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EEU restores electricity in 50 war-impacted towns

• Conflict causes 2.8 bln Birr damage in electrical infrastructure

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA—Having capitalized on the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) between the federal government and TPLF, electricity has been restored in 50 towns in

the war-affected Amhara, Afar and Tigray states, the Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU) disclosed.

EEU Corporate Communication Director Melaku Taye told *The Ethiopian Herald* that due to the rigorous efforts made by the utility

to restore the damaged infrastructure, the service has been resumed in most conflict-impacted areas. Whilst Adwa, Axum, and Wukro towns of Tigray State were recently reconnected with the service, consolidated

See EEU restores ... page 3

U.S.-Africa ties grow to strategic relations: Researcher

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA- The U.S. ties with Africa, which was characterized by policy dictation and acceptance have transformed to cordial and strategic relations, according to a researcher in the area.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) African and Asian affairs researcher Kidus Gezahen said that the U.S. has changed its approach with Africa from policy dictation to equality, fraternity and strategic engagement.

According to the researcher, if economic development can be achieved by

strengthening internal unity and creating internal stability more than ever before, the U.S. will have good relations with Africa. “Without internal stability, relations will always be an interest in U.S. policy.”

“The number of young people and the growth of educated manpower has made the time for Africa to be a recipient of foreign dictation is coming to an end. Africa needs to do its internal homework for better relations in the long run and that relationship should be based on strengthening Africans and not based on American interests.”

Recently, the increase in the number of

See U.S. Africa ... page 3



Kidus Gezahen

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US analyst cheers Ethiopia for greatest accomplishment in Africa

ADDIS ABABA (ENA) - The Abay hydro-dam, also called the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is the greatest accomplishment in Sub-Saharan Africa and everybody should congratulate the Ethiopian people for taking this bold challenge and building the dam that benefits the continent, the American political-economic analyst Lawrence Freeman said.

The analyst who visited the project on Monday told ENA that “there is no reason for anybody to complain about this dam. The dam is the greatest accomplishment in

See U.S. analyst ... page 3



Samuel Kassahun

Sustainability crucial for effectuating Gov't anti-corruption resolve

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

ADDIS ABABA- Government's recent crackdown on corrupt officials shows its determination to fight the social menace, according to Transparency International, adding it says the step should be compounded by accelerating the building of democratic institutions to make the effort sustainable.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian*

See Sustainability ... page 3

Cementing diplomatic relation through soft tools; Football

Page 7

The surprising World Cup at Qatar 2022

Page 8

Representing the disenfranchised: Africa in United Nations Security Council

Page 9

News

Health Ministry urges partners' contribution in conflict-affected areas

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- The Ministry of Health called up on the diaspora community, stakeholders, development partners, and civil society organizations to continue their support in the restoration of health services in war-affected areas.

In her keynote speech at Universal Health Coverage (UHC) day celebrated under the theme Build the world we want and a future for all, Ethiopian Health Minister Lia Tadesse (MD) urged all stakeholders to contribute their support in rebuilding and reinvesting health facilities affected by conflict.

She said UHC day provides an opportunity to advocate for UHC and play a key role in achieving universal health coverage and ensuring health security with concerted efforts.

“The celebration comes at a critical time when the nation is rebuilding its health systems nationally following the destruction caused by manmade and natural disasters. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how lives, livelihoods, and also our futures are depending on achieving UHC leaving no one behind.”

Apart from enabling all individuals and



Photo: Eyob Teferi

communities to be able to receive the health service they need without suffering financial hardships, UHC means a full spectrum of essential quality services across the life course promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, and quality of care when needed, according to her.

She stated that it means these services are easily available and accessible to all both geographically and financially. Ensuring UHC is beyond health as it helps alleviate poverty, improve nutrition and enable children to attend and complete education thereby creating a productive society.

Similarly, it promotes gender equality and creates economically vibrant societies and

jobs. It ensures peace and inclusive social stability. Therefore, making health services inclusive is a key part of SDG and has provided a unique opportunity for us to encourage using multi-sectoral participation in health delivery to the community.

The country has been progressively increasing the coverage towards achieving UHC despite manmade and natural disasters such as COVID-19, drought, and conflicts.

Through the expansion of primary health care facilities, in terms of infrastructure, workforce, increase in number and diversification of health professionals, and also in the availability of input, the nation was able to reduce child and maternal

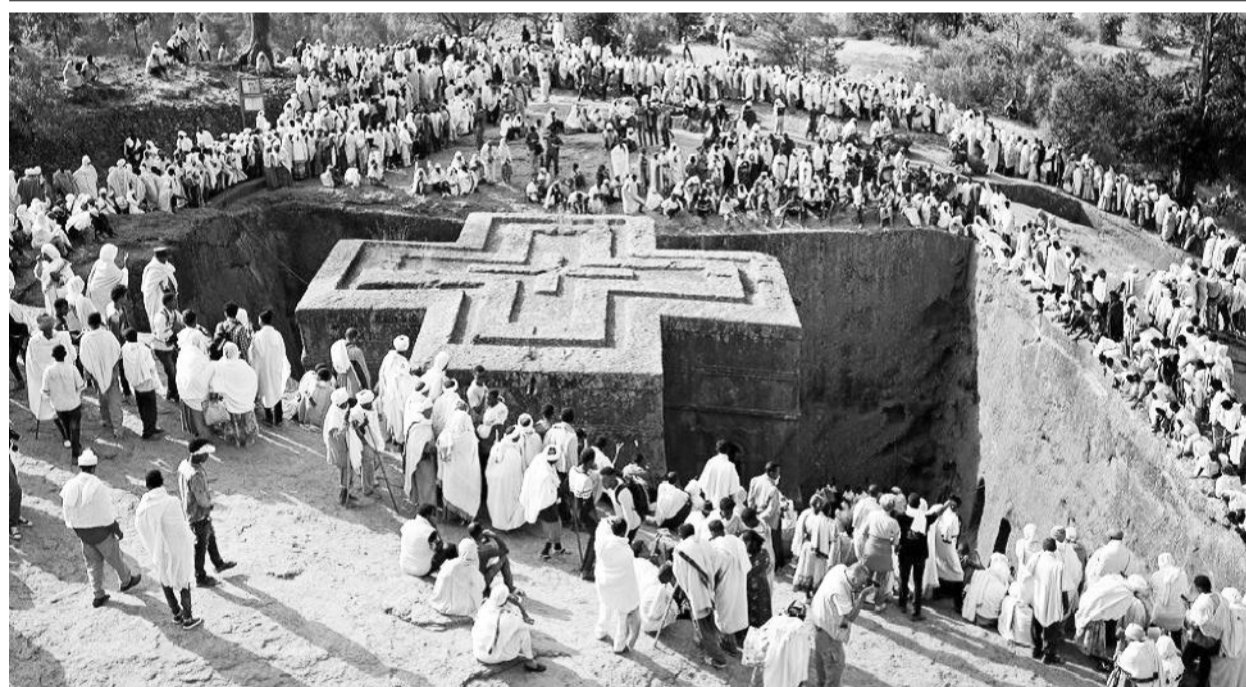
mortality, reduce the death of infectious diseases like TB, Malaria and HIV and improved availability of better sanitation through collective leadership, professionals, community, stakeholders at all levels, she added.

All the aforementioned manmade and human disasters have demonstrated the vulnerability of the health system, social protection, and economic system.

Despite the challenges, it was able to maintain essential services to our people, she said, adding that the progress was not only a commitment of the government but also a collective action of all stakeholders. Thus, she acknowledged the role that CSO played in achieving the pillars of UHC.

Mentioning that the celebration is a timely event, Abebe Kebede, Executive Director, Consortium of Reproductive Health Associations (CORHA), on his part urged the government, CSOs, and other development partners to prioritize UHC with the ultimate goal of making sure that no one is left behind in terms of access to basic health services.

Frehiwot Nigatu, Executive Director at International Institute for Primary Health Care (IPHC) highlighted the need to create equitable universal healthcare service for all people without any financial hardships.



Lalibela readies to mark Christmas colorfully

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- Lalibela has finalized preparations to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ (*Genna*) holiday, on January 7th, Lalibela Town Administration Culture and Tourism Bureau stated.

Heritage Protection and Tourism Development Department Coordinator with Lalibela Town Administration Culture and Tourism Bureau, Mandefro Tadesse, told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the town is preparing itself to celebrate the festival impressively.

Various committees are set up and the youth are given the training to receive

guests and facilitate transport, water, and food as well as to make tourists aware of the town and its environs. As the faithful and tourists did not attend and celebrate the day as required over the last 3 years, it is necessary to celebrate the upcoming Christmas in a very glamorous way with guests.

Some 45 hotels are ready to welcome and host the guests who come to the town to celebrate the holiday, the Coordinator stated.

Ethiopian Christmas is marked after forty-three days of fasting. January 7th is regarded as a special epoch as it is also the birthday of King Lalibela, who built the historic and mesmerizing

Lalibela churches. Training has also been offered for priests, youths, and other holiday coordinators to celebrate the festival in a good manner.

The coordinator also pointed out that efforts are being made to celebrate the Christmas holiday widely and restore the tourism activities that have been dwarfed due to conflict and COVID-19.

There is no security problem and we have discussed it with the security bodies so that the festival can be celebrated peacefully and guests can return safely to where they came from.

Over 1.5 million guests are expected to celebrate Christmas on the spot, he noted.

Newly tourist destinations extend tourist's capital stay: Bureau

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA- Addis Ababa Culture, Arts and Tourism Bureau stated that newly built tourist destinations in the capital have played a paramount role in lengthening the tourists stay here.

As to Tourism Destination Development and Confirmation Competence Director Amdemariam Mamo, tourist destinations that are under construction and completed are playing a great role in elongating tourists' stay in the capital.

Nowadays, there are many newly built tourist destinations in the capital he said, adding that if tourists stay one day on average, they can generate about 340 USD to the city.

Earlier, the capital served as tourist transit but after the newly accomplished project parks such as Aberhot Library, Friendship, Unity, and Entoto parks are becoming the new tourist destinations. Now the above mentioned parks are contributing a lot to tourists' stay for many days in the capital, as to him.

“When existing 18 museums and 22 parks have a complete infrastructure in the capital, they would help tourists stay many more days here, and the shortage of foreign currency will be resolved somehow when tourists stay long in the nation.”

Moreover, the office is working with the local tourists to visit newly built tourist destinations in the capital and from every corner of the nation. “We are notifying unexplored tourist destinations of the nation to the local banks and other institutions to visit and inspire.”

The director further stated that the newly built tourist destinations are facing shortage of budget so they should be invested to have complete infrastructure since they would be the main source of revenue.

News



BRICS international journalism training program opens

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - The second edition of an online journalism training program for media professionals from BRICS countries kicked off on Monday.

A total of 50 trainees from Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa and other developing countries will take part in the three-month training program, hosted by Xinhua News Agency.

Fu Hua, Executive Chairman of the BRICS Media Forum and President of Xinhua News Agency, addressing the opening of the training program via video said that the program was proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping at the 13th BRICS Summit in September 2021.

It is hoped that the program can help trainees

from all countries to establish a global vision, enhance their sense of cooperation, promote their journalistic professionalism and ability, discover and narrate more and better stories of BRICS, and make heard the voice of BRICS countries calling for mutual benefit and common development.

The training program, jointly organized by member institutions of the BRICS Media Forum's presidium, is an important move to implement the 14th BRICS Summit Beijing Declaration.

Launched in 2015, the BRICS Media Forum mechanism was proposed by Xinhua and jointly initiated by mainstream media from the five countries. The first online journalism training program was held successfully from December 2021 to March 2022.

U.S.-Africa ties grow to strategic...

educated human resources in Africa, the economic development of some African countries, and the relative development of democracy have changed the continent from accepting the US policy to a strategic relationship, the researcher elaborated.

"The presence of educated human resources in quantity and quality can see one country's affairs in depth whether from outside or inside; this has been adjusting Africa's relations with other continents. Currently, Africa's greatest asset is its human power. Especially the educated manpower will increase the industrial sector by bringing

knowledge transfer."

The researcher further highlighted that the U.S is the leading country in the world in providing humanitarian aid to Africa and the country gives out eleven billion dollars every year. However, the U.S. interest Africa is making investment and it could grow as Asian countries have grown through direct foreign investment by preparing a suitable policy for this. The continent needs to formulate its own political and economic policy so that its relationship with America and China is based on benefit.

US analyst cheers Ethiopia...

Sub-Saharan Africa and everybody should congratulate the Ethiopian people for taking this bold challenge and building the largest hydro-dam in Africa and the 7th most powerful dam in the world."

"And I couldn't be happier as an American who is standing at the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam under the rapid construction," he added.

Upon completion, the massive complex infrastructure is expected to generate over 5,000 MW of electricity that will contribute to regional economic development which will also provide stability to the region.

According to Freeman, it is in the US interest to support Ethiopia in its efforts to build the Renaissance Dam, the largest hydro-electric dam on the African continent.

The dam will be the biggest infusion of electrical power in Sub-Saharan Africa that will make Ethiopia the second largest producer of power behind South Africa.

Ethiopia should therefore be congratulated by the United States and by the western

world for this phenomenal accomplishment, Freeman stressed.

"I think that the United States and the western governments should be praising Ethiopia and to be finding ways in order to develop its economy. Given the aspiration of the Ethiopian government to provide electricity, this is the first step of much work to be done."

The analyst elaborated that "Africa needs a lot of energy infrastructure. I (therefore) want to see thousands of bigger water powers. This is an important first step and Ethiopia should be congratulated by the United States and by the western world for this phenomenal and beautiful accomplishment."

Freeman added that he witnessed a speedy construction of the Grand Renaissance Dam.

"So getting here today was a special moment in my adult life time. I think that the United States and the western governments should be praising Ethiopia and to be finding ways

EEU restores electricity...

efforts are underway to restore electricity in the remaining areas.

After the successful completion of the maintenance work that was carried out in huge transmission lines, electricity has been restored in the aforesaid towns. Other towns and villages in nearby Adwa and Axum are also on trial and the service distribution will be resumed.

Meanwhile, the director indicated that the past conflict in different parts of Tigray, Amhara, and Afar states have caused

immense damage to electrical infrastructure that is estimated about 2.8 billion Birr.

Commending the role of the community in supporting the restoration activity, Melaku highlighted that EEU's high-level commitment is patched to the area have closely followed the task and given the necessary technical and managerial support.

"Our employees have also working tirelessly day and night to restore service in areas that were affected by the conflict.

Sustainability crucial for effectuating...

Herald, Transparency Ethiopia Executive Director, Samuel Kassahun said that it is imperative to appreciate the commitment of the government to effectively contain the daunting impacts of corruption as it established the National Anti-Corruption Committee.

In a statement on Nov. 17, 2022, the Office of the Prime Minister announced the establishment of National Anti-Corruption Committee tasked with coordinating the operation against corruption. The committee also makes corrupt officials and actors face justice per the finding of a study already conducted, and identify other officials and bring them to justice.

"Corruption has reached a level of becoming a national security threat," the statement said.

The crackdown could pave the way for bringing about an effective outcome in the fight against corruption, it said.

A ray of hope is now shining out as some sort of political commitment is on the pipeline. Previously, the very problem that the nation faced in its fight against corruption was undue political involvement.

"A range of effective ways can be put in place to stamp out corruption through assigning officials based on merit as well. Particularly the exercise of meritocracy should be at play in democratic institutions to fight the menace sustainably."

According to him, the other most important issue that makes the fight sustainable is academic institutions' freedom. He said these entities also should discharge their responsibilities free of any affiliations.

It is when measures of holding corrupt officials to account are compounded by practical steps of building sustainable institutions that the country could alleviate corruption effectively, he hinted.

Per the statement, the government's tasks are of two kinds: one is it would look into its laws, procedures and manuals to close loopholes that corruption actors are taking advantage. It also exposes and holds to account officials and actors that take part in corrupt practices.

The 7-member National Anti-Corruption Committee comprises Intelligence Chief Temesgen Tirunch and Attorney General Gideon Timoteos (Ph.D).

in order to develop its economy. Given the aspiration of the Ethiopian government to provide electricity, this is the first step of much work to be done."

He also hoped that the completion of the dam in the near future would change the Horn of Africa for the better.

When asked about the repeated grievances coming from the downstream countries, mainly Egypt, the American said that there is no rationale to complain.

There is no reason for anybody to complain about this dam. It is the greatest accomplishment in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Freeman noted that Ethiopia has reaffirmed many times that the construction of GERD will not significantly affect the flow of the Abbay River into the downstream countries.

As a result, Ethiopia has also considered the downstream countries in the process of building the dam by making two wide bottom outlets in which water flows throughout the year.

The American analyst believes that the Grand Renaissance Dam should be considered as a victory for this generation of Ethiopia like the forefathers.

"As I studied, Ethiopians under Menelik II defeated the Italian army on 1st March 1896 at the Battle of Adwa. That was the first time an African nation defeated the so-called modern army, and Ethiopia had resulted in never being colonized. The Ethiopians mindset is a strong identity for the nation of the future vision. This dam represents the same identity and mindset that was so in Adwa Victory."

Recall that Ethiopia has completed the third filling of the reservoir of its flagship project, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, and the second turbine with a 375 Megawatt has started generating electricity.

The country, which is a source of 85 percent of the Nile, is filling the GERD reservoir through a gradual process and only during its rainy season to allow the river to continue flowing to downstream countries.

Opinion

Capital Markets opportunities, challenges

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Capital markets are financial markets where assets such as stocks, bonds, and currencies are traded, purchased, and sold between investors, business institutions, governments, and individuals. These markets identify and allocate assets to the best and ambitious projects and businesses. They are interrelated, interconnected, organized, structured, unified and can affect trading in markets across the globe. Consequently, capital markets are highly regulated, synchronized and harmonized to ensure efficient transactions. They are crucial to the financial structure of businesses in the Ethiopian economy.

The financial institutions should be in a position to guide and advise the financial sector. They may fuel and drive the local, regional and national economy to help allocate risks, and promote financial security and stability. These benefits provide chances, prospects and opportunities for Ethiopian enterprises, investors, shareholders and individuals to maximize their profits.

To make successful investment and business decisions, Ethiopian entrepreneurs must understand the key players within the “new” capital markets and their roles. Ethiopian investors should have an overview of how capital markets work as well as their common flaws. They have to test and implement potential solutions to ensure economic and business success. They also have to be informed of the participants in the Ethiopian capital markets. These markets enable buyers and sellers to transact different forms of financial assets. In these transactions there are several notable players and these are analysts, companies, institutional investors and traders, and households.

Ethiopian analysts should be empowered to evaluate state and private companies and compare their current performances. They should be able to estimate values of companies to determine and advise whether shareholders should buy, hold, or sell. Companies participate in capital markets to acquire assets and operate. Here, institutional investors deal with mutual funds, hedge funds, and pension funds. Seller institutions include traders, salespeople, and investment banks. There are households or consumers who invest money in the market by buying or selling individual stocks. All of these entities are key players in the capital markets.

Having identified the various operators in the capital markets, it is useful to understand for Ethiopian investors which market they operate in. These capital markets are known as primary market and secondary market. The primary market comprises publicly held companies which are selling stocks or bonds and securities to investors for the first time. Small-scale investors and households are not major operators in this market because they are not able to buy “large” amounts of stock at a time. Therefore, Ethiopian companies should take lesson and promote

their securities to larger, more established institutions to ensure bigger returns. The secondary market is essentially the stock market, where investors of all sizes trade previously issued securities among themselves. Companies do not receive any direct profit from these market transactions since these stocks are traded “among” investors only.

The capital markets are shrouded and masked with serious problems. Although capital markets are crucial to the modern economy, they can stimulate and aggravate “disinformation” that may lead to insatiability and greed that cause economic decline, depression, slump and recession. These consequences are often continued by businessmen and investors applying incentives, which can seriously and significantly influence the market. In this respect, as bonuses and stock options can prompt, inspire and encourage investors and employees, they can also promote and support “unethical” decision-making, contribute and add to income inequality.

Moreover, equity analysts may feel forced by companies to make intense, severe and “one-sided” evaluations to create and ascertain job security. In this regard, the most common evaluation is the market based feedback and analyses in support of unethical decisions. Such unethical operations should be checked by concerned Ethiopian authorities.

Analysts are forced by interest groups to periodically assess the market using unethical approach and method. This often leads to unfair, partial, subjective and inaccurate evaluations of capital markets. Two major problems arise from these evaluations and these are lopsided information and the principal-agent. The lopsided information come about in a capital market when a buyer or seller shares “more” information on an investment’s historical, current, or future performance than the public. As a result, the investors can make a more informed and profitable investment decision better than their peers. This takes place when investors or employees within companies have “access” to confidential information and misuse it for profit. Lopsided information often leads to imbalances within capital markets. In severe and intense cases, it can cause market failure unless checked by concerned authorities.

Another capital market predicament is the principal-agent problem, in which conflicting priorities occur between asset owners and the representative authorized to act on their behalf. The principal-agent problems within business relationships are: shareholders vs. management teams; financial institutions vs. rating agencies; voters vs. politicians; and clients vs. lawyers.

Companies can handle these problems in several ways. The most common include realigning organizational priorities, changing incentive systems, and improving the flow of critical information. There is no clear cut solution to the problems in

the capital market, but researchers have suggested some remedies. Many options have been tested that have both benefits and drawbacks. However, there are some “remedies” with which companies can better manage both the lopsided information and the principal-agent problem within capital markets.

One way companies try to combat capital market challenges is forming a “board of directors” to check the management. This measure ensures shareholders’ interests are properly maintained and represented. The shortcoming of this measure is that management usually “selects” board members, who may be manipulated and biased in its favor. A second method is stock ownership in which business decisions and priorities are aligned. Companies usually incentivize employees with stock offerings. This may motivate employees to perform, managers to motivate, encourage and arouse their teams. The CEOs are inspired to make decisions that benefit their businesses and investors. The shortcoming, however, is that CEOs may become risk-aversers when making financial decisions. They fail to make decisions even when they benefit the company to protect their finances and share prices. This is a lesson to learn by Ethiopians as shareholders and board members.

Some companies penalize managers for light errors, instead of motivating or encouraging them. While this measure can be effective, it can also lower morale and encourage managers to protect themselves by “shying” away from major decisions. This is true mainly in state enterprises. Converting these enterprises into private hands or into private equity may protect companies from total buyouts. In this situation, there is a need to monitor capital markets to determine their next moves. This enables company managers and investors to review and improve internal goals, controls, and processes. These measures will help to analyze the markets and decide when their companies should go public “again.” A company must be public for an investor to make money. Additionally, there is no guarantee that an investor may not encounter the same problems of lopsided information or principal-agent relationships, especially if they possess insider information.

The future is full of uncertainty for the capital markets, including that of Ethiopia. Without “strategies” to face these uncertainties and to combat issues like insider trading and imbalanced relationships, capital markets can be chaotic and turbulent. These markets are, however, critical to a country’s economy and offer businesses, investors, and individuals the opportunity to succeed financially.

There are successful companies contending with growing market challenges. They pay dividends to shareholders together with profits that accrue to them. Others retained a large share of profit and capital to reinvest in innovations. They also give shareholders more voting authority. It is unclear which of these approaches is best; their success can only be revealed over time. Given the

state of the economy, it’s more important than ever to understand how financial markets work, recognize how to address their problems, and acquire the financial skills needed to ensure investors make sound financial decisions.

It is believed by financial experts that “uncertainty” of capital markets should not impair entrepreneurs from making informed financial decisions. Experts in business strategy and management refer to the inclusive finance which reshapes the financial system. This provides the underserved people access to critical financial tools with exceptional opportunity to connect with outstanding peer and experts to gain insights amid unprecedented global challenges in the capital markets. To overcome challenges, investors and capital market operators need to have transformational experience that combines the best of strategic thinking with the most important advances in financial inclusion, digital technology for a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges of the future.

To appreciate the future developments, investors, managers and executives of leading business enterprises come together to discuss their experiences in financial transactions. Included in this discussion are bankers, technologists, financial regulators, and heads of development agencies.

The exchange of ideas among specialized leaders from across the country contributes to better understanding of the past, gauging the present and envision the future in the digital age. Also, Ethiopian financial operators capture the key factors behind the success of current leaders in the financial revolution. They may also extend their ideas to the emergence of the new financial techniques that lead to the digital age. They also contemplate on possible strategies to attain success and avoid failures in bringing financial “access” to the majority of the people

It is crucial to address key strategic issues arising from the dual goals of economic and social value creation. Businesses, especially those based on technology, may compete or flounder or close down. It is crucial for Ethiopian businesses to successfully compete in highly competitive markets.

Another issue is how to “balance” social mission with financial considerations. It is important for Ethiopian financial institutions to stay abreast of rapidly evolving products and delivery channels. These institutions need to be inclusive to help vulnerable people to enter the digital age. It is also useful to create a platform for financial inclusion of managers within Ethiopian financial institutions, government agencies and support organizations to discuss, share ideas and gain new expertise.

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

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Editorial

Gov't peaceaccord implementation on fast pace

Following the Ethiopian Government's commitment towards the peace deal, several international and regional institutions are extending their appreciation in various forms. As witnessed at the US-Africa Summit held recently, Ethiopia's effort to effectively implement the peace agreement signed in Pretoria and Nairobi and the measures taken by the government to bring peace has received recognition.

Likewise, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) and the delegation he led held fruitful discussion with US leaders and officials on the margins of the US-Africa Summit—another diplomatic victory Ethiopia has achieved out of the peace deal.

According to the testimony given by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Advisor Ali Zafar, the peace agreement and the reform program Ethiopia has been implementing have helped the nation to galvanize foreign support for development. The peace environment and the reform program should be an opportunity for Ethiopia to showcase the accomplishment and also to reinvigorate foreign partners.

In fact, following the deal, the government is discharging its responsibilities in every possible way, not only to effectively implement the agreement; but also addressing the challenges of the people. As part of its promises, basic services are restored in war ridden areas and humanitarian items are being delivered accordingly.

In areas where there was no electric access for long are now enjoying the service. Humanitarian access into the State has continued in a more concerted and organized manner. As a result, food and non-food aid supplies are being transported through four corridors. Electricity is restored in Mekele, Wukro, Adigrat and Humera towns. In Axum and Adwa towns,

telecommunication service is also restored.

Seeing the government's commitment and effort, several humanitarian partners are also scaling up assistance to meet the increased humanitarian needs of the country. For instance, between 15 November and 8 December, the government, joining hands with humanitarian partners, have mobilized over 1,600 trucks to deliver more than 63,800 metric tons of food, more than 4000 metric tons of health, shelter, education, protection as well as water sanitation and hygiene supplies.

As witnessed, from the aftermath of the peace deal, both signatory parties appear to have eventually realized that ending the conflict is the best way to ease the path towards sustainable peace. Preserving the peace deal and implementing it accordingly needs the commitment of the two parties. In this regard, the Ethiopian Government has gone far for effective implementation of the deal, and its commitment for peace will keep its pace for the sake of internal stability as well as ensuring regional peace.

As one of the prominent countries in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia values peace at the expenses of any price. In this regard, besides exerting all its energy for the successful accomplishment of the peace deal and providing humanitarian support, the country will further strengthen its multilateral and bilateral relations with the global community. The agreement marks an important step in efforts to bring sustainable peace not only in Ethiopia; but also in the Horn and beyond; and has laid a solid foundation to preserve Ethiopia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Opinion

US-Africa Summit for fostering genuine, respectful partnership with Africa

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

The historical relations between the US and Africa dates back to the era of the transatlantic slave trade in which hundreds and thousands of Africans were sold off to owners of cotton plantations mostly in the southern part of the US. For over 40 years, Africa became a center for a rivalry between the US and world socialism led by the former USSR. After the Cold War subsided in 1990, the US foreign policy of disengagement with Africa created a cool situation between the African countries which were gradually being drawn towards China in the context of South-South cooperation in the most pragmatic foreign policy and diplomacy followed by the PRC.

Direct investment position of the U.S. in Africa 2000-2021. After a peak in 2014, foreign direct investment (FDI) in Africa from the United States dropped to 44.81 billion U.S. dollars in 2020, but picked up again in 2021. Africa receives lower FDI inflows than any other region amounting only to 5% of the total US FDI flow across the world. China maintains only 1 military base in the world that is in Djibouti but the US has 29 military bases in Africa and 750 across the world.

Over the last couple of years, the China factor and the continued Russian presence in Africa as well as further proliferation of terrorism in the Horn of Africa as well as the growing military and diplomatic ties between Eritrea and Russia and escalating rivalries among a number of western and Arab countries for the control of the Red Sea became a *casus belli* for the reconsideration for revision on US foreign policy and diplomacy towards Africa.

The Second US-Africa Leaders Summit that was

conducted in Washington from December 13-15, according to the Vision Statement for Partnership with Africa focused on a number of areas in which the US pledged to work in partnership with African countries.

Most leaders of African countries are keen to promote democracy and good governance in their respective countries but are being pressurized to establish their own democratic systems based on western and US liberal and neo-liberal value systems.

The US must respect home grown African political, cultural and social values that have developed over thousands of years in Africa instead of imposing their political ideologies on Africa through various means.

Over the last several decades, the US has continued to interfere into the internal political affairs of African countries further multiplying the already fragile political situation in many African countries. Although the US claims that it wishes to cooperate with African governments in fighting against terrorism, it has taken no meaningful measures to uproot the causes behind the spread of terrorist organizations across the continent. It appears that the US is still clinging to her policy of disengagement in Africa and the actions it would take hereafter could show if the US commitment to fight terrorism is genuine or simply face-saving.

Leaders who are eager to develop their own democratic systems are most often labeled and branded by western and US based media houses as dictators and oppressors. The US needs to stop interfering into the internal affairs of African countries through various means including clandestine or even open support to opposition

groups who covet for power by destabilizing and creating ethnic based sporadic conflicts in these countries. This has to a greater degree contributed to political destabilization across several African countries.

The current shift in US on Africa needs to be based on genuine partnership and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of these countries.

The US repeatedly claims that it is keeping military bases in Africa to provide logistics support in the struggle against terrorism but in most cases this has not turned out to be so.

The African countries are also worried about the proliferation of military bases in the continent as part of the visible power the big powers of the world including the US. The Government of the US is expected to understand that like any other countries across the world, African countries are seriously of the US national interest concerned about the safety and security of their people at any point in time. The fulfillment of the national interest of the US must not be addressed at the expense of compromising the security and peace of African countries.

Events over the last several decades show that the US prefers to deal with each African country separately and is not that much interested in African quest for the promotion of Pan Africanism. Yes, the US has now said that it will help to cooperate with the African collective cooperation in developing AfCFTA. This again is something to be observed through future developments.

The US policy on the war that was triggered by TPLF was indeed intriguing. The US continued to provide clandestine information and diplomatic support to the group in a bid to find a political and

physical space for putting pressure on Ethiopia and Eritrea in their ever growing relations with Russia and the PRC. In fact, the US continued to blame the Ethiopian Government for blocking humanitarian aid to Tigray and of using food as a weapon of war while in reality the reverse was performed by the TPLF.

It is true that the US has played a major role in composing and enforcing the Agreement on Permanent Cessation of Hostilities between the GoE and TPLF under the auspices of the AU but seems to remain silent on the deliberate delays on the part of the TPLF in fully implementing the terms of the Agreement under the agreed period of time. The US on the other hand did not lift these economic and diplomatic sanctions it has imposed on Ethiopia over the last two years.

During the Second US-Africa Leaders' Summit that was conducted for two days in Washington, the Ethiopian delegation led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has conferred with the US President to warm up the cooled diplomatic relations between the two countries and officials of the State Department as well as the Managing Directors of the IMF and the WB. The executive diplomacy has created a political leverage which enabled the delegation to secure more diplomatic and economic support from the international financial magnets in their support for assisting Ethiopia to manage the rehabilitation program that is going on in the war torn northern part of the country.

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

Business & Economy

What does Private sector do for a national progress?

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Being home to close to 120 million population, Ethiopia is the second most populous nation in Africa next to Nigeria, and still the fastest growing economy in the region. Though the country is still regarded as one of the poorest nations in the continent, it is relentlessly working to enlist itself in the category of middle income countries in the years to come.

Yes, Ethiopia's economic growth would help the nation pull social stability, financial progression and even political harmonization to think of, at the end of the day, a well-developed and equally benefiting country. The right avenue on which the country is now journeying has exhibited the smartest trajectory towards an irreversible progress and lasting development.

Without a shadow of doubt, inclusive and sustainable growth can help heal grievances stemmed from economic exclusion, and the role the private sector can potentially play along this line is an invaluable step to bring about a real difference.

Taking this solid fact into consideration, this writer talked to Amanuel Lorenzo, who is an economist and working for a private consultancy to substantiate the topic of discussion "the role of private sector in bolstering economic development in Ethiopia."

He said, "The profitability of very private sector has highly depended on their country's development and comprehensive growth. Hence, actively participating in Ethiopia's development scheme for the private sector is serving themselves at their own home. Yes, the private sector investment can also bring an infusion of capital without increasing the debt burden. However, these volatile environments struggle greatly to attract and sustain the long-term private sector investment that is needed to help the country break the sluggish economic growth pace."

As effectively dealing with the complex economic challenges requires creative solutions, the private sector and the government are expected to work together to find innovative ways to firmly consolidate investments in a range of lucrative contexts.

As to Amanuel, the combined effort of the government, local private sector, the international investor, public enterprises and other development partners has prettily paved the way for the country to seize the next level of success as active economic engagements and supplementary businesses are important for continuing economic opportunity.

"In present day Ethiopia's opportunities for private sector engagement are made much more widened though a lot remains to be done. For instance, if we take the recent situation of the country, where conflicts are contained in certain regions, extensive investment and advisory support in stable areas has been possible – for example, in places such as the Tigray state and those



of Amhara and Afar where investments in agribusiness, power, financial services, and renewable energy were severely damaged," the economist said.

True, supporting the private sector in daunting contexts is complex and requires active market creation through project development, regulatory reform, and capacity building, he opined.

According to Amanuel, the link among economic development, job creation and stability has repeatedly been emphasized, as well as the need for more robust underwriting of risk to encourage the private sector.

He further stated that the road ahead in the era of competition and the existence of myriads of systems of doing business is challenging, and the country has to make adjustments along the way. "We shall continue learning, understanding, and incorporating approaches and instruments that could be effective in engaging the private sector knowing that the sole effort of the government and some finger coned partners of it would lead nowhere."

As Ethiopia moves towards adoption of the institutional strategy on private sector, it is committed to remaining nimble and flexible thereby meeting the ambitious target it has set for itself.

As far as the active involvement of the private sector is concerned, a number of aspects have to be taken into account. To mention but a few, business-led initiatives, such as research and development partnerships, knowledge-sharing platforms, technology and skill transfer, and infrastructure investment have the potential to kick-start development thereby reinvigorating productivity gains, generating better quality jobs, strengthening skills and promoting technological advancements.

It is inevitable that challenges exist in

due course of maximizing the private sector's role in economic development. Besides, businesses often work in difficult environments where corruption is rampant, the rule of law is not enforced, and infrastructure and services are poor.

As to him, still, the private sector is often an agent of change and a potential partner for implementing the farsighted goals of the nation. This move is worth appreciating, indeed!

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often lack the resources to invest in innovation to fuel productivity and development, he said adding that strengthening SMEs may help drive these processes and foster local entrepreneurship, create skilled employment, and promotes knowledge- and technology-transfers.

Needles to state, the active involvement of the private sector is key for increasing productivity, attracting investment and creating better job opportunities. Ethiopia has shown that it is possible to narrow that gap, with the private sector contributing greatly to strengthen skills, improve education opportunities and rehabilitating as well as reconstructing institutions in war affected areas. Thus private companies in the country have partnered with national universities to make a difference in all aspects, he underlined.

Doing business and doing well are not mutually exclusive. Profit-seeking and sustainability objectives can align. To better mitigate risks and realize the benefits of private sector action, informed dialogue among policy makers, the private sector and all concerned businesses entities is quite crucial to make a difference. Through this frank exchange of knowledge and best practices on doing business in emerging economies, both public and private sectors can better define their contributions to

mutual interests. While the private sector can be the engine of growth, innovation and job creation, government's effort to establish stable and supportive environments needs to be well focused, he underlined.

The consistently high economic growth over few recent years has resulted in positive trends in poverty reduction in both urban and rural areas. Furthermore, conflicts in various parts of Ethiopia risk undermining the economic and social development progress the country has achieved.

Ethiopia's main economic development journey on a sustainable basis is of instrumental in accelerating poverty reduction which both require significant progress in job creation, as well as improved governance, to ensure that growth is equitable across society.

As food insecurity is growing due to adverse weather events, locust invasion, conflict, and global conditions leading to high inflation of food prices, the commitment of the private sector more than ever before is seriously needed.

True, he said Ethiopia has a fledgling private sector, whose growth and job-creation abilities have been hindered by constraints in the business climate and competitiveness.

No doubt, as Ethiopia's growing workforce puts pressure on absorption capacity of the labor market, necessitates improving current jobs, while creating sufficient new jobs, promoting private sector involvement it timely and decisive.

The private sector helps reduce poverty in Ethiopia by creating employment and generating income, providing essential consumer goods and services, and investing in infrastructure. Although Ethiopia has grown over the past three to four years at impressive rates, the challenge going forward is to promote the growth that is inclusive and sustainable.

According to Amanuel, to achieve economic outcomes that lift greater numbers of people out of poverty requires a vibrant private sector in which micro, small, and medium size enterprises thrive alongside large firms and labor intensive activities can also flourish.

The private sector can also support the development of regional value chains, where manufactures that heavily rely on embedded and embodied service inputs source such inputs locally in the continental market, creating jobs and adding value.

As the banking sector, non-bank financial institutions and fin-techs have important roles in private sector financing, they have to run in a very organized and properly managed manner. The private sector thus presents an opportunity for firms to access finance and increase firm competitiveness and productivity which in turn help the nation record remarkable economic achievement for real growth and lasting change.

Art & Culture



Cementing diplomatic relation through soft tools; Football

BY NAOL GIRMA &
KFLEEYESUS ABEBE

Establishing diplomatic relation is one phenomenon with the interest of economic, social and military cooperation. On the course of centuries Ethiopia was able to forge significant and numerous diplomatic relations with countries across the world. Its relation with European countries such as Great Britain, France, Italy, Sweden, Norway, Germany and others have been consequential to its current status. The countries have exploited unique ways of developing the status of their diplomatic relation. Among the ways, using cultural and soft diplomacy has become very visible. Ethiopian influential statesmen, physicians, educators, scientists and artists had the touch of European colleges or other supports. Now, the diplomatic assistance of Europe is homing on Ethiopian sports also.

It is obvious that sport has such irreplaceable power of creating togetherness among people. Sport lets people living apart to come together and support each other. It is also a powerful tool to empower the disadvantaged or people who consistently go under stereotype or discrimination. It is with this understanding that the British embassy took the initiative of facilitating training for Ethiopian coaches. Lucy Gordon, Head of Communication and Public Diplomacy, says the embassy wants to increase its contribution also in cultural and soft things like sports.

“We have a very big development and humanitarian program. We are doing (supporting) in education, sanitation and health staff. We also get to do more cultural, soft things like we are doing today where we have brought coaches from British charity and humanity. Unilever Ethiopia has helped us to bring them out here. As today, we did training for 25 Ethiopian coaches who already have football teams. Half of them are women. We trained them how to make girls play football and increase culturally appropriate environment.”

Lucy tells such activities augment the



relation of the two countries as the two countries have similar passion and love to football. It also supports Ethiopia's effort of preventing gender bias in the country.

“When you are British, the first thing you will be asked by Ethiopians is about the Premier League. So, I think it is very powerful connection between UK and Ethiopia. Of course Ethiopians love football. They love the Premier League. Supporting Ethiopia's football is important to us. Of course, sport brings people together. It can break down barriers. We think that for women. Sport is a very good tool for gender empowerment and equality. As such it is a big priority for the UK, to level the play between man and woman. We think we get girls playing football and we get them working together in a team. We build close relationship with each other. We get them out of the house which is important to bring them out to society”

Lucy expressed her and the embassies pride over endearing relation of the two countries. She said the embassy has been there in collaboration with Ethiopia as it makes considerable developmental gains.

Owen Southgate who represents Football for Humanity and his Swedish organization Center for Learning believe that the event has paramount sociocultural importance.

“The ability to bring different cultures in the same room and have discussions in and around how to ethically work in developing women sport for example really gives us the chance to compare and contrast what

goes in other parts of the world. So that we can look how we can influence each other positively in moving forward and providing better opportunities in women sports. For me personally it is also a great learning opportunity coming to a new culture and be able to experience and understand it. It gives me more opportunity to be better educator and work from diplomatic perspective.”

Owen illustrates the training has multidimensional benefits for the girls as they would feel they are important part of the society and talented. There is also intention for the girls to visit Sweden and have a cultural exchange. Owen didn't hesitate to express his fascination about Ethiopia and its people.

“Ethiopian people are amazing I had such huge amount of fun here. I love the culture. Your interest in traditional dance, the different dialects, even with lots of different challenges people seem to have a lot of hope, a lot of motivation, a lot of enthusiasm for better tomorrow. So, working with female coaches both men and women were interesting. They just have been fantastic to hang out with. I am very happy, very joyous.”

Italian embassy was also among supporters of the program and its school participated at girls tournament held at the end of the training. Gianni Caione (PhD) who is responsible of Italian State School soccer team underscored the role of the event in creating gender inclusion and empowerment among Ethiopian students.

“The event is very important not because there are things we organize. Our embassy is very friendly to Ethiopian people. We have long presence and our school never been closed even in times of crisis. Nineteen percent of our students are Ethiopians. They are good mannered and successful in their academics. We have girls' inclusion program and this event is in parallel with our objectives as school.”

General Secretary of Ethiopian Football Federation (EFF), Bahiru Tilahun says such trainings help coaches to catch up with latest systems, management and ways of training girls. The general secretary also emphasized the training would let coaches better understand their girl players who come withstanding different challenges. Bahiru expressed the federation's interest of sustaining this cooperation, galvanizing support from British embassy, other embassies and organizations and thereby form strong women national team.

“We want to draw international experience so that we invited experienced coaches to come through British embassy and give the training. This is a huge achievement. As federation, we want to sustain this relation and get similar or even better trainings through cooperation of British embassy.”

The three day theoretical and practical training was taken by 25 women coaches. To celebrate their successful completion of the training, there was also a tournament held among four girls' teams. The last event happened in the presence of British Ambassador to Ethiopia Alastair Mcphail (PhD) and Ethiopian Football Federation President Esayas Jira. Trophy was handed to the winning team.

Most importantly, the event was a day of cultural exchanging as there were cultural dances, Ethiopian food and talks among Ethiopians, British embassy community and Europeans in general. The hope is the training and girls' tournament to sustain by empowering women and strengthening diplomatic relation of Ethiopia with Britain and Europe in general in this soft but impactful way.

Global Affairs

The surprising World Cup at Qatar 2022

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

When FIFA, the world football governing body assigned Qatar to host the 2022, 22nd World Cup, there were various protests and opposition expressed for a number of reasons. First of all the geographic location was considered too unfriendly for football many said because of the hot climatic conditions there. Temperatures range in the higher thirties and forties and this is hardly ideal for any activity, let alone for football that requires a lot of running and physical challenges for ninety minutes.

This was considered untenable for a tournament that lasts a month with intense matches every three days. This would put at high risk the athletes, it was argued. Secondly, Qatar is not known for any sort of football tradition and the risk of the people not being interested in the contest is high and it would not be fair to assign such a huge world competition for a nation such as Qatar when there are so many other nations that are hungry of football and would pay any sacrifice to entertain this huge event.

There were candidates such as the USA, Mexico and others who were ready to host the world cup while Qatar had to build practically all the infrastructure needed to host the contest. Thirdly the country would be too small to entertain millions of fans who would like to go there and watch the matches.

However, it resulted that Qatar had carried out a huge and extensive campaign to win the chance to host the event thanks to its enormous economic clout and the lobbying it made using international football stars as ambassadors. Their opinions were heard across the football world and the board members of FIFA were added to this list.

The likes of former football stars and then president of the Union of European Football Association, UEFA, Michel Platini and the president of FIFA Sepp Blatter were seen to support the campaign for the candidature of Qatar to host the games. Finally when the hosts suggested that the games would be held in November and December rather than in July or August when the climate of Qatar is fiercely unfriendly and extreme, the opposition due to the adverse climatic conditions stopped.

This was in 2010 when it was awarded with the bid to prepare the tournament. Qatar showed the plan of preparing the necessary infrastructure and the financial commitment indispensable to successfully carry out the games. Stadiums were built from scratch.

However all the same lots of controversies continued to flourish alleging that Qatar violated several human rights provisions internationally accepted such as denying people rights and discriminating them on various lines or denying certain civil and political rights to its citizens. Awarding such a huge world competition would be giving it approval for what it did.

The way it treated its immigrant workers



was also another point raised by those who bitterly campaigned to deny Qatar the right to host the world cup or make it a failure with various boycotts unless it changed its rules.

But finally when the games began it was football which eventually triumphed with the passion for the sport and the controversies were sidelined despite repeated attempts to dilute the success of Qatar.

In fact, many were heard saying that such a fierce campaign against Qatar was more than anything motivated by prejudice to third world countries on account of some sort of racism because competitions of this magnitude should not be given to countries such as Qatar, a tiny nation with little political importance in relation to those such as USA or Western nations as a whole that are used to monopolizing the platform to host all sorts of important world events.

Qatar in the end has won the bid and it has also shown that it can successfully host the contest with well-organized and arranged facilities both in material as well as human resources. Not only that it has also declared that all those who come to Qatar and do not respect its rules would not be welcome or risk to be repatriated to wherever they came from. This was important because it limited the use of alcohol in and around the stadiums. These were points on which many particularly western countries would not accept without stiff opposition but Qatar did manage to overcome this resistance.

Even before the end of the tournament this world cup has been characterized by various surprises mainly in the positive sense for African teams and others which traditionally were not reputed to have a shining or prestigious accolade of football victories. In other world cups it was almost always taken for granted that African teams would lose to any team and even do so with a huge goal difference. But now we have seen that these teams shined and there were thousands of Africans giving support to these teams given the presence of large

numbers of people of African descent in Qatar for various reasons.

African teams performed better than any other world cup scoring goals on their adversaries even when they lost the games. Senegal shined very well and managed to be the first African country to qualify to the round of sixteen winning against a traditionally strong football nation such as Ecuador. Even in its defeat against the Netherlands, Senegal did play very well for the majority of the duration of the match and only an incidental error of the goalkeeper facilitated the goals of the Netherlands.

Morocco was the other surprising African team which by beating Belgium almost provoked a revolution and there were skirmishes between Belgians and Morocco fans living in Belgium. Morocco in fact qualified without losing a single match winning its group just as did England, the Netherlands, or Croatia all of which have a great tradition of football at the highest levels. Similarly, Ghana as well showed resilience in its match against South Korea beating it and scored two against Portugal in the 3-2 defeat. Tunisia beat the champions of the world France while Cameroon beat the five times champions of the world Brazil.

These are totally unexpected results that contributed to the beauty of the competition and confused all the so called football experts in their predictions. The defeat of Argentina by Saudi Arabia was another huge event in the world of football along with the defeat of Germany by Japan which eventually caused its early elimination from the competition. Eventually Japan won the group by beating also Spain one of the fancied clubs for good results in the tournament and qualified for the round of sixteen. Qatar in this sense has given the maximum any competition of this level could give. More people than expected were seen watching matches cognizant of the fact that surprises are at the corner in every match.

African teams have come a long way in football with now fancying even better

positions in world football. We remember the best position for an African team was one of Ghana attained in 2010 South Africa when it almost qualified for the last four. Since then no other African team managed to reach that level. We will see if this year things will change.

Many pundits had forecast that teams such as Germany would reach the top four and African teams would not have chance of making it to the last sixteen. But all their forecasts have resulted contrary to their logic because Saudi Arabia beat Argentina, Japan beat Germany, Morocco beat Belgium, Tunisia beat France and Cameroon beat Brazil! All these results can be classified as totally unexpected and this has made the competition more fascinating and suspenseful. That was the beauty of football and at the world cup level it has been recorded as unprecedented.

Talking about the preparation of the tournament Qatar has secured the admiration of the world because few had predicted that it would be such a success from practically every point of view. There were no complaints about the logistics because Qatar has prepared the necessary infrastructure in an advanced manner and it was evident that the management of the preparations was admirable. We have seen a tiny country with a population of less than two million, most of whom are not even native, has managed to host the world's biggest and most important football event and having done it successfully it has secured the admiration of the world and most of the criticisms of many international mostly western media had to step back from their original opinions and previsions.

Qatar has demonstrated that even small third world countries can prepare huge events at international level and this could be encouraging for other nations who would candidate themselves to stage such a huge event if they can have the financial means such as Qatar.

Law & Politics

Representing the disenfranchised: Africa in United Nations Security Council

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is an indisputable fact that as no African country is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, most African leaders at all hours of the day and night have been calling for a permanent seat. As the existing circumstances on the ground are nothing less than historical injustice, Africa at the earliest possible juncture must have due representation in the Security Council.

The unfair representation of Africa in the council for long has been drawing sharp condemnation from an extensive range of African leaders. Regardless of the fact that they requested quite a lot of times for the continent of Africa to have at least two seats as permanent members in the UN Security Council, the desired destination has not been accomplished yet.

In the same manner, as the continent of Africa with 54 nations is not represented as permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, Africans have been passing through a considerable amount of challenges that need a quick fix. In good truth, if the Security Council fails to incorporate permanent and non-permanent members from the continent of Africa, bringing about the desired goal would be easier said than done and like painting the fourth bridge.

Given the current circumstances, African leaders have continued pressing for two permanent seats on the UN Security Council on the grounds that the continent of Africa will have a chance to play a part in decision-making in connection with their own issues. But if the existing situation continues on the same path, the suffering of Africa will continue.

Concerning the issue once Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Ph.D.) called on African leaders to collectively insist that Africa's reasonable request for no less than two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats at the UN Security Council be adopted, and also stressed the need for the establishment of an African Union continental media house, according to information obtained from Ethiopian News Agency.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the 35th Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU), the prime minister added that Africa's media representation on the international stage is equally important.

Abiy (Ph.D.) insisted that Africa's voice on the world stage needs to be heard loud and clear. "Africa must also be represented on important international bodies."

More than seven decades after the creation of United Nations, the premier pointed out that Africa remains without meaningful input and role in the system of international governance.

"This is particularly through of the United Nations. We as Africans lack representation in the Security Council and are underrepresented in a variety of ways. It is the right time to reform and revitalize



the United Nations system to reflect current global realities and ensure that a more representative body with only fair representation and transparency in those institutions can usher in a just era in multi-literalism," he noted.

By the same token, in relation to the issue the premier once tweeted I join other African leaders in reiterating that a continent of around 1.3 billion people needs a permanent voice and seat at the UNSC represented through a bloc. Issues and decisions that concern the continent cannot continue being addressed without continental representation.

At the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, held from December 13-15, 2022 in Washington DC, President Biden said, "...Today, I'm looking forward to hearing more from all of you about the issues and priorities that matter most to Africa and how we can deepen our cooperation. And I emphasize 'cooperation.'"

Our nations have worked closely together for a long time. We've improved the lives of countless people in all our countries in meaningful ways, on both sides of the Atlantic. And with this summit, and with the African Union's Agenda 2063, our eyes are fixed squarely on the future...

The choices that we make today and the remainder of this decade and how we tackle these challenges, in my view, will determine the direction the entire world takes in the decades to come. As I said yesterday, the United States is all in on Africa and all in with Africa.

African voices, African leadership, African innovation all are critical to addressing the most pressing global challenges and to realizing the vision we all share: a world that is free, a world that is open, prosperous, and secure. Africa belongs at the table in every room — in every room where global challenges are being discussed and in every institution where discussions are taking place.

That's why I announced in September, at the United Nations General Assembly, that the United States fully supports reforming the U.N. Security Council to include permanent

representation for Africa. And today I'm also calling for the African Union to join the G20 as a permanent member of the G20.

"And today I'm also — whether we're upholding or defending the foundational principles of global peace and security enshrined in the U.N. Charter and the U.N. — and in the AU's seminal documents, or meeting the challenges that impact every nation, the people of Africa are indispensable partners, delivering — to delivering the progress that benefits everyone, not just in Africa and the United States, but the whole world"

While on the subject, as no African country is a permanent member in the Security Council, most African nations have been facing several challenges.

It is worth mentioning that Ethiopia has fought unwarranted pressure and interference in the war that lasted for two years in the northern part of the country. A lot of efforts have been made by some entities to twist the country's arm under the guise of quite a lot of lame reasons that do not reflect the existing developments on the ground. However, in the fullness of time, all their efforts went for nothing owing to the concerted efforts of the government and the people of Ethiopia.

It is public knowledge that since the onset of the war, some foreign entities time and again have been bending over backwards to put unwarranted pressure on Ethiopia coming up with a considerable amount of conspiracies that can turn the lives of innocent civilians into a living hell. They left no stone unturned to press hard on the democratically elected government under the veil of human rights violations.

In a similar vein, in furtherance of pursuing their hidden motives going behind the scenes, they have gone to the ends of the earth to blacken the positive image of the country by orchestrating quite a lot of imaginary and bogus stories.

Even worse, instead of sticking to the truth, some groups have been blowing the whistle on the federal government that has been working around the clock to get to the bottom of the problem in an atmosphere

of calm. As opposed to turning the tide and changing the course of events, they have spared no efforts to raise the stakes in Northern Ethiopia.

It must be remembered that on the heels of unwarranted pressure from some entities in many instances, Ethiopians at home and abroad have fought against their evil deeds. As Ethiopia's allies know the hidden motives going behind closed curtains against the country, they have been many a time and oft engaged in forestalling external pressure and interference.

Thousands of Ethiopian in every nook and cranny of the world managed to protest against unwarranted pressure and interference in the internal affairs of the country.

Unless Africa possesses a permanent seat in the Security Council, foreign pressure and interference will continue. As a matter of fact, for understanding the unvarnished truth, quite a lot of African leaders have sustained voicing their concerns.

As published by AP news in times gone by Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni urged U.N. Security Council reforms that would give Africa permanent representation there, saying such changes would prevent "aggression against Africa."

Museveni spoke at a meeting attended by high-ranking officials representing 10 of the African Union's 55 members. The meeting is the latest in a series focusing on changes at the Security Council that would favor the African continent of 1.3 billion people. A previous meeting called for at least two permanent seats with veto powers and two non-permanent ones.

"The U.N. Security Council should have been and must be reformed," Museveni said. "This is not a favor by anybody but a right of all peoples that inhabit the planet Earth."

The matter of reforming the 15-member council has provoked debate for decades. Its five permanent members reflect the international power structure at the end of World War II: the United States, China, Russia, France and Britain.

Planet Earth



Worst drought on record continues to ravage the Horn of Africa

BY STAFF REPORTER

Millions in East Africa are suffering from drought and starvation, as the longest and most severe drought on record drags on into the late short rains period. After five consecutive failed rainy seasons, experts predict that next year's rainy period from March to May will also fail. Six failed rainy seasons is unprecedented.

Due to the drought, millions are facing crisis levels of food insecurity – many go days without food. Oxfam warned that food shortages will cause one death every 36 seconds till the end of this year.

Child death numbers have risen as well. Seven million children under the age of five are estimated to face acute malnutrition, including 1.85 million who face severe malnutrition. Crop harvests in Kenya, Somalia, and southern Ethiopia continue to disappoint. Over nine million livestock have died, devastating pastoral communities across the region.

Water has become a precious commodity, with about 23 million people facing daily household water insecurity. This leaves them more vulnerable to water-borne diseases. It also forces women and children to travel long distances to fetch water, often exposing them to violence on their journeys.

“The only thing people are praying for now is a little bit of rain,” said Walter Mawere, the Communications and Advocacy Coordinator from CARE Somalia.

“I have met adults who are saying they have

to forgo water. They can give their children some drinking water but there is not enough for themselves.”

At the same time, people are reeling from the knock-on effects of the drought. Measles and cholera outbreaks are impacting communities, and when combined with malnutrition, the health impacts are even worse.

At least 1.77 million people have fled their homes, living in internally displaced people (IDP) camps, or have sought refuge in neighboring countries.

Somalia is the worst affected and is experiencing an undeclared famine, sending shockwaves through agropastoralist communities, who are scrambling to make ends meet. 74 districts, making up almost half the country, are experiencing severe drought conditions.

1.3 million people in Somalia have been forced to move into IDP camps, living in makeshift shelters lacking even basic facilities like healthcare, water, and education.

“Families only get some cloth or plastic to build their house. There is no floor, no windows – nothing, in this heat in Somalia,” said Mawere. “There are no proper sanitation facilities for women, increasing risk when they have to venture out. It exposes them to sexual violence.”

A truck brings water to Ainabo IDP Camp in the Sool region of Somalia | Courtesy: Saddam Mohamed, CARE Somalia.

Gender-based violence, early marriage, and the rates at which girls are dropping out of school are soaring in East Africa, as income drops and pressure to feed the family mounts.

Mana Omar, an Indigenous climate justice activist from the Maasai pastoral community in Kenya, says the most significant problem facing her people is the ongoing drought.

“Men’s work is associated with the land and livestock and because of the drought, nothing is going their way,” said Omar. “They get frustrated and beat the women in their families. Women are married off and are exchanged for livestock to make up for the loss in income.”

The biggest issue facing the Horn of Africa is a lack of funding. Funding for the drought response plan in Somalia is at 72 percent – the funding for Kenya and Ethiopia stands at 55 percent and 52 percent respectively. If these funding gaps are not closed urgently, the crisis will only cost more.

A major victory coming out of the recent COP27 climate talks in Egypt was the adoption of a loss and damage fund, which is supposed to fund disaster situations like these – situations that the Global North bears historical responsibility for. But, that fund is far from being operationalized. The Horn of Africa needs that money now.

“It’s clear that the Global North doesn’t care for African lives. We are continuously left behind,” said Omar.

“We cannot wait for some loss and damage finance. We cannot wait for some conference

or negotiation, it’s a matter of human life and we cannot just sit and do nothing or wait for world leaders to respond.

Some expect that if Somalia were to announce famine, funding might increase. The government has been reluctant to do so. However, in 2011, most of the 260,000 deaths caused by famine in Somalia had already occurred before the declaration of famine.

“Whether famine is declared or not declared, we need to act now,” said Mawere. “These are technical terms, they’re numbers on paper. Behind the numbers, there are families, there are girls, and there are women. They are suffering, they have nothing to eat.”

“We need more support to reach the most affected populations in the country.”

Support has always come too late to places like Africa, according to Dr. Guyo Roba, Head of the Jameel Observatory, who belongs to the Borana pastoral community. He says that aid is reactive, never anticipatory, despite the sounding of plenty of early warning alarms back in 2020.

“It’s much cheaper to fund anticipatory action or early action to disasters like the drought in Africa. Emergency response is much costlier. A cleverer response would be to prioritize early action,” said Roba.

Ignoring the drought in Africa is a political choice, he says.

Source:menafn.com