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Ethiopia's truce delivers peace dividends to East Africa : Amb. Morgan

• Applauds Ethiopia's role in South Sudan peace

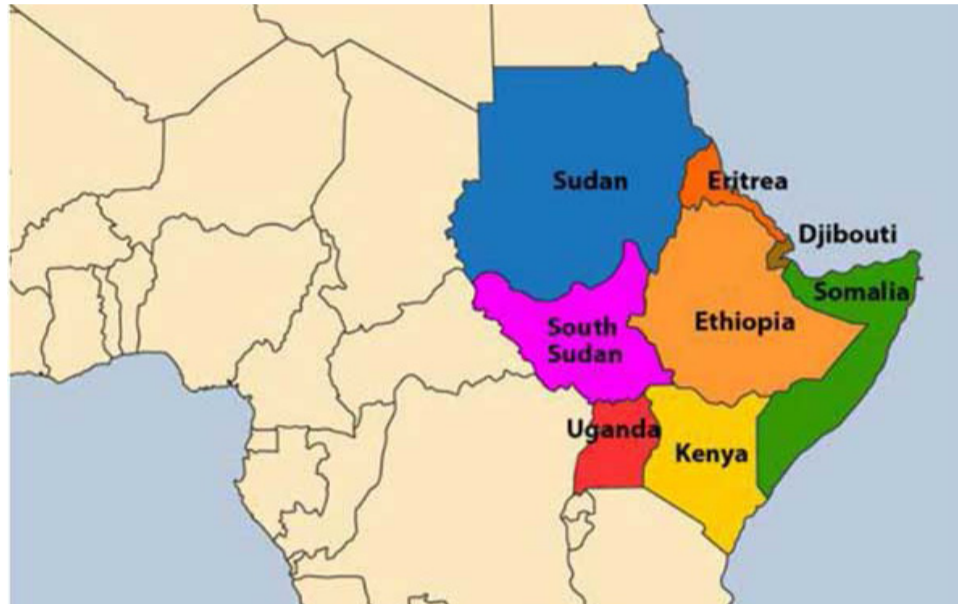
BY KFLEYESUS ABEBE

ADDIS ABABA- Taking the intertwined fate into account, South Sudan is delighted for Ethiopia to cease the two-year conflict in negotiation, the country's ambassador said, adding that the East African region is the direct beneficiary of the truce.

In an exclusive interview with The Ethiopian Herald, South Sudanese Ambassador to Ethiopia James Pitia Morgan stated that Ethiopia's peace has immense benefits for the stability of the turbulent East Africa. "The Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) which the government and TPLF signed in Pretoria and Nairobi is not only in the interest of the people of Ethiopia but also in the interest of the whole region."

Ambassador Morgan further highlighted that the restoration of peace and stability in Ethiopia, the most populous and economic powerhouse of East Africa, has also enormous benefits to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the regional body.

"When there is a problem in one member state, the situation affects the entire region and the implementation of our programs and aspirations including the free movement of people and economic and political



integration. Our vision to prosper will be put aside whenever there is a problem in the region."

Commenting on Ethiopia's role in South Sudan's peace, he indicated that the former has a longstanding role in helping his country to sustainably resolve internal problems through peaceful means. "Ethiopia has got a very important role in supporting us to resolve our internal problems peacefully and to shun war. We have seen that on many occasions when South Sudan has

See Ethiopia's Page 3 Ambassador James Pitia Morgan



Military options for holding power obsolete in Ethiopia

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA-Saying that the door is open to resolving differences through peaceful means, Ethiopian Ambassador to Kenya Bacha Debele

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Ethiopia's diplomacy succeeds in repelling mounting pressure

HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA –The strong and coordinated effort made by Ethiopian ambassadors, missionaries, the Diaspora community, and other relevant stakeholders constitute the country's success to withstand the intensified and unwarranted pressure of some interest groups, a senior diplomat said.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Ethiopia's former Permanent Representative at the UN in Geneva Ambassador Zenebe Kebede noted that the north Ethiopia conflict had dragged intensified attempts of meddling and pressure from some global forces. The country overcomes all these challenges through cooperative efforts made by

ambassadors, diplomats, and the diaspora community.

As to him, the Geneva-based International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia's (ICHREE) report is more politically motivated and it is not merely about human rights investigation. Also, the UNSC discussed for over fourteen times on Ethiopia's internal affairs in clear breach of its mandate and the issue of the joint investigation the commission is planning to undertake is biased.

The commission has established an investigation team which is illegal and the Ethiopian government has the capability of undertaking an independent investigation. On the other hand, the Ethiopian Human

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Commission providing aid for needy in Amhara, Afar

• Delivers 169, 000 MT food to conflict-affected areas since CoHA

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News

From deadly war to grand Deal: How Pretoria's peace deal redefines Ethiopia's diplomacy

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

Ethiopia's strained relation with some western countries and international organizations has recently returned to normalcy on the heels of the landmark Pretoria peace agreement struck between the Federal Government of Ethiopia and Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).

Some foreign countries and entities that have partly severed ties with the country mostly due to flurry of misinformation campaigns and far-fetched political interests have now been recalibrating their positions.

On 2nd of November 2022, the federal government and TPLF signed AU-brokered peace deal in Pretoria followed by two rounds of meetings in Nairobi between senior commanders of the respective parties.

In the wake of these positive developments, those international organizations along with other superpower countries around the world showed their readiness to intensify their work with the federal government after they witnessed the commitment of the incumbent to ensure the peace and security of the nation and implement the peace accord.

Those international entities showed their eagerness to collaborate with the federal government by letting the Ethiopian Airlines to secure a 281 million USD loan from the American EXIM Bank. Also, the World Bank Group (WBG) granted the government



WORLD BANK GROUP

of Ethiopia to acquire 2.9 billion USD in the coming years while the nation was participating on the US- Africa Leader's Summit 2022.

Century long partnership between Ethiopia and the US made the lone came to reality. The agreement has also created more rooms for both countries regarding job creation and other advantages.

Global Chairperson, Fairfax Africa Fund, Zemedeneh Nigatu has also mentioned in his tweet that the agreement brings mutual advantage for both nations. He tweeted, "... Ethiopian Airlines group to acquire new Boeing aircrafts which support 1,600 American jobs. *Ethiopian* is Boeing's biggest customer in Africa and the new purchases reflect the mutually beneficial U.S-Ethiopia relationship."

On top of that, US EXIM bank President and Chair Reta Jo Lewis also said that the announcement would ensure that 1,600 hardworking Americans will be able to keep and maintain their good-paying jobs. This transaction also advances one of US EXIM bank founding charter mandates to expand and improve commercial ties across the Horn



of Africa.

The US EXIM bank loan would make the airlines to purchase 26 more Boeing airplanes and expand its services.

Albeit the world shows its interest to stand with the federal government, there are still some entities that are spreading false information and accusation regarding the action taken by the Ethiopian Government on the implementation of the peace accord and unfettered humanitarian assistance.

Recently, some officials from the US Congress namely Brad Sherman, Ilhan Omar and James P. Mc Govern submitted a letter to halt the loan that the Ethiopian Airlines requested the American EXIM Bank. They appealed that the peace process hasn't drawn results in full and unfettered access coupled with massive scale-up of medical and health assistance that the people of Tigray need. The objective of sending the letter is to spread disinformation on Ethiopia. This shows that some actors are still demanding sanctions and preconditions that threaten national policies and nation's sovereignty. The information they stated is completely

opposite to the ones that the AU- Brokered team disclosed in various occasions.

On December 17 publication of The Reporter Newspaper stated that on behalf of the Ethiopian Airlines, Ethiopian Airlines Chief Executive Officer (CEO), MesfinTassew quoted, "The decision was on hold for several months because of the war in the northern Ethiopia and pressure from the politicians. For a month now, they were processing the permit and it is expected to be completed next week."

Following the Pretoria agreement, all those bumpy roads lays between the Ethiopia and the international world have become smooth. Those sides that stood on the opposite side of the federal government have now shown interest to support the peace accord and provide the necessary humanitarian assistance. The partnership that Ethiopia has with those actors has gradually restored. This is because the federal government has exerted its potential to ensure the nation's peace with all points.

In various events, stakeholders who are close to the peace agreement and involved in the implementation process of the AU-led peace accord are reporting that the process is on the right track. The latest swift developments such as the deployment of federal police to guard federal institutions, the resumption of flights to Mekele, not to mention the humanitarian supplies and restoration of basic services, surely promises a new dawn in Ethiopia.

Obasanjo confirms aid delivery, basic service resumption in Tigray

ADDIS ABABA (ENA) - The Special Envoy of the African Union, Olusegun Obasanjo, confirmed on Thursday that emergency humanitarian assistance is being provided in Tigray region and basic services have started.

The Special Envoy of the African Union, Olusegun Obasanjo, and former President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, arrived the reported day in Mekelle to observe the implementation of the peace agreement reached between the federal government and the TPLF.

According to the special envoy, the visit of a delegation of senior government officials led by House Speaker Tagesse Chafo to Mekelle has confirmed the commitment of the government.

The special envoy explained that following the peace agreement emergency humanitarian aid is being widely provided in Tigray region and basic services have started.

He appreciated the government's commitment to resume basic services in Tigray and make humanitarian aid accessible; and thanked the leaders of both sides for the good work they did for the peace agreement.

Obasanjo also reminded that the provision of unfettered humanitarian aid, resumption of basic services and establishment of lasting peace in northern Ethiopia are part



of the peace agreement, and thanked the government for implementing everything as per the agreement.

The special envoy stated that it is commendable that electricity, banking, telecommunication, and other basic services have started within a short period of time.

He further said the African Union, the people of Ethiopia, and the civil and military leaders of the two sides have played a significant role in bringing about this result.

Former Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta said on his part we have confirmed that all transport corridors are open for emergency humanitarian aid and basic services have started.

He also stated that it is commendable that air transport, roads, banks, electricity and

other services, including humanitarian aid, have resumed operations in the region.

"The leaders deserve praise for this result, and we will continue to strengthen our cooperation," Kenyatta said, adding that the implementation of the peace agreement is a clear demonstration that it is possible to provide an African solution for Africa's problems.

Justice Minister Gideon Timotiws said the government is implementing everything as per the promises made following the peace agreement.

He further confirmed that the government will work with determination in all fields.

Senior leadership of the TPLF, Getachew Reda confirmed that the agreement is being implemented by both parties.



Ethiopian to resumes flights to Shire

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA—The Ethiopian Airlines has announced that it will start making one flight a day to Shire town, Tigray state as of next Monday.

According to local media reports, the airlines will also increase its regular flights to Mekelle from a single flight to three times a day. It has also continuously increased the number of flights per day by considering the number of passengers in the future. The airlines also announced that customers can be registered and book tickets using the website and company's mobile application from wherever they are.

It is to be recalled that Ethiopian airlines resumed its regular passengers' flight to Mekelle at Alula Aba Nega Airport upon completion of some reconstruction process. Apart from this, many concerned institutes and various bodies such as ethiotelecom, Ethiopian Road Administration, Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, and the likes have been working closely to restore the physical infrastructure and back the area to normalcy as it was seriously affected due to the conflict.

It is recurrently heralded that the resumption of regular flights would bring manifold advantages such as restoring peace process, encouraging social interaction, enhancing common trust and mutual understanding as well as integrating families .

News

Organization hands over water project to serve 76,500 residents

BY YESUF ENDRIS

NEGELE ARSI- Habitat for Humanity Ethiopia-HFHE has accomplished its three year clean water project in NegeleArsiWoreda of Western Arsi. About 76,000 residents who have been suffering from water stress for long have become beneficiaries, *The Ethiopian Herald* learnt.

The Project has been implemented by HFHE with financial support from Korean Government (Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Korean International Cooperation Agency-Global Disease Eradication Fund (KOICA-GDEF) and Habitat for Humanity Korea (HFHK), it was stated.

Speaking to Ethiopian Press Agency, project executives, government officials and residents said that the project is now providing lifesaving drink water as the area was under green drought for long time.

HFHE finance officer GudisaWogari, who is also in charge of project coordinator, said that the project consists of water reservoirs, water points, and HDPE water pipelines development.

The project has two newly constructed water reservoirs, 27 water points and 56 kilometer long pipeline; and provides seven Kebeles clean water.



Negele Arsi Water and Energy Office Head, GalatooTeshitee said, "Life in several rural areas Negele Arsi is so hard due to water scarcity. In their daily works, consisting of pounding grains and preparing food for their family, some locals used to go to river or streams for drinking water, he indicated. The government in collaboration with NGOS and traditional institutions to build water points. HFHE has also provided lifeline service."

Halima Ahmedin, a mother of seven, also said that the water project makes her to access sufficient clean water.

"My family members and I were under water stress and it was a must to go far away

from their home to fetch potable water. It took at least two hours to reach the river. Now, the project makes our life easy as we can access drink water nearby," she said.

As to her, rivers were used as source of drinking water for both residents and cattle till recent times.

Another resident of Neggele Arsi, Teitu Shala also said that her entire family was challenged by water scarcity until HFHE's project inauguration.

"Now, we are accessing clean water effortlessly. So, I would like appreciate funders and implementers engaged in this project construction," she added.



Ethiopia's...

Right commission and ICHREE jointly conducted a fair investigation and report their results.

Ambassador Kebede continued: "The findings and witnesses of the joint report revealed that there is no genocide, ethnic cleansing committed, using aid as a weapon of war and others. What we can understand from that is they simply received dictation from the opposing side and put their report as an investigation as a political tool."

The ICHREE allegedly accused the Ethiopian government of crimes against humanity and human right violation. From the very beginning, Ethiopia opposed the resolution citing its establishment as a politically-motivated measure.

The commission was established to repeat what has already been done by the joint investigation report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights into alleged human rights violations. The government of Ethiopia has done its best in conducting investigations and ensuring accountability including the establishment of an inter-ministerial task force.

The commission has no power to investigate in Ethiopia and this is not acceptable to the government. We conveyed that their mere intention is to intervene in the internal affairs of the country under the guise of human rights."

Commission providing aid for needy in Amhara, Afar

• *Delivers 169, 000 MT food to conflict-affected areas since CoHA*

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA- The Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission (EDRMC) said it has delivered humanitarian aid to people affected by the past unrest in Amhara and Afar states.

The commission also dispatched some 169,000 metric tons (MT) of food items to the war-impacted Amhara, Afar, and Tigray states since the enactment of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA).

Following the CoHA, the government and partners have delivered 141, 671 metric tons of food in the first- round of operation (45 days) and covered the entire 8.3 million people in need in the three states, Commissioner Shiferaw Teklemariam (Ph.D.) told journalists yesterday. In the second round of operation, the commission

also delivered 28,000 metric tons of food supplies and covered 20 percent of the needy.

The first and second operation covers all Tigray zones, three zones of Amhara as well as three zones of Afar State. Some 3872 metric tons of nutrition food is also being transported, in the aforesaid states, he added.

Some 22 flights transported over 959 million Birr in cash via Mekelle and Shire airports. Some 879,980 liters of fuel were also transported to Tigray including allowing companies to transport fuel directly from Djibouti to Mekelle.

According to the commissioner, in the reported period, the WFP, the federal government, and the Integration of Donors took a lion's share in supplying humanitarian assistance. The government has delivered over 15, 000 metric tons of food out of the

169,000, and the remaining is covered by donors.

Also, 22 flights transported cash and 3,117 trucks were deployed to transport the humanitarian supplies. About international cooperation in humanitarian response, some 119 aid agencies partners have participated in the endeavor utilizing the four land corridors namely Afar-Abala, Gondar-Humera-Shire, Kombolcha-Kobo, Gondar-Debank-Mai Tsebri as well the air transport.

Shiferaw pointed out that various institutions have been widely engaged in the rehabilitation and restoration of essential services in the conflict- affected areas and the commitment of donors to work in cooperation with the government is encouraging.

The National Rehabilitation Commission was established to facilitate the rehabilitation process, it was learned.

Ethiopia's truce...

encountered problems, Ethiopia is always there."

Ambassador Morgan continued: "Starting from the time of Emperor Haileselassie I, we always make sure that any problem in South Sudan is brought to Ethiopia to find the solution. So when the north Ethiopia conflict broke out, the first leader in the region who called for peace was my President SalvaKiirMayardit."

Military options

(General) stressed that the use of violence as means of achieving political goals is unachievable in today's Ethiopia.

Speaking to local media, the military commander turned diplomat said that the recent political path demonstrated that the route to attaining political goals is only negotiation and round-table talks. Armed militants including Shene could simply draw a lesson that only damages could be gained out of killing and looting civilians. Thus, it is important to address differences peacefully.

"Anyone devoted to their country should not be fond of the destructive attempts of some interest groups who wish to see a weak and

destabilized Ethiopia."

The Ambassador further expressed optimism that the consultative meeting that senior commanders of the government and TPLF held recently in Nairobi will ensure the smooth and unhindered implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA). "Most of the measures taken afterward the CoHA demonstrated this fact and the restoration of electricity and telecom services as well as the uninterrupted humanitarian aid delivery showcased the fruit of the truce."

Moreover, following the CoHA, the Federal Police have taken full control over the federal institutions in Maychew, Mekelle,

Tekeze, Adigrat, and other towns. TPLF forces also returned all heavy armaments to members of the Ethiopian National Defense Force that were stationed in Agula town, Southern Zone of the Tigray State.

The resumption of direct flights to Mekelle, the visit of a high-level government delegation, and the deployment of the monitoring and verification team as well as mediators from Kenya and the African Union are all the fruits of the truce.

"Not only do these measures demonstrate the commitment of both sides to better implementation of the accord but it brought relief to multiple sides that second-guess the Pretoria Agreement," Bacha emphasized.

Opinion

New Year-resurrection in present, reborn in future, die every moment to past

BY LAKACHEW ATINAFU

The continent of Africa has been marginalized from the rest of the world and served the planet without receiving fair in exchange. Africa has been exploited and engulfed by powers aroused from narcissistic approach and devil philosophy.

Even in these days of democratization and nations vow for safeguarding human values and fairness of equality, the western world is frequently observed to exclude Africa and manage sustain oppression.

Medieval and modern histories have it that Africa has had chronologies mainly with Western Europe from the age of exploration, slave trade, and colonization to the present time.

Long was the journey dark was the night of course, Africans in the end mainly in the third quarter of the twentieth century emancipated from colonial rule however there is yet perpetuate sound of colonial legacy which manifests itself in unbalanced trade, intervention of the westerns in internal affairs, partiality and other systematic oppression.

The US and EU influence and consider themselves as formulator of obligatory policy may not sound better any more as Africa is big geopolitics importance, potential investment destination, preferred market place and generator of raw materials for the globe.

Hence, Africa is almost the gear box of the planet that existence of the world excluding Africa cannot be thought of.

Crystal clear in deed Africa is not reloaded contender that stands the super power in confronting them with nuclear weapon. But the continent is a milked cow that they have deceived to sustain the hook and suckers relation. The westerns do not pull triggers but they deploy mechanisms to sustain the continent as tribute of their wellbeing.

Africa is now forced to alter other partners if the western continue stirring every piece of shit in the continent.

For Example, the US frequently warn countries and would take measures like expelling from AGOA unless they adhere to the sole interest of it.

The current rotation and revolution ushered new things. Multipolarism holds for the emerging nation ample of opportunities so that the rest of the world should foresee fundamental changes of circumstances and revised policies laid on the foundation of greedy interest.

So Africans and the US, EU should begin the new year as the planet will make a full circle around the sun on January first.

Leaders of Africa are also urged to work aggressively in international sphere of diplomacy, keep on playing their card well in convincing investors to do business in Africa convey messages the significance the continent as the source of raw material for most of the industries, on top of its contribution in maintaining balance of nature.

Here it is quite imperative to scale up best

practice of Ethiopia in the diplomatic sphere of influence and glittering achievements gained in the endeavor.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) launched on Monday at the annual performance evaluation

and planning retreat of senior officials at the African Leadership Academy in Sululta Town of Oromia State.

Withstanding the internal and external challenges that tested Ethiopia's diplomacy in the past two years, the country has achieved significant success in the area, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen said.

Ethiopia has attained huge diplomatic success over the past year despite the conflict in the northern part of the country and mounting pressure from some interest groups.

The conflict coupled with external challenges has never pulled back Ethiopia rather makes the country register huge diplomatic achievements including the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA), peaceful negotiation, negotiations on GERD, and others.

Praising the commitment and efforts made by the local community, the diaspora, and ambassadors, Demeke highlighted that the diplomats did a great job in protecting Ethiopia's national interest. "They were more than effective in preserving Ethiopia's interests, living up to Ethiopians' aspirations and the country's rich heritage.

Despite the dynamic and unpredictable nature of global diplomacy Ethiopian diplomats exerted their utmost effort and protected the country's national interest," he highlighted.

He urged the diplomats to do their level best to advance the national interest of the country by any means. Ethiopians in the Diaspora should also keep on standing by the side of the homeland and to further collaborate with the government to register better results.

Regarding the progress and implementation of the CoHA signed between the federal government and TPLF, the DPM expressed optimism for the success of the accord. The government remains steadfast in its commitment to the success of the peace process.

MoFA State Minister Ambassador Birtukan Ayano said on her part that, the ambassadors will reflect on the challenges of 2022 and the solutions given to them, besides laying out the core issues of engagement in the upcoming year.

She also mentioned last week's visits to over 10 institutions in the country that were designed to show the fruits of the reform process and reveal what is expected from the ambassadors in augmenting the capacity of some of the institutions.

As Ethiopia and Africans are keen to renew the robust diplomatic tie with the westerns world, the US should reinstate countries expelled from AGOA.

From the outset, one must note that AGOA

is an essential but not ideal initiative for African countries. Therefore, while losing AGOA benefits could cause several socioeconomic and (possibly) political challenges, it should not be considered as the sole determinant of the nations' beneficiary from the economic prospects.

First, having been used as a US foreign policy tool, one may logically doubt the very motive and purpose of AGOA. Secondly, the fact that the AGOA is the US' grant for Africa, the continuation of which relies exclusively on the US, makes African nations donee beneficiaries hence contradicting the idea of establishing a mutually respectful relationship. While the US makes huge benefits from AGOA, it would be wrong and unfair to consider African countries the exclusive beneficiaries.

This notwithstanding, the US' expulsion of Ethiopia from the AGOA benefit can seriously impact the economy. First, it will hurt Ethiopia's fledgling manufacturing sector as several manufacturing industries (mainly apparel and footwear industries) exporting their products to the US market through the AGOA duty-free program will be forced to continue doing so.

The decision will also discourage potential foreign investors who are contemplating participating in the manufacturing sector through the industrial parks, hoping that they would access the US market through AGOA. Exclusion from AGOA will significantly decrease Ethiopia's export.

Millions of poor citizens, mostly women, who have relied on the manufacturing industries and small-scale businesses directly or indirectly related to AGOA, will lose their jobs. This may create social chaos and disturbance. Several companies will be forced to close. These and other associated problems may create further stress on the economy.

To prevent the aforementioned and related challenges, Ethiopia and the US should engage in an interest-based constructive engagement. Continuing Ethiopia's membership in AGOA program is in the interest of both Ethiopia and the US.

The two countries can work together to improve Ethiopia's overall human rights situation through a mutually respectful engagement. If the US is to live up to its values, it should not exclude Ethiopia from AGOA because that would primarily affect the poor citizens rather than the Government.

Threatening the lives of millions of poor Ethiopians cannot in any way serve the purpose of human rights or any other value that the US is said to have stood for.

The US should also understand that although it will not be affected as badly as Ethiopia, removing the latter from AGOA will adversely impact it. Furthermore, by excluding Ethiopia from AGOA the US will only give its traditional competitors, such as China, the upper hand in Ethiopia's economic and political future.

The impact of Ethiopia's exclusion from AGOA may go to the extent of damaging the relations between the two countries.

Therefore, the two countries should deescalate the tension and build mutual trust.

African and Asian Affairs Researcher Saeed Geheghe stated that the relationship between America and Africa is changing from policy-making and acceptance to brotherhood and strategic relations.

As the researcher of African and Asian affairs, Saeed Gehegne, told the Ethiopian Press Agency; America's relationship with Africa was one of policymaking and acceptance.

In the current situation, the rise of powerful countries at the international level has forced America to change its perspective on Africa. Before it was over taken by China, America was the largest foreign direct investment in African countries.

This indicates that there is a strong relationship that America is still yearn in expanding foreign direct investment in Africa and secures the position.

According to the researcher: If economic development can be achieved by strengthening internal unity and creating internal stability among fellow Africans, the eyes of the world and US will be in continuous bid to maintain mutual relation with Africa.

Without internal stability, relations will always be based on US policy interests. America's policy of increasing the number of young people and educated manpower in Africa; the researcher said that the time for Africa to be a policy recipient is coming to an end. But after this, the relationship will improve, he said. Africa needs to do its internal homework for better relations in the long run. He said that a good relationship should be based on the strength of Africans and not based on American needs.

When America and China come to Africa, they bring their own interests. Both have their own interests. Africa, on the other hand, should formulate its own political and economic policy so that its relationship with America and China is based on benefits.

From a diplomatic point of view, a strategic partnership entails an exceptionally close relationship between countries or other entities that are vital to promoting each other's strategic interests. Strategic partnerships are mostly created with highly valued partners, which are carefully selected based on a realistic assessment of the significance of the partnership to the long-term interests of the nation.

In due course, the westerns and some other entities have to revise the policy they formulate regarding ties with Africa and begin the new year promoting fraternity and mutual respect pursuant to the international tenets of diplomacy that grant Africa one of the influential continent from various parameters.

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

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The Ethiopian Herald

Editorial

Inching rapidly towards AU's Agenda 2063, silencing the guns

Winding up the two-years long devastating war in the northern part, Ethiopia is speeding up the implementation of the peace accords reached between the federal government and TPLF. Following the peace agreement signed for cessation of hostilities, Ethiopia wasted no time to put into practice the full contents of the agreement. This smart move showcases that the country is alert in implementing one of AU's Agenda 2063, silencing the guns.

Africa is widely known for being a hot bed of numerous violent conflicts. This situation inspired the Silencing the Guns in Africa as an agenda, a flagship initiative of the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 that aspires to end all wars, conflict and gender-based violence, and to prevent genocide.

Agenda 2063 of the African Union aims to end all wars and violent conflicts on the continent. To this end, it promotes dialogue-based mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution. In addition to eliminating and preventing the causes of conflict, it is also necessary to reduce military resources and secure the state's monopoly on the use of force. There should be functioning mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of conflicts in all areas of society in order to promote a culture of peace and tolerance among the peoples of Africa.

Gaining lesson from human and property destruction that the war induced, the TPLF also exerted commendable efforts to materialize the agreement. Having optimistic view towards the AU led peace accord and developing mutual trust, both parties have gone long distance to reassure the people in the war torn areas from the trauma it brought against them.

In the following weeks of the agreement, myriads of activities

that include rehabilitating the displaced people and reconstruction of destroyed infrastructures have been underway. Provision of unfettered humanitarian relief with the help of international aid organizations of which Ethiopia has taken the lion's share is praiseworthy. Besides, resumption of the basic services that the public needs most has built trust among the people that the peace agreement is concrete and made with utmost determination from both sides.

Longing for the remaining services like land transportation and full operation of banking system, the people are expressing their heartfelt delight over the progresses so far. They enjoyed services of electric utility, telecommunications, and flights to and from Mekelle after long time of darkness and separation from their relatives and families.

The recent visit of senior officials of the federal government led by the speaker of the House of People's Representatives uplifted trust of the people on implementation of the agreement and built confidence on the initiation and capability of Ethiopians to solve their problems by themselves on top of valuing the role of AU mediation.

Taking charge of safeguarding federal institutions in Mekelle by the federal police as per the agreement reached in Pretoria, South Africa, is among the shining successes undertaken that consolidates effectiveness of the agreement.

In sum, these measures and others the Ethiopian government has been taking so far and the rest duties to be accomplished step by step to realize the full enactment of the cessation of hostilities demonstrate its commitment in carrying out the implementation of AU Agenda 2063.

Opinion

The Pretoria peace deal benefits the entire horn region

BY STAFF REPORTER

It is undeniable that the Horn of Africa has been painted as a scary or dangerous place, economically and politically damaged by war and lack of peace. As a result, the area stands at the forefront in terms of the number of citizens migrating in search of a better life, drought, famine and the number of internally displaced persons.

There are many reasons why the region has become a manifestation of the deep-rooted conflict and instability of our world. Among these reasons, the main ones are the favorable location, the potential natural resources of the countries in the region, and the internal political issues of the people in the countries.

There is a way in which the Horn of Africa is viewed differently by outside powers. One of these is the area where the world's three major sea lanes meet. Especially the Gulf of Aden, which connects the Arab world and Europe, is an important place.

As a result, according to the scholars, it is inevitable that the countries of the world who claim to be economically and politically powerful will compete to show their voice, influence and dominance in the region.

Among the countries in the region, Ethiopia occupies the highest position in terms of land area, population and economy. It plays a significant role in the development and stability of the area. Ethiopia is a country that can be called an economic driver that

connects the countries of the region with each other and with other parts of the continent and other parts of the world.

Although the Horn of Africa region was plagued by a lack of peace until it became known as a hotbed of conflict for several years, Ethiopia went above and beyond to play a role in stabilizing the region. Thus, it can be considered as an important country for the peace and stability of the region. This role is defined by negotiating the economic issues that can reduce the causes of conflict in the local countries and the politically warring parties, fighting terrorists, deploying peacekeeping forces and handling refugees.

One of the main reasons why the Horn of Africa is characterized by conflict and instability is the intervention of foreign powers. Foreign forces try to interfere in the affairs of the country by using internal conflicts. The war between the government and TPLF had revealed the needs of these forces and how far they would go to achieve these needs.

In addition to their intervention activities in the country, they were taking various measures to weaken the government. All this effort is to force the country to accept the things that it does not allow to accept by the principles of diplomacy that it follows, with the intention of creating a government that breathes in the lungs of the West in the country. Unable to achieve all this, their only option was to support the warring party and

force the government. If the government does not accept this, it is knee-jerk by giving support to the warring party to continue the conflict, which can lead the country to worse problems. As the American analyst Lawrence Freeman mentioned above, the West, especially his country, has gone so far as to dream of bringing about system change in the country by removing Dr. Abiy's government from power.

However, it was not possible to bring about the system change that the Westerners wanted in the country. The two-year civil war has destroyed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people and property worth billions, but both sides, who saw the horrors of the war, reached a new chapter in the agreement made in Pretoria, South Africa. Because of this, there is no question that more lives and properties were saved that would have been lost if the conflict had continued.

A closer look, however, shows that it has been possible to avoid a threat that could have happened to the security of the country and the stability of the region.

Since the day after the signing of the Pretoria Agreement, the war was almost complete, and both powers stopped blaming each other and making threats. Subsequently, following the signing of the agreement in Nairobi, Kenya, where the militants disarmed and joined the regular army or demobilized, according to the agreement, the leaders of both armies met and discussed. According

to both agreements, the government is doing its part to provide uninterrupted aid and basic services to the Tigray region.

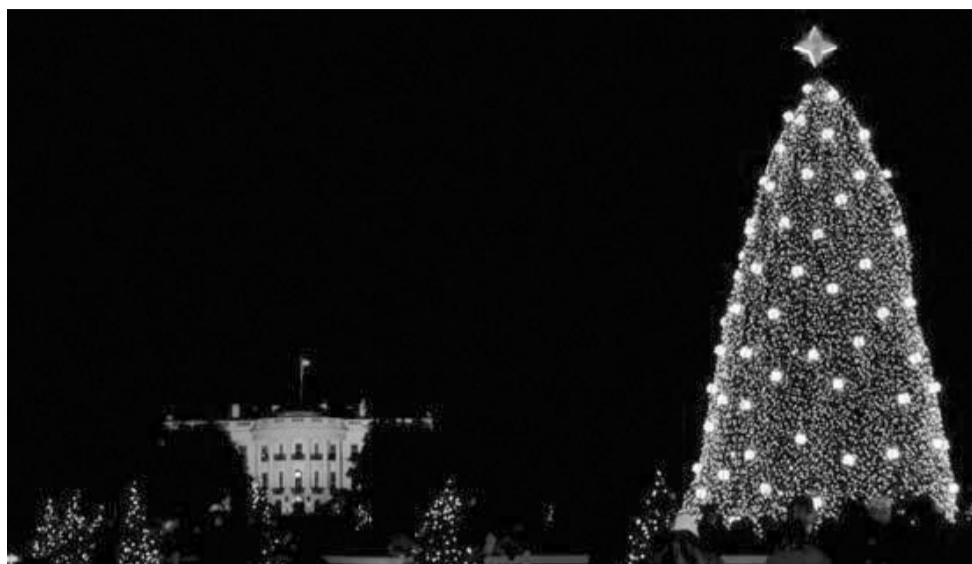
The peace agreement reached between the government and the TPLF not only ended the terrible civil war but also saved the entire region from the worst possible danger. This had the potential to lead to instability in Ethiopia and turn the entire region into a conflict zone.

If this conflict leads to instability in the region, it is inevitable that not only the countries of the region will be the victims, but also the powers that claim to have an advantage in the strategic location of the region and who always intervene.

Although reaching a peace agreement is an independent victory, the fact that the agreement was reached under the auspices of the African Union can be considered a double victory. In the past years, based on the decision of the leaders of the member countries of the African Union, efforts have been made on the principle of African solutions to African problems. This makes it appropriate to solve the problems through this principle in terms of understanding the problems of the continent's countries more and bringing appropriate sustainable solutions.

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

Art & Culture



Western Christmas Vs Ethiopian “Genna” Christmas

BY KFLEEYESUS ABEBE

Christmas is obviously a religious holyday commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ. But the unique atmosphere it creates, its significance and influence over people around the world shows it is more than a mere celebration of a holyday. Though it gets celebrated annually across the world, the actual dates of celebration, the assortments and things it is associated with are different from culture to culture. It is adapted to the ways, culture and customs of given country or continent.

Christmas in Western world is an extensive celebration also having huge influence over other parts of the world. At times, it seems Christmas is a western celebration. There is even a song “Do they know it is Christmas?” For the Western world Christmas heralds the beginning a new season and a New Year. It is a transition from dry season to a rainy season (Winter). The celebration accordingly is long and require due preparation. Colorful costumes, decorations, lighting Christmas trees, displaying of outdoor christmas lights on houses even government premises, christmas carol, music, cuisines, candies, chocolates, cookies and the Santa Claus gifts made western beautiful and influential cultural power across the world. It is a colorful celebration often symbolised by red as Elvis Presley’s song:

I’ll have a blue Christmas without you

I’ll be so blue just thinking about you

Decorations of red on a green Christmas tree

Won’t be the same dear, if you’re not here with me

The event changed life style and became a source of inspiration for singers, painters, fashion designers, cinematographers, writers and other forms of art. Charles Dickson’s novella christmas carol, American Christmas comedy film Homealone, and Mariah Carey’s song “All I Want For Christmas Is You” are few to mention. Western Christmas has also influenced politics in a way people and government to remember the disadvantaged, minorities, disprivileged communities, prisoners, refugees and others and reaching out through humanitarian aid and granting parole. The culture of giving gifts and donations is part and parcel of in western christmas and it is a culture of instilling this



kindness, thoughtfulness and togetherness in this season.

Ethiopian Christmas is also a joyous moment that come after months of fasting. Unlike western, Ethiopian seasonal transition has already taken place. Ethiopians begin New Year in Septmeber and the next ten months are relatively dry seasons. Christmas comes almost at the middle of the year which is a hot season.

Like Orthodox churches in Russia, Ukrain, Serbia, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Kazakhstan, North Macedonia, Moldova and Montenegro, Ethiopians celebrate christmas on Tahsas 29 (January 7), not December 25th. The celebration is strictly religious occasion for the celebration begins at the eve of Christmas as churchgoers flock to churches wearing ‘netela’ white garment. The church service typically begins at around 6 pm and continues

through to the early hours of Christmas day. There will be liturgical service, hymns called ‘wereb’ and ‘shibsheba’ performed by clergy and then everyone at the church altogether shows happiness for the birth of Jesus singing different Muzmur or spiritual songs. The songs might be listened in the houses, streets, almost everywhere.

Unlike Western in which red and green are popular, white is the dominant color in Ethiopian christmas. Celebrants were different but mostly white traditional clothes. As the holyday is celebrated every part of the country, there is one place the holyday will be more colorful and meaningful. It has become customary for believers to make pilgrimage to Lalibela rockhewn churches this time. Lalibela is a UNESCO world heritage site built by King Lalibella as a replica to Jerusalem. Going to Lalibela, The New Jerusalem, is considered going

to actual birthplace of Jesus, Bethlehem, South of Jerusalem. It is a warm atmosphere, perfect view and beautiful sound as large procession of faithful seen in white garment holding torches, clergies wearing colorful robes and everybody chanting and singing along priests and deacons.

After the church service, ‘Genna’ is a festive time families to get together and cherishes unique Ethiopian dishes. As the celebration comes after fasting of 43 days, it is expected that celebrants to prepare high proteint dishes such as Doro Wot (Chicken), lamb or beef stew and other similar foods with drinks like Tela (traditional ale) and Teji (honey wine). Amharic phrases “Enkuan lebrehane ledetu adersahichu,” enkuan aderesachiu and the responses Enukan abro aderesen will be heard everywhere. The phrases are equivalent to saying of merry christmas, Happy holidays to you and the same to you.

Christmas is a time everyone enjoy relative freedom. It is when girls, housemaids and gatekeeper can go out and play with their mates. The ‘Genna’ play is typical in this season. Genna is a play looking alike European golf. The master and house servants may play together and there is a saying ‘begenna chiwata aykotum geta’ Masters won’t be angry during genna play even when they are defeated by the servant. The music also went on like this.

Asina bel asina genna

Eyoha

Asina gena ye

Eyoha

Asina genna ye

Asina bel be genna chiwata

Asina bel Akotwm geta

Christmas tree, decorations, giving and receiving gifts are alien to Ethiopians. The influence of western christmas however was seen for sometime as Ethiopians having christmas trees, decorating and displaying of lights and wearing christmas costumes in some places. Yet still it isn’t as such popular. Ethiopians seemed to be satisfied by their unique way of celebrating christmas; inside church wearing eye catching white garments and getting together and eating traditional delicious foods and listening to either spiritual songs or cultural songs and dancing.

Law & Politics

Numerical indicators: Testimony to successful implementation Pretoria peace deal

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is worth mentioning that for two years the northern part of the country has been in a devastating war that metamorphosed into dire humanitarian crisis and a living hell. Shortly afterwards the positive gesture of the government to patch things up as stipulated in the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed in Pretoria, the whole thing has been getting back to normal.

Notwithstanding the fact that the implementation of the peace accord has been attaining the objective and accomplishing the assignment, some peace spoilers have continued putting a damper on the positive developments efforts. However, unlike the expectation and negative rhetoric of some naysayers and Ethiopia's enemies, the federal government and Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) have continued putting the peace accord at a point of no return by taking concrete measures.

It is widely known that since the start of the peace implementation, the people of the northern part of the country have begun breathing a sigh of relief. The smooth flow of humanitarian assistance and restoration of social infrastructure have been receiving a pat on the back more than ever before with service providers expediting the works and reaching more war-impacted communities.

As things currently stand, from the second assembly of the high-ranking commanders of Ethiopian Defense Forces and Tigray militants to the first visit of the Ethiopian delegation to Mekele, the peace implementation has been heading in the right direction. Other than that a considerable amount of promising moves are being taken by both the federal government and TPLF aimed at breathing new life into the peace implementation.

After their arrival in Nairobi, Kenya, the federal government and TPLF have arranged the Term of Reference (ToR) of the Joint Monitoring, Verification, and Compliance Mechanism (JMVC) in addition to tossing around quite a lot of ideas with respect to the peace implementation.

Aside from monitoring and bridging gaps on the subject of the peace accord, the African Union Monitoring and Verification Team has embarked on following up on the practical actions of the implementation of the peace accord.

The Special Envoy of the African Union, Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta and Executive Secretary of IGAD Workneh Gebeyehu arrived in Mekelle On Thursday to observe the implementation of the peace agreement.

According to the special envoy, the visit of a delegation of senior government officials led by House Speaker Tadesse Chafo to Mekelle has confirmed the commitment of the government.

The special envoy explained that following the peace agreement emergency humanitarian aid is being widely provided in Tigray region and basic services have started.

He appreciated the government's commitment to resume basic services in Tigray and make humanitarian aid accessible; and thanked the leaders of both sides for the good work they did for the peace agreement.



Obasanjo also reminded that the provision of unfettered humanitarian aid, resumption of basic services and establishment of lasting peace in northern Ethiopia are part of the peace agreement, and thanked the government for implementing everything as per the agreement.

True to the special envoy's words, over the weeks, developments in Tigray have been fast with the restoration of works seeing accelerations following the visit of federal delegation to Mekele Tigray regional capital.

There have been numerical indicators that corroborate the fact that the situation in the war-torn region is going through a U-turn that attributable to the strong determination.

With regard to the joint report, the Ethiopian government and humanitarian partners stated that some 2,214 trucks with food supplies and 250 trucks with non-food supplies reached conflict-affected areas in North Ethiopia since mid-November. Food and non-food lifesaving supplies as well as fuel and cash continue being transported to Tigray in four corridors through Amhara and Afar states. Nearly 90,000 MT of food and 8,600 non-food supplies have reached Tigray between November 15 and December 23.

Aircraft also continue transporting some 18 MT of nutrition and 14 MT of health commodities transported to Mekelle and Shire, and some 446 MT of agricultural supplies have also reached the area. The report further said that the total operational cash transported to Tigray so far was 798,050, 495 Birr, 780,755 fuel liters delivered, and 28 partners supplied during the reporting period.

Among the positive achievements, Ethiopian Airlines recommenced its flights to Mekelle as of December 28, 2022.

Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mesfin Tasewu said, "We are truly pleased with the resumption of our flights to Mekelle. The resumption of these flights will enable families to reunite, facilitate the restoration of commercial activities, stimulate tourist flow, and bring many more opportunities which will serve society. We are ready to serve our passengers who are traveling on the route between Addis Ababa and Mekelle and play our part in the socio-economic development of our country."

By the same token, the restoration of a other services is in full swing. While on the subject, on the heels of the resumption of flights to Mekelle time and again have been expressing their infinite happiness.

Some of the passengers said the resumption of Ethiopian Airlines regular flights to Mekelle, the regional capital of Tigray, would move the peace process to a new chapter, in an interview they gave to a local media.

Ethiopian Airlines resumed its regular flights to the regional capital as per the federal government's promise to effectively implement the peace agreement. Accordingly, the Ethiopian Airlines plane took off from Bole International Airport and headed to Mekelle.

Passengers who spoke to local media said that they are happy that the airline restarted flights to the city, adding that the resumption of flights has moved the peace process to a higher level.

Appreciating the government for implementing the peace agreement, they also called for further reinforcement of the implementation of the agreement. They also pointed out that after the recent visit of the federal government delegation led by the Speaker of the House of Peoples Representatives, Tadesse Chafo, things are improving rapidly.

It is an indisputable fact on the heels of the peace deal the lives of the people of Tigray have been turning for the better. Currently, they have set in motion leading a meaningful life failing to recall the past devastating conflict that rocked the northern part of the country. As the government is committed to stipulating the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, the peace implementation has been pointing forward in the right direction again and again.

In the aftermath of the uncompromising stance of the government, delivery of humanitarian assistance and restoration of social infrastructure has been accomplishing the desired goal. In consideration of the foregoing, residents of the Tigray State have been expressing admiration for the federal government.

For the love of taking the peace deal to a high standard by expediting the delivery of humanitarian assistance and restoration of social infrastructure every Tom, Dick, and Harry should stand by the side of the government.

Apart from that the federal government and Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) should go to the ends of the earth to the full implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and bring about the desirable goal at the earliest possible juncture. In the present climate, the federal government has been making every possible effort to bring the whole thing in northern Ethiopia into normalcy.

Meanwhile, there have been fast developments in terms of basic service restoration including telecommunication and power. Ethio telecom said it has facilitated telecom infrastructure access for around 54 bank branches located in the Amhara, Afar, and Tigray states in its Northern Region to allow them to resume services.

Speaking to local media, Ethio telecom

CEO Frehiwot Tamiru stated that telecom infrastructure access was provided for about 31 branches in Shire, 21 branches in Waja, Alamata, and Korem as well as one each in Aba Guna and Adwa towns. The operator has given priority to the banks to help them to resume the crucial service as soon as possible.

Through the rehabilitation and restoration activities that ethio telecom has carried out, it has managed to reinstate the service in over 27 war-affected towns including Shire, Alamata, Kobo, Debark, and Adwa among others.

Noting the operator has been heavily engaged to reinstate the damaged connectivity, the CEO indicated that priority has been given to governmental and non-governmental organizations that are engaged in humanitarian response. Though many of the services that are restored currently are categorized under emergency services, once the fiber work is done, all services including data service would be operational.

"Due to the severity of the damage that has occurred in the telecom infrastructure, we have made the attempt to at least partially resume emergency services and other services will also be resumed once the restoration of essential infrastructure has been completed."

The restoration of amenities and essential services including electricity, telecom, banking, and others have been at the highest level of activity in Tigray after a two-years disruption, officials said.

Accordingly, the Ethiopian Electric Utility Deputy CEO Solomon Tasewu stated that the restoration of electricity has covered almost all of the Tigray State. The utility has restored the service in 80 towns across Tigray, Amhara, and Afar states that were cut off due to the damage to electric infrastructure during the recent conflict in northern Ethiopia.

"Technicians have been deployed to conflict-affected areas and damaged facilities have been re-equipped with the necessary spare parts."

President of the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia Abie Sano said for his part that the bank has reopened some branches in parts of Tigray and will consolidate the move after undertaking the audit. The auditing professional task force has been working on the auditing tasks in Mekelle to know the situation of branches in Tigray and the task force will finalize its activities in the nearest future, Abie remarked.

The Federal Police of Ethiopia, which is authorized to protect institutions of the federal government, stated that it reentered Mekelle, the capital of Tigray State for protection purposes.

In a statement issued, the Ethiopian Federal Police Commission announced that it started working to protect federal institutions.

Following the peace agreement reached by the government and the TPLF in Pretoria, South Africa, the Ethiopian Federal Police will carry out the protection of airports, electricity, telecom services, banks, and other federal institutions that provide services to the public in Tigray.

It is known that the Federal Police has been doing security and safety enforcement work by entering the areas of Tigray and supporting the public to return to their villages.

We want to remind everybody that humanity should come first

Michel Saad

BY GRIMACHEW GASHAW

Today's Herald guest is Michel Saad, Head of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Ethiopia. He was born in Lebanon during the civil war that ravaged the country. In those days, children of Lebanon including him were forced to waste most of their time out of school. When things went back to normal, he attended primary and secondary schooling.

As he embarked up on higher education he studied first degree in chemistry, as well as another degree in international law. His career history started in a private company that works on pharmaceutical and medical equipment. He also worked as a TV News correspondent. He then joined the humanitarian field working for the international committee of the Red Cross for 13 years before joining UNOCHA.

He has been in Ethiopia since the end of January this year. Just before he was assigned to the UNOCHA position, he used to enjoy visiting various parts of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Herald had a short stay with him and discussed a range of issues related to humanitarian responses and the challenge he faced so far while doing the same job. Have a nice read.

How effective are you in coordinating global emergencies to save lives during humanitarian crises?

As part of the UN agencies, OCHA is the only entity that embraces the word "humanitarian" in its name. Over the years, it has developed its capacity of reacting at times of emergencies be it natural or manmade disaster across the globe and scaling up the assistance in a place where there is small presence of it.

We have several arrangements with different partners of UN agencies, Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, international and national NGOs, member states or governments, at times when our services are linked to emergencies, search and rescue people affected in case of emergency situations.

So, we have several modus operandi that enable us to react quickly in case of emergency situations across the globe. In some protracted settings—in a crisis lasting more than six months or one year, we carry out the humanitarian response plan combining all these humanitarian needs by first or early December every year so as to do global humanitarian overviews launch which happened last December for the first time in Addis Ababa at the AU Commission.

Our job is to coordinate humanitarian responses to reach the people in emergency situations. First, we identify the humanitarian need, make sure where the needs are available, and make sure anyone is left behind. So we do not only focus on an emergency that is grabbing the attention

of the globe, but we make sure to tell all member states, all partners if there are other humanitarian needs somewhere else.

Gather information and manage it in a way to be able to provide the response effectively and sit down with the partners and governments to see who would be able to do what to respond to this crisis. However, generating ideas by itself is nothing unless you get the money that enables you to do much. We also have a whole branch working on humanitarian financing. At the global level, we call the central Emergency Response Fund and then in some countries we do have a country based full fund.

In Ethiopia, for example, we have the Ethiopian humanitarian Fund which has been in operation since 2006. It is one of the oldest in the world. And last year, for example, through this fund, donors provided about 100 million USD. It is one of the effective tools for donor's to be able to channel funding to local organizations who sometimes might be struggling in accessing international funding. It also allows us to react very quickly as we work with local partners who understand the situation as they are amongst the community who might be affected by a natural or manmade disaster.

And then we work on advocacy to highlight that there are humanitarian needs in place X, Y, Z, and also to support the authorities to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law.

As we react in emergencies, our way of operating is to go somewhere, understand the needs, provide the response, coordinate the response, monitor the impact, face it down and hand it over to other partners who do more in terms of resilience and development.

Unfortunately, this is not the case everywhere. We are seeing more and more devices that are taking longer in time. Since we had the COVID pandemic, two years ago, we are the first to react and call the world community respond to the COVID Emergency across the globe. Since then, we would need to find a way to bring our colleagues from across the globe as humanitarian people could not respond to all the needs.

In Ethiopia, we have been operating for more than 40 years in different capacities. The latest crisis that we are dealing with is the drought in the eastern and southern part of the country back in 2016 /2017. Indeed, we did support the COVID response and then the Locust infestation. Unfortunately, while we were facing down the operations, the conflict in the north unfolded. Thus, we had to revisit our posture, increase our capacity and start responding to the needs.

In today's Ethiopia, I think we can say that we are dealing with at least two crises; conflicts mostly in the northern part of the country in Afar, Amhara and Tigray. The



drought started initially in the eastern part of the country and part of the southern regions such as Somali, SNNPs, and Southwest Sidama. Then, we are seeing it spreading.

As per the humanitarian response plan reviewed initially, we were calling for 3.1 billion USD to provide aid for about 22 million people in Ethiopia. Later on, when we reviewed it again, the humanitarian demand was increasing from 3.1 to 3.3 billion USD. Thanks to the generosity of donors, we received good funds, I would say. However, we are still less than 50 per cent funded which means we are forced to make very difficult decisions. So either 50 per cent of the people will not get the support or we will support everybody instead of giving them 100 per cent of what they need.

Thus, we keep on reminding the international community to provide more support considering that Ethiopia is a big country with a large size of population and complex situations be it manmade and natural disaster. We need to ensure that there is enough attention on the situation in Ethiopia.

What is OCHA's plan to improve humanitarian access in the northern part, especially after the peace deal made between the Ethiopian government and TPLF forces?

The resumption of the first military convoys back in the first of April this year, OCHA was the first to open the route and managed to provide assistance without forgetting the communities in need, in Afar, and Amhara on the way. Then, on 24th August, we faced lockdown in terms of sending aid from one region to the other, although we never stopped working.

So, our colleagues everywhere in Amhara and Tigray continue to work despite the circumstances. We very much welcomed the news after discussion in Pretoria in South Africa. And then, we always have very close discussions, collaboration with the government at several levels from federal level up to the zonal or woreda level. During that time, we intensified these consultations and discussions to see how we would be able to scale up and from where. We have to recognize the efforts done by the Ethiopian government to provide humanitarian access



Herald Guest



to the people affected by conflict in the northern part of the country.

If we compare the situation today with what we had, ahead of the peace deal, we were able to fly from Addis to Mekele with the United Nations and humanitarian Air Services flights. Today, we are able to fly from Addis to Mekele and Shire- two different destinations - using four flights per week.

Previously, we were sending aid only through the Samara -Abala- Mekele route alone. Today, we are continuing from Samara to Mekele route and Kobo to Alamata. We are also sending aid from North Gondar – Adi Arkai – Maitsebri. Humera-Shire-Sheraro is the other corridor that we send aid to the people affected in the conflict. So, there is an improvement in terms of access.

Thanks to the decision made by the Ethiopian government, the consultations we have been making with them will be able to advance the access as it was a conflict zone. We need to have these discussions, consultation agreements to see how we can scale up humanitarian aid to the people in need. We are seeing a greater improvement. In discussion with our partners such as humanitarian operators and donors, we see how they can support the humanitarian operations.

Could you tell me how the war affected the distribution of humanitarian services in northern parts of Ethiopia during the last two years of conflict?

The situation in conflict prone areas mainly in Tigray and parts of Afar and Amhara were very difficult. The main thing is that the whole region was cut off from the rest of the country. Due to the fact that Public utilities be it power supply, telecommunication, banking services, even the supply for the market, the trade routes and all of that could not be managed from the center and terminated service as the days went on. We are able to provide life saving support in times of emergencies but we cannot substitute for a function in market and services and all of that.

Due to this reason, we have been really trying to see how we can do to the best of our capacity and respond to these needs. However, the situation was really difficult. I mentioned parts of Afar and Amhara as they were under the same state of affairs. The cessation of public utilities such as electric power, banking, trade routes creates difficulty to provide humanitarian access to the people in need.

Food and water shortages have been seen in drought affected areas. So how does OCHA manage problems related to malnutrition?

Thank you for mentioning this. Last year, we started raising the alarm bell about the drought that started mostly in the eastern part of the country and struggled to get attention back. We pushed our colleagues from headquarters to give us some funds from the central Emergency Response Fund so as to initiate the response and this was back in December last year. At this moment, I think we managed to rally and put more attention on the drought situation in the country.

We have done some events about the drought in the Horn of Africa as natural disasters or pandemic do not know borders.



However, the situation in Ethiopia needs special concern as it may be the first time when we are entering into the fifth failed rainy season. This explains the magnitude of the drought situation.

Another thing that we should keep in mind is we had a locust infestation that occurred in eastern and southern parts of the country two or three years ago. When we have a locust infestation, by the time we get rid of this problem, the soil would have really lost its nutrients and power. The lives of pastorals are relying on their livestock. These people are moving from one place to the other in search of pasture and water. However, the livestock of these pastoral communities have died in staggering numbers.

This is a strong indicator about the gravity of the situation. In some pockets, there might have been some cases of malnutrition as the people are not moving as they used to do regularly. Lifestyle of the community would impact on the quality of the food intake.

This increases the rate of malnutrition that occurs in many parts of the country in Somalia, Guji, Bale, Borena of Oromia state and Konso. What we do in terms of responding to this very acute and concerning need is, our partners are more specialized in addressing malnutrition. So we work very closely with the health sector to respond directly to where it is needed without allowing anybody to fall behind.

Recently, we have colleagues from five different clusters and we pragmatically decided to join forces together to be able to have a more effective impact with the minimum resources at hand. So we have partners from the agriculture, food security,

nutrition, health, water & sanitation, hygiene clusters, five of them came together under inter cluster collaboration. And they have started working focusing on Somali and parts of Oromia states.

We would like to call on all benevolent-- all the people who are attentive and sensitive to the immediate view of human suffering. We do need support as we cannot allow in 2022 for people to die of hunger or malnutrition. We do need support as we are seeing the numbers of people who seek humanitarian aid is increasing. We are trying our best to respond to working in coordination and collaboration with government officials at all levels.

How much of your humanitarian supply like water, food and medicine are obtained from local sources? How much do you think of the service benefiting local suppliers?

Some of the supplies are unfortunately not available in Ethiopia's market and we are forced to import. Whenever we are able to find any of the intended supply in the market, this is what we try to privilege as much as possible. We are here to provide humanitarian aid. This is the way of giving back.

And at the same time, I would like to highlight that more than 90 percent of our colleagues are actually from Ethiopia and whenever we do any tasks related to humanitarian assistance, we still need their assistance to move them around, put them in the warehouse and distribute them to the people in need. So, this is considered as supporting the local economy.

But we have welcomed the recent development in terms of the green initiatives

of Ethiopia; not only the planting of trees but also the increase of wheat production and development in agriculture. Our colleagues who are more experts in this field discuss with the government if we can start now considering instead of importing food and if we can link up people who are in need and those who are producing.

During the recent OCHA, AU and other stakeholders summit here in Ethiopia, what important decisions were made regarding humanitarian service delivery in our country?

In the event organized, we said that the situation in terms of humanitarian need is getting worse. We have more people in need of humanitarian assistance. I asked for more than 51 billion USD which is a lot of money. As the humanitarian needs continuously increase, it is imperative to discuss with all partners. We have to put together and find a way to respond to the humanitarian need immediately. Let's finger fence one year to another as the challenge will not disappear by itself. Thus, we have to do something important.

So, calling donors, the world community and philanthropic organizations who can support a dollar, birr and voluntarism intention is imperative to manage it. We were also working closely with AU and other partners such as the international federation of the Red Cross, other UN agencies as well as local and international NGOs to see how we can support the humanitarian agency.

When we say natural and manmade disasters, this can happen anywhere. Nobody can say this could not happen to me. Africa is not only a place for humanitarian crises, be it natural or manmade disasters but also a place of high potential to African people to see how they can support each other when there are other crises and mitigate the humanitarian impact.

As a coordinator of global humanitarian assistance, what do you convey for the international community to further reach the war affected areas?

What we ask from the international community is, to make sure that no one is left behind. This is something that member states have signed on to the United Nations with sustainable development goals. No human suffering should be provided with more attention than human suffering. Any human suffering anywhere in the world is something we all have the responsibility to address in any way we can.

That is why, we find a way to support all the positive momentum to allow access to the people who are in need, set aside stability to come back replacing insecurity anywhere it can have and make sure that humanitarian assistance and operators stay in the way from other kinds of interests be it political, geopolitical and others.

We have the job to do. We have worked according to principles that we did not invent. Everybody has subscribed to communities and member states of neutrality, impartiality and independence and most importantly humanity. This is the point we want to remind everybody. Humanity should come first. We should always consider humanity. How we can support each other wherever needed to put our hands together.

**Thank you very much.
It's my pleasure.**

Utilizing digital technology effectively to bring socio-economic change

BY TEWODROS KASSA

No doubt, digital technology has contributed a lot towards transforming the lives of individuals today. Even though the level of its role is different from country to country, all agree that it will add value and ease human life significantly.

Digital Ethiopia 2025 National Strategy that has been set to transform the country's national economy through four major pathway sectors and digitization of the sectors is expected to boost the economic transformation of the country.

The Ethiopian government has given due priority to digital technology and recognizes that the country's aspirations and journey to realizing a prosperous Ethiopia, a conducive and inclusive for all is intimately tied to advancement in technology.

Currently, utilizing digital technology has become an important milestone towards changing the lives of millions through creating numerous job opportunities for the youths and women. As one part of the society, the youths are accessing new job opportunities through the use of digital technologies and selling their products successfully.

A number of Ethiopian companies that operate through the use of digital technologies are coming to the front at this time of globalization. The country was lagging behind in the case of digital technology access and use among the society. Thus, it is a must to apply physical movements to buy goods and services from anywhere.

However, some companies are now introducing the digital technology based services mostly in Addis Ababa and other growing cities of the country. Thus, it is required to promote such companies that become an eye breaker in the sector. The internet based ride transport services are one of the most important milestones that change the lives of Addis residents.

Recently, Africom Technologies and Ashewa Technology Solutions have signed a memorandum of understanding to work together in the efforts of digitizing Ethiopia. On the event it is indicated that promoting the technology sector would be significantly useful in achieving the goal of creating digital Ethiopia in 2025.

Ethio ICT Park General Manager Surafel Shemelis said the country is applying information technology pillars nationwide to achieve the plan of making digital Ethiopia in 2025.

As to him, these two giant technology



companies are jointly working to help the country achieve the vision of information technology plan thereby ensuring digital Ethiopia within the shortest time possible.

He said, "Jointly undertaking activities would also enable the country to create huge job opportunities, foster market connection, transfer knowledge in the nation and back parks in their effort."

Ashewa Technology Solutions, Chief Executive Officer, Daniel Bekele said, "We are endeavoring to ease challenges and make society's life better. We are working on 13 types of latest technology areas and in a bid to transform the manual working culture to a sophisticated one towards reinvigorating the national economy."

"As working together swells the capacity of discharging responsibilities, we have to amalgamate efforts to bring about real impact on societal life. To this end, we will apply rural inclusive technology interventions across the nation. Besides, the partnership will bring tangible change in technology solutions and make the rural localities accessible to technology. The companies signed to work together in the areas of doing research together, jointly provide training, share experience and finance resource mobilization."

On his part, Africom Technologies Chief Executive Officer Baheru Zeyenu said that companies, the private sector and government are expected to work hard towards digitizing and connecting each other as this move plays a great role in making them fruitful.

"We have developed various software technologies and sent them to U.S. Africa, Europe and Asia apart from focusing on business consultancy service locally. We have to some extent soothed the impact of shortage of foreign currency in the nation since we have developed the new



"Jointly undertaking activities would also enable the country to create huge job opportunities, foster market connection, transfer knowledge in the nation and back parks in their effort."

software in Ethiopia."

As to him, they are working together to ensure digital Ethiopia is cognizant of the fact that solitary move leads nowhere and doesn't help someone hit the set target. "We have planned to expand the best practices to foreign countries in the years to come," he added. It was also learnt that Africom Technologies was established 18 years back by five persons.

In sum, in this era of digital technology different countries are generating more from the sector. Thus, being creative and well aware of the varieties of digital technologies utilization and increasing access to the digital technologies immensely helps especially the new generations to promote their talent and create job opportunities for them. The growing number of youth unemployment rates will also be settled through the use of this digital technology. Different economists also emphasized that the traditional way of creating job opportunities seems not enough to embrace all the youths. Thus, new mechanisms are available in the digital technology sector. The sector is also gaining momentum from time to time and attracting new competitive investors in Ethiopia.

Verbatim and Caption

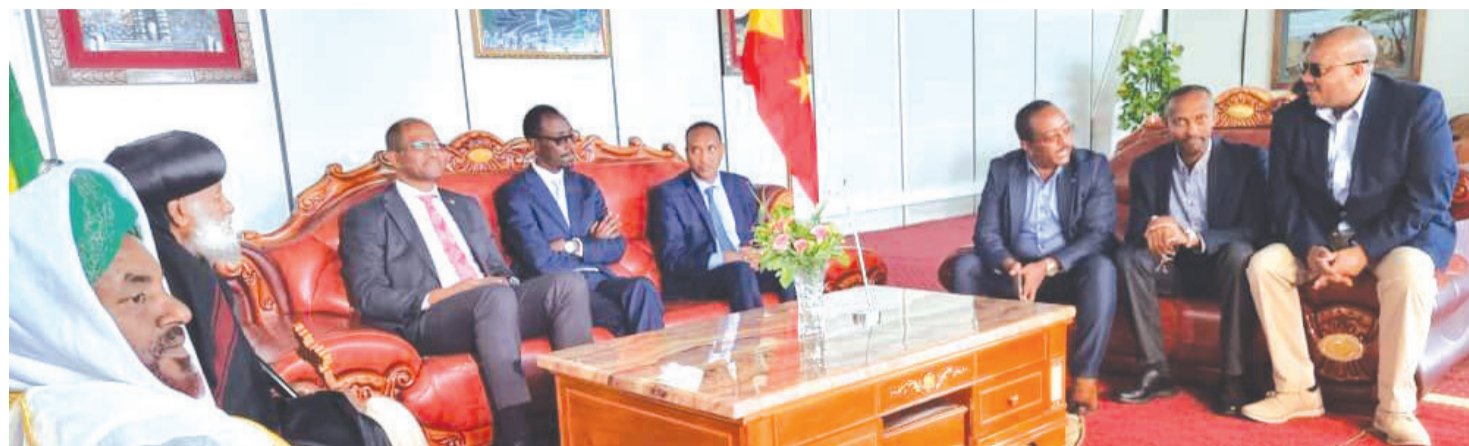
Peaceful week!

Tigray religious fathers welcome gov't officials in Melkelle

On 26 of December 2022, Federal government delegation led by House of Peoples Representatives Speaker, Tadesse Chafo visited Mekelle. The arrival of the federal government delegation, which includes ministers and senior officials, was something taken as a surprise as it was the first official visit after two years of conflict. This comes following the peace agreement between the federal government and the Tigray People's Revolutionary Front (TPLF) to end the two years' war in Pretoria a month ago.

Tigray religious leaders and representatives of the people with TPLF officials received the delegation at Mekelle Alula Abanega Airport. The leaders appreciated the visit and the peace deal and requested the delegation to accelerate services restoration as soon as possible.

Following Monday's visit, continuous services have resumed. *Ethiopian* has started daily flights from and to Mekelle since Wednesday and Telecom service resumed in Mekelle and other towns on Wednesday.



Archbishop of Mekelle Diocese praises federal government delegation's Mekelle visit

What happened during the past two years was really shocking for the people of Ethiopia especially for the people of Tigray. The war badly affected the people. It was a sad moment to experience a deadly war without basic services for two years. The people are eagerly waiting the restoration of peace and the resumption of normal life. All of us are happy to see a peace agreement and to experience its implementation.

All people are happy to see the resolve of the dispute peacefully. The federal government delegation's visit to Mekelle means a lot for the peace. We are asking you to realize the peace and to implement it fully. All the people are waiting to live in peace and are waiting the jumpstarting of all basic services as soon as possible. I hope to see the opening of all basic services within a short period after your visit.

Archbishop of Mekelle Diocese of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Abune Isayas said during his welcoming speech to the federal government delegation.

President of Tigray Islamic Affairs welcomed federal government delegation to Mekelle

So horrific years are behind us.. This day [your visit] is a historic day. It is a historic visit for all of people who love peace. I want to welcome you to Mekelle. Let bygones be bygones; we have to work for a better future by strengthening the peace that ensued.

As you know, there is no transport, telecom, bank, medicine and other basic services in Tigray. Though we understand the move to start services as of today, we are asking you to start services as soon as possible. The people of Tigray need the services urgently to save lives.

Sheikh Adem Abdulkadir, Tigray Islamic Affairs head said during his welcoming remark



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AHRI's efforts in forging long-term partnerships with HEI, bureaus

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

A research institute created to promote and encourage scholarly activity of a basic or applied nature in an area that is not normally restricted to a single academic department. And the mission of AHRI is to improve medical care; health and wellbeing of the public by generating and delivering scientific evidence, developing new tools and methods through biomedical, clinical and translational research, and to serve as a hub for technology transfer and capacity building in medical research and training.

A consultation forum organized by the Armauer Hansen Research Institute (AHRI), in collaboration with the Somali State Health Bureau with heads, deputy heads and experts from states' health bureaus, Vice Presidents of universities (Jigjiga, Haramaya, Diredawa and Kebri Dehar) as well as those contributing to the health research sector was successfully held on December 16, in Jigjiga.

Speaking at the occasion, AHRI General Director Prof. Afewrok Kassu said that collaboration with partners and stakeholders encourages employees to build and maintain working relationships that will help them obtain essential information or assistance in order to advance the set goal



in the set time frame. "To be specific, the consultative meeting is aimed at bolstering cooperation and coordination that will improve the Institute's ongoing biomedical, clinical, biotechnology research and research training activities pertinent to the region."

He further noted that forming, strengthening and maintaining good relationships between the researchers, the community and the other relevant stakeholders is essential to ensuring genuine stakeholder participation and engagement. "Collaboration with partners and stakeholders means building and maintaining an effective and constructive network with partners, stakeholders or contacts that may be helpful in achieving organizational goals. AHRI is committed to expedite the collaboration through action and translate to the ground, would like to urge each respective higher education and health

bureaus to strengthen the collaboration."

Since the ability to build long-term and trusting relationships with stakeholders is an essential element that defines the success of project managers and leaders professionals should and exert further for the common good, he specified.

In the contemporary interconnected business world, companies as well research institutes that have managers who are able to foster a deep level of connection with their stakeholders have a significant competitive advantage, he explained adding: "By learning and embracing critical strategies of building and strengthening relationships with stakeholders, organizations should solidify their long-term success. Collaborative processes are most likely to succeed when there is room for negotiation; when stakeholders need each other to achieve

both institutes through framing shared goals; and when there is a willingness to participate."

Similarly, AHRI researchers and senior leadership had an interactive side meeting on specific projects of; one health, malaria, viral diseases, research training as well as the general research landscape of the region was conducted on the occasion.

From the deliberations, having synergetic partnerships was agreed upon in terms of health research, health innovations and research training with the above stated institutions' representatives. A visit was also made to Jigjiga University, including the Jigjiga One Health Initiative Project site which is supported by AHRI, Jigjiga University and other development partners.

AHRI was founded in 1970 through the initiative of the Norwegian and Swedish Save the Children organizations seconded by the Ministry of Health of Ethiopia.

The Institute got its name from the Norwegian physician, Gerhard Henrik Armauer Hansen, who first described the leprosy bacillus (*Mycobacterium leprae*).

The Institute joined the Ethiopian Ministry of Health in 2004 and in 2016 it became a government health agency under the Council of Ministers Regulation No.376/2016.