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Gov't continues fulfilling CoHA responsibilities: GCS

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- The government has been fulfilling its responsibilities enacting in the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA), so disclosed Government Communication Service (GCS).

GCS also announced that the reconstruction of damaged infrastructure in Tigray is already in a full swing.

The GCS State Minister Selamawit kassa briefed journalists on the current affairs of the country yesterday and she indicated that 85 percent of war-damaged power transmission towers have been maintained and trial activities are being done.

Eight main power stations including

the Mekelle power station have been connected with the national power grid so it allows 57 towns and districts to regain power. The rest 15 percent of war-damaged transmitters will be maintained and gone operational within the next two months, she noted.

Telecom service in several towns has also been restored. The restoration process of telecom service is being implemented in parallel with power restoration. Accordingly, 65 telecom stations have been fixed and have become functional, she said.

As to the State Minister, bank service in some towns has been resumed and about 24 bank branches of Commercial Bank of Ethiopia are going to finalize preparations to

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Photo - Eyob Teferi

Commission to conduct screening, registering dialogue participants soon

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA-The National Dialogue Commissioners disclosed that screening and registering of participants who will take place in the national dialogue will be carried out in 1,300 Woredas soon.

National Dialogue Commission Vice Chairperson, Hirut Gebre-Selassie and Commissioner Zegeye Asfaw said that the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission is toiling on the identification and registration

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News

Ethiopia reinforces ties to U.S.: Scholar

BY TAMERU REGASA

ADDIS ABABA—Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) U.S visit is of instrumental in making the latter well aware of Ethiopia’s reality and has further consolidated Ethio-U.S. bilateral ties, so said a Political Science Researcher and Diplomat.

Talking to local media concerning the Prime Minister’s visit to the U.S., Political Science Researcher and Diplomat Prof. Brook Hailu said that the premier has exchanged views with various officials in the U.S. and such engagement is very helpful to lift up the biased sanctions on

Ethiopia and to defend the interest of his country as well.

He said that in his visit, the premier discussed a range of ideas with leaders of various international financial Institutions that could support the ongoing development activities in Ethiopia.

Explaining his hope towards the improvement of U.S.-Ethiopia diplomatic relations, he said that the relations between the two countries would be restored, because the government of Ethiopia has been solving its challenges in a peaceful manner than ever before.



It was learnt that the Premier held a discussion on various issues with the U.S. Secretary of State Anthony

Blinken, members of the U.S. investment community, Managing Director of IMF and others.



Photo: Hadush Abirha

Real estate, home expo kicks off here

BY TAMERU REGASA

ADDIS ABABA- The 5th Real Estate and Home Expo was kicked off here yesterday in the presence of government senior officials and various stakeholders.

Speaking at the expo, 251 Communications and Marketing Private Limited Company (PLC) Deputy CEO Blen Lersachew said that the Expo is going to provide an opportunity for buyers to explore the abundant real estate property options through linking real estate house demanders with developers.

She stressed that her company has long years’ experience in organizing various local and international events as well as advertisement works.

According to the Press statement of the event, real estate and similar projects have been contributing over 13 percent for the domestic growth of Ethiopia in the past 10 years. Numerous investors continue to join the real estate and construction sector to address housing needs of millions of Ethiopians from home and abroad.

Explaining the benefit of the expo the release underscored that the expo is

helpful in linking business to business (B2B) sector and Business to Customers (B2C).

It is expected that over 20 real estate developers, 1,000 visitors, interior designers, and home accessory providers will attend the expo.

Land Bank and Development Corporation General Director Lensa Mekonnen her part said that such type of expo is very helpful to ensure competition in housing and building sectors.

She urged that real estate developers should extend their services to other towns and cities of the country as they have been operating only in Addis Ababa.

Sales Consultant with Ayat Real Estate Share Company Behailu Amare told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the expo is very helpful to promote their houses.

He said that his company is pioneer real estate company in the country and it has built and transferred over 7,000 houses so far.

The expo was organized by 251 Communications and Marketing Private Limited Company (PLC), it was learnt.



African media need to work on building unity, trust: Panelists

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA—Panelists highlighted that the media need to act responsibly in order to build trust, unity and confidence among peoples and countries across Africa and the world as whole.

Country Rap Tunes and Communism Sean Blackmon said that the media narrative needs to be managed properly so as to build strong unity and trust among the people in Africa and the world. The social media exist to make money, and do other activities apart from connecting people.

“We really have to fundamentally understand how media operate to understand what we see and read and we need to have free press across the world. The news that goes out to millions of people is decided by some individuals in a leadership position of media,” panelists underlined.

Lawyer Kamau Franklin on his part said that there are biased media narratives across the world especially the western media outlets. “Violence is not vehemence when it is practiced by the west and broadcast by their media outlets. Nothing westerners ever do is termed as violence.”

The corporate or mainstream media need to be all inclusive, act responsibly in a way to protect national interest, sovereignty and human rights in any parts of the world rather

than using media as a tool for the westerners’ policy execution.

“The Western media is there to tell us who our friends are and who our enemies’ principles against the media. Ethiopia is a friend of the U.S and labeling others on the contrary. So we have to understand that the moment the western media broadcast that someone is our enemy, we need to do all we can to investigate about what’s going right in that country,” he stated.

He stated that those who labeled as the enemies of the western are the people, who are really fighting for freedom and liberation. The western narrative about Africa and others is full of dictators, bribery, primitive, corrupt, war-torn, uncivilized food insecure and others.

Kenyan living in U.S. Karanja Gaçuça said that currently the racism is increasing and challenging the world which needs serious attention and the media needs to discharge its role appropriately. “We have to find our own ways to talk about things in our own words,” he said.

Jaqueline Luqman said that social media is a utility and helps people amplify the message of ability of the peoples voices and it’s essential tool of fighting anti-colonial, anti-imperial and others movements. The media is fundamental tool of fighting injustices, inequalities and others.

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Editorial

Deserved recognition!

Recently, the American Academy of Achievement and the Global Hope Coalition in Washington DC awarded Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed the 'Outstanding African Leadership Award' in recognition of the remarkable leadership he demonstrated in realizing the Green Legacy Initiative.

Appropriately, this outstanding leadership award is in response to Ethiopia's commitment in green development under the leadership of the prime minister. Determinatively, Ethiopia launched the Green Legacy Initiative in 2019 with an ambition of planting 20 billion seedlings in a span of four years. Because of the relentless commitment of the leadership, the nation exceeded the set goal and fulfilled the four year challenge with 25 billion seedlings planted throughout the country. Since 2019, Ethiopia has consistently made global headlines with ambitious tree planting targets that have brought successful accomplishment.

Without any controversy, almost the global community appreciated the commitment of the people of Ethiopia and the determined leadership of the government for recording extraordinary achievements in greening the environment that will have far-reaching positive results in minimizing the consequences of climate changes. Interestingly, as Ethiopians believe social development and environmental living have to go hand in hand to be effective, they are convinced by the urgent necessity of investing in a green environment. Though they believe social efforts are not sustainable without environmental elements, what they are consistently investing in their environment will indisputably have a global effect in accelerating the reforestation endeavors and addressing climate change. Hence, the response of the global community to Ethiopians commitment in this regard is proper and wise.

Furthermore, realizing the necessity of working together with its neighboring countries, Ethiopia sincerely invited them to join the Green Initiative Campaign. For instance, Ethiopia provided high-quality

seedlings of preference to some of its neighbors some months ago and plans to do the same in the years to come in an effort to promote regional cooperation and combat the negative effects of climate change. Beyond greening the environment and battling climate change to ease the socio-economic crisis, this will surely strengthen regional cooperation and will ultimately serve as a crucial platform to ensure peace and stability in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. Properly, the bilateral and multilateral development partners ought to support Ethiopia's endeavors.

These recent achievements have brought Ethiopia to boldly share its experiences with other African countries and make the Green Legacy initiative pan-African. Fortunately, this initiative does not only serve as a stepping stone to a better future but also it enables Ethiopia to set higher the pace in combating climate change and foster community resilience.

Moreover, the Ethiopian Green Legacy Initiative has cultivated brotherhood among the youth of some African nations. The Ethiopian youth delegation some months ago took part in a tree-planting campaign in a few African countries. For instance, the youths from Ethiopia, in South Sudan, together with senior government officials from both sides, planted about 500 seedlings in Juba under the banner of the Plant African Fraternity event. On the occasion South Sudanese Minister of Culture, Youth, and Sports, Albino Bol Dhieu said Ethiopia is a symbol of Pan-Africanism. He said, "Ethiopian Green Legacy Initiative plays significant roles in solidifying the already strong Ethiopian and South Sudanese relations by creating linkages with the youth of the two countries."

In short, Ethiopia has been playing praiseworthy roles in greening the environment and curbing the consequences of climate change. Surely, it has been leading globally in the green legacy campaign. Hence, the outstanding recognition indisputably deserves its leadership.

Opinion

Music embellishing football vibes in FIFA World Cup

BY EYUEL KIFLU

Music captures the mind and feelings of people regardless of age, color, religion, ethnicity, social status or other backgrounds. From little children to senior people, from working house to government house, from the destitute to the billionaire, music takes the heart of everyone. Like Music, football plays indispensable role in bringing societies together, to see what binds them together, to look peace and harmony in themselves. When this two are fused, they have such power, intensity to influence people for the good. Fans also witness the power of the music and football. They say music is the blood vessels of football. They go to the extent of arguing that football is unthinkable without music.

Songs and chants are a must for any decent atmosphere and bring with them more than just a nice melody. Music on the stadiums are about identity. Each song has its own unique allegiance to one side or another and looking deeper into them will prove this point.

Music is generally accepted as the language of the world, still when integrated with football it can even unite the world. From big stages like the world cup to small neighborhood matches, football plays are decorated and provided with vibrant atmosphere while spectators giving support for their team. Music is at the heart of decorating football matches. There are songs, chants, dances, and mock battles that are the adorable vibes of the stadiums.

It is customary for big matches to have theme songs and opening and ending performances. World Cup which is always very much anticipated tournament is known for production and hosting of big music events,

For instance, K'NAAN's - Wavin' Flag, Shakira's "Waka Waka", and R. Kelly's "This is a sign of victory" were popular songs that added color to the 2010 World cup that took place in South African.

Like wise, music in the 2022 Qatar world cup has been ingredient to beautify and create lively mood. Starting from the breathtaking opening ceremony, the 2022 World Cup is able to captivate spectators with the magnificent music performance of Jung Kook "Dreamers", who is the member of famous world Korea band BTS, featuring by Qatari singer Fahad Al Kubaisi.

It's abundantly clear, FIFA world cup anthems and songs are adopted officially by FIFA/ official broadcasters and partners selected by FIFA. The chosen songs are usually multilingual and including English, also official language of the host country. Additionally, language of certain FIFA partners regions and other languages.

In the history of FIFA, for the first time each of the 32 participating teams in Qatar were asked by FIFA to select a song that they would like to be played when their team scores a goal. This has led to an intriguing mix of choices ranging from the modern, to the traditional, to old favorites from the past and which, again showcase musical styles from around the world.

Gala's "Freed from Desire", a hit in the 1990s remains hugely popular with football fans and was initially chosen by three teams; Poland, England and Switzerland. To avoid a clash, England chose "one kiss" by Dua Lipa as a back-up song while Poland used "Balkanica" by Piersi as their second choice.

Brazil took their goal celebrations seriously and have plumped for "esquentando o Couro" by Mocidade independente de padremiguel, one of the Rio de Janeiro samba schools that participate in the city's world-famous carnival.

Brazilian coach Tite, said before the tournament that music and dancing play a fundamental part on his team's identity. "Everyone has their own way, our way is dancing" he said. Mexico has also gone with a sound that is instantly associated with their country choosing "La negra" by La Hijaadel mariachi. Spanish fans had the chance to hear their choice Mi Gran Noche by singer and actor Raphael, a song recorded back in 1967. It's opened seven times during their 7-0 win over Costa Rica in their opening match. Raphael represented Spain in the Eurovision song contest and sold more than 70 million records worldwide.

Australia also went for an old favorite choice, the 1980s hit down under by men at work. Ghana and Cameroon were among those who preferred local artists. The black stars (Ghana) celebrate their goals to the sound of "Oofeets" by Sarkodie, one of Africa's well-known rappers and leading proponent of the Azonto style. Cameroon also had, "Mbandjoh" a song where the Cameroon singing/dancing group, Les Rythmeurs ABC. It's widely played when the country hosted the CAF African cup of nations in past January.

In similar vein, Blur's Song 2 (France), Idol by BTS (Korea Republic) and Zombie Nation by Kernkraft 400 (Wales) are among some others. FIFA recognizes that football fans, who are renowned for their passion and creativity, provide their own entertainment and the music

played during the matches is intended to add to this and get the fans even more involved.

The closing ceremony of world cup 2022 will host at Lusail stadium, which is the largest stadium in Qatar capacity of 80,000. FIFA has yet to announce a full list of performers for closing ceremony. However, Nora Fatehi, an Indian actress, model, singer and dancer is expected to perform at the event, some rumours said. Also expected that she will perform a hindi song on the stage. Additionally, David Adeleka known as "Davido" on his stage name the Nigerian music star is expected to perform on the stage. Also, different artists are expected to perform.

Music, in addition to colorifying tournaments, makes such events unforgettable. Like remembering winners of previous tournaments, music released on the time ignite memories and help people remember good times they have spent during the times. They also remember good times they have cherished together. This way people in the world can see their commonalities, what they could do together if they choose peaceful matters like coming together, living in harmony and rejoicing moments. Therefore, music and football have become such powerful tools reminding humanity that is still embedded among us. Music can also be used in other sport or other similar events to preach togetherness and any development and peace initiatives.

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

News

British Embassy deliver women coaches empowerment training

BY NOAL GIRMA & ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – British Embassy in partnership with Ethiopian Football Federation and Football for Humanity has delivered women coaches professional empowerment training.

Opening the Girls Football tournament, British Ambassador Alastair McPhail (PhD) said the British has delighted to work in partnership with the Ethiopian Football Federation to empower women coaches' skill. Theoretical and practical training is aimed to improve the skill of women coaches in Ethiopia.

Delivering world-class education on the theme of women empowerment for football coaches in Ethiopia has paramount importance to increase the participation of women in the field.

As to him, his embassy is ready to prepare and deliver this kind of women empowerment programme for coaches and others in the future.

Ethiopian Football Federation President Isaias Jira for his part said that Ethiopia is committed to work in partnership with the British Embassy in skill empowerment activities and others. We will continue our



cooperation.

He thanked all stakeholders that have support to organize women coaches training and girl's football tournaments. This kind of training will enhance skill development of women in the sector. He reaffirmed that the federation is ready to support such kind of skill development efforts.

British Embassy Communication Head of Public Diplomacy Lucy Gordon for her part

said currently, the embassy is doing its level best on various development and humanitarian program such as water sanitation, education and health sector.

The UK and Ethiopia have an old-long enduring friendship, she said.

Some selected 25 women coaches took part in the empowering training for the last three consecutive days from December 14 to 16, it was learnt.



Lemesa Tulu

Authority's targeted fuel subsidy saves 29 bln. Birr

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADAMA - An amount of 29 billion Birr has been saved following the introduction of targeted fuel subsidy over the past five months, Petroleum and Energy Authority said.

Authority's Fuel Products Market Standard and Study Director Lemesa Tulu told The Ethiopia Press Agency that prior to the new system which was introduced to overturn the previous mass subsidy schemes and pay back fuel debt, the authority used to expose to billions of Birr losses.

However, he said that the implementation of the targeted fuel subsidy have avoided 10 to 14 billion Birr in losses every month.

Recalling the month of June in last Ethiopian year, he stated that the country had lost 14 billion Birr apart from suffering from severe fuel shortage, nonetheless, the introduction of targeted fuel subsidy has dropped the monthly losses from 14 billion to 5 billion Birr.

"If the procedure had not been implemented and if we had continued with mass subsidies, there would have been 60 billion Birr in losses during the last five months alone", he underscored.

He mentioned that the major factor for such losses was the provision of mass subsidy below the price of imported fuel.

He stated that the government has set up the new system to help the low-income generating societies who cannot afford it.

In fact, the targeted fuel subsidy system will not only reduce government expenditure and losses, but it will also curb fuel wastage including illegal trade in the sector, he stressed.

He further stressed that for the new system to be beneficial to consumers, there should be coordinated control and monitoring. Strong legal action should also be put in place against those who commit procedural violations.

Moreover, the Director said that the government has spent 3 billion Birr for targeted fuel subsidies within five months alone.

Indicating that fuel used to be smuggled out from Borena and Somali state, the director said that the problem has been reduced by 70 percent following an introduction of quota system in the area.

Similarly, there will be strict control on the stations and fuel deliveries so as to curb artificial shortages resulted in because of black markets, he added.

He also noted that it is necessary to take integrated and strong action against gas stations and fuel distributors who sell fuel at a high profit and trade at the expense of consumers and the enforced the law and guidelines.

Gov't continues ...

restart service.

"Basic and large bridges have been reconstructed. And, four hospitals as

well as eight health stations are now serving people having carried out swift reconstruction by the government,

moreover, 2,200 health professionals who were out of the job because of the war have also registered to return to work."



Hirut Gebre-Selassie



Zegeye Asfaw

Commission to conduct ...

of participants and collecting ideas for discussion as input, as ENA reported.

The commission believed with the responsibility of holding inclusive and participatory dialogue is finalizing the collection of inputs by holding discussions with stakeholders in regions and city administrations, Vice Chairperson Hirut said.

The collecting of inputs has only been partially incomplete in Addis Ababa and Oromia, and the remaining works in these places will be finalized within a few days, she added.

Commissioner Zegeye, on his part said that Ethiopia, which has a huge population, faces deep-rooted problems that would be discussed through the representatives.

If views of stakeholders are collected properly and trust built before reaching consultations, the process will get acceptance by Ethiopians, he added.

As the discussion with stakeholders about inputs collection and identification of representatives is being finalized, the identification of participants will soon commence in 1,300 woredas, they stated.

Criteria for delegation of participants will depend on the regions and the society, but all the public will be represented, it was learned.

As to them, the screening process will be made carefully and the dialogue will be conducted in all woredas.

He added that the commission is working with commitment to undertake the national dialogue in accordance with the schedule and to create a national consensus. And who confirmed that the dialogue will be held neutrally, said the facilitators will be given rigorous training.

Opinion

COMESA can support e-commerce

BY TESFAYE TADESSE

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) has taken practical measures to transform its 21 Member States into one single market of diverse opportunities that promote trade and investment in the largest Regional Economic Community in Africa.

COMESA's ultimate vision is to be a fully integrated, internationally competitive regional economic community with high standards of living for its entire people ready to merge into an African Economic Community. Moreover, it has a mission to achieve sustainable economic and social progress in all Member States through increased cooperation and integration in all fields of economic activity. This process can be fostered by applying e-commerce.

Digitalization continues to transform various aspects of our daily lives and dramatically affected the world of trade. More products and services are increasingly being sold over digital platforms known as electronic commerce or e-commerce. To build the capabilities needed for countries to take advantage of the transformations in commerce, policies implemented at national and international levels matter. In addition, COVID-19 pandemic has further accentuated the shift towards e-commerce as people and businesses had to transition to virtual platforms (UNCTAD, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2021).

Globally, the United Nations and other international bodies are supporting e-commerce development, given its fundamental role in advancing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development and other international development goals (UNCTAD, 2017).

E-commerce has the potential to accelerate the attainment of the 17 Sustainable development goals (SDGs). It can also promote the empowerment of women entrepreneurs and other traders, consistent with supporting SDG 5 on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. Furthermore, e-commerce can support SDG 8 on creation of decent jobs and economic growth through promoting entrepreneurship and emerging jobs. There is potential to advance SDG 9 through e-commerce as it promotes innovation and integrates enterprises into value chains and markets.

Additionally, cross-border e-commerce can significantly increase the exports of developing countries, accelerating the attainment of SDG 17. The immense benefits of e-commerce can also trickle down to other SDGs, including SDG 1 on ending poverty in all its forms everywhere.

There are several definitions of e-commerce. However, most global definitions are consistent with the organization for economic cooperation and development (OECD) e-commerce definition.

OECD defines e-commerce as "the sale or purchase of goods or services, conducted over computer networks by methods specifically



Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa – Wikipedia

designed for the purpose of receiving or placing orders. Payments and delivery do not have to be conducted online." The definition excludes orders made via telephone calls, fax or manually typed email from being classified as e-commerce transactions (OECD, 2019).

Before adopting the OECD definition, the World Trade Organization (WTO) Work Programme on Electronic Commerce defined e-commerce as "the production, distribution, marketing, sale and delivery of goods and services by electronic means" (Ismail, 2020). The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) defines e-commerce as "purchases and sales conducted over computer networks" (OECD, 2019).

At a regional level, the African Union Convention on Cyber security and Personal Data Protection define e-commerce as "the act of offering, buying, or providing goods and services via computer systems and telecommunications networks such as the Internet or any other network using electronic, optical or similar media for distance information exchange" (African Union, 2000).

As OECD, 2019 illustrated, there are various models of conducting e-commerce. However, the typical business models include Business-to-Business (B2B), Business-to-Customer (B2C), Business-to-Government (B2G), Consumer-to-Business (C2B) and Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C).

The e-commerce market continues to grow at an unprecedented rate globally. E-commerce is expected to reach approximately USD 7.3 Trillion in sales, accounting for 24.5 percent of overall retail sales globally by 2025. E-commerce retail sales worldwide are predicted to increase by 120 percent between 2019 and 2025. By 2025, retail e-commerce share of total retail sales is expected to steadily increase by 24.5 percent.

E-commerce is growing across all regions, with North America and Asia leading in e-commerce penetration. While there has been traction in e-commerce in Africa, it has been growing at a slower pace than other regions. In Africa, e-commerce revenues have been increasing and are expected to reach USD 46 Billion in 2025, with Nigeria,

South Africa and Kenya taking the lead.

This infant stage of e-commerce development in Africa needs COMESA's interference of enhancement especially for the member states of the region. As I have mentioned earlier, being the beneficiary of e-commerce depends on the national, regional and international policies. Accordingly, COMESA can support the regions with the development of policies, strategies, technological infrastructure and management that can manipulate the e-commerce models.

In the Ethiopian context, e-commerce is the transaction of goods and services through the Internet or other information networks (The Electronic Transaction Proclamation No. 1205/2020). An e-commerce transaction should allow tracking of products/ services from ordering to delivery and accept diverse payment options and delivery methods either online or offline.

The Digital Ethiopia 2025 Strategy has identified e-commerce as a priority area for economic growth. Undoubtedly, digital transactions, including e-commerce, will play a catalytic role in driving the attainment of Ethiopia's development goals and aspiration. However, Ethiopia's e-commerce development is still at an infancy stage, with limited players and no defined e-commerce value chains across different sectors of the economy. Therefore, Ethiopia is on the mode of developing e-commerce strategy to provide a collective vision for e-commerce development and growth in Ethiopia and aims to facilitate B2C, B2B, and C2C by effectively leveraging shipment, cargo, airline, and other national capabilities.

The Ethiopia's National E-Commerce Strategy which is being developed has three principal objectives. These are to create an enabling environment from a policy, legal and operational perspective, promote e-commerce in the domestic, regional, and international consumer markets and ensure coordination and buy-in amongst critical stakeholders ahead of the implementation phase.

Furthermore, the strategy is premised on five goals: to increase private sector participation in the e-commerce sector; to increase consumer awareness, trust, and confidence in

e-commerce; to promote exports and enhance forex earnings; to build the regulatory capacity of key institutions and to promote innovation in e-commerce.

More than ever, it has become fundamental for countries, particularly developing nations, to have clearly defined frameworks to support e-commerce growth, as demonstrated by the COVID-19 global pandemic in 2020. The government of Ethiopia has also identified e-commerce as an engine to propel economic growth and diversification. The e-commerce Strategy aligns and is consistent with attaining the aspirations set out in the Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda, Ten Year Development Plan (2020 – 2030), National Vision 2025, 2025 Digital Transformation Strategy and further builds on the country's existing trade policies and strategies.

The 2019 homegrown economic reform agenda acknowledges Ethiopia's large population and market size as a leverage point for e-commerce development. Therefore, the E-Commerce Strategy aims to implement the following critical actions in the Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2020).

Promotion of e-commerce and digitization of the financial and logistic sectors to support market expansion across the country and internationally, Improvements in the financial and logistics sector are required, including in e-payments, the national addressing system, and geospatial-enabled logistics modernization. Additionally, the strategy aims on enacting measures to accelerate the development of a digital payment ecosystem and promote e-transactions and introduction of policy and regulatory reforms to encourage investment and start-ups to drive e-commerce.

Thus subjects are proper with the COMESA's regional agendas. With a motto of "growing together for prosperity", COMESA offers a wider, harmonized and more competitive market, more harmonized monetary, banking and financial policies, greater industrial productivity and competitiveness. In addition, increased agricultural production and food security, more rational exploitation of natural resources and more reliable transportation and communication infrastructure are its pivotal offers for the region.

As its profile shows, the gross domestic product of COMESA is 851 billion Dollar with a population number of 598 million. Its global export is 90 billion Dollar whereas intra COMESA export is 9.7 billion Dollar.

In order to further enhance these results and accelerate the success of its vision and mission, focusing on e-commerce is preferable and is a demand of digitalization season.

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

Business & Economy

Reviewing the land tenure system for better use of the resource

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

In one occasion, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said that the first person who raised the slogan known as “land to the tiller” was Baro Tumsa the renowned political activist and establishing member of Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). Some also say that the slogan was promoted by the 1960s students’ movement.

According to the historian Abebaw Ayalew, in 1966, in the first time of the Ethiopian history, students rallied against the land holding system introduced by the emperor Hilesilassie I and protested officially. But the status quo condemned and accused them as if they were backed by external elements who were dedicated to destabilize the country. Nevertheless, the students’ movement and demand was an instigator for radical change to bring down the thousand years long feudal system. Many agreed that, the students’ slogan can be said a turning point for radicalizing their movement.

According to Abebaw, due to anxiety of the students’ movement intention and their forwarded slogan, the imperial government was forced to establish one committee which was assumed to study the land issue under the auspicious of the then Ministry of Land Holding. The committee which had comprised Ministers with high profile studied the matter and proposed new land holding system reforming ideas.

Nevertheless, the imperial government had showed ambivalent to the matter and had become reluctant to the matter for 9 years. Though the issue had been forwarded to the parliament, the response was just a deaf ear.

According to the historian emeritus Professor Bahiru Zewdie, the quest to “land to the tiller” ultimately got responded by the 1974 popular revolution with radical proclamation introduced by the Derg which had abolished then law and dispossessed land lords.

As to Abebaw, in the Ethiopian political history, the radicalized land proclamation was introduced by the Derg because the members of the regime officers themselves involved in endorsing the law after intense and exhausting debate. Right after the introduction of the land proclamation, about 800 thousand residents of the Addis Ababa city rallied to demonstrate their support to the proclamation.

The proclamation also freed tenants from the landlords’ tax and made the production relation in favor of farmers. It also liberated from landlords’ exploitation.

The new land proclamation which had brought hope to the farmers was threatened by the new proclamation introduced in 1979 which referred to the establishment of cooperative associations. The new proclamation inhibited farmers not to grow crop as they wish. Joining the cooperative associations and sharing crops with members had been forcefully imposed.

Abebaw further said that in 1989 when mixed economy was introduced by the Derg, farmers faced uncertainty because claiming their share from the collective asset from the cooperative associations was very difficult. This clearly had indicated that despite the proclamation introduced in 1975 entitled farmers as if they were owners of the land, it was impractical and fully owned by the government. After the downfall of the Derg, when EPRDF assumed the government power, the land ownership system which is still controversial continued as it was. As both the Derg and EPRDF officials were indoctrinated by Marxist philosophy, both believed that when the government controlled the economic power, perpetuating political power could be possible. Therefore, both sustained the government ownership of land under the guise of public property. The absence of the transaction value of land also continued.

The constitution introduced by EPRDF article 40 explains that land is owned by the public and the government. Sub article 3 further says that both the rural and urban lands and the natural resources are owned by the public and the government. Land would not be sold or transferred to other party and belongs to the Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples.

Sub article 4 also says that farmers have the right to obtain land and not to be evicted from their position. But in real terms farmers have only used rights on the land and the transaction value of land is totally denied.

The officials of EPRDF claimed that the land issues are not negotiable as long as they were in power and adamantly said that they would put for negotiation only at the grave yard of their system.

In such rhetoric they governed the land for the past nearly 30 years. According

to experts, the Derg land proclamation as compared to the EPRDF was more pro-farmers while the later has some ambiguity. Though EPRDF had characterized by rigidity in its land policy, the quest for land policy reform is still on the table for further discussion. In the Ethiopian politics, the land issue has remained as a controversial issue. Particularly, during the election period the contested parties raised the land issues as their major agenda. For long, the government is known by its rigid stance with regard to land policy reform but now it seems it has changed its stance towards the policy and this is revealed by the government authorities’ comments.

While attending the parliament regular session recently, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) explained that the land policy issue has become worrisome particularly in urban areas. On the occasion, he unequivocally explained the reality on the ground with regard to land owning system.

“Land is owned neither by the government nor by the public, rather, it is controlled by the corrupted government officials and brokers,” the PM said.

For long, intellectuals, opposition party members and observers claimed that the government made itself powerless regarding land ownership by its wrong policy and now the government transferred its decision making authority to what these segment of the society uttered. After long time of hibernation, however, the government recognized that the absence of transactional value of land inhibited citizens not to create wealth.

Though the government land policy states that, “land is not for sale”, in practice, it is illegally sold by brokers and corrupt officials and this reality is recognized by the government officials. Such a situation seems to have created a conducive environment to change the existing land policy.

For long, the land issue had been a motto which rallied the public for resentment. It also served as instrument to regime change.

But still intellectuals have continued their debate in what way can the policy could be changed.

Demis Chanyalew (PhD) is an agricultural economist and said that when he heard the Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed’s true explanation of the land holding system,

he was so pleased.

He further said that if the government wants to reform the land policy; the policy must be integrated with strategy and the strategy with a program. As to his study paper known as “The three politicians and policy in economy”, the land issue was given special attention. It also evaluates the strength and weakness of the existing land policy.

“In many countries, land is possessed by various mechanisms and among others, it is owned privately, publicly and communally” Demis said. He also said that all have brought their own positive outcomes.

However, as to Demis, in the last 50 years, privatizing land is ignored and this can be seen as the policy weakness. The Prime Minister in the aforementioned occasion refuted that at least the urban land ownership could be revised. If so, this can be seen as a paradigm shift regarding land policy to this country. Three years ago, Anteneh Girma, (PhD) who worked as senior advisor in the Ministry of Agriculture reflected his view on the ten years perspective economic growth and said that the perspective plan prioritized agriculture. To that end, eight major problems of the sector were identified and improving mechanisms were set.

Among the problems, ill land administration and utilization, absence of coordination and modernity are leveled as the main ones. “Land that must be used for farm is used for other purposes, and land that must be used for other purposes is used for farm,” Anteneh said. As the result, it is misused.

As to Demis, plowing land in a fragmented manner does not help raising productivity, rather it poses land degradation. Hence, to boost production and to utilize the resource sustainably, shifting the old thinking with regard to land ownership and reforming the system is essential.

In line with this, establishing institutions helpful to utilize the resource economically is vital. Anteneh further said that regarding land usage and transfer, renting and transferring land in the form of inheritance law, the government has to forward mechanism to alleviate problems. Cultivating land in a fragmented manner will take farmers to nowhere. Therefore, to attract investment and technology there should be a policy shift in the part of the government.

Planet Earth

How greening initiative backs up public health, economic efforts

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Billions of people living across India, China, Kosovo, Pakistan, Mexico, Peru, and Saudi Arabia have no choice but to breathe some of the most hazardous air quality on Earth. Yet, as world leaders and delegates gathered in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, for this year's UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) last month, there was skepticism about whether or not those assembled would address the longer-term effects of climate and the urgent situation in regions where pollution is a daily and deadly fact of life.

While we have only limited data on air quality in many rapidly developing countries, the current data is enough to tell us that air pollution is a leading risk factor for child health and non-communicable disease for millions of people. Historically, annual convening like COP tend to follow their own rinse-repeat pattern of setting future milestones in climate activism without putting mechanisms in place to see them through.

While the world always talks about climate change but does not intervene in tangible tasks, some countries including Ethiopia are transferred to practical responses that could be exemplary to the world at large. These countries know the severe impact of climate change before the world talks about climate change and related issues.

Ethiopia, home to 120 million people, is one of the world's most drought-prone countries. It has a high degree of vulnerability to hydro-meteorological hazards and natural disasters. Depending on sectors that are climate change sensitive such as rain-fed agriculture, water, tourism, and forestry as well as a high level of poverty are the main factors that exacerbate Ethiopia's vulnerability.

Ethiopia's policy response to climate change has progressively evolved since the ratification of the UNFCCC in 1994. Ethiopia launched the National Adaptation Plan of Action in 2007 and the Ethiopian Program of Adaptation on Climate Change and Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions in 2010.

Ethiopia also endorsed a Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy in 2011 with the objective of building a green and resilient economy. Over the years, Ethiopia has been implementing various programs within those policy frameworks. One among them, and by far the most consequential, has been the Green Legacy Initiative (GLI). Rooted in a vision of building a green and climate-resilient Ethiopia, the

Green Legacy Initiative was launched in June 2019.

The country of 120 million people set a target of planting 20 billion seedlings within a period of four years and practically showed its commitment in achieving the plan ahead of time. By the fourth year, Ethiopia has succeeded in planting 25 billion seedlings by mobilizing more than 20 million citizens throughout the nation.

The development of more than 120,000 nurseries throughout the country has enabled the creation of more than 767,000 jobs, mostly for women and youth.

The Green Legacy Initiative is a demonstration of Ethiopia's long-term commitment to a multifaceted response to the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation that encompasses agro forestry, forest sector development, greening and renewal of urban areas, and integrated water and soil resources management.

This has an immense contribution to Ethiopia's efforts to meet its international commitments such as the Paris Climate Change Agreement, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative has multiple targets as it naturally touches on various targets of the 2030 Agenda. Contribution to food security is one of the objectives of the Initiative. In 2022 alone, more than 500 million seedlings with premium values in local and international markets such as avocados, mangoes, apples and papayas were planted.

This directly feeds into the current drive of becoming food self-sufficient by promoting sustainable agriculture as envisaged in Sustainable Development Goal II. The Initiative is a major flagship project that will help attain its adaptation goals as set in the National Adaptation Plan. Ethiopia is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change.

Frequent droughts, floods and locust infestations are some of the manifestations of the extreme climate events.

Over the past four decades, the average annual temperature in Ethiopia is estimated to have risen by 0.37 degrees Celsius each decade. Directly linked to Goal 13 of the SDGs, this Initiative complements Ethiopia's efforts to reduce its vulnerability. Moreover, forest conservation, reforestation, restoration of degraded land and soil as well as the promotion of sustainable management of

forests.

Ethiopia's forest coverage has been declining for decades at an alarming rate. Between 2000 and 2013, the net loss of forest cover was 72,000 hectares a year which is equivalent to 100,840 football fields.

The Initiative intends to reverse this as this is unsustainable in a country where 85 % of the population depends on rain fed agriculture. Overall, the innovative aspect of the Initiative lies in its potential to address multiple objectives. This entails enormous benefits in environmental protection, restoration of overexploited and degraded natural resources such as surface soil and water, halting desertification and many other interrelated objectives. The enormity of the inter-linkages will significantly contribute to Ethiopia's efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Considering the potential in the tourism sector, the incumbent government has launched natural development projects in different parts of the nation. Beautifying Sheger is one with a vision of increasing tourism and quality of life, reducing the effects of climate change and to create jobs in the Ethiopian capital city by developing green spaces from Entoto to Akaki waste water treatment plant. The project aims to convince citizens to assist in the cleaning efforts as well, as despite Ethiopia's recent economic development there has been no environmental action to reduce industrious and urban waste.

Dine for Ethiopia projects will also offer the untapped opportunity for investments in ecotourism, agro-processing, and apparel manufacturing and food industries. Endowed with natural assets, culture, and history, Koyssha, Gorgora, and Wenchi projects will also enable decent work, livelihoods, and return on investments for all stakeholders.

The effort that has been made so far has countless benefits in terms of reducing air pollution which will have a severe impact on the health of citizens apart from ensuring economic benefit to the people at large. Considering the effort exerted so far Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed received the Outstanding African Leadership Award presented by the American Academy of Achievement and the Global Hope Coalition in Washington DC for his initiative, called Green Legacy, to reforest the country.

The green initiative effort should continue until many African countries second it and join hands to make the continent a place where every citizens of the world prefers to live.



While the world always talks about climate change but does not intervene in tangible tasks, some countries including Ethiopia are transferred to practical responses that could be exemplary to the world at large

Art & Culture

Our thoughts do not define us

BY SENAIT G/HIWOT

Days before my 26th birthday I discovered a deeper meaning to life. I realized I was defining myself all the time to some concepts in my mind and being unhappy... I realized I had taken the wrong way of finding self-worth and happiness by telling myself that I had to be confident all the time and to do this and that... I realized the more I told myself to be confident the more I felt like I lacked something.

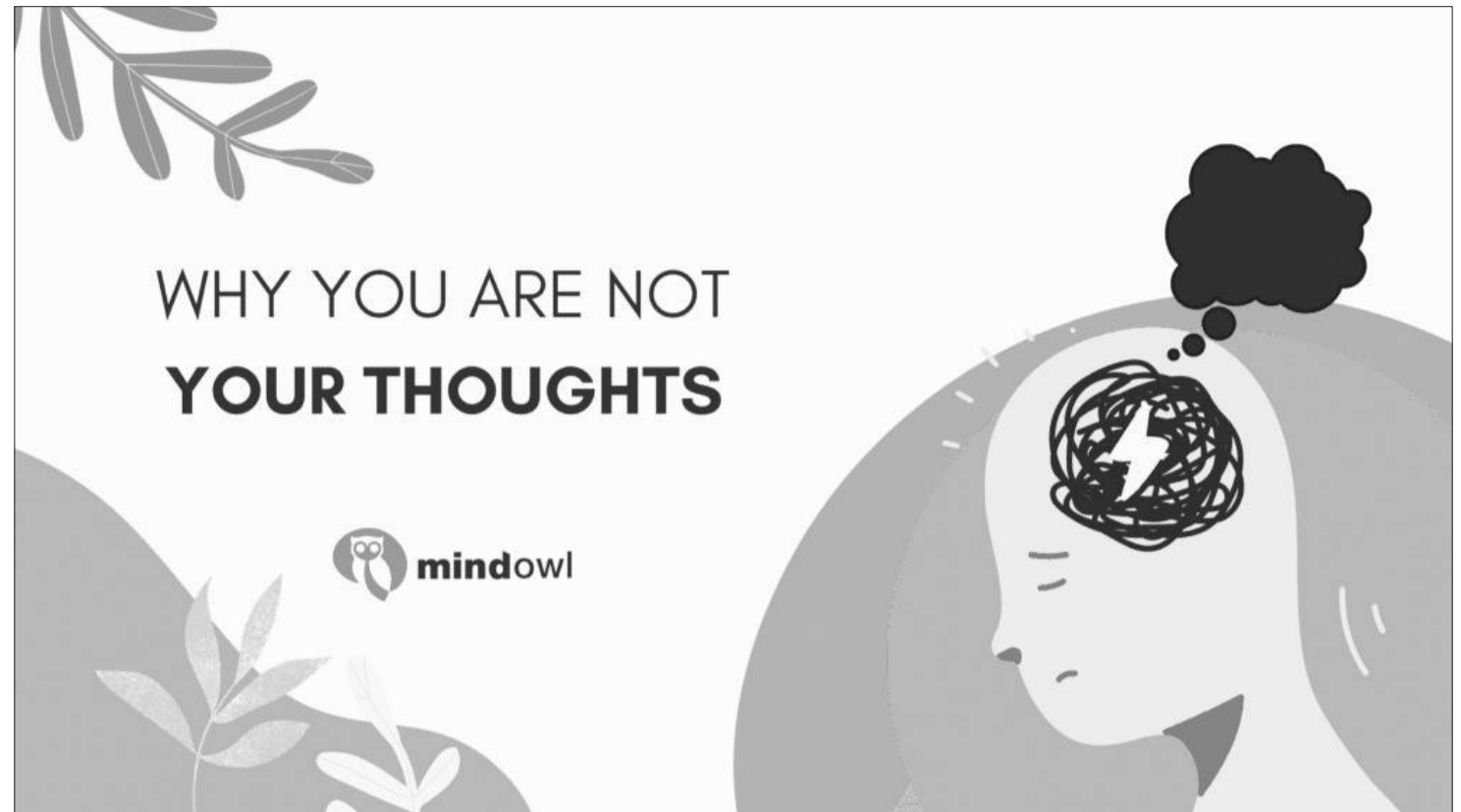
A guy called Noah Elkrief on you tube made me realize that I am not my thoughts... that thoughts aren't real... good or bad they are just circumstantial, not reality... i grasped this concept so easily and applied it to my life and found happiness and self-worth.

Elkrief made it clear to me that there is always a self-image we protect and that is why we are so afraid or skeptical of other people's views towards our image... we protect it with all we have.

What is self-image though... let's break it down

For me I had a self-image of Smart, Polite, Reserved, Confident, Beautiful, Rich, Kind, Observer Stressed, Judgmental, Awkwardly shy, Weak, Conservative and strong.

But aren't there times when I was also the opposite of that YES there were..... so do these traits define me? No they don't... see I am the awareness, consciousness, soul and I can't be defined by thoughts of



myself or other people... so that gives me the absolute freedom to be anything I want.

The other thing that Elkrief made clear for me was that what we think as Good or Bad are not actually true but circumstantial... what might be good for one person may be bad for the other.... So what is bad what is good?

Bad is usually understood as something that creates discomfort, pain, lack of pleasure

but how do we know that is bad just because we experienced those emotions... what if those emotions make us better or give us a deeper meaning in life?

Good is usually defined as something that creates pleasure, satisfaction and comfort but how do we know that is good just because we experienced those emotions... what if those emotions end up harming us?

So we don't know what is good and bad...

all we know is reality and it changes all the time like night and day... we also physically change but something in us is always there since we were born and that is consciousness or awareness and that is what we are.

So should we worry about what others think or what we think about ourselves?

THOUGHTS DO NOT DEFINE US. GOD DOES!

Using poetry as a gift card

BY ALEM HAILU G/KRISTOS

Hearing the good news my nice at the other end of the Atlantic Ocean was to graduate I was at a loss how fast to send her a congratulation card when the idea writing a poem dedicated to her crossed my mind. I remember reading How Helen Steiner Rice was using poems for gift and congratulation cards. We could do the same during mother's and father's day and the like. Let us see Helen Stiner's poem about fathers

Fathers are wonderful people

Fathers are wonderful people

Too little understood,

And we do not sing their praises

As often as we should...

For, somehow, Father seems to be

The man who pays the bills,

While Mother binds up little hurts

And nurses all our ills...

And Father struggles daily

*To live up to 'his image'
As protector and provider
And 'hero of the scrimmage'...*

*And perhaps that is the reason
We sometimes get the notion,
That Fathers are not subject
To the thing we call emotion,*

*But if you look inside Dad's heart,
Where no one else can see
You'll find he's sentimental
And as 'soft' as he can be...*

*But he's so busy every day
In the grueling race of life,
He leaves the sentimental stuff
To his partner and his
wife...*

*But Fathers are just wonderful
In a million different ways,
And they merit loving compliments
And accolades of praise,*

*For the only reason Dad aspires
To fortune and success
Is to make the family proud of him
And to bring them happiness...*

*And like Our Heavenly Father,
He's a guardian and a guide,
Someone that we can count
on*

*To be always on our side.
(Helen Steiner Rice)*

My poem

Balloons soared to the sky

Elated are dad, mom

And I

Why?

Because my niece

Kibrewengel

Graduating from GMU,

Climbed

The academic ladder high;

Balloons soared to the sky

*To greet
Happy doves that roved
The sky.*

*Kisses are blown,
For her Knacks
Are far and wide known.*

*Now is time for rejoice
And laughter*

Calculus, Algebra

Differential equation

Real analysis

Computer programing

What have you?

Are at the tips of

Her every finger.

To her mom and dad

*The soft spoken, polite
girl*

True to her name

Proved

A cherished daughter.

Society

Rehabilitating repatriates through PPP intervention

BY LELUSEGED WORKU

Every year, more than a million youth enter the labor force in Ethiopia. Despite all the efforts to create better job opportunities in different mega projects, manufacturing, construction, trade and service sectors, the number of unemployed citizen remains one of the pressing challenges to Ethiopia.

For this reason, like other parts of the world, it is common for Ethiopians, especially young people, to travel to foreign countries illegally looking for job opportunities with attractive salary.

In fact, for some of the young people, the reasons to travel abroad illegally are not economic problem. But, it is associated with family pressure, peer influence, and human traffickers' traps.

As a result, many Ethiopians have been migrating to overseas illegally, mainly to the Arab countries, and other areas thinking they could earn a living and support their family.

Those fortunate young migrants, whose luck has lead them to a country where the economy is better and the political situation is stable, are seen working hard, improve their own lives and send money back to their families. Unfortunately, there are also others whose life ended up in prisons, face number of challenges or returned back home empty handed.

Sources indicated that Ethiopia has the largest number of migrants returning to the East and Horn of Africa, mainly after travelling seeking work opportunities in overseas.

Ethiopia, as a major labor sending country, is currently experiencing an increase in number of returnees.

Seeing the social and economic challenges of the returnees, the Ethiopian Government is also working aggressively to rehabilitate returnees, provide them with better job opportunities and trainings. For instance, as it was indicated by Ministry of Labor and Skill (MoLS), more than thousands of Ethiopian returnees have recently got job opportunities in various economic sectors. The Ministry, joining hands with other stakeholders and partners and using the available resources and opportunities, has created job opportunities to returnees.

Understanding the socioeconomic burden of the problem not only on the individual returnee, his/her respective families and even on the country, several stakeholders are also discharging their social responsibilities in accordance with the directives the government has set to provide job opportunities for returnees.

As part of this effort, lately, the Ministry of Labor and Skill, along with JAMBO Cleaning Service, First Consult and Addis Ababa Labor Enterprise Industry Development Office, has created job opportunity for not less than 1,000 returnees. Using the opportunity provided by the Ministry and stakeholders, the returnees have taken basic life skill trainings that would equip them with the required knowledge and skills to be



Photo- UNDO

productive citizens.

Employment Provision Leader with the Ministry Birhanu Abera said that the MoLS, is paving the way for returnees to support themselves and start their own business through allocating all the available resources

On his part, JAMBO Cleaning Service Managing General Tewodros Gebrye, said that his organization is working to support the returnees. According to him, Jambo Cleaning Service, together with the Ministry and other stakeholders, is providing relevant training to returnees to equip them with better training to make them effective and productive citizens.

In an interview with the local media, returnees who took the training said that the training provided by the Ministry and stakeholders is timely and have a great contribution to their future career. According to returnees, the multipurpose training provided by the Ministry of Labor and Skill in partnership with other stakeholders have a crucial role in shaping their future and serve as a means to earn their own income.

Returnees face a lot of difficulties upon return, in particular in terms of creating decent livelihood opportunities, especially in a situation of mass return. Several experts in the area suggests that one of the main priorities of countries who faced mass returnee is to strengthen their institutional capacity to provide economic empowerment support to returnees such as career counseling, market-oriented skill building, and sustainable livelihood training for instance through job-placement or access to finance to start up own businesses.

As it is indicated by ILO, building strong cooperation and capacity building activities to manage returnees and reintegration

should be part of countries' priorities in supporting them. Furthermore, providing returnees with basic skill trainings on entrepreneurship and motivational skill is one tool in overcoming economic and social challenges of returnees.

Indeed, the issue of migration and reintegration has become a priority agenda for the Government of Ethiopia. With the increase in migration flows from Ethiopia over the past decade, returning and reintegration has become an increasing salient issue, with many Ethiopian nationals coming back to Ethiopia.

As the number of returnees increase, the government is also working to address the challenges and reduce returnees' economic and social burdens. In this respect, the role of private sectors in easing government's burden by providing training and job opportunities to returnees is worth appreciating. The partnership between JAMBO Cleaning Service and the Ministry is a good indication in this regard.

The partnership between the Ministry of Labor and Skills and private sectors is a step towards strengthening public-private partnerships in helping the repatriates; it is a critical step in laying the groundwork for other possible collaborations with the private sector to create even more job opportunities for young returnees in Ethiopia.

In related news, the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs said that last Friday about 1,014 Ethiopians have returned home from Saudi Arabia. The Ministry indicated that out of the total returnees 924 are men, 63 women and 27 them are children under the age of 18. The Ministry also indicated that returnees are obtaining all the necessary support at the Airport and Sheltering centers and, reunification with their family members is being carried out.



More than thousands of Ethiopian returnees have recently got job opportunities in various economic sectors. The Ministry, joining hands with other stakeholders and partners and using the available resources and opportunities, has created job opportunities to returnees

Law & Politics

Cooperation not intervention: Africa demands true partnership of equals

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Since time immemorial, Africa has passed through many peaks and troughs, rises and falls, strikes and gutters as well as hills and valleys with the intent of standing on its feet and reaching where it is today. It is interesting to note that since the dawn of history the whole thing for the continent of Africa was not a low-hanging fruit or a walk in the park. In good truth, Africa has been moving forward in the right direction in the face of continuous challenges.

In the aftermath of African emancipation, African nations have been passing through segregating political beliefs as a consequence of the dictations of some entities under the pretense of quid pro quo, assistance, growth, and other related aspects.

It is an indisputable fact the continent of Africa as things stand at the moment necessitates audacious and determined collaboration with its assistants throughout the entire world. Albeit Africa experiences a well-established relationship with quite a lot of nations worldwide, it has been to this point a disproportionate partnership. In words of one syllable, the continent of Africa demands a true partnership of equals.

Regardless of the fact that some entities know the fact that Africa is an opportunity for the entire world beyond a shadow of a doubt, they are not in the position to give credit where credit is due. The continent of Africa is still under the yoke of some foreign affiliates that have been utilizing at all hours of the day and night its untapped natural resources. It has been as well under unceasing dictations of third parties striving to twist its arm and putting unwarranted pressure under the pretense of a considerable amount of lame reasons.

Africa, which is inundated with countless natural and manmade resources, does not have to be considered the home of famine, war, drought, and conflict.

As the resources Africa possesses are more than enough to feed the entire world let alone its own people and reach where the highly developed nations have already seized, Africans should design certain effective strategies that help them free from the chain of poverty and create a true partnership of equals with some nations worldwide.

For the sake of truth, the U.S. – Africa Leaders' Summit which was held in Washington DC from 13-15 managed to play a paramount role in articulating their shared concern and bringing collective positions into the fold.

It goes without saying the continent of Africa needs to be represented in a wide spectrum of issues such as global climate



change, democracy, worldwide economy, health, safety and security, crimes against international law, poverty, brutal suppression, impoverishment, and other related aspects. If the continent of Africa fails to put the aforementioned reality on the ground into effect, attaining the desired goal will be like getting blood out of a stone and painting the fourth bridge.

In spite of the fact that Africa is rich in natural resources, the continent has been witnessing widespread poverty and underdevelopment that need a quick fix before the situation goes from the frying pan into the fire. From economy to politics, some entities are behind all African conundrums that have been handcuffing the hands of Africans at various points in time.

It must be remembered that all African challenges arise out of hundreds of years of conspiracies of several entities that consider the continent as not a fully-pledged one. The Eurocentric thought that has been injected into World history continues to put African values in shambles and weaken Pan Africanism thoughts.

As inoculating western political ideology did not help Africa move forward to emblem its delightful facial future to the world and become involved in efforts to develop in an African way, all states of the continent should move heaven and earth to put the phrase 'African solutions to African problems' into effect turning a blind eye to the rhetoric of unbiased observers. As a matter of fact, it is more than time for the continent of Africa to take an inner-directed standpoint for positive outcomes.

Rather than being a bystander with regard to African issues, Africans do not have to give the green light to other groups to turn the tables on them. If truth be told, the secret behind some nations' advancement in technology and other aspects of human development is the rich resources of Africa situated in the length and breadth of the continent of Africa.

In the absence of these invaluable resources, some nations in the world for sure will feel

like a fish out of water and a chicken with its head cut off. As their action is like watching a caterpillar turning into a butterfly, Africans should wake up before the whole thing continues going from the frying pan into the fire.

As some groups know the fact that a united and prosperous Africa will not let them utilize the rich resources and pose the biggest threat to their existence, they, directly and indirectly, instigate conflict among the continent of Africa in all shapes and forms.

It is crystal clear that if Africans turn their full attention to development making use of their God-given resources wisely and fairly, some nations will get stuck sooner rather than later. Aside from threatening a catastrophic escalation, their existence would remain under a big question mark and the whole thing would take a turn for the worse.

Africans should separate the wheat from the chaff than upping the ante orchestrated by some entities that place every now and then huge emphasis on looting the resource of Africa in a number of instances. As nothing makes some nations happier than twisting Africa's arm bringing a number of evil strategies into play, Africans should look inward to see outwards and distance themselves from becoming an instrument of their criminal deeds going behind closed curtains.

As long as everything required for development is at the doorstep of the continent, Africans need to join hands putting their differences aside and placing emphasis on taking the continent to the next level of accomplishment. Africa and its people should distance themselves from serving as an instrument of the conspiracies of some nations that have been dragging the continent back orchestrating layers of conspiracies.

If all potential gaps hovering over Africans are bridged, conflicts for sure will cease to exist in the continent of Africa in the shortest possible time. It must be kept in mind that

the continent of Africa has been destabilized by centuries of coercion, colonialism, neo-colonialism, mismanagement, conflict, and many related things.

Unless Africa breaks the chain of dependency on other nations in the best way possible, the continent will remain poor and destabilized forever. In a related move, leaders of Africa should be careful of their words and wean themselves from making empty promises that can cause unrest and back the continent of Africa into a corner. Africa additionally has both the capability and determination to solve wide-ranging issues from development, education, and health to peace and security.

According to information obtained from The White House, at the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, held from December 13-15, 2022 in Washington DC, President Biden reaffirmed the United States' commitment to deepen and expand our partnership with African countries to better meet the shared challenges and opportunities of our era.

The Summit reaffirmed our resolve to work collaboratively with African governments, businesses, and publics to strengthen people-to-people ties, ensure more inclusive and responsive global institutions, build a strong and sustainable global economy, foster new technology and innovation, strengthen health systems and prepare for the next pandemic, tackle the food security and climate crises, support democracy and human rights, and advance peace and security.

The U.S. Government is dedicated to following through on these commitments. To that end, the Biden administration is establishing a new Special Presidential Representative for U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit Implementation to coordinate implementation efforts. This senior position will ensure this strengthened partnership manifests not only in word, but also in deed. The Department of State will appoint Ambassador Johnnie Carson to this role. Ambassador Carson dedicated his 37-year career to African diplomacy, serving as the former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs and Ambassador to Kenya, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Earlier in his career, he also served in Botswana, Mozambique, and Nigeria, and was a Peace Corps volunteer in Tanzania.

Ambassador Carson will coordinate with U.S. and African government, civil society, private sector, and diaspora representatives to ensure that the important dialogues that began during the Summit lead to durable action. He will also work with a wide range of stakeholders to explore mechanisms for future high-level engagement. We are looking forward to bringing him on board.



Ephrem Endale
Contributor

Between you & me

Artificial Womb...Coming Soon!

Modern science seems to be moving in the queerest of ways. I mean the days of “Eureka!” seem to be wiped of the charts with the days of, well, call it what you may. As we hear more and more of ‘inventions’ which turn out to be ‘controversial’ and with no positive benefits to mankind we worry if science is becoming only about destruction! I mean, no more are many of us impressed by missiles that fly forty times the speed of towns. Missiles don’t build; they destroy as they are presently in Yemen, Ukraine and elsewhere. So hearing supposedly big and nominally ‘untouchable’ countries bragging of possessing weapons which could turn entire cities to dust at the touch of a single button, applause is the last thing that comes to our mind.

These days when they talk about the most sophisticated modern weapon they are not talking about lessening human destruction. They are talking about annihilating the highest number of people. More and more science seems to be coming up with ‘inventions’ which are not about saving humanity; but about destroying what’s already here. Many explain the never-ending wars and armed conflicts with the grand scheme of depopulating this earth. The talk of the financially muscular that in a few decades the world population will decrease by a third is a very strange thing to say. About two billion people perishing in a few decades! You can’t blame those who would say; Are these people thinking of doing something? Are they to let out another

round of viruses? Are the nukes about to fall all over this planet! Believe me these days no thought could be dubbed as crazy, because the craziest things are happening every day.

You can’t help but be scared. Take artificial intelligence. If the technology is used for the good of humanity and to build better world the benefits would have known no bounds. But when they are using them with the idea of bringing more destruction it’s worrying. Unfortunately that seems to be the overwhelming scenario! The things they tell you the robots of the artificial intelligence technology could do you wonder if the time when human beings would end up expendable is drawing ever nearer. One person even warned the robots would be far smarter than the smartest human beings. Recently an expert of something or other was quoted as claiming at a high level international meeting the world’s climate problems would be solved only when nine tenths of human being perish. What does that mean?

“The story of human evolution will not be the same again;” that is what one media outlet claimed writing about what they call Ectolife or ‘artificial womb.’ Artificial what!

Ours being a very religious society such ‘news’ send the shivers through tens of millions. As the ‘news’ from spiritual dimensions it is taken by many other sign of the Judgment Day drawing nearer. After all in so-called secular sections, societies have

begun talking of the “End Times.” You tube is bursting with all kinds of such stories. This is a world craving for good news and yet the reverse seems to be happening. What the hell is going on?

We are not here to debate about the Ectolife thing or other such ‘inventions.’ Still the matter deserves and those with the knowledge on both sides of the religious/secular divide should come out and tell us what’s what. Some would ask “Doesn’t this world has more pressing things to deal with before thinking of ‘incubating’ human beings in some factory or something?” Look I didn’t push in the term ‘incubating.’ It appears on many written material on the issue.

The extent to which this ‘invention’ goes is so mind-boggling, there are many questions than there are any answers. They claim everything works as the natural child bearing process does. But then a woman who gives birth naturally doesn’t choose skin complexion, the level of intelligence of the like. “EctoLife is a concept that offers parents to ‘produce’ customized babies with the help of artificial wombs. An ‘Elite Package’ would allow people to choose their baby’s level of intelligence, height, hair, eye color, physical strength and even skin tone;” so what appears the promotional narrative goes. But EctoLife does that! Are The Matrix characters coming off the screens and being our next door neighbors? Behold the Matrix! So we might in a few years’ time sit for a drink or two with the

real life Neo, Trinity, Morpheus, Agent Smith, Niobe etc.?

“EctoLife baby farm eliminates pregnancy and labor;” that’s how one paper titled it. Maybe, nice and good. But isn’t having babies all about pregnancy and labor! Isn’t being a mother all about going all through these processes! Just musing. Behold the Matrix!

By the way Cambridge dictionary changed its definitions for the terms “Man” “Woman.” Yes, it really did!

Man: - “an adult who lives and identifies as male though they may have been said to have a different sex at birth”.

Woman: - “an adult who lives and identifies as female though they may have been said to have a different sex at birth”.

Does that mean the biology books are going to be rewritten? It turns what you have been thinking all through on its head. In some countries male prisoners can claim to be women and they are relocated to the females ward. The bottom line seems to be if you say you’re a female then you’re a female. But family and friends must be still considering you as a “he!” The same might go for the females.

The people behind the ECTOLIFE thing say it would be practical within ten or fifteen years. And voila! You’ve a ‘factory’ that could ‘incubate’ as any as thirty thousand babies a year! You feel heavy around the throat even talking about it in those terms.

“We want Africa to be top of the world”

Today it’d be Argentina VS France. Some say it’s actually Argentina VS Africa. Forget it! Cheering on the French is one thing. But defining the team as an African team would do no good to African football which created real earthquakes in Qatar 2022. You could understand where that notion came from as the number of dark-skinned is quite significant. Do you remember years back when the French lifted the trophy what the far right Le Pen person said of the team, “Not white enough!” That was what he said. Not a very nice welcome, is it!

Yes, like most things skin color is a very visible and highly controversial issue not only in football but in all sports. So it is only natural for us to cheer those who looked like us.

No wonder there are many highly skilled dark skinned players especially in the European leagues. The fact is when you’re ‘from another skin complexion’ you’ve to do extra better than ‘the originals.’ These black players in European teams are at their highest levels because they work extra hard.

Morocco’s coach Walid Regragui says:

“European journalists do not like African teams playing like Europeans. In the past African teams were seen as teams who played for fun but were not effective. Those days are over.” Yes they are over and the Moroccans proved it. In the opening days of the up when unexpected teams put all predictions on their

heads there were items which claimed there was worry in the football administrative circles. What if an African team made it all the way to the final! That should have made everyone who wants to see the football monopoly broken. But no; that’s not the case. An African team in the finals would be financial disasters. It is strange. But then times have changed the football bosses should be ready for a new world order when it comes to soccer.

One thing Qatar 2022 would be remembered for is the disastrous refereeing that clouded many of the games. No wonder that all kinds of conspiracy theories are flying around.

Messi said: “I don’t want to speak about referees because after they will sanction you. But people saw what happened. Messi spoke and the poor guy was kicked all the way to Spain. Many accuse FIFA acting because of Messi’s criticisms and the guy shouldn’t have been humiliated that way. Goalie Martinez said, “The referee was just giving everything for them.... He just wanted them to score, that’s basically it.... He’s useless.” That’s what they made him to be... useless; at least for this world cup.

Well, that man seems to have added an unwanted color to the tournament. Seventeen yellow cards! That’s some feat, wouldn’t you say? And there was also a red card. But then one can’t deny that it was a very tension filled game. Maybe this guy was thinking of putting the game under control as he tried to do in

the Iran-USA game. I mean no one can blame him of lacking in the knowledge of the rules of the game being such an important presence in Spanish La Liga.

And the Argentinians have their share of strong criticisms from the Spaniards. Pepe says “After what happened yesterday, with Messi talking, all of Argentina was talking and the referee comes here to blow the whistle. I’m not saying that he comes here conditioned...but what did we play the second half? We weren’t allowed to play the second half.”

Bruno Fernandez was angry too; “We already know how it works ... before the game we already knew what we were in for, and what kind of referee we would find.” I don’t know if they’re going to give the trophy to Argentina. I don’t care, I’m going to say what I think and screw them. It’s very weird that a ref officiates us from a country still in the competition... clearly; they’ve tilted the field against us.”

This world cup goes as one of the worst when it comes to refereeing decision. No wonder conspiracy theories fly around. Conspiracies of seeking to make an already selected team champions. It was also about Europe and the others.

By the way what is going on with good old Ronaldo! Before the fallout with his coach he had some issues in one game he played. Despite his undisputed place as one of the greatest footballers of all times he was once

again of theatrics when he tumbled for the slightest touch that wouldn’t fall a five year old, some said. He got the penalty. The funny part is the referee wasn’t willing to look at VAR for second opinion. Now that’s not a good refereeing when clear controversies are ...but the Portugal is Europe and Ghana is Africa.

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Just in passing I’ve a little confession to make. I’ll tell you what, though I’m not a ‘fan’ of any of the two teams in today’s final I still want to see Lionel Messi’s hands around that cup. He deserves it. It is not only about his football skills. It is also about his professional discipline never trying to force his way into the spotlight as many seem to be fond of doing, never overreacting, and never offending fans of opposing teams.

Is the world ready for an African World champions. It should be. The Moroccans almost did it. As their coach put it; “We want Africa to be top of the world.” Cheers! You almost made it.

In Pictures

One visit to U.S, huge diplomatic gains!

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

The delegation of the government of Ethiopia led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has just traveled to Washington DC to attend the U.S.-Africa Leaders' Summit. Parallel to attending the leaders' summit, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed held productive discussions with different key government officials of the U.S. and other heads of international organizations, including the presidents of World Bank and IMF.



PM Abiy, President Biden, Ballon d'Or winner and President of Liberia, Weah watching football



The pictures was taken during the historic night that an African nation, Morocco, for the first time in history was playing World Cup Semi-final game with France, while the African leaders were gathered in Washington DC to attend the U.S.-Africa Leaders' Summit.

In the pictures U.S. President Joe Biden, Prime Minister of Ethiopia Abiy Ahmed, current President of Liberia and 1995 Ballon d'Or winner George Weah, other African leaders and U.S. senior officials are seen watching the semi-final football match between Morocco and France.

In diplomacy, such closeness and friendly vibes among leaders of different countries is a sign of strong diplomatic relations. Beyond a formal summit, the picture shows strong friendship, diplomatic relations and revival of the historic relation of Ethiopia and the U.S. and U.S.-Africa as well.



PM Abiy, World Bank Group President discussed



Prime Minister Abiy, in the sideline of U.S.-Africa Leaders' Summit discussed with the President of World Bank Group, David Malpass. As depicted in the picture PM Abiy and WB President shaking hands. The Ethio-World Bank heads talk came at a critical time when Ethiopia's peacebuilding process is on the right path to bring sustainable peace in Ethiopia following the Pretoria agreement between the Government of Ethiopia and the TPLF.

The resoration of peace and Ethiopia's efforts of peace-building are important steps to realize and accelerate Ethiopia's all-rounded reforms. Peace-building and development programmes are World Bank's priority areas. Ethiopia is tackling its political challenges through negotiations and peace-building process. Hence, the discussion between the two heads would help to revitalize the relation of WB and Ethiopia.

Following the discussion, Prime Minister Abiy said that the return of calm is a chance to accelerate the economic transformation agenda that enhances productivity and job creation. "I had a substantive discussion with the President of the World Bank Group, David Malpass on supporting our reforms."

PM Abiy, IMF Managing Director discussed

Prime Minister Abiy held productive discussions with International Monetary Fund (IMF). In the picture, PM Abiy was welcomed by IMF Managing Director, Kristalina Georgieva, at the headquarters of IMF. They discussed on Ethiopia's transformative economic reform agendas including the need for debt resolution.

During the discussion, PM Abiy expressed resolution to preserve past gains and deepen the reforms.

In addition, PM Abiy, along with his delegates, also held productive discussions with U.S. Trade Representative, Ambassador Katherine Tai on ways of expanding U.S.-Ethiopia trade relations. Similarly, PM Abiy held discussions with U.S. investors on investment potentials in Ethiopia.

