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U.S. hails Ethiopia's unwavering commitment to succeed peace

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA- U.S. hailed the Ethiopian government's unwavering commitment to ensuring peace and security through improving humanitarian access and restoring basic services in the conflict-

affected areas of northern Ethiopia.

This was noted when United States Secretary of State Antony John Blinken met with Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) in U.S. on Tuesday.

Blinken commended steps taken by the government to improve humanitarian access

and begin restoration of essential services in conflict-affected areas specifically in Tigray state.

He also welcomed the progress made on the implementation of the November 2 Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA)

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WBG approves 745 mln USD grant projects to improve services in Ethiopia

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA -The World Bank Group (WBG) has adopted 745 million USD grant for a more people-centered approach (MPCA) to its program in Ethiopia with a strong focus on meeting basic needs and providing basic services to the vulnerable.

Group's board of executive directors last Tuesday approved two projects; namely, the *Ethiopia*
See WBG approves ... Page 3

Majority of conflict-affected areas regain power: EEP

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - Electric power has been restored in several cities of conflict- affected areas in North Ethiopia, so disclosed Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP).

Speaking to local media, EEP Communication and Public Relations Director Moges Mekonnen said that, the electric power in areas that are found in three main power supply and distribution lines have been made to resume service. The special focus has been given to repairing the

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Moges Mekonnen

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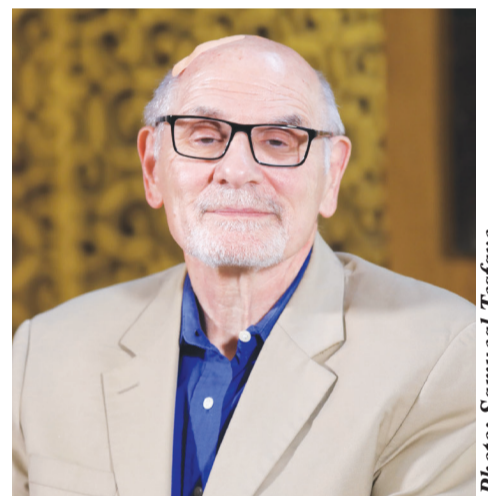
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Lawrence Freeman

Africa seeks more U.S. support for infrastructure: Analyst

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA –African leaders need to push for more support for infrastructure on the ongoing ‘U.S. - Africa Leaders’ Summit 2022’, so remarked Lawrence Freeman.

Commenting on the summit, Political and Economic Analyst for Africa Lawrence Freeman told *The Ethiopian Herald* that, the western countries particularly U.S should extend multinational support to the continent to ensure peace and inclusive growth.

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Photo: Samuel Tesfaye

Economic emancipation matters the most

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Walking the talk on social infrastructure restoration, humanitarian aid deliveries

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Go organic!

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President underlines enhancing women's global participation in peace processes

ADDIS ABABA (ENA) - Women's participation in peace processes is way too low despite the compelling evidence that their participation in peace negotiations increases the probability of a peace agreement by up to 35 percent more than if they were out of the process, President Sahle-Work Zewde said.

The 3rd Africa Forum on Women Peace and Security under the theme "leveraging on women peace and security to enhance women's participation and leadership in peace process in Africa" kicked off in Addis Ababa yesterday.

Women are seen as victims and victims they are, President Sahle-Work noted, adding that they are not, however, lamenting at

what happens to them. They are agents of peace, mediators, and negotiators.

Citing the UN Women's Global Study on the Implantation of UNSC 1325, she said that women constituted only 13 percent of negotiators, of those 3 percent were involved in mediation and just 4 percent were signatories in major peace processes. "This is way too low," she noted.

The world is experiencing a reversal of generational gain in women's right while violence, conflict, coup d'état, displacement, and hunger continue to increase. "This is a sad reality."

Sahle-Work stressed that "our demands and actions are for women to have their

places in the peace processes, mediations, negotiations, and implementations. Without their perspective, we cannot expect a lasting peace."

AUC Special Envoy on Women Peace and Security, Bineta Diop said on her part that, women play an important role in preventing and de-escalating conflict, brokering local ceasefire, promoting culture of peace and coexistence as well as recruitment of children as combatant.

"Yet the numbers show us that investment in women and girl, and willingness to ensure the involvement in this peace building effort is desperately low."

The special envoy added that, women

represent tiny segment of peace negotiators, envoy, mediators and peacekeeping.

"We need to look into the role of women in post-conflict economic revitalization that brings us more equitable recovery."

The two-day forum is expected to deliberate on the role of mediators in promoting women's meaningful participation in peace processes, promoting women's leadership in humanitarian action, and promoting women's rights through electoral mediation. African women leaders, women peace builders, national and regional focal points on women peace and security and other stakeholders in the implementation of WPS (Women, Peace, and Security) Agenda in Africa are in attendance of the forum.

Ethiopia on right track to achieve digital economy

BY MENGESHA AMARE

ADDIS ABABA - Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MoIT) stated that, a number of activities have been well undertaken to make digital Ethiopia real as it is of instrumental in creating a wide range of jobs, securing foreign currency and bolstering inclusive economy in 2025.

Having a stay with local media, MoIT State Minister Huria Ali said that, having a digital ID is one of the major elements to follow the digital system in the country. Besides, Ethiopia has set a strategic plan to hit the target of providing citizens with digital ID, all in one gadget of course, which comprises all what are required for all citizens at national level.

She said: "As the country has planned to gradually entertain a digital service delivery system in 2025, a number of institutions have already converted their services from analog to digital system so as to run activities as swiftly and timely as possible wherever and whenever they are."

She further stated that, the country has prioritized digital connection in all aspects and capitalized on transforming ways of running activities into a modernized fashion. Hence, setting up infrastructure is being well capitalized.

"We will come to digital payment via expanding the internet system and making the digital service provided by ethio-telecom competitive enough in the telecom industry," she added.

African Telecommunications Unity Director General, John Omo on his part stated that, Africa always follows the footsteps of Ethiopia as the country is taken as a hallmark of all change initiatives.

He said, "Though digital transformation in Ethiopia has shown sluggish pace, the country has now taken remarkable steps and finalized legal frameworks with a view to fostering the digital journey."

The new generation needs to be well equipped to make digital system in the country viable, he opined.

USAID launches 34.6 mln USD project for health service improvement

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA - USAID Healthy Behaviors Activities has launched 34.6 million USD project in a bid to achieve sustained adoption of healthy behaviors using social and behavioral change strategies with individuals, families, and communities in the coming five years.

The project focuses on the selected areas of Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, Gambella, Oromia, SNNPS, and Dire Dawa, which cover some 110 districts. It will also operate on family planning and reproductive health like maternal, new born, and child health as well as prevention from malaria, emerging infectious disease, nutrition and so on.

Speaking at the lunching of the activities yesterday, USAID Healthy Behaviors Activities Chief of FHI 360, Henock Gezahegn said that the USAID has invested 9.5 billion USD over the past over six decades whilst 25.3 percent of that investment has been applied in the various parts of Ethiopia.

As to Henock, the event was mainly marked to triplicate the effort of the USAID to reach out to citizens in need of support in Ethiopia.

USAID Healthy Behaviors Activities,

USAID Ethiopia, Jonathan Ross on his part said, "We will work with the states' health Bureaus, Ministry of Health, and other concerned bodies as partnerships to succeed the plan in the schedule via drawing important lesson from the past experiences."

He further stated that, the inclusive participations of the community and private sector engagement, addressing healthy facility to citizens, engaging on combating gender based violence or transforming healthy behaviors and gender norms, helping the Ethiopian government effort to make healthy community are among the priority thematic areas of the project.

Health State Minister, Dereje Duguma(MD) on his part said that, the USAID has been contributing a lot to the national effort along with the Ethiopian government over the past six decades. Particularly, the USAID has allocated over 2.5 billion USD for health sector solely over the past few years.

Dereje further stated that, the two bodies have engaged in creating healthy life and encourage the country's pre-care health system over the past five years. The major objectives of healthy behaviors activities are to bring behavioral change among the society regarding health matters.

AEPAC toiling to boost Ethio-U.S. ties

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA - The American Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee (AEPAC) expressed readiness to work tirelessly on strengthening Ethio- U.S. ties and recovering efforts of the conflict- affected areas in homeland as well.

AEPAC Executive Chairman Mesfin Tegenu stated in his article published in Pan African Visions that American Ethiopian Diaspora communities support Ethiopia's recovery from impacts due to the conflict. "We can help bolster support for the Administration's policy positions at home and abroad, we can also help boost trade and there are no better ambassadors for America's democratic values than us. American



Ethiopian Diaspora communities' effort is a key to transforming waning US influence in Africa."

"There has to be a purpose to the American Ethiopian Diaspora unity, and we are advocating for change in U.S. Government policy. We started the journey with full confidence in the ability and strength of United States foreign policy."

"AEPAC has worked tirelessly to try and change the misinformation and ignorance in Congress about Ethiopia. We have met with more than 100 representatives' offices to try and reveal the facts of the conflict, we have done our best to defend Ethiopia against condemnation bills that are HR6600 and S3199 from going to a vote," he stated.

As to him, the Government of Ethiopia

has done its work, and there are many big issues to overcome from ethnic federalism to the national economic recovery. But all Ethiopians have a part to play to this end.

Ethiopia has now found peace and there is a need to reset. Reset society in Ethiopia and bring people who have been locked in a brutal war back together. Reset relations between Ethiopia and the United States. And reset AEPAC's approach toward its efforts to unite the Diaspora and turn the international conversation on Ethiopia to a more positive place, the Chairman explained.

"One day soon the U.S. can undertake the foreign policy transformation that is required to be a successful international partner in 2023. Let's see if that plays out during the Africa summit in Washington DC," he said.

IGAD launches new media network to strengthen peace reporting

ADDIS ABABA/ENA/ - The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the eight-member regional economic community in the East and Horn of Africa region, has launched a new media network to help boost the reporting on peace and security issues in the region.

IGAD's Peace and Security Division convened the media network's launch workshop on 13-14 December in Bishoftu town, with journalists, media regulators, and other media practitioners with the aim of boosting the transparent, professional and contextual coverage of peace and security issues.

The media practitioners were drawn from

seven IGAD member states: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.

Speaking at the occasion, Peace and Security Division Director, with IGAD, Siraj Fegessa said IGAD recognizes the need for a platform to strategically and sustainably engage with journalists and media practitioners in the coverage of peace and security in the region.

"This network gives us the opportunity to do exactly that, especially at this time when the region is faced with multiple threats to human security," he added.

At the launch, the media practitioners established a steering committee to liaise with IGAD on creating structures for

proactive communication of the often-sensitive topics on peace and security.

"The media plays a significant role in informing and shaping public perceptions as well as in driving important conversations around a broad range of issues with direct relevance to strengthening good governance, sustainable development, peaceful resolution to conflicts as well as regional integration," the director said.

The new IGAD Regional Media Network on Peace and Security recognizes the need for professional and ethical coverage, where regional media regulators, journalists, and other media practitioners will be working together in the coverage of peace and security issues.



WORLD BANK GROUP

WBG approves 745...

Program for Results for Strengthening Primary Health Care Services and the Flood Management that have been planned to serve vulnerable Ethiopians impacted by multiple crises including COVID-19, climate-related disasters, and devastating conflict.

Accordingly, the Ethiopia Program for Results for Strengthening Primary Health Care Services financed through a 400 million USD grant from the International Development Association (IDA) and 45 million USD grant from the Global Financing Facility (GFF) aims to improve essential and equitable health care services and The Flood Management Project (FMP) financed by a 300 million USD grant from the International Development Association (IDA) is geared towards urgently enhancing Ethiopia's resilience to climate-related shocks, as well as improve its ability to better respond to and manage disasters and flood risks.

"The health project will provide over 22 million women and children, including those in conflict affected areas and Internally Displaced Persons, lifesaving health services such as immunization, family planning, skilled birth, antenatal and postnatal care. It will also restore facilities that were damaged by conflict, enabling millions of Ethiopians to get access once again to the services they direly need," said Ousmane Dione, World Bank Group Country Director for Eritrea, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Sudan.

U.S. hails ...

that is believed to help bring lasting peace to northern Ethiopia.

The secretary general urged both parties to enjoy accelerated implementation of the agreement and access to the conflict areas.

"The United States remains committed to support the African Union-led peace process, including the AU monitoring and verification mechanism," he added.

In his twitter page, Prime Minister Abiy said that: "He held candid and productive meeting with Blinken. And expressed his appreciation to the U.S. for their contribution in Ethiopia's efforts to achieve peace. For decades Ethiopia has been a key ally of U.S. in Africa."

Similarly, Prime Minister Abiy discussed a range of issues with U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan with a view to strengthening the two countries historical bilateral relations.

Majority of conflict -affected...

main power supply stations and substations.

The repair and restoration efforts are continuing in several areas. The repairing activities in most of the areas have been finalized. The efforts have been bearing fruits in accessing and restoring power. Shire, Walkait, Adigrat, Humera, Maychew and other areas are currently accessing electric power. Repairing other power lines is also progressing well, he said.

He said: "There are some remaining tasks to fully resume the power

in Afar and Amhara States. In the Weldiya area, Doro Gebir movable power supply and distribution station repairing and restoration process have reached to 65 percent completion. There is a delay in electro-mechanical works. Chifera, Hara Gebeya and others will access electric service soon."

He further noted that, electric power has resumed in several areas, and to fully restore electricity in all areas, efforts are relentlessly exerted on repairing main power supply station.

Africa seeks more U.S. support for...

He stressed that, Africa needs financial and other assistance to building infrastructure, because without infrastructure, nothing is going to work.

Charging low interest rate to the finance is another thing to catalyze development process. The Chinese are doing that in some of their projects in the continent, he added.

He stated that, China has built huge economic development policy in the

continent with the aim of supporting the development process which is encouraging.

According to him, African nations should be treated as sovereign nations controlling their own policy. "They are claiming that as they give democracy, human rights and others rather than supporting good governance. The most fundamental human rights is the right to live, right for economic development and that's where the West and

the U.S in particular fall short."

"If you are concerned about human rights, then you have to build infrastructure in Africa. If you don't do that, those are empty words. No, I think there is going to be a lot of empty words. So they should be a very big radical shift of policy and approach to art."

Talking about the new geopolitics of the Horn of Africa and the U.S. and its allies

policy to this end, he said that they stuck in wrong an old a mindset coupled with geopolitical interest, to control world, finances, politics and others. "That is one of the reasons they wanted to carry out a regime change in Ethiopia. They are not happy with Ethiopia's relations with Eritrea, Somalia, and others. Because the West loses control of the Horn of Africa, which means they lose control of the waterway around the region."

Opinion

Mitigating Money Laundering with appropriate policies, procedures

BY GETACHEW MINAS

For an innocent observer, financial institutions seem to be free from money laundering (ML). These institutions, however, do not have the courage to claim immunity from financial crimes. Transgression of financial laws and regulations keep the banking institutions in permanent scare. They are exposed to fright, panic and shock if timely and relevant measures are not taken in time. The sources of panic are the customers who are depositors, borrowers or shareholders of the banks or financial institutions. As depositors they may claim all their deposits in time of serious and dangerous political or economic or social crises. Fortunately for the banks, all depositors rarely withdraw their deposits at the same time. Borrowers pose more danger to the banks than depositors as they fail to repay their debts on time for reasons of misuse of loans. The loans may not be used for intended purposes due to abuse of funds by borrowers. However, all borrowers are not in the same boat as some of them use loans profitably.

Launderers would never use money for productive purposes. To achieve this, they are closely in touch with officers who have relevant competence and authority to oversee money laundering (ML) in the banks. In some countries, they are bribed to overlook laundered monetary activities. This is against the anti-ML policies, guidance and procedures of the banks, both public and private. As Belay Sileshi indicated, financial institutions in Ethiopia had internal audit function to assess anti-money laundering (AML) and sanctions and practices. But, they do not have other independent “third party” to audit and assess ML. It is also noted that the absence of national ID card for customers and the technology to improve anti-money laundering activities is an issue. Also, the policy for preventing ML has difficulty of implementation. This created a ground for money launderers to exploit the banking system.

Experienced bankers suggested that the banks ought to have appropriate policies and procedures to ward off and discourage malpractice within the banking system. Also, financial intelligence center within banks should investigate concerned officials in charge of the banking system. This center should be fully authorized to investigate, probe and scrutinize these officials without any fear of repercussion, consequence and impact. If such authorities are immune to investigation, then the banking system would be engulfed with corruption and faces the danger of irreversible collapse. Of course public banks are guaranteed survival in the midst of an ocean of money laundering. The officials should treat such banks like any private enterprise which should not depend on anyone for existence in the midst of banking and financial crises.

In its history, ML has survived one crisis after another. The secret of its survival is its ability to adapt to different circumstances. It has developed survival mechanisms in

the modern society in which globalization and digital transformation reigned. These changes have caused serious damages to individuals, enterprises, and states and governments. There also developed catalysts for illegal actions, including terrorism, fraud, and corruption that led to deterioration in integrity and transparency, which nurtured ML. This in turn, entailed the unlawful act of hiding money for illicit purposes, which aggravated the illegitimate and clandestine nature of money. Banking experts have recognized that ML is the transforming process through which dirty, illegal money appears to be very clean. ML leads to illegal profit that hides the true origin of money.

The origin ML is fraud, corruption, prostitution, illegal sale of weapons, drugs, and other malpractices. The international financial institutions have noted that this practice is carried out by an individual who dissimulates or covers up the illegal origin of income. This created the impression that the money is derived from legal sources. Developing countries suffer from ML that distorts the efforts of entrepreneurs that labor to gain profit by supplying goods and services to the market. Ethiopia is committed in combating ML that distorts economic development in the country. An assessment of the overall risk of ML reached a conclusion that it encouraged corruption, tax fraud, goods smuggling, human trafficking etc. Therefore, it has been recognized that an adequately operational institution with regulatory power should be created. This will minimize, if not eliminate, ML and terrorist financing. This organ of the government should have the power to freeze, seize, and confiscate the proceeds of ML crime.

An efficient anti-ML system may comprise laws and regulations that empower financial institutions to fight illicit operations. Ethiopia has liberalized the financial sector, allowing external investment in the segment of the economy. However, there is a need to be cagey, suspicious, cautious and guarded “against” the alien ML. As mentioned earlier, there is also the possibility of corruption and ML linked to human trafficking, commercial fraud, tax evasion, and other criminal conducts. These acts would severely interrupt the country’s economic growth and foreign trade. When ML expands with a tacit and implicit agreement with concerned authorities, the financial system is rendered weak and inefficient. Risk detection system by the financial institutions becomes deliberately fragile and pathetically weak to allow hidden ML. Launderers favor to circulate their money through the “stable” financial system to avoid detection.

Effective anti-ML intelligence system may protect banks and financial institutions from IT network of embezzlement. If undetected in time, ML undermines the stability of financial systems. It corrupts officials and heads of financial institutions. In this regard, Ethiopia’s economy being highly cash-based, there are some vulnerable institutions whose services are exploited by launderers.

Therefore, its financial institutions are alert in controlling illicit financial transactions. It is argued that money laundering impairs the development of financial institutions and this would lead to corruption by criminal groups. Financial reports have confirmed that Ethiopia has been in a better position. However, as Belay Sileshi found out, there are limitations in the adoption and implementation of anti-ML requirements among banks in Ethiopia. Concerned authorities have not addressed the issue on suspicious transaction reports.

Based on these reports, researchers proposed more intensive investigation. They had found that the cash intensive nature of Ethiopia’s economy had caused a significant amount of cash to circulate outside of the formal financial system. It had been suggested to limit cash withdrawals from financial institutions by individuals within a given period of time. This measure would enhance the effectiveness of preventive anti-ML measures in Ethiopia. However, the proposal did not guarantee the efficiency of the measures in reducing criminality and controlling ML and terrorism. Therefore, it is suggested to examine the effectiveness of the measures in controlling ML. The study of the effectiveness of the measures should be focused on assessing: existing anti-ML preventive measures; the effective countermeasures taken by financial institutions to combat ML; and the challenges of anti-ML measures in Ethiopia.

The questions raised by researchers were useful in assessing the preventive measures adopted by financial institutions. They looked into existing practices in fighting against ML by these institutions. The probe was relevant for assessing the effectiveness of countering ML in the financial institutions. In so doing, it was possible to identify the challenges to anti-ML measures in Ethiopia. However, researchers have not been able to include the opinion of bank officers except those of the staff of the financial intelligence center. The other difficulty the researchers faced was the lack of freedom on the part of respondents. Some respondents were not willing to give information on ML activities by officials. In addition, there was prohibition on giving information to a third party even for academic research purposes. Researchers had faced some difficulties in accessing anti-ML publications.

There was a problem of hesitation in availing confidential information to researchers. Another limitation is the dearth of literature on the issue. The writings on the issues of ML are “general” in nature. Researchers rely on websites, and official sites of NBE, banks, and international organizations. Generally, the nature of ML creates apprehension in the concerned institutions as it is a crime of converting property for the purpose of disguising its illicit origin, location, disposition and ownership. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has been established with a mandate to set standards and to promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating ML. The task force focused

on the investigation of transactions that eventually convert illegally obtained money into legal money.

Researchers have underlined that Ethiopia’s anti-ML law has some inadequacies with regard to preventive measures such as customer “identification” in case of politically exposed persons and high risk customers. There is difficulty of verification of information provided by a customer to the banks. There is also lack of minimum requirement to identify true customers. There are challenges in clarifying the nature of financial crime by the prosecutors and the judiciary. There is also a lack of preliminary investigation to avoid duplication of unnecessary reports. However, there are some challenges in checking if measures taken to control ML are effective or not. It is reported that the legal framework for controlling ML does not provide for international cooperation until the “recent” establishment of a directorate for the extradition of ML residing abroad.

ML has become a sophisticated activity that maneuvered a series of complex transactions that removes the cash from its “original” location. This is done to avoid detection by the concerned authorities. At this stage ML is the most risky, because of the proximity of its true origin. It is also risky because of the possibility of being detected by the authorities is high. ML involves the introduction of illicit “profits” in the financial system and this alerts authorities to take immediate action. Money launderers are exposed to law enforcement detection since there exists a direct connection between the profits and the crime and it also involves the physical disposal of the cash. However, concealing the money laundered in the financial system has become increasingly difficult to discover. This is due to the large number of methods used in ML.

In order to avoid deposits of large sum of money that may “trigger” suspicion and cause detection, the money launderers use a large number of individuals as depositors in several banks. This is a strategy used by ML to avoid detection. Also, they purchase expensive property and “resell” it; they create legitimate businesses that deal in cash like hotels, bars and restaurants. These are among other techniques used to obscure the true source of illegitimate money. The true knowledge of such resources by the concerned authorities would reduce and eliminate the ML from its operational activities. This strongly demands the “honesty” and dedication of authorities and their trusted functionaries in digging out the ML illegal financial operations in Ethiopia. These authorities should use qualified Ethiopians to be engaged as moles, spies, infiltrators and secret agents within the local and external financial institutions to effectively prevent ML.

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

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Editorial

Ethiopia's relentless commitment to peace accord

The two years long bloody war between the federal government and TPLF has been wound up with a peace deal. Both sides are expected to do their best to live up to their obligation to the agreement. Therefore, those with a mediator/observer role need to observe their mere role only as mediators/observer and should not go beyond that so that they would not tamper with the domestic sovereign affairs of the country.

On the morrow of the agreement signed in Pretoria, Republic of South Africa, the federal government has been working relentlessly to urgently restore the peaceful situation and other services in Tigray. Accordingly, all the necessary food and medical supplies to Tigray region are being delivered at the necessary volume and speed. Due efforts have also been made to rehabilitate public facilities and services like electricity, telecom and banking, among others.

Following the agreement signed in Nairobi also the two sides are working towards disarming and reintegrating the TPLF combatants which is one of the important terms of the deal. This is also progressing smoothly as the two sides are working closely with commitment.

On all these progresses, the government and the people of Ethiopia like any decent person does, feel indebted to those who collaborated in bringing the two forces to the table of dialogue and working tirelessly to seal the peace deal. The peace deal has indeed saved the lives of tens of thousands of people and property estimated at billions of dollars.

Indeed the peace deal deserves very high respect as it has saved an invaluable life asset for the country and the people. Yet, there is something important that deserves honor which is equally important if not more, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the

nation.

Nothing can go even beyond the honor that should be given to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the nation. It is an issue that citizens pay even their precious lives. Hence, no one should try to dictate over issues that are the sovereign rights of nations with the pretext of showing care to an agenda like the peace deal reached between the federal government and TPLF.

Under the framework of the African Union (AU) the mediators to the peace deal were envoys from Kenya, Nigeria and Republic of South Africa. All these countries and the envoys are showing positive remarks to the progress of the peace deal on the ground. However, the remarks made by the US government on the peace process need some consideration.

While appreciating the positive developments in the process, US secretary of state Antony Blinken has recently noted that foreign forces need to evacuate from Tigray. Here, it should be clear that the only entity entitled to safeguard the territorial integrity of the nation is the Federal government of Ethiopia. If at all there are foreign forces in the sovereign territory of the nation, including Tigray, it is left to the sole discretion of the Federal government as per the constitution of the county to let them in or out. As long as the government has full right and might to do so, it should not be mentioned as a topic between the bilateral relations of the two countries, Ethiopia and US.

Nevertheless, what would be more important to bolster the century old strong ties of the two nations is to revamp the trade relations that soared up in recent years due to the war in the north, though still unreasonable. Hence, the US should think over relisting Ethiopia in the AGOA beneficiary African states to revamp the strong Ethio-US relations.

Opinion

A step-gazing Ethiopians' cast!

BY MENGESHA AMARE

The other day I was seated right at the back of the driver in a taxi heading to Adey Ababa, Saris to visit my aunt residing there. I meticulously established a rapport with a guy who sat beside me and after a while, we started discussing the significance of the national dialogue, which is strongly believed to unravel the complicated and deliberately heaped problems of the country. It is a national scheme the government and other patriots have calculatingly devised to bring about lasting solutions to the age-long problems from which the country has been suffering for a year.

In the middle of our talk, I all of sudden raised the case of the sly projects which anti-peace elements composed of targeting giving the county a hard time to making it fidgety all the time. I came up with several undeniable and convincing justifications; he was convinced and expressed his pact nodding his head, of course.

The man gazed at me seriously as I lucidly exhibited my consecration to fight circumstances thrown against my beloved Ethiopia, and tried to reflect on what I said in a very telling and hypnotic manner.

I think he is a member of a certain political

party truly working for the progress and unification of the country contrary to the evil acts of those who would like to garner underserved benefits by making their masters joyous. In principle, every citizen of the country is not supposed to think, act and perfume the same, but when it comes to an eternal mother—A COUNTRY—no need of compromising on it. Otherwise, the act of the ones who would like to bargain over their country is tantamount to handing over their mothers on sale.

The phrase the man uttered at a certain elucidation gazed my cast as it reads, 'A person who doesn't develop affection towards their country is a wingless crow' and I started thinking deeply. Wow! What a catchy phrase that vividly entails what many were doing to weaken their country merely serving the interests of others who have provided them with morsels of dollars.

I told him my name but didn't dig to take his since I wholeheartedly fixated on the idea with which he came up. I scrupulously listened to him not only he brought about a grain of truth which holds water but it was reflecting the reality on the ground of what is practically happening in the country.

Let me exhort my case citing what the

person whom I didn't take his name excellently uttered about the national dialogue at the end of our talk before our departure. As I said earlier, since his raconteur style attracted my attention and his argument was worth appreciating, I would like to present it as it is with trifling modifications.

All walks of life in the county have to be well informed and keen to practically implement the national dialogue commenced earlier to make Ethiopia a great nation. We don't have another country reserved as some little-minded people think, to make some piece and feeble territories, the greatest one has to be dismantled, as to them. If a certain mind has become submissive to systematic slavery, they could hardly be double-eyed except following a unidirectional trek as a horse in a cart.

I would like to call the man smart enough indeed not because his idea is compatible with mine but is an undeniable fact and everyone would be on the same boat if they carefully heard the way the man elucidated it.

No disagreement or sense of rivalry would be out of the circumference of close talk or dialogue as the latter could be a real weapon to have heart-to-heart healing. When it is framed at the national

level, however, a country willing to put it into effect will undoubtedly reap yummy fruits via remedying politically wounded mental set-up, sewing economically dilapidated society, healing the 'my way or no way' psychological cancer among ethnic groups and well-treating an inferiority or superiority disorder as Ethiopia is a country which equally houses close to 120 million sons and daughters, even refugees and asylum seekers. Yes, Ethiopia is equaled by none. Surprisingly enough, Ethiopia lacks nothing except real patriots working for its advancement and full independence.

I can unequivocally deduce from the person's ideology that Ethiopia needs people like this who have not yet been spoiled by an ethnocentric viral disease that is contagious unless treated in short. Yes, as individual difference and ideological deviation are inevitable, differences are well accepted and manifestations of beauty, too, however, bridging this difference by devising viable means like the national dialogue—a golden step gazing all Ethiopians cast—is an everlasting expedient.

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

Business & Economy

Economic emancipation matters the most

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Homegrown economic reform is unequivocally of instrumental in helping Ethiopia declare independence and bring about sustainable growth. That is why the government is these days well capitalizing on reinvigorating local capacities in production, land preparation, human capital promotion and all rounded coordination towards attaining the long aspired goal of making Ethiopia an affluent state in Africa and beyond.

The country is these days particularly since the very advent of the recent reform firmly committed to enlist itself in the category of middle income countries within the shortest time possible.

The proper implementation of a number of mega projects, commencement of wheat export after quenching local consumption, the rise of generating foreign currency from sesame and coffee production is a case in point in this regards.

Yes, the government has given due emphasis to all these invaluable projects and working from dawn to dusk with a view to making Ethiopia a hallmark of African independence and economic emancipation.

Taking all these steps towards progress and real change, this writer approached Mekonnen Muleta, who graduated in Agro Economic from Haramaya University for comment with regard to the journey the country has been trekking to declare economic independence. He said, "If a given country is economically empowered, militarily well equipped, socially prettily harmonized and politically stabled as well as matured, no another country could attempt to infringe its sovereignty and territorial integrity let alone twist its leaders' arms to sever their interests at the expense of its comprehensive wellbeing and autonomy."

As to him, economic empowerment is a viable and eternal weapon to get Ethiopia unwaveringly prospered thereby it would not bow to those which consider themselves as superpower and try to surpass its unalienated boundary.

According to Mekonnen, Ethiopia's leaders have now well comprehended the impact of economic empowerment and work hard for real change and meaningful improvement of citizens' lives. Unequivocally, Ethiopia needs to explore domestic capacities to curtail foreign dependency and ensure evolutionary economic freedom.

It is crystal clear that he said the world's first Arabica coffee was introduced by Ethiopia. Although delayed rains in the southern part of the country are noticed without having a significant impact other than to extend harvest in the region, the weather in 2021/22 has been generally favorable throughout the production year with minimal insect and disease infestation in the coffee growing regions.

As to him, Ethiopia is the world's third-largest Arabica coffee producer and the greatest producer of coffee in Africa as of



Embarking on homegrown economy opens avenue to prosperity

2022, with a production that has slowly increased from 6 million to over 8.15 million bags over the past ten years. The coffee seedlings that were recently planted and grew for five to ten years have now started bearing fruits and keep on producing.

The production of coffee is anticipated to increase by 100,000 bags in 2022/ 23 to 8.25 million bags (495,000 MT) taking the favorable weather, low insect and disease pressure as well as sufficient rain into account. It is well remembered that in comparison to the 2019–20 forecasts, which were 7.6 million bags, the estimate for coffee output in 2020–21 increased to 8.15 million bags. Besides, the increased coffee producing and the introduction of new trees for harvesting can be taken as the key causes of the increase in production volume.

He further said that the coffee production in the country has been increasing at alarming rate and the government has also attached due emphasis to it.

Citing a certain export, Mekonnen said that Ethiopia's coffee export is anticipated to increase and more than 15 million smallholder farmers and other industry participants rely on coffee as their primary source of income in Ethiopia.

The increased yields seen in the coffee producing sites particularly in the southern and western parts of the country, the introduction of new trees for harvesting are the key causes for the increase in production volume.

Not only is Ethiopia rich in fertile land growing cash crops like coffee, sesame and other lucrative ones, but it is also affluent in various tangible and intangible heritages and resources which can potentially be transacted and well cashed thereby supporting the economic aspect of citizens in one way or another.

He said if the country is in a passion of gaining utmost benefit out of particularly the former coffee production, there are a

lot of activities to be well dealt with. He said, "Farmers working on the area have to be empowered and helped get reasonable benefit in return. This means mechanisms are expected to be devised to help farmers contact concerned bodies from either the ministry at national level of state agriculture bureaus so as to curtail the illicit move of brokers; this does have dual merits. It helps farmers get what they deserve on the one hand and enables the nation to garner foreign currency supporting the national revenue on the other."

Apart from capitalizing on coffee production, which is very rewarding right these days, the government has to well reinvigorate the homegrown economic reform commenced recently.

He said, "Ethiopia is endowed with more than what other countries in Africa even beyond do have. What matters here is our working culture and sense of belongingness to our country has to be well nurtured and boosted."

As to him, a range of mechanisms like modernizing the agriculture sector, embarking on export promotion and import substitution and promoting the homegrown economy are the viable mechanisms that could potentially help the nation declare economic emancipation.

Another person whom this writer had a stay with is Asnake Worede. He graduated in Economics and is working as a private economic consultant in Addis Ababa.

He said that he has closely followed all the activities undertaken by the government especially revolving around economic issues. As to him, the incumbent is working at much as it can to get the country prospered though a long journey retains to be stridden.

According to Asnake, Ethiopians at home and from abroad have to move in unison to make their country alert in using its resource, be they are refrain or manmade,

to bring about a meaningful difference peculiarly in the economic sector.

Without a shadow of doubt, he said, economically developed countries do have minimal criminal acts, tolerable corruption steps and embezzlement inertia.

He said, "To the surprise of everyone, if Ethiopia had been an economically developed nation, it wouldn't have been exposed to the very organized and calculatingly framed conspiracy especially over the last two years plus following the war broke out in the northern part of the country. True, economic development is a guarantee for being pretty independent of course coupled with other indispensable social and political portions."

The subsistence rain fed farming and livestock production in which the majority of Ethiopians have been engaged has to be well transformed and made well mechanized to help the country hit its set target being a middle income economic nation within the shortest time possible.

Yes, of the principal crops Ethiopia has possessed and grown well like cash crops, pulses, oil seeds, potato, sugarcane and some vegetables, coffee is the largest export earner and a leading one.

Needless to state, the Ethiopian government has embarked on a ten-year economic development plan (2021-2030) where agriculture is on the top priority sectors. Besides, Ethiopia's development plan has laid out enhancing agricultural production and productivity as one of the major strategic pillars.

He said, "As Ethiopia is endowed with abundant agricultural resources and has diverse agro-ecological zones, and agriculture is the mainstay of Ethiopia's economy, the sector needs to be well transformed to back the industrial effort and ultimately help Ethiopia become independent state in all aspects".

Art & Culture



Tariku Birhanu (Baba)
*who outshined in the
 aforementioned works, was
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 For instance he was awarded
 as the best actor of the year
 by Sheger FM 102.1 and was
 nominated for an award at the
 Guma Award International Film
 Festival*

Ethiopian artists mourn a born actor

BY NAOL GIRMA

The legendary movie actor Tariku Birhanu (Baba) was born to his father Birhanu Ambaw and his mother Abaynesh Kibret in Addis Ababa in 1984 G.C at a place commonly known as Teklehaymanot Gymnazium .

When he reached school age , he attended his primary and secondary education at Balcha Abanefso Primary School and Addis Ketema Secondary School respectively. Then he went to college to receive a diploma in Leather and Leather Technology.

“During his schooling at leather and leather technology institute, he was charismatic and proved a model student,” his instructors witnessed.

During his studies, he was a favorite student of the institute, instructors and experts of the institute testify.

Pertaining to his career path art, Birhanu responded to his call of life at Abeboch Theatre Club. In order to let his beginning flourish and catapult him to heights of fame, he sat at the feet of the mentor of emerging artists the seasoned Artist Tesfaye Abebe (Father). He started the ABC’s of theatre and film there .He also took theatre courses at different times to help him succeed. As a member of Saint Michael Sunday School in Tserah Tsion Golahe also acted where he made fulltime spiritual films.

He acted in a theatre entitled Baitewar at Abeboch Theatre Club and demonstrated his abilities in various art events. At Kundi Theatre he acted in movie called Laundry Boy, which proved a harbinger to a successful career journey.



His film journey started with *Laundry Boy*, *Yefikir ABCD*, and various films of our country. These as a spur he acted in more than sixty films that are very popular especially among the youth .Some of his works included: *300 shi*, *Asnekign*, *balageru*, *Blatena*, *Bole Manekia*, *endebalnena mist*, *Enginerochu*, *Eyorica*, *Gudayu*, *hagershhagere*, *hiwotekebadmizan*, *fikirfacebook*, *kekan belay*, *kokebachin*, *mognu ye aradalij*, *tidarfilega*, *wofekomech*. *Wotoader*, *wotat be 97* and other movies.

The Artist Tariku Birhanu (nicknamed Baba by his friends) Tariku Birhanu (Baba) who outshined in the aforementioned works,

was decorated with different awards. For instance he was awarded as the best actor of the year by Sheger FM 102.1 and was nominated for an award at the Guma Award International Film Festival.

Apart from his artistic life, the actor was known for his humanity and generosity in his varied social life. Tariku was also an advocator of the work of the Eye Bank of Ethiopia – an institution that works to reverse corneal blindness in the country through the collection and processing of donor corneas.

The institution said that a person used to do something different in life, but Tariku

has shown us what is true in practice. It was saddened to hear the death of the prominent actor Tariku Birhanu.

Artist Tariku Birhanu cut in the flower of his manhood at age 38, He is survived by a son.

Prior to the funeral ceremony artists, his fans, celebrities and dignitaries gathered at National Theatre here in Addis Ababa to bid a farewell to the late Artist Tariku Birhanu.

Senior officials, religious leaders, senior and young artists, relatives and fans of the legendary artists expressed their respect at the theatre with tears .

Indepth

Corruption: The most perpetrated and least prosecuted crime

In these times when all sorts of human rights violations have been ‘normalized,’ a crime which continues to be perpetrated everywhere but punished nowhere: corruption is also seen as a business as usual. A business, by the way, that relies on the wide complicity of official authorities.

“Corruption attacks the foundation of democratic institutions by distorting electoral processes, perverting the rule of law and creating bureaucratic quagmires whose only reason for existing is the solicitation of bribes.”

Such a widespread ‘plague’ continues to be more and more exported by the business of the top trading countries as reported by the UN on the occasion of the 2022 International Anti-Corruption Day on 9 December.

Corruption weakens and shrinks democracy, a phenomenon that is now more and more extended (See IPS Thalif Deen’s: *The Decline and Fall of Democracy Worldwide*).

Such a shockingly perpetrated practice – which is rightly defined as a “crime”, — not only follows conflict but is also frequently one of its root causes.

“It fuels conflict and inhibits peace processes by undermining the rule of law, worsening poverty, facilitating the illicit use of resources, and providing financing for armed conflict,” as highlighted on the occasion of this year’s World Day.

Corruption fuels wars

Corruption has negative impacts on every aspect of society and is profoundly intertwined with conflict and instability jeopardizing social and economic development and undermining democratic institutions and the rule of law, the UN warns.

Indeed, “economic development is stunted because foreign direct investment is discouraged and small businesses within the country often find it impossible to overcome the “start-up costs” required because of corruption.”

Imposed by private business

It is perhaps useless to say that corruption is a practice widely committed by all sectors of private businesses.

In fact, in several industrialized countries, every now and then, some news shows the facades of zero-equipped hospitals and schools being inaugurated by politicians ahead of their electoral campaigns.

Shockingly, too many involved politicians get proportionally punished, if anytime, after extremely lengthy and mostly unfruitful legal processing.

Disproportionate impact

For its part, the World Bank considers corruption a major challenge to the twin goals of ending extreme poverty by 2030 and boosting shared prosperity for the poorest 40 percent of people in developing countries.

“Corruption has a disproportionate impact on the poor and most vulnerable, increasing costs and reducing access to services, including health, education and justice.”

The World Bank explains that corruption in the procurement of drugs and medical

equipment drives up costs and can lead to sub-standard or harmful products.

“The human costs of counterfeit drugs and vaccinations on health outcomes and the life-long impacts on children far exceed the financial costs. Unofficial payments for services can have a particularly pernicious effect on poor people.”

Bribery exported

A global movement working in over 100 countries to end the injustice of corruption: Transparency International, which focuses on issues with the greatest impact on people’s lives and holds the powerful to account for the common good, reveals additional findings.

Its report: *Exporting Corruption 2022: Top Trading Countries Doing even Less than Before to Stop Foreign Bribery*, warns that despite a few breakthroughs, “multinational companies bribing their way into foreign markets go largely unpunished, and victims’ compensation is rare.” “Our globalized world means companies can do business across borders – often to societies’ benefit. But what if the expensive new bridge in your city has been built by an unqualified foreign company that cuts corners?”

“Or if your electricity bill is criminally inflated thanks to a backroom business deal? The chances of this are higher if you live in a country with high levels of government corruption.”

Public officials who demand or accept bribes from foreign companies are not the only culprits of the corruption equation. Multinational companies – often headquartered in countries with low levels of public sector corruption – are equally responsible.”

Twenty-five years ago, the international community agreed that trading countries have an obligation to punish companies that bribe foreign public officials to win government contracts, mining licenses and other deals – in other words, engage in foreign bribery. Yet few countries have kept up with their commitments, it adds.

Everybody is complicit

“Much of the world’s costliest forms of corruption could not happen without institutions in wealthy nations: the private sector firms that give large bribes, the financial institutions that accept corrupt proceeds, and the lawyers, bankers, and accountants who facilitate corrupt transactions,” warns the World Bank.

Data on international financial flows shows that money is moving from poor to wealthy countries in ways that fundamentally undermine development, the world’s financial institution reports.

Worse than ever before...

Transparency International’s report, *Exporting Corruption 2022*, rates the performance of 47 leading global exporters, including 43 countries that are signatories to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Anti-Bribery Convention, in cracking down on foreign bribery by companies from their countries.

“The results are worse than ever before.”

Europe Doing Nothing

“Western Europe and the European Union remains the highest scoring region in the world’s corruption index, progress has halted and worrying signs of backsliding have emerged.”

This is how Transparency International’s 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) report introduces its section: *A Decade of Stagnating Corruption Levels in Western Europe Amidst Ongoing Scandals*.

The report shows that while corruption levels remain at a standstill worldwide, “in Western Europe and the European Union, 84% of countries have declined or made little to no progress in the last 10 years.”

An excuse

The COVID-19 pandemic has given European countries “an excuse for complacency in anti-corruption efforts” as accountability and transparency measures are “neglected or even rolled back.”

Transparency International further explains that “weakening good governance and checks and balances heightens the risk of human rights violations and further corruption.”

The Transparency International’s 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption on a scale of zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).

According to the 2021 ranking, the Western Europe and European Union average holds at 66, and these are the region’s most signaled States:

- Countries like **Poland** (56) and **Hungary** (43) have backslid, with harsh crackdowns on rights and freedom of expression.
- Others still near the top like **Germany** (80), the **United Kingdom** (78) and **Austria** (74) faced serious corruption scandals.
- **Denmark** (88) and **Finland** (88) top the region and the world (alongside New Zealand), with **Norway** (85) and **Sweden** (85) rounding out the top.
- **Romania** (45), and **Bulgaria** (42) remain the worst performers in the region.
- **Switzerland** (84), **Netherlands** (82), **Belgium** (73), **Slovenia** (57), **Italy** (56), **Cyprus** (53), and **Greece** (49) are all at historic lows on the 2021 Index.

For each country’s individual score and changes over time, as well as analysis for each region, see the region’s 2021 CPI page.

In short, in the last decade, 26 countries in the region have either declined or made little to no significant progress.

Allowing corruption to fester

On this, Flora Cresswell, Western Europe regional coordinator of Transparency International said:

“Stagnation spells trouble across Europe. Even the region’s best performers are falling prey to major scandals, revealing the danger of inaction. Others have allowed corruption to fester, and are now seeing serious violations of freedoms...”

Nor does the region exist in a vacuum: lack of national enforcement in Europe means corruption is exported globally as foreign actors utilise weak laws to hide money and fund corruption back home.”

In the last decade, 26 countries in the region have either declined or made little to no significant progress, it warns.

Since its inception in 1995, the Corruption Perceptions Index has become the leading global indicator of public sector corruption. The Index uses data from 13 external sources, including the World Bank, World Economic Forum, private risk and consulting companies, think tanks and others.

The scores reflect the views of experts and business people. (See: *The ABCs of the CPI: How the Corruption Perceptions Index is calculated.*)

Europe waters down a law to clean up business

The European Justice Ministers on 1 December 2022 agreed on a proposal for a law to make companies accountable for the damage they cause to people and the planet.

In response, Oxfam EU’s Economic Justice Policy Lead, Marc-Olivier Herman, said:

“Today, European countries watered down a landmark proposal to clean up business and stop corporate abuse. It is a loss for the women and men who work in terrible conditions around the world to make the goods that end up in our shopping trolleys. The only ones celebrating today is the regressive business lobby.”

The original proposal was already a far cry from the game-changer law we expected. Now, after EU countries played their part, it is only weaker, warns Herman.

Many loopholes

“There are more and more loopholes allowing companies to escape their obligations to clean up their business.”

“The financial sector can continue to bankroll human rights violations and damage to the planet without being held accountable as it remains up to each European country to decide whether they want to make banks and other financial players clean up business.”

Anti-Corruption?

The 2022 International Anti-Corruption Day on 9 December, states that the world today faces some of its greatest challenges in many generations – challenges which threaten prosperity and stability for people across the globe. The plague of corruption is intertwined in most of them.

An outstanding world body fighting crime: the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), reveals the following findings about the consequences of corruption:

Two Trillion US dollars in procurement is lost to corruption each year (OECD 2016)

89 billion US dollars a year is lost to corruption in **Africa**, close to double its 48 billion US dollars in foreign aid (UNCTAD 2020).

What else is needed to fight this human rights violation?

(Source: <https://www.ipsnews.net>)

Law & Politics

Walking the talk on social infrastructure restoration, humanitarian aid deliveries

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

On the heels of the signing of the cessation of hostilities agreement between the federal government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) under the auspicious of the African Union, multifarious fruitful activities have been unfolding in the Tigray State. In consideration of the foregoing, the wider international community has been speaking highly of the incumbent's significant achievement.

It is widely known that since the start of the war, the federal government has been smoothing the delivery of humanitarian assistance in all quarters of the Tigray state in the face of unremitting challenges and cooked-up stories. It as well has gone to the ends of the earth to make peace happen coming up with a broad spectrum of effective strategies.

In the current situation, in the aftermath of the free flow of humanitarian assistance in all corners of the northern part of the country and the restoration of social infrastructure, inhabitants of the Tigray state have been feeling on top of the world. Disappointedly, some entities in the present circumstances have continued leaning over backward to obstruct the cessation-of-hostilities agreement.

Apart from being preoccupied with back-fence talk and malicious defamation against the federal government, they every now and then come up with a broad spectrum of maneuverings that can throw cold water on the positive moves of the country. It is common knowledge that in the course of the war that lasted for two years in the northern part of the country, a broad range of efforts had been made by some entities to move the country into uncharted waters and besmirch the positive image of the government.

With the purpose of mystifying the global community and laying the blame at the federal government's door, Ethiopia's arch-enemies that detest seeing an affluent and peaceful Ethiopia have been many a time and oft coming up with imaginary and make-believe stories.

Notwithstanding the fact that humanitarian assistance has been unceasingly entering the Tigray state via road and air, some entities have sustained dragging through the mud the positive developments in close collaboration with Ethiopia's biggest enemies and bitter foes.

Regardless of the fact that Ethiopia's deadly rivals have knowledge of the unadorned truth in connection with the delivery of charitable donations, they have been sparing no effort to besmirch the positive achievement of the country. It is important to highlight that as a consequence of the firm stance of the federal government, several humanitarian organizations have been assisting the progress of humanitarian aid to Tigray state exempt from difficulty.

Apart from that medicine, medical equipment, emergency drugs, surgery materials, and other things of a similar kind have been



delivered to the Tigray State. Other than that infrastructure services, social welfare facilities, and other significant services have been put in place as a consequence of the determination of the incumbent.

In light of the current situation, governmental and non-governmental charitable organizations have been moving heaven and earth to get to the bottom of humanitarian glitches at the earliest possible juncture.

As things stand at present, the federal government in close collaboration with aid organizations has been delivering the urgently needed humanitarian assistance to the Tigray State more than ever before by creating a safe and conducive environment. Against this backdrop, the intended destination is being accomplished throughout the Tigray State in the shortest possible time.

In the wake of the commitment and hard work of the federal government, the whole thing on the subject of humanitarian assistance has been heading in the right direction as per what is stipulated in the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA). It is learned that some 3,239 metric tons of nutritious food were provided by the government and humanitarian partners to 71,978 vulnerable segments of the community within a month.

In a similar vein, recently National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) Commissioner Shiferaw Teklemariam (Ph.D.) announced that the Federal government in collaboration with various humanitarian organizations has achieved 95 percent of the plan of delivering humanitarian support in conflict-affected areas over the past month.

In the same way, Ethiopian Electric Power stated that maintenance activities have been moving in the right direction. Besides, maintenance experts in all areas are continuously playing a part and working on it with profound diligence by resisting the geographical complications of the area and other related aspects.

"The connection of the Mekelle power line with the national power grid shows the commitment of the federal government to help the people of Tigray resume daily life and normalize the situation. In all areas where electricity has been cut off, the work of repairing and making the high-power transmission lines and distribution stations ready for service has been carried out in cooperation with relevant stakeholders."

In a similar vein, it is announced that most parts of the Tigray State will regain telecom service in the shortest possible time on the grounds that telecom infrastructures ravaged by war in all accessible areas are being repaired with utmost effort.

After the signing of the cessation of hostilities agreement, delivery of humanitarian assistance, restoration of social infrastructure and other related aspects have been pointing forward in the right direction. The provision of unhindered humanitarian assistance to civilians affected by the conflict in the northern part of the country has been fast-tracking.

In an interview Shire city residents gave recently to Ethiopian News Agency said that the uninterrupted humanitarian support from the Government of Ethiopia has rescued many lives and solved problems.

Praising the encouraging and effective moves of the government to ensure lasting peace, they have called on the government to strengthen its efforts to resume basic services and reconstruction activities beyond providing humanitarian support.

The inhabitants said that hadn't the government provided massive food, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment following the peace agreement, the lives of many people would have been at big risk. The determination of the government in providing sustained support is therefore appreciable.

In the same manner, UN OCHA Ethiopia announced that the Government of Ethiopia in collaboration with humanitarian partners has delivered 64,000 Metric Tons of relief food to Tigray state from mid-November to Dec 08, 2022.

According to the report obtained from the office, 574 million Birr operational cash has been collected from the government, local and international partners. What's more, 10 tankers of fuels have been transported to the state.

Along with different public agents, 23 partners have participated to supply the aid in the reporting period. 1,554 trucks with food supplies and 118 trucks with nonfood supplies have reached the state, according to the report.

The report underscored that efforts are ongoing to reach more conflict-affected people across Northern Ethiopia. It was learnt

that the government of Ethiopia has achieved the plan to deliver humanitarian support by providing 95 % of the total demand for food in the three conflict-affected states (Tigray, Amhara, and Afar) in the past month.

Be that as it may, Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU) Corporate Communication Director Melaku Taye recently told *The Ethiopian Herald* that after the successful maintenance completion of the damaged electric infrastructure, electric service has been restored in Humera.

He further stated that the service has been restored to the distribution substation after the successful completion of maintenance works carried out in the transmission line. Other towns and villages in the surrounding areas of Humera are on trial and the service distribution will be restored soon.

He went on to say that electricity is the bedrock for the operation of other essential services including telecom, internet, sewerage, bank, and others due emphasis has been given to the task. It should be borne in mind that the electric service has been returned to the towns of Maychew, Alamata, Korem, Shire, Salaklaka, Aba Guna which had been cut off from the national power grid for over a year due to conflict in the area, and other towns in Tigray and Afar states will be reconnected soon.

More relief deliveries are being carried out to conflict-affected areas in Tigray state of Ethiopia and a total of 2,398 trucks have been already made to depart to the state, said National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC).

NDRMC Public Relations Director Debebe Zewude told The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that aid deliveries would continue so long as the demands of needy are met. Noting the availability of unfettered humanitarian access, he said that the governmental and non-governmental humanitarian agents are now toiling to access all possible ways to address humanitarian needs in the state.

During the past days (before Nov. 27, 2022), 576 million Birr has been sent to Mekelle and Shire aiming to execute humanitarian programs. Cash, food and non-food items have been sent; 89,217.8 metric ton food items including nourishing foods have been delivered so far. Out of this, the government has transported 13,686.8 metric ton, he said.

Women in Focus



Go organic!



BY TEWODROS KASSA

She had served as a flight attendant at the Ethiopian Airlines for a couple of years. Following this, she had the opportunity to visit various countries and gain local and international experiences to reach her current position.

Being a flight attendant always requires more readiness to serve guests with a welcoming look. Thus, she is always ready for learning and cultivating new ideas in her profession. She uttered that joining this profession immensely helped her to open a new chapter in her current life.

She was always at work and ready to welcome Airline's customers with a bright face and heart-warming greetings. Her international travel opportunities also helped her to collect and use the latest hair and face cosmetic products from different countries.

However, the type of cosmetic items she used to beautify herself did not give her comfort for the reason the products were not suitable to her. Gradually, she started feeling and seeing some side effects on her skin as she continued using the cosmetics. At this point, she had to make a decision. Then, she investigated the causes with her own and decided to quit consuming any cosmetics in order to save her natural beauty.

And Meron Nega, former member of the Ethiopian Airlines; but now Owner and CEO of Ennet Earth Organic Beauty Products, did it. She quits using cosmetics that are made from a range of industrial chemicals immediately.

As Meron told to the Ethiopian Press Agency, she recalled that the cosmetic products that she used to buy had a negative effect on her skin. In the past, when buying and using cosmetics, she did not give any attention to the ingredients/chemicals/ added in them. As a result, they caused side effects on her skin; which in turn inspired her to shift into organic products.

After she quit using such cosmetics, she has come up with a new idea of switching to naturally made cosmetic products. Prioritizing organic products becomes her final decision to sustain her magnificent beauty as it is. To implement her new decision, she first started reading and researching more about organic cosmetic products. She then learned that, these organic products have many health benefits if properly prepared and used. In the same way, she prepared her own cosmetic products for the first time and tested it on herself. She noticed that, the results were amazing and that her skin had changed through time. As there is a solution to all problems, she solved her problem in this way. But after solving her problem,



she did not want to stay silent about her new finding. Instead, she understood that the solution she came up with for herself would be useful for others too.

Then, she decided to produce natural cosmetic products as her full-time career. She resigned from her job as a flight attendant at the Airline; she dedicated her full time and attention in producing organic cosmetic products.

Since 2018, she has been producing and supplying various organic beauty products to the market. Currently, a few ladies who understand well the benefits of natural products are using her products. She is confident that, numerous Ethiopians will give recognition to organic products; and prefer her cosmetic products in the future.

As she stated; she prepares these organic cosmetic items from various plants. She explains that, she noticed an immediate change in her skin as soon as she started using her organic cosmetic products. Following the encouraging improvements on her skin, she began to think that she needs to empower herself through training and scrutinize other international experiences.

Accordingly, after taking different trainings, she strived to get an international certificate in the area; and learnt how to prepare safe, effective skin soaps naturally. She began producing facial soaps in 2018 using domestic raw materials, especially bamboo. In the process, she has been able to produce various liquid beauty products

from carrots, avocados and cactus plants.

The wide availability of an exotic Moringa plant that sought to alleviate numerous diseases in the country motivated her to produce more organic cosmetic products from this plant and supply to the local markets.

Currently, she is witnessing a good progress in the organic cosmetic products and the business is promising to her. However, it took her a long time to create awareness among consumers and to make her products acceptable in the market. She pointed out that, those who understand the benefits of organic beauty products are using her products.

She said that, the organic cosmetic products are produced right here in Addis Ababa, Lafto Sub-City, and displayed them in her medium cosmetic shop at Bole Medhanialem Mall for local customers.

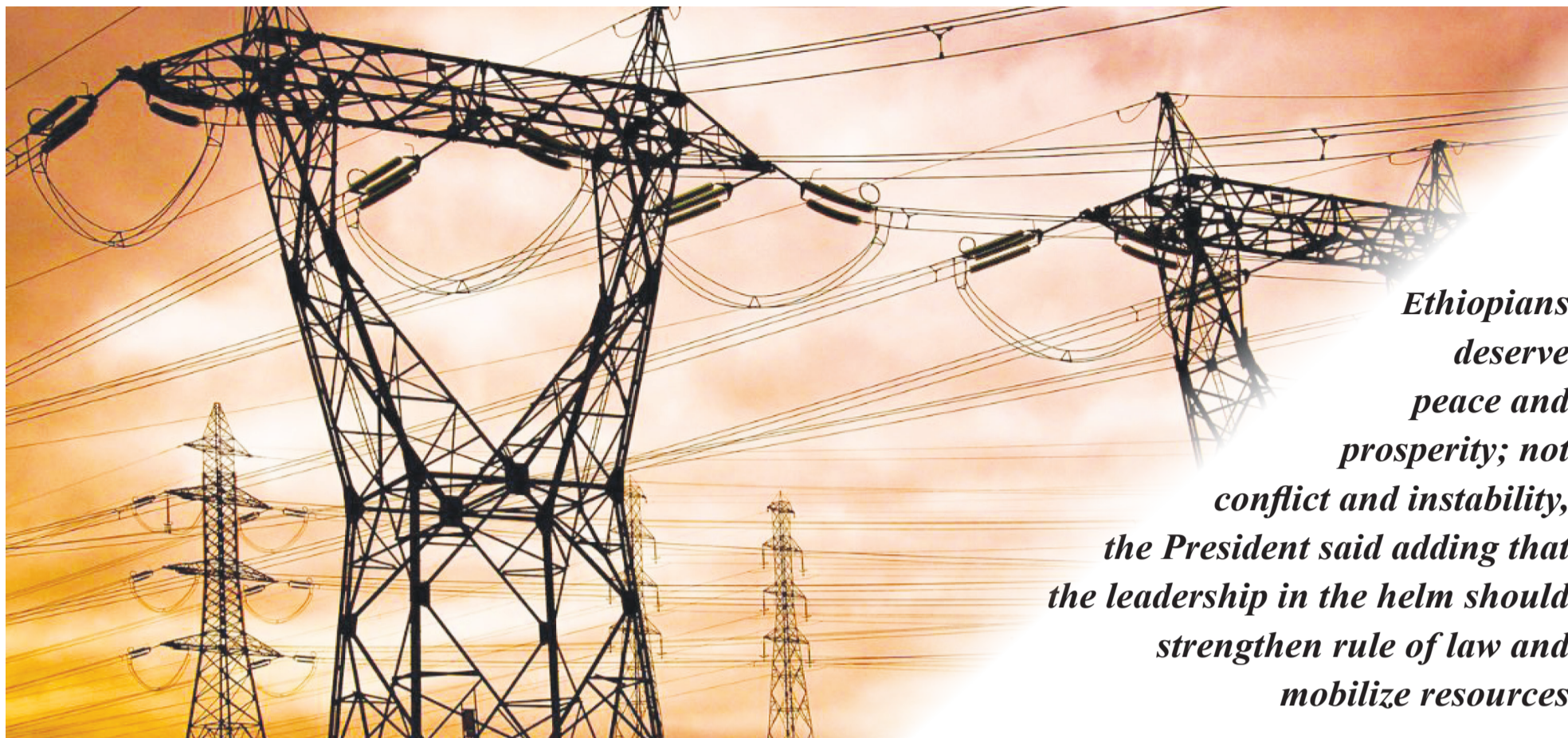
According to her, the products are also available in Bambis Supermarket, inside Entoto Park, and distributed in different parts of the country. Although various machines are used to produce the cosmetic products, the final products are mostly produced by hand to keep the organic processes. She employs more than 12 people to be involved in this production process.

Currently, her organization produces three types of soaps. One of these is a soap made from bamboo, which is turned into charcoal and then added with avocado oil. This is very useful for removing pimples

on the face. It also removes unnecessary impurities from the skin. The second is a type of soap made from the Moringa plant and; as to her; helps maintain the health of sensitive and delicate facial skin. The third type of soap is made from cinnamon and is used for acne and especially for people with two types of facial skin. There are also other organic cosmetic products that are used as skincare treatments- to soothe sun-damaged skin, prevent premature skin aging, soften hair that are free from any chemical and rich with various vitamins. As the products are mostly prepared from edible oil and plants, they do not contain any harmful chemicals and do not cause any harm. For this, the products have been tested and certified by the Ethiopian Standards Agency.

Meron has now created job opportunity for citizens. She also aspires to penetrate widely in the cosmetics market. Most importantly, she dreams to witness "women's can do attitude" and become influential in her journey.

In sum, having such products gives new insights towards other entrepreneurs to start creative businesses. Moreover, creating awareness on the value of organic products is important to promote such businesses. Currently, availing organic products to the market is gaining momentum in the country following the need to avoid any harmful impacts of industrially processed products.



Ethiopians deserve peace and prosperity; not conflict and instability, the President said adding that the leadership in the helm should strengthen rule of law and mobilize resources

Gearing determination to support Ethiopia's rehabilitation effort

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Following the peace agreement made between the Federal Government and TPLF, massive rehabilitation activities are undertaken by the government. Ranging from repairing damaged facilities and transmission lines to restoring basic services, as well as delivering humanitarian assistance to the people in need, a number of activities are ongoing.

As a result, over the past few weeks, owing to the government's commitment and persistent efforts from respective offices, basic services such as power, telecom and internet have been restored in various towns including in Mekelle, Tigray State and the surrounding areas. Concurrent to the reconstruction activities, providing rehabilitation support to communities residing in conflict-affected areas is going smoothly though a lot has to be done for the reason that the scale and severity of the needs in the areas is more demanding and cannot be alleviated merely by government's energy; but with the concerted intervention of all.

In an exclusive interview held with *The Ethiopian Herald* recently, the Ethiopia Diaspora Association (EDA) President Indris Mohammed confirmed that, the Association is working round the clock to backing government's rehabilitation efforts through mobilizing resources.

According to him, the Association is ready to actively take part in the efforts exerted to rehabilitate the war affected population and reconstruction of socio-economic facilities damaged during the two -year conflict in the Northern part of Ethiopia through

providing the community with financial and material support.

He said: "The EDA is pleased by the peace deal signed between the government and TPLF. We are hopeful that the agreement will come to fruition; the Association is committed to supporting the efforts along that line."

According to him, the EDA has been denouncing a few groups who are trying to instigate unrest and chaos through social media and other platforms. "These individuals have been involved in such criminal activities because they have been making profit out of the war in Ethiopia."

The Association is willing to replicate the best practices recording in terms of the Great Ethiopian Homecoming Challenge, law enforcement, Green Legacy Initiative as well as rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts of the nation in Afar and Amhara states.

Ethiopians deserve peace and prosperity; not conflict and instability, the President said adding that the leadership in the helm should strengthen rule of law and mobilize resources.

A case in point, a number of Diaspora communities are mobilizing resources to construct damaged health facilities in Welkait and those from Canada provided Bahir Dar and National Defense Force hospitals with 400 medical beds worth 30 to 35 million Birr through global aid Ethiopia along with Human Bridge.

"Many are joining hands and the EDA is working to strengthen further. We are communicating and encouraging members of the Ethiopian Diasporas hail from Tigray

to take part in the rehabilitation effort, and many are responding positively, to extend support," he added.

The EDA is keen to operate in Tigray State as soon as conducive opportunities are put in place, because it is our responsibility to rebuild Tigray, and the EDA calls on stakeholders and the Ethiopian Diaspora community to show solidarity to the reconstruction effort.

In the same token, the governments of Japan, Canada and Ireland have donated ten ambulances amounting to 24 million Birr or over 400,000 USD to Ethiopia's four conflicts affected states with a view to assist nation's effort for better healthcare services.

Speaking at the ambulance handover ceremony, UNFAP representative Suzanne Mandong said UNFPA purchased the ambulances using generous funding of the embassies of Japan, Canada and Ireland as part of supporting the national program.

The support is of significantly useful in saving lives, promoting sexual and reproductive health, as well as helping fight sexual and gender based violence. "The donated ambulances would be deployed to four conflict affected states such as Amhara, Tigray, Afar and Benishangul Gumuz," she said.

Japan Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ito Takako also said that the health sector is one of Japan's Government cooperation in Ethiopia and the former is keen to contribute to the Ethiopian people's health and well-being especially in expanding gender sensitive services to tackle the problem.

Japan will continue providing assistance for the health sector in Ethiopia focusing

on those in the most vulnerable situations and working together with the Ministry of Health and partner organizations including UNFPA, she said.

In response to the urgent and vast humanitarian needs, Japan will continue to assist conflict and drought affected regions in Ethiopia via the partnership with international organizations, she added. Ambassador of Canada to Ethiopia, Stephane Jobin also noted that access for survivors to services and access for the ambulances within their regions is a decisive step.

Ireland Ambassador to Ethiopia, Nicola Brennan said the provision of ambulances is a continuation of Ireland's longstanding support to the health sector in partnership with UN agencies. Currently Ireland is supporting continuity of life saving health services including maternal health in conflict affected regions in Ethiopia.

Speaking at the occasion, Health Minister, Dr. Lia Tadesse said that the ambulance support is encouraging for the restoration of life saving service facility including maternal and new born babies in conflict affected regions and remote areas of the country.

"Ethiopia would like to recognize the support granted to it when the country has been at a critical time and needs too much resources in due course of restoring damaged health facilities across the nation in general and in conflict affected areas in particular," she added.