effective in good policy environments. Researchers defined and measured good policies and their improvement. This rating takes four main policy areas into consideration and these are macroeconomic management and sustainability of reforms; structural policies for sustainable and equitable growth; policies for social inclusion; and public sector management. Post-war countries tended to have weak institutions and one of the important issues is how they should prioritize and sequence their policy and institutional reforms. An analysis of policy reforms found “no” evidence that any particular area should be prioritized.

A few economists suggest that aid is beneficial for growth in post-war countries. However, there is no link between specific policy reforms or particular types of aid and growth to explain why aid is growth enhancing. Studies imply that there is “little” difference in aid between countries at peace and in post-war. The only differences are in the importance of humanitarian aid and debt forgiveness. Humanitarian aid only makes up a very small share of aid to peaceful countries. However, debt forgiveness is “lower” for post-war than for peaceful countries. Aid for social sector, education and health, and economic infrastructure makes up half of total aid. There is “little” difference in the proportion of aid allocated to education, health and physical infrastructure between countries at peace or during the post-war decade. Despite their reconstruction needs, post-war countries do “not” receive more aid for economic infrastructure. Amazing!

There is no evidence to show that one

particular type of aid is more beneficial than another. The particular needs of post-war countries in terms of physical infrastructure reconstruction and rehabilitation do “not” seem to be matched by more aid for this purpose. However, an evaluation of community-driven reconstruction programs suggests that communities often prioritize education and health over economic infrastructure projects. For example, studies indicated that more than half of the participating communities in the DR of Congo chose to rebuild schools. This suggests that the allocation of aid for social services may be appropriate to meet the needs in war-torn societies. However, more country evidence is required to assess the allocation of aid by purpose. Although evidence suggests that aid is beneficial in post-war countries, there is “no evidence” that aid is growth enhancing as mentioned earlier.

Post-war economies face a risk of recurring conflict as indicated earlier. This risk is significantly reduced by strong economic recovery. Governments and international organizations should prioritize short-term growth strategies in order to achieve peace and stability. Economists suggest the best strategy would be a “package” involving low taxation, high aid, intense scrutiny of public spending and low inflation. All the suggestions focused on the policy response and strategy for the immediate post-war years. In this period, the generation of employment for young people is of particular importance. Experience suggests that countries with a large proportion of the youth population or “youth bulge” face a higher risk of civil conflict. In this situation, job opportunities are limited and youth bulges are significant factors that lead to terrorism, rioting, violent demonstrations, and low-level violent conflict, but not the onset of civil war.

Peace dividend crucially depends on employment opportunities for young people. This is an important condition for growth. Unemployment and idleness are the main reasons why young people join rebel groups and gangs. In order to reduce the motivation to join organized violent groups any economic policy should consider the impact on employment. Job creation is only one of many challenges post-war economies face.

Other challenges include the reconstruction of health and education facilities, infrastructure, and the revival of the private sector. In post war Ethiopia, the bad experiences of other countries in similar situation should not be repeated. In the “post conflict” era, the people and government of Ethiopia should work together to defend the country from local and external nemeses, adversaries and antagonists.

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

The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943
Published daily except Mondays
By The Ethiopian Press Agency



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Tel. 011-126-42-22
Fax. 251-011-156-98-62

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The Ethiopian Herald

Editorial

Humanitarian support to reinforce peace!

According to some sources post-conflict reconstruction in many cases is a complex and multidimensional process. It encompasses efforts to simultaneously restore law and order, ensure good governance as well as economic and social conditions, among others.

In the case of speeding up the peace process in Tigray, such goal can be a long term one that can await the full restoration of peace, law and order. Up until that there is a need to prop up the just started peace building process by streamlining the smooth and timely of emergency relief and medical services to the region.

Therefore, the efforts to cement the already started peace building effort needs due attention and collaboration of both local and international stakeholders in delivering aid, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Now the two year war has ended. Agreement has been signed between the two sides to permanently cease hostilities and resort to normalizing the situation in the region as well as focus on rehabilitation and ensure peace.

This is a good venture as the parties have continued to discuss in Nairobi on how to do the next task, which is disarmament. Hopefully the agreement will bring about the desired result if it is implemented properly with the same level of progress as observed so far.

Yet to make sure that the agreement will ultimately success to ensure peace in Tigray calls for the concerted efforts of all stakeholders.

Especially the collaborative effort to expedite relief, medical and psychological support to victims is an urgent issue. The region needs multifaceted support to return to normal situation like before the war. While overall rehabilitation takes time and resource, it is

good to give due attention to restoration of basic services that do not give time for those in need.

Services like electricity, telecommunication, and education need to resume as soon as possible to simplify the process of normalizing the peoples life. Since many have lost their livelihood they are left at the mercy of continuous humanitarian aid. The humanitarian aid must be upheld until the people become self-reliant recovering from the damages caused by the war.

Schools and health facilities also need urgent rehabilitation. The government has so far been striving to resume basic social services like electricity, telecom in Tigray. Accordingly power transmission lines are being maintained and rehabilitated so as to provide service to the region.

Efforts are also underway to extend the highly and urgently desired relief and humanitarian services. Transportation of the emergency relief is already started in the region. It is important to make sure that the relief is delivered with adequate amount and the right time to all areas in need.

Along with the food and medical aid, it is also important to think about those who have been displaced from their homesteads. In addition to the daily relief services, they should be given support so that they can return to their homes, rehabilitate themselves and resume their normal lives.

In this regard the governments endeavor needs due appreciation. It also needs the support of all concerned relief and humanitarian aid organizations, political parties as well as citizens at home and abroad to show due commitment for the prevalence of peace.

Opinion

Breathing a healing air: Priceless peace deal outcome

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It is really high time for the Ethiopian government to help citizens move from wartime to peacetime as Ethiopians in general and ethnic Tigrayans in particular have peculiarly tired of leading life blustered with the effects of myriads of war-borne evil acts in history.

Obviously, after being severely entangled with a two year plus long sniff air peculiarly blown from the north with artillery pollution, Ethiopians have started breathing a sigh of relief and enjoy leading life free from threat following the peace deal concluded with the federal government and TPLF.

Hereafter hostility, revenge and all evil acts in general have to be neutralized and gradually vanished as negotiations progress towards a lasting peace agreement, which in turn helps the nation foster comprehensive growth and prosperity.

Unequivocally, peace has already been declared in Ethiopia as all Ethiopians won the trophy and have reaped the fruits of 'African solutions to African problems' principle.

If truth be told, no one loathes peace and living in harmony with others unless they have developed spirit of devil as religious ideologies stipulate. There are circumstances of course that potentially push individuals or groups to be indulged in evil acts that result in destruction and loss of life at the end of the day.

Without a shadow of doubt, peace agreement is the formal ending of a conflict thereby resulting in stability and devised to address the root causes of a given conflict, create change with a view to guaranteeing durable peace.

To the surprise of everyone, no disagreement, rivalry or ill intention could be beyond human mind if human race shoulders good will to come up with peaceful coexistence and establish a viable rapport to have amicable tie with one another and/or each other.

Absolutely, peace process, negotiations and close talks about problems and creation of a peace agreement have to be a culture of Ethiopians as these steps are important to maintain a proper balance between the involvement of internal and external actors. External actors are undoubtedly important in the creation of a peace agreement in the capacity of negotiators, mediators and arbitrators with a view to monitoring and aiding the implementation process.

True, their role would hit the set target with the proper involvement of internal parties in the agreement process. Yes, peace agreements within the overall process of reaching the negotiated settlement of an internal conflict are quite pivotal.

A genuine and wholeheartedly performed agreement will result in durable peace, whereas a pretended one will result in delays, setbacks, or even the collapse of the peace process. Hence, the agreement should meet among others precision of wording, technical

feasibility, international legitimacy, detailed implementation timetable.

Yes, mediators here are duty bound to ensure that negotiations between the parties meet these high standards. The international community should not impose agreeing parties to trek in the direction they would love for the effective implementation of the peace process rather they have to promote a process of gradual accommodation between the peace agreement and realities on the ground, which is the only path towards a lasting peace.

Needless to state, the following expectations have to be met to make the peace deal a success: the signing of the agreement would deprive the armed groups who remained outside the peace process of their political agenda and would pressure on them to cease the fighting, the repatriation of opposition leaders in exile would lead the latter to become more realistic in their expectations and more accommodating in their demands, the beginning of the implementation process, would provide the latter with the strongest incentive to make the process work, even at the expense of their initial political objectives.

The international community further needs to stretch helping hands and provide the agreeing parties with wealth, technical expertise, financial resources, international legitimacy, implementation experience and help enforce agreements as properly and timely as possible.

Since Ethiopia all the time enjoys entertaining color blind diplomacy, nations from every corner of the globe can establish bilateral or trilateral ties so long as they prefer following a win-win fashion to unduly interfering in its internal affairs.

Besides, the international community needs to help support the governments identify what kinds of challenges are likely to emerge during implementation and real practical phase. As a more serious problem stems from the general political situation in the country, roundtable discussions, close talks and agreements are preferable steps to get sources of conflict dried forever.

From the point of view of the relationship between the two warring parties, the danger is further decelerated and one party develops trust on the other. From the point of view of the relationship between the peace process and society at large, they have to be well informed that the peace deal is a viable step to declare lasting peace, development and prosperity if fittingly managed.

In a nutshell, the agreement must be able to prevent a resurgence of the conflict, create conditions for a stable scenario, and repair the damage in terms of security in the political, economic and social as well as psychological spheres.

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

Business & Economy

Mineral investment to encourage, attract investors

BY BACHA ZEWDIE

The Amhara Regional Mineral Resources Development Bureau recently held a mineral investment development campaign in Bahirdar in collaboration with the Ministry of Mines under the theme “Minerals are new hope for our region”. In the movement, the entities engaged in different sectors of mineral development participated.

Minister of Mines, Engineer Takele Umma, and head of the Amhara Region, Dr. Yelikal Kefale, along with bodies who govern the sector were presented. Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus and the unrest in northern Ethiopia, such forums and movements have not been held for a long time. This has been the reason for the sector to slow down even more.

The war that took place in the northern part of Ethiopia has put a lot of pressure on the activities of the mining sector, which directly or indirectly benefited from the sector and contributed to the country’s economic growth. In particular, the location of major mineral resources in the Amhara region is in a war zone, making the problem worse.

By reviving this stagnant mining development, the mineral wealth of the country should be utilized through such platforms in the efforts being made to create an invincible Ethiopia by moving in different sectors as a country. The platform is an alternative solution to encourage those working in the sector and to attract new investments.

On the stage of the Mineral Investment Development Movement, types of minerals used for the industry and the construction sector as well as for jewelry were presented for display and for new investment. In this program, which included a discussion forum, opinions were circulated that would help the sector achieve better results in the country’s economic development. Through this, different ideas regarding good performances and gaps identified in the sector were raised.

Among the suggestions raised is an exchange performed by mineral smugglers continued to be a bottleneck in the sector, and it was pointed out that lack of control and monitoring is the root cause of the problem.

Opal is mentioned among the precious minerals found in the region because of its high price and its vast popularity. Opal mining in Ethiopia is widely found in the Amhara region, especially in the Delanta district. It has also become identity of the area.

An individual who brought up opal mine in the forum said remorsefully that the opal mine, which could have a great role in the development of the country’s economy by generating income, is not even changing lives of the communities living nearby. He mentioned that the reason for this is lack of a strong operational system to prevent illegal mining transactions.

Complaints, frustrations and concerns raised by the individual and other forum participants alike are common. The problem has persisted to the extent it seems that those involved in illegal activities have been given green light.

Comments presented on the movement show



Ethiopian Opal Gemstone

that the question why is it not possible to resolve the grievances of individuals and associations continues to be a discussion agenda even today.

While explaining about the ideas raised by the participants in the forum and the general program of the movement, Haile Abebe, Head of the Amhara Region Mineral Resources Bureau said that, Opal is being illegally exported from the country. The Chinese and Indians who are engaged in the field are doing this. This happened because the government did not pay due attention to the sector.

Regarding their plan ahead, Haile mentioned that questions and comments as well as tax-free investment incentives; infrastructure development and other ideas that can encourage development have been raised and in response, he said the comments raised are relevant. The opal mineral in Ethiopia is a globally recognized brand. However, the sector’s vulnerability to illegal activities has undermined the country’s benefits.

In the last fiscal year, the region earned about seven million Dollar from opal development. Due to the amount of mineral resources in the region, it is expected to generate more income. It is an issue that has been given attention at the regional and national levels to fill such a gap.

Structural support to the sector has been among the efforts made in the past few years. A system has been developed for districts to provide close monitoring and support. The system is considered as one solution to prevent illegality. A task force involving the security force has been established to conduct monitoring and control at the zone, district and regional levels. The task force needs to be strengthened. In addition, there should be mineral trading centers in selected districts. Movement has been started to implement this.

The movement program is aimed at strengthening investment with a view to future achievements, as well as strengthening the development work in addition to rehabilitating the war affected areas of the region. Just as efforts are being made to achieve success in agriculture and other development sectors nationally, mining development is also being

done by stimulating the stakeholders to contribute to the regional economy.

The bureau head explained that it is a program to create awareness about the potential of mineral resources available in the region; the importance that the sector can bring if it is used; the challenges and favorable conditions in the sector; how to overcome the challenges and the activities that need to be done in the future to enhance the positive aspects.

According to him, about 40 types of minerals, divided into five sectors, which are used for industry, construction and jewelry have been identified in the region through research. Among them, he pointed out that a large amount of lithium, which is used for car battery input, is found in the Wolo area. He further explained that one ton of lithium raw ore worth 17 thousand Dollar in the current international market.

He also announced that there is also cobalt ore used for airplanes in the region of which one ton raw ore sells for 51 thousand Dollars. There is also a mineral with huge economic benefit that can be used as input for different firms. Lack of understanding in the sector regarding international and domestic market situation as well as location of the mineral is the problem, he said.

According to him, in addition to making it possible to overcome such gaps, the movement program has also made an effort to attract investment by promoting the types of minerals available in the region and their locations. In addition to exploring the gaps in the sector, the movement platform held by organizing exhibition and discussion together, was successful in its purpose as it praised the government’s recent attention to the sector and conveyed a message to continue it.

The presence of some areas of the region in the war zone is bound to directly or indirectly affect the sector. In response to the question whether the risk of impact on the movement intended to attract investment is the same, he said that most of the mine sites are exterior to the war zone, so it is not a threat. For example, an investor who wants to build a cement factory can do in the Abay Valley; an investor who

wants to engage in coal mining can find safe areas in Chilga, Ambasel, Debrelias, Ankober, and gold minerals in the Weberma area.

Because of these areas were mentioned on the movement platform, many of the participants showed interest. In particular, there have been requests for investment in coal development. It has been identified in the study that around 3.9 million tons of coal reserves can be found in Chilga area. Licenses have been given to a number of developers of coal, and among them, one developer is in the process of carrying out construction at a cost of 565 million Dollar in the Ambasal area.

According to Haile, the government’s direction of using local raw materials to replace the imported coal with high foreign currency will encourage those engaged in different mining sectors. He also mentioned the activity started in the development of coal which is used as an input for the construction sector and cement producing industries.

Asked about the criticisms of some economists who said that the organization of professionals and offices should be strong in the rural areas where the mining development is carried out, Haile said that, the favorable conditions were created for the top management who controls the work. He added that the gaps that were observed in the mining sector starts from the policy that has lowered the attitude towards the sector. It is impossible to build an institution unless the work is supported by policy. Amhara region can be taken as an example here. The sector has been made to work once under agriculture and other times under the governance of other institutions. There is no structure in zone and district. Instead of thinking that mining is the way to prosperity, it was a situation of taking mining as a source of conflict and anger. As a result, it did not receive attention from top-down management.

But now, the procedure has changed. He explained that following the national reform, operations and organizations have been changed, the regional mining agency has been organized at the office level and brought into the cabinet structure; zones have been converted into departments under the same cabinet; and districts are being organized to serve as mining offices in selected districts.

Haile said that, works will continue to be effective by strengthening the activities started with the new organization. He pointed out that the movement platform will continue with different content and based on the international mineral and technology event held at the national level from November 10, it will be held in Bahirdar city from November 19, 2022.

Minister of Mines, Engineer Takele Umma, who attended the Mineral Investment Movement Forum said; “Ethiopia can grow and prosper in the mining sector if we believe that the minerals in the country belong to Ethiopia.”

Head of Government of the Amhara Region Dr. Yelikal Kefale, on his part, confirmed that the region is ready to support the mining development by solving operational obstacles. He also called on investors to invest in the sector in order to turn the mineral wealth in the region into development.

Art & Culture

Wretched lives

BY HENOK TIBEBU

(part 1)

The bright sun on the clear blue sky was shining on the majestic Addis Ababa having a cool weather that day. It was September first of 2014 E.C, a special occasion when Ethiopians welcome their new year. The departing year 2013 E.C. had passed horrifyingly as the nation went through several difficulties mainly due to the war between the TPLF and the government defense forces. Though the war was still going on, the New Year was being celebrated in most parts of the country.

It was unwisely the protagonist quitted his relatively high-paying job for a reason that never holds water. As such he didn't feel like celebrating anything. He is a self-declared author. He had got published some few short stories on a magazine for which he was working for the past five years as a journalist. Some few short stories and he would quit his highly-paying job claiming that he has to become a full time **author or writer** without considering that he needs an income for survival.

He couldn't even afford money for his small narrow room that stretches only one mattress on the floor. There is no extra space at all except from the door that opens to the outside to the mattress. For bare necessities he is leaning on the support of his good friends. But he still doesn't try to get a job. The place where he rented his small room is a squalid village near the big bridge on a highway. Polluted dark water flows under the bridge. It creates a stench in the nostrils. No treatment seems to cure the murky water. Residents near the river dump their liquid and dry waste in it.

There in the slam are found several households that support their livelihood by selling *Arake*, a strong Ethiopian traditional ale to alcoholic youngsters whose lives are ruined by different addictions but mainly the *Arake*. He thinks he could find a story to write based on the alcoholic lives of these reckless young men and women who dropped out from school and left their families to spend their whole days and nights tipsy.

They nicked name the drink sipirri which has no possible meaning. The young author's room shares a wooden wall with the small room which his landlady sells sipirri in. Most of the morning times he would recline on his mattress and listen to the conversation of the alcoholic young men and women who wouldn't not be careless about celebrating holidays, a new year or success.

But they celebrate birthdays of one another with candlelight and bread. Most of the time, their food security proves gate crushing. Crushing ceremonies, be it holy

or cultural (traditional) by showing up in somebody's house without invitations. They don't only eat and drink in that residence as informal or uninvited guests but also provoke the pity of hosts to take away foods and drinks for their friends waiting in the sipirri houses.

The author has been quite and observant most of the times. Nights that he spends with them, they call him the cool dude and even leave their seats for him when he arrives. Sometimes they say "Janis accompany is here" and give him a space on the wooden benches. Jani is one of the barflies around the slam and his best friend. He would sit and listen. As an author, he has to observe in silence.

"Happy new year everyone!" said Masho one of the young female alcoholics. There were about three young alcoholic men inside that sipirri house, which is separated by a wooden wall from the author's hell hole. "Happy new year to you too Masho" replied those people.

The author woke up when he heard her loud scratchy voice. He hates her voice. Her voice is so scratchy that she sounds like a coffee boiler when the coffee is ready. It disturbs him whether she speaks lower or louder. Though she hasn't done anything wrong on him he doesn't like her at all. She is always against every alcoholic person when she is drunk, except him. She doesn't fear him; for a matter fact she doesn't fear anybody.

But she respects him even when she is dead drunk. She always says his name with obeisance while greeting him. "Hi Dani how are you?" she would say. His name is Daniel. "I am good. How are you?" he wouldn't say her name. Yet he couldn't understand why he doesn't like her.

He would hear the young men talking peacefully as they drink sipirri for half an hour. He is still lying on his bed. He wonders "how could they be strong enough to start drinking this hard liquor in such early morning and keep on drinking the whole day?"

Suddenly Masho started screaming with that scratchy voice of hers. "Who are you to tell me to be quiet?" she screamed. "Woman I am not talking to you! Why do you always want to grab people's attention?" this was Fapplaw. He is one of the young winos who left home and his family for the sake of sipirri. But he compromises the situation he is in claiming he has become alcoholic after the death of his mother. He is a light skinned, short and skinny young man. His head has started turning bold as he is losing his hair from the front side. He loves biting his nails so much that the back tips of his fingers have lost their nails halfway from where they are supposed to grow. He does not let them grow even half an inch that his fingers have made his hands look like the

hands of a handicap.

"Who would want your attention?" she raised her voice again and then lowering it... "to tell me to be quiet and stuff....." she started murmuring like a stubborn house servant. Then Fapplaw said "hey woman shall I smack you once and wake you up!" and laughed with the others except Masho. Masho didn't respond directly. She went on murmuring. "..... telling me to be quiet and stuff. Who does he think he is, the sheriff of this sipirri house? hahaha..."

This time Daniel the author has already made his ears wide open and alert in case he could hear something interesting for his fiction which he didn't start writing yet. This time Fapplaw is gossiping about one member of their sipirri society.

"Awtaru was not deported from Saudi Arabia. It was rather from England....." He said and went on "you see Awtaru is a very talented guy! His sister used to live in London when he was leading a life of sipirri and sleeping on the street. It was a hard life he was leading inured to dirt and all his body was bugging.

One day his sister came from London and started looking for him. She found him sleeping drunk and dirty on a street. She told him that she came to take him and has already processed his Visa for England. "I will move to London but under one condition!" he said to his sister. "What is it?" his sister asked him.

"I won't leave my bugs behind. They have to go with me!" As his sister got so confused and embarrassed she would ask him "why is that?"

"They are the source of my talent!" said Awtaru.

"I don't understand"

"You will"

Then his sister just asked him to wash up just to be at least semi presentable. He agreed and took shower and washed his dirty clothes but he made sure he still has bugs on them as many as he needs for his talent show. He moved to London with his bugs. Two months later he got registered for an audition on Britain got talent.

"The first day he got on the stage, Simon would ask him "what is your name young man?"

"Awtaru"

"Where are you from Awtaru?"

"I am from Ethiopia"

"What does Awtaru mean?"

"I don't know"

"You don't know the meaning of your name! Laughs. Anyways why did you choose Britain got talent?"

Guess what that dummy friend of mine

said? "Fapplaw paused for a moment. His friend asked "what?" Masho is still murmuring. Tell me to be quiet and stuff....."

Fapplaw went on telling the story. He said it was because there is no Britain's got talent in Ethiopia!" The audience laughed thinking a comedian came from Ethiopia."

"What is your talent Awtaru?" asked imon.

"Making beat that you have never heard in your life!" said Awtaru with full confidence. "I told you that guy is very talented then let's hear it." The stage is yours said Simon. That time Awtaru would start picking the bugs from his neck gray hair quickly and squashing them with both his thumb nails and make a wonderful beat that goes like "ttew...tta...ttuhs...tteesh....." Then comes a big applause from the audience and the judges including Simon. Suddenly Simon would see the blood on both his thumb nails and was shocked. He has to ask Awtaru.

Awtaru you are bleeding?" We have never seen a man who sacrificed this much for the sake of art. Don't you feel any pain?" "Not at all" answered Awtaru. The audience and the judges were so amazed that they gave him another round of warm applause. Then Simon asked "how is that possible?" this time my dummy friend instead of fibbing would say "it is possible because this is not my blood. It is rather my bug's I made the beat by squashing my bugs."

Right at that moment the beautiful black judge.....what was her name?whatever... started throwing up. The whole audience followed suite. It was Simon who didn't throw up. That guy is conservative. You know how conservatives are. He would ask Awtaru "how could you commit such genocide on innocent bug's Awtaru?"

"It is easy. These bugs have been sucking my blood for years and they are never grateful. They always suck my blood and keep me restless like extremists round the world did to their poor people. You can't understand that because you are a man of art. You don't have to feel sorry or be humanitarian about the bugs.

"Let me just tell you one thing some governments do not feel sorry when they sell mass destructive weapons for Africans to see Africans spilling each other's blood in civil wars that they never want to go through," said, Awtaru without fear.

I told you that dummy was a philosopher too. Finally both Awtaru and his sister were deported because of those words. Meanwhile a rumor has it some have promised to support Awtaru with his talent.

(to be continued)

The need to abide by the terms of the Pretoria Deal

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

A sigh of relief has been experienced by all parties when the peace deal of Pretoria was announced on November 2, 2022 almost two years to the day the hostilities had broken out between the TPLF forces and the Ethiopian National Defense Forces. It was hailed as a breakthrough by all those who were following closely the Horn of Africa affairs because Ethiopia is a key country in the affairs of the Horn besides being a key player of international affairs in general and African affairs in particular. It should not be forgotten that Ethiopia is seat to many international organizations including the AU and the UN ECA among others. For the last two years it was engaged in a conflict that drained its human and material resources inflicting a huge damage to the economy.

No doubts the cost of the war was immense calculated roughly up to 20 billion dollars by some experts' estimate.

Ethiopia's place as one of the most stable countries in Africa was put in serious jeopardy with its image tarnished in many ways. Many people were referring to Ethiopia as an unsafe country and hence investors were hesitant to come to Ethiopia and engage in huge long term investments. Investors it is known do not like uncertainties and in that sense the country has lost a lot.

What is more, Ethiopia had to withstand the pressure of international media, a massive negative propaganda campaign and the threats of various sorts of economic sanctions that have deeply affected the economic programs such as the exclusion from the list of African countries who benefited from free trade to the US in the AGOA program, African Growth and Opportunity Act.

They were really tough times for Ethiopia because the historical enemies of Ethiopia were making prophesies that the country would crumble to pieces once the federal government was toppled. Several other insurgencies were taking place in the country with forces such as the Shane group and the jihadist militants of Al Shabaab mostly based in neighboring Somalia. And yet the country has withstood all these challenges because it has a solid history of resistance and resilience. Its people are ready to fight all those who try to dominate it by force or belittle it. It is owner of a long and glorious history of rejection and overcoming of forceful acts coming beyond the frontiers.

Other African countries were anxious about what was going on in Ethiopia which they saw as pioneers of

independence, sovereignty and freedom. Hence, the conflict in the north had multiple implications and now that a deal has been reached to stop it, all Ethiopians must feel to have won. It is not time to incriminate this side or that one and what is now important is putting the deal on the ground and make it practical.

Implementing the Pretoria peace deal will now be the first priority of both parties, TPLF and the Federal government, because unless there is full cooperation with good faith on both parties the deal will remain on paper only. It is not like some who would like to say that given the government is now totally on the drivers' seat it is up to it to implement the deal. But this cannot be plausible because it takes two to a tango, as the saying goes.

We have seen in the past that peace deals have not always succeeded because they have various uncertainties and loss of confidence on both sides due to what has been happening for a long time. Coming from protracted hostilities and violence there are still remnants of people who barely trust the other side and this needs a lot of psychological work using all means available. It must be understood by all that things have now changed diametrically and people have to adapt to it wholeheartedly.

The various propaganda campaign that was carried out during the conflict need to totally stop and adopt a new friendly and reconciliatory approach. We need to insist that it is all about a united and compact Ethiopia and not the one that our enemies or adversaries tell us from abroad. We need to re-educate all those who are or were engaged in the actual battles to change attitude and consider the other party as brothers and sisters. The usage of words to communicate messages becomes fundamental so that a change of mind occurs. It is a difficult task but without it no peace deal can have a chance to come down to the ground to be successfully implemented. That is why many said it needs a lot of patience, dexterity and commitment on all sides.

Now that a deal has been reached, everything that happened during the hostilities or before them need to be addressed differently. We need to look forward and not backward as Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said. We need all the focus on the future helping all those affected by the conflict to rehabilitate and get back to their pre-conflict days. We need to show to others that as we are capable of fighting to win the war, we are also capable of winning the peace by adhering to the terms and conditions of the deal.

We need to honor our words because it is about reputation and credibility and what happens next will largely determine what kind of country we are destined to be. Ethiopians must now run fast to recover the time lost in conflicts and controversies and open a new chapter of peace and total stability, avoid anxieties of hostilities and finally people can sleep in peace without the nightmares of guns roaring day and night, tanks rolling down the villages and towns, missiles being launched here and there.

Implementing the terms of the Pretoria peace deal totally will take a long time and a lot of patience because we must not forget that there are still elements who want to sabotage the deal and contribute to re-ignite the war because their mission has failed. Ethiopians must be smart and resilient to change the previous reality that the peace deal has introduced and attention must be taken not to regress in our mind.

Trust and confidence in one another is fundamental to lead to the strict

implementation of the deal using the processes and terms contained in the document. Ethiopia now needs the contribution of international bodies to accompany it in this difficult transition including a huge support in financial means because the country is in dire straits economically with not only what this conflict in the north has caused but also what has happened with the conflict in other parts of the world as well as the consequences of climate change.

It is true that the Pretoria deal has opened a new chapter to Ethiopia's modern history but if it is not strictly implemented using the laws of the country there could still be the interference of foreign elements and that is not what Ethiopia has been fighting for. The principle 'African solutions for African problems' implies that foreign powers' intervention can only be accepted to the extent it does not affect the sovereignty and independence of the country.

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Law & Politics

Peace builders in, conflict brewers out

BY SOLOMON WASSIHUN

Like the beginning, the end was unexpected. The news of the beginning of the conflict in northern Ethiopia two years ago came as a shock, and the peaceful end came as a surprise when it was least expected. Few analysts had expected the peace talks in Pretoria to produce a successful outcome so quickly. Now, a week later, implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) is well underway as planned.

The headlines and rhetoric of war have now been replaced by news of peace and hope for reconciliation. The two military chiefs, who were bent on destroying each other, are now sitting side by side, putting their heads together to develop strategies for the rapid and effective implementation of the Pretoria Peace Agreement. TPLF-controlled broadcasters TV show civilians in Mekelle rejoicing over the signing of the peace agreement and longing for an early return to normalcy.

Instead of war songs, songs and speeches about peace resound from the radio stations. Ethiopians seem to share a common belief that war can bring nothing but colossal death and destruction of livelihoods, and they are united in advocating for peace. Talk of war and condemnation gives way to talk of peace and reconciliation. The sound of peace fills the air.

A Mekelle resident says “we are very happy to learn the news of the peace accord. That was what we have been waiting for a long time. The people of Tigray have always been longing for peace, but things were beyond our control. We believe peace is the basis for everything, no one is happier with the news of the peace agreement than the people of Tigray. We are now looking forward to the implementation of the agreement without any delay.”

The Mekelle-based Tigray University Scholars Association issued a statement calling up on all Ethiopian scholars for positive engagement in the peace-making process. The association made a desperate call for peace days ahead of the announcement of the signing of the peace deal. That in itself shows the genuine and urgent desire of scholars in Tigray for peace “At no time is education more important than in time of war. Scholars have to use their wisdom and knowledge to influence society and conflicting parties to adhere to a peaceful resolution of the conflict through political and constitutional means. Thus scholars have the responsibility to improve the situation and lessen the war narratives through quick and positive engagement in the peace discussions.” says the statement.

What Tigray desperately need now is peace builders and development agents like health specialist, entrepreneurs, engineers, industrialists, etc. not street demonstrators, social media critics, or self-proclaimed ‘freedom Fighters’

The overwhelming majority of the Tigray people from every walks of life from daily laborers to college lecturers are backing the peace accord. They are the ones who have the fresh practical experience the value of peace. They are the ones who suffered the direct impact of the absence of peace and the destruction of war during the last two years.

Minimal out-layer groups who are trying to disrupt and stand in the way of the peace process would not have a chance to persevere, as they will not get the support of the Tigray people. Those who tend to reject the peace accord have revealed their hidden agenda with their own actions which contradict the wish of the Tigray people.

The minority opposition against the peace deals is coming from those Tigrayans who are enjoying all the peaceful and comfortable life in the western world. They do not experience what it is like to live in a war situation for such a long time, as the people of Tigray have been through. While some Tigrayan scholars based in Mekelle who share the daily pain of the civilians are crying for peace, a few Tigrayan scholars who are enjoying the comfort of the civilized world are pushing for the continuation of the war, rejecting the peace accord.

Following the liberation of much of Tigray by Ethiopian forces during the last few weeks and the signing of the peace deal, the situation in Tigray is fast improving. Now there is almost no active battlefield in the Tigray region. The flow of humanitarian supplies is quite improving. Tigrayan civilians in localities that were hard to access due to the war are now receiving humanitarian supplies. Preparations and Maintenance works are well underway in several areas of the region to resume delivery of basic services. Electric power lines are being restored, and banks would soon open their doors to the public in the region.

While this is the fact on the ground, groups of a few Tigrayans in the diaspora are disrupting the peace process by creating confusion and misleading the international community not having a clear understanding of what is going on the ground. Those people are engaged in such anti-peace activities in the name of the people of Tigray just to advance selfish political goals set by the sponsors of their lavish lifestyle in Europe and America.

The few Tigrayan diaspora members, who are seeking the return of chaos in Tigray, work closely with foreign activists who are heavily involved in instigating insurgencies and massacres in Africa. People like Martin Plaut and Alex de Waal are known as the master strategists of chaos in Africa. Plaut is a British journalist and academic originally

from what was then apartheid South Africa, and has been called a propagandist and agent of death by his critics. Alex de Waal has been criticized as a corrupt and compromised scholar who supplement his income by writing a series of unfounded accusations against the Ethiopian state

Over the last few weeks, they have been trying their best to plant a seed of division among the Tigrayan diaspora by showing the Pretoria peace deal in a bad light. If they really wished to see the good of Tigray, these activists would have at least expressed cautious optimism and exercised a ‘wait and see’ approach to the peace process, restraining themselves from rushing to launch the media campaign against it.

We hope that the majority of Tigrayans in the diaspora would soon come to grasp the reality of what is actually going on in Tigray. They would join the chorus for the call for peace by contributing their share for the implementation of the peace accord. Instead of wasting their valuable time shouting, and blocking the streets of western cities in vain, the Tigray diaspora should come to Tigray and use their time and resources to help the speedy recovery of the livelihoods of their compatriots.

The Tigrayan diaspora, which comprises investors and professionals in various fields, has quite a huge potential in bringing change to Tigray. It is time for the Tigrayan Diaspora to prove their mettle as patriotic citizens by taking bold steps and active involvement in building a pluralistic political landscape in Tigray replacing the old monopolistic system. They need to go to their communities in every corner of the region to preach peace and sensitize the public not to fall prey to the propaganda of warmongers who want to keep Tigray in a destabilized situation for the sake of their selfish motives.

They should get involved in the upcoming provisional administration of Tigray and work with their compatriots to realize the change they wish to bring to their community. What Tigray desperately need now is peace builders and development agents like health specialist, entrepreneurs, engineers, industrialists, etc. not street demonstrators, social media critics, or self-proclaimed ‘freedom Fighters’.

It is time to let bygones be bygones and Tigrayans should join hands with all other Ethiopians to restore Ethiopia’s image as a preferred destination for foreign capital and tourists. All Ethiopians, including Tigrayans at home and abroad, should make themselves available as bricklayers for the peace project the nation is embarking on.

It is time for patriotic Tigrayan scholars and activists

Women in Focus

What do women need to make a difference?

BY MENGESHA AMARE

What I once recounted a phrase in a multi-paged book reads 'Men may work from sun to sun; but woman's work is never done' has attracted me to produce this piece. As far as my understanding is concerned, one may argue with it of course, men do have loopholes to get a rest within a day, on the contrary women have never had time to respite physically, psychologically and other related aspects as a number of household chores are waiting for them all the time. It is really devastating for women to be devoid of having a rest in life.

Here, empowering and/or educating women could unequivocally be the best solution to such an imbalance mode of treating women.

So the saying goes, "Educating females is educating the society," thereby contributing a lot to the overall development and growth of a given nation, Ethiopia has been embarking on educating as well as empowering women and girls especially these days.

Undeniably, the economic empowerment of women has several non-economic advantages and paves a range of opportunities to bring about meaningful societal change.

Without a shadow of doubt, women are part and parcel of the community in any country as the world has compulsorily comprise two sides of a coin—men and women, female and male—to lead a happy life in the universe.

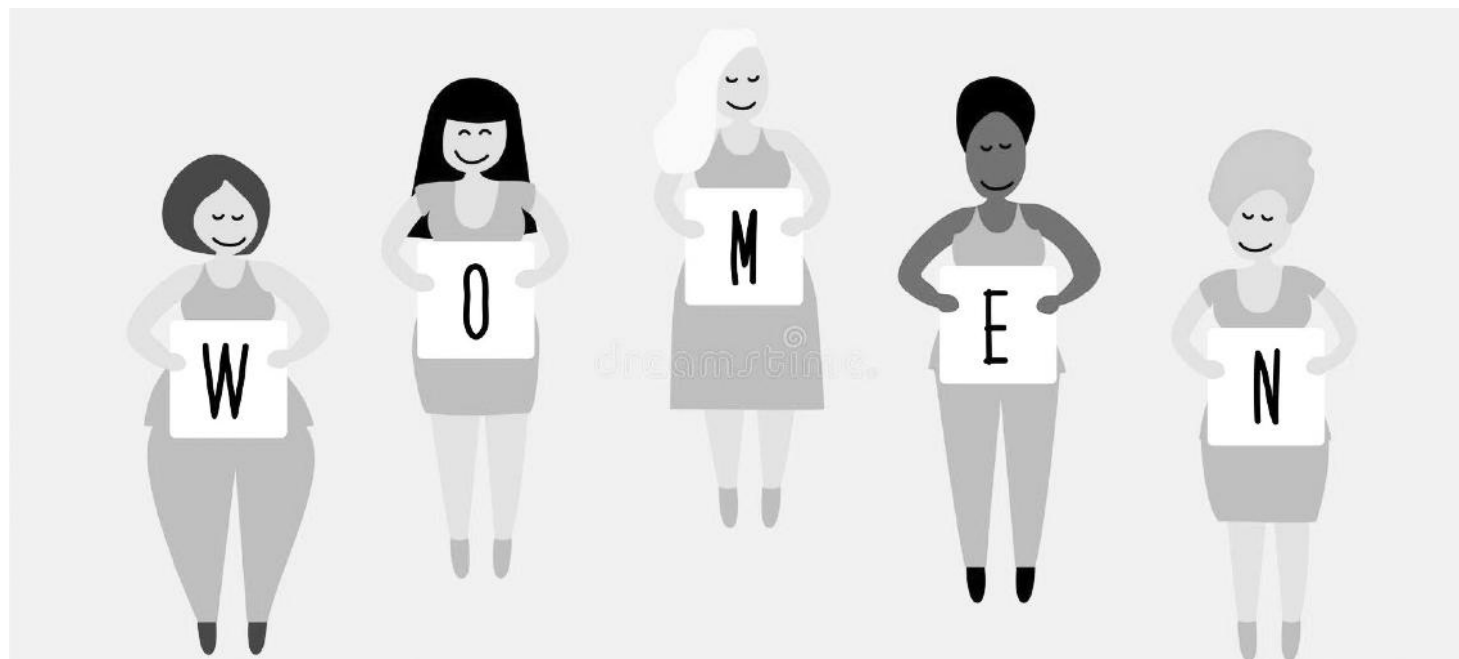
Taking this concept into account, this writer recently approached Sara Solomon, who graduated in Sociology and Social Anthropology at Addis Ababa University. She said, "Though women have conventionally played critical roles among the society, they still do not have equal access to opportunities and services, with few exceptions of course, this has to be well focused on to alter the trajectory."

The improvement of the political representation and participation of the Ethiopian woman and their economic empowerment at the grassroots is bridging the gender gap and triggering socio-economic development, although challenges have still remained intact, she said.

She said, "No need of noting this fact that women and girls constitute over 50 percent of the entire population of Ethiopia. Besides, they are actively involved in fighting poverty in households and thus make a crucial contribution to development of the society."

Promotion of community-based projects and problem solving approaches could be perfect avenues to push for the economic emancipation of rural Ethiopian women and family members administered under their supervision, and women who possess economic and political power contribute to the wellbeing of their households. Their empowerment is a commitment of the government to catalyze development.

This strategy is pulling down gender and ideological barriers like gender parity to catalyze development and to boost the



political representation of women in the country, she added.

True, she added since the progress made in empowering women and girls in Ethiopia as a vector of socio-economic development, it is quite crucial to well boost important strides that have been made in the country.

Women can do everything they are entitled to so if empowered and given ample opportunity

The most straightforward approach asserts that women and men have different preferences; with women being more concerned about their children and men their own wellbeing.

Obviously, she said, investing in women's economic empowerment sets a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication, and inclusive economic growth as women have been making enormous contributions to economic, social and even political arenas.

According to Sara, women and girls in Ethiopia have faced discrimination and inequalities in the workforce which have not only hurt them, but their families, communities and their countries as a whole.

She further elucidated that the Ethiopian government has acknowledged that empowering women and girls is a key contributor to economic development and an important factor in sustained economic growth. That is why it is doing all its best to empower women thereby enabling them to change themselves, their family lives and contribute their great share to the overall growth of the country.

Healthy, productive, competent and educated girls with equal access to opportunities can grow into strong, capable and smart women who can take on leadership roles in their country.

In leadership positions, Sara said women can also help develop policies that support women and girls, and continue to provide greater opportunities for jobs, education and health services. In countries such as Ethiopia, an increase in the number of female lawmakers helped advance legislation promoting gender equality such as providing

women in particular and the entire society in general with equal rights to women and ensuring reproductive rights.

Although women farmers make up almost half of the agricultural workforce across the nation, their level of productivity is significantly lower than that of their male counterparts since they have not been empowered well. This trend has to be changed for common good.

Another woman whom this writer approached for comment is Asamen Melka, a Sociology graduate from Bahir Dar University working for Arada Sub City women's affairs. Other issues that attract attention might be, she added, in Ethiopia girls enroll in primary school at a lower rate than boys and given less opportunity to attentively follow their education, and enrollment rates drop even lower at secondary and tertiary levels.

"Yes, since reinvigorating women's roles as leaders, entrepreneurs, businesswomen, journalists, models, farmers, consumers and economic stakeholders will transform the country, the government has to attach due emphasis to such as promising and optimistic move," she added.

The place of women in the society has so far been relegated to contribute minimally to the social development of the country. In addition, women's rights are not properly being protected in order for women to participate in various issues of their country but are subjected to abysmal violations. This can be well healed, Sara expounded, through empowering and educating women and girls, she opined.

She said unless women are empowered and gender equality is achieved so that women can play their role in economic, social, political, and environmental areas, the country will not achieve sustainable development with the recognition of only men's participation in all aspects.

The fact that women constitute half of the entire population of the country makes empowering them to be an active part of all development initiatives in the country a compelling context, she stated.

As to her, most women in the non-farm labor force are self-employed in the informal

sector but have no access to finance to grow their businesses.

Hence, it is high time to empower women and utilize all their potentials so as to bring about sustainable development in the nation, according to Asamen.

Therefore, one must understand from such ideas that without equal inclusion of women in all areas of development initiatives, what the country has long aspired in terms of social, economic and political shapers cannot be hit.

As sustainable development of human society has environmental, material, ecological, social, economic, legal, cultural, political and psychological dimensions demanding serious attention, women would be change engines in that regard if empowered and educated well, said Asamen.

Asamen further stated that struggling to bring about all-rounded socio-economic as well as democratic growth with the sole recognition of men's efforts is tantamount to clapping with one hand. Hence, for the effective and sustainable economic growth of any country, equal participation of both genders is unequivocally central. According to her, valuing women's work is instrumental in rescuing them from a life of poverty so they might contribute to the country's overall growth.

"Let me exhort my case by urging the government and other concerned bodies working on empowering and educating women and girls to take all issues revolving around women and girls into serious account."

True, it is worth noting that the concrete strength of women is instrumental in achieving other pillars of sustainable development and elements leading towards prosperity. Most importantly, empowerment of women and educating them well are crucial for them to become active participants in various social, economic and political areas of the country. It is when women are properly empowered and educated that they can better influence every step to make a difference. They should be empowered to do so, indeed!



Improving producers' work-life improves productivity

BY KFLEYESUS ABEBE

It is not uncommon to see business people or corporations making a great deal of profits by processing, selling or reselling products sourced from farmers or their own laborforces. However, most of the time, the care and treatment business people show to their labor force is shocking. In most cases, workforces compelled to work in uncomfortable conditions and treated poorly. Agencies that understood the consequence of such a trend on the lives of employees and on productivity in general are pushing for equity, introduction of minimum wage and provision of conducive environment.

Fairtrade Africa, a largest fair trade system in the world, is among such organizations that advocate and perform activities to improve the lives of the workforces and create favorable working conditions. In addition to its certification and assessment for potential market opportunities, it is performing various activities targeting to uplift the lives of workers and producers through different mechanisms. For instance, supporting employees' association, providing training and financial assistance to start business and earn additional income were some of the undertakings it accomplished in previous project. The inclusion of women and Persons with Disabilities was also part of the initiative.

Sustaining the effort, Fairtrade Africa on Monday launched a million Euros worth project to improve the livelihoods of farmers in the coffee, flower and other horticulture businesses. The project aimed at improving the socioeconomic conditions of workers as well as preserving the ecosystem that everyone depends on.

According to Caspar Pedo, Head of

Region: East and Central Africa at Fairtrade Africa, Dignified Opportunities Nurtured through Trade & Sustainability (DONUTS), the program aims at asserting that workers and producers should have to lead a decent life that contribute to the national development. He expressed the goal of the project in flower sector is to ensure the rights of workers.

"The program has components like issues of trade, environment, social and economic development. Two sectors we are looking at is coffee and flower supply chains. In flower sector, we try to ensure much more on workers' rights but look the bigger picture what we call social dialogue. Social dialogue is basically an issue of workers' representation: how their working conditions can be improved when we provide them much stronger voice. When workers have voice and be able to meaningfully participate in various matters, to change their lives through collective bargaining, you actually empowering them."

The project in coffee sector focuses on conserving and rehabilitating the environment, farmers and workers depending on it. "We are looking at sustainability through improved farming system. As you all aware, climate change has impacted coffee producers and coffee supply chain negatively. We are going to pay a lot of attention to new modern farming methods.

Farming methods enable workers to protect their business- how they can effectively improve productivity, sustain the supply chain coinciding with the environment inspite of climate change."

Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority Director General Adugna Debela (PhD) on his part said that improved protection of workers' rights and benefits contributed

significantly for the rise of export volume this year.

"Previously, the sector was in a very complicated situation which led farmers to benefit less. This had discouraged farmers; and reduced productivity, and even compelled some to change their focus to other produces. Taking this into consideration, we have been working with relevant stakeholders to betterment the livelihoods of farmers. Last year, we exported 300 thousand tons of coffee to international market and earned 1.4 billion USD. This has come as the result of activities we carried out with a number of stakeholders including the Fairtrade Africa."

The Director General also said; work on the environment is timely as it increases productivity and benefits workers sustainably.

"As Arabica Coffee growing country, we understand and consider the serious impact of climate change. So, any project supporting us in mitigating the impact of climate change is welcome and we are ready to work closely."

Unions and employees' organizations, who are keen and ready to work jointly in the project, are always welcomed, he reaffirmed.

Zenabu, who is from Gedeo Coffee Association said: "50,000 farmers are directly dependent on the income they generate from their coffee production. This project, therefore, is of great importance to them as it could have substantial impact on their livelihoods. Concurrently, I think it is timely to work on ecological protection for the very reason it increases product and productivity; and improve the lives of workers sustainably."

Zenabu also urged everyone to join

hands for the successful realization of the project.

The four year long program is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and with additional support coming from national fairtrade organizations and commercial partners.

Commenting on previous performance of Fairtrade Africa, Fairtrade Finland Programme Specialist and Representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland Anu Eskonheimo also highlighted a number of success that Fairtrade has registered. According to her, what made this project unique is it attaches due emphasis to environment. "For coffee project, environment projects give more focus; particularly in carbon credit production. And, in coffee projects, focusing on the environment and carbon credit production is a huge part of the scheme.

The project, as it is expected to impact the livelihoods of workers and keep the ecosystem safe, stronger inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, women and youth is principal goal of the project. Annu also reaffirmed Finland Government's commitment to sustain its support for the success of the project.

Likewise, it is vital for agencies and governments to participate in similar initiatives so as to reach more farmers and producers thereby impact their lives positively. The Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions, Ethiopian Human Rights Council and other agencies like Fairtrade Africa are urging the government to introduce a minimum wage system. Working along stakes is also imperative to improve the working conditions of employees especially for Persons with Disabilities and women.