

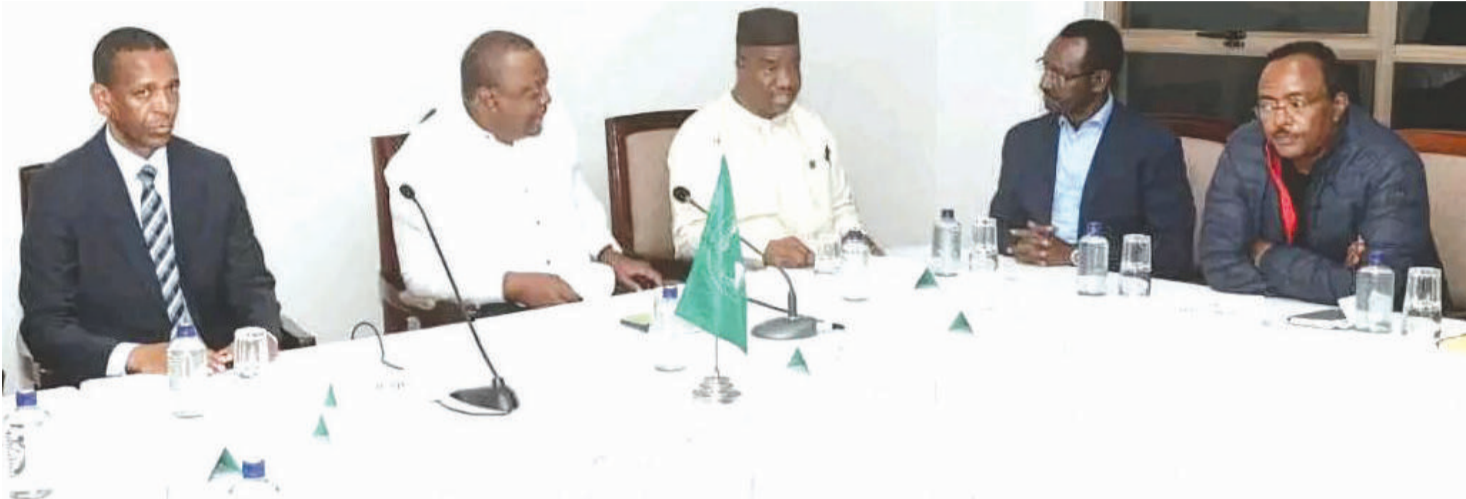


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AUC commends gov't, TPLF for confidence-building measures

• *To dispatch team to Mekelle to verify CoHA*

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA- The African Union Commission (AUC) commends the federal government and TPLF for the positive confidence-building measures they have taken since the signing of the COHA and encourages them to continue with their efforts to restore peace, security, and stability in Ethiopia.

The AUC convened the 2nd Senior Commanders Meeting between the government and TPLF on the Implementation of the Permanent Cessation

of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) in Kenya's capital Nairobi.

Speaking on the occasion, a member of the AU High-Level Panel and former President of Kenya Uhuru Kenyatta lauded the two parties' commitment which enables the AUC to make tremendous progress towards a series of actions and activities to bring back the state of normalcy to Ethiopia.

"We agreed that the true statement that they need to make will be the statement they make when we are in Mekelle in the next few days observing and verifying the actions beyond documents. We are confident that we are in

the right direction."

Kenyatta further highlighted that before the end of December, the AU team will head to Mekelle to verify the COHA implementation process.

The meeting, which discussed the implementation of the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) process, also finalized the Term of Reference (ToR) of the Joint Monitoring, Verification, and Compliance Mechanism (JMVC).

It was learned that the Senior Commanders meeting was facilitated by the AU High

See AUC commends ... Page 3

Ministry releases final ET 302 accident report

• *Failure of MCAS sensor mainly contributes to crash*

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – The Ministry of Transport and Logistics has released the final investigation report of ET 302 Boeing 738-8 Max aircraft that crashed on March 10, 2019 near the town of Bishoftu six minutes after takeoff, killing all 157 people aboard.

Briefing media yesterday, Transport and Logistics Minister, Dagmawit Moges said the investigation team composed of various organizations and countries was conducting a detailed study while the outbreak of COVID-19 has caused a delay in the process.

See Ministry releases ... Page 3



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ILO emphasizes private sector's job creation role

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

ADDIS ABABA-Generating decent jobs for the ever-increasing young population of Ethiopia should not be left only to the government and the private sector is expected to enhance its engagement in the

See ILO emphasizes ... Page 3

PM, First Lady inaugurate Sodo Bread Factory

• *Visit privately-operated fruit, vegetable farm*

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Talented, emerging poet

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National Dialogue: Avenue for harmonizing diametrically opposite points of view

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The time has come for the world to support an African-led initiative

Gabriel Nigatu

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News



Photo Tsehay Nigusie

Zemen Junnedi

Corporation to reinstate industrial parks in war-impacted areas

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA- The Industrial Parks Development Corporation (IPDC) announced that it is relentlessly working and carrying out preliminary works to reinstate the industrial sector in war-affected areas thereby attracting new investors.

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Corporation Media and Marketing Department Head Zemen Junnedi said that the corporation has been carrying out various activities to revive the industrial sector in Amhara, Afar and Tigray states. Promotion of investment opportunities is among the activities that the corporation has carried out to restore the industrial parks that were heavily affected by the recent conflict.

“The peace agreement signed between the federal government and TPLF will bring manifold advantages for the industry sector expansion and help people secure life.”

As to him, the government has been doing a lot of activities such as constructing physical infrastructure and providing people in need with unfettered humanitarian support, restoration of peace and development to the former status. Taking peace and adequate infrastructure are the crucial issues for the industrial sector; the corporation will fully operate upon completion of the physical infrastructure in the war affected states.

“Previously, only big cities were selected for industry expansion, but now the Corporation is working hard to expand the development to other places via selecting them for industry thereby benefiting the people in their surroundings.”

Zemen further stated that over 20 investors (excluding industries that have finalized preliminary works to start the operations very soon) have signed agreement with the Corporation and started their work in the past three months.

The corporation has been providing investors and others with one stop service in a bid to avoid bureaucratic red tape and reduce investor's complaints via supervising, inspecting, and inspiring the investment activities.

Ethiopia has secured 32 million USD only from Hawassa Industrial park within three to four months in a clear manifestation of the industry sector's indispensable role in ensuring the holistic development of the country, the head emphasized.

Lalibela anticipates 1.8 mln tourists for Genna (Christmas)

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Preparation has been finalized to welcome over 1.8 million tourists for the celebration of *Genna* (Christmas) in Ethiopia's stone-hewn churches in Lalibela, disclosed Deputy Mayor of the Town.

Speaking with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Deputy Mayor and Head of Town's Tourism Office, Deacon Addise Demissie indicated that the town has concluded its preparation to serve the expected tourists thereby boost the tourism movement which was devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic and conflict in the area for over three years.

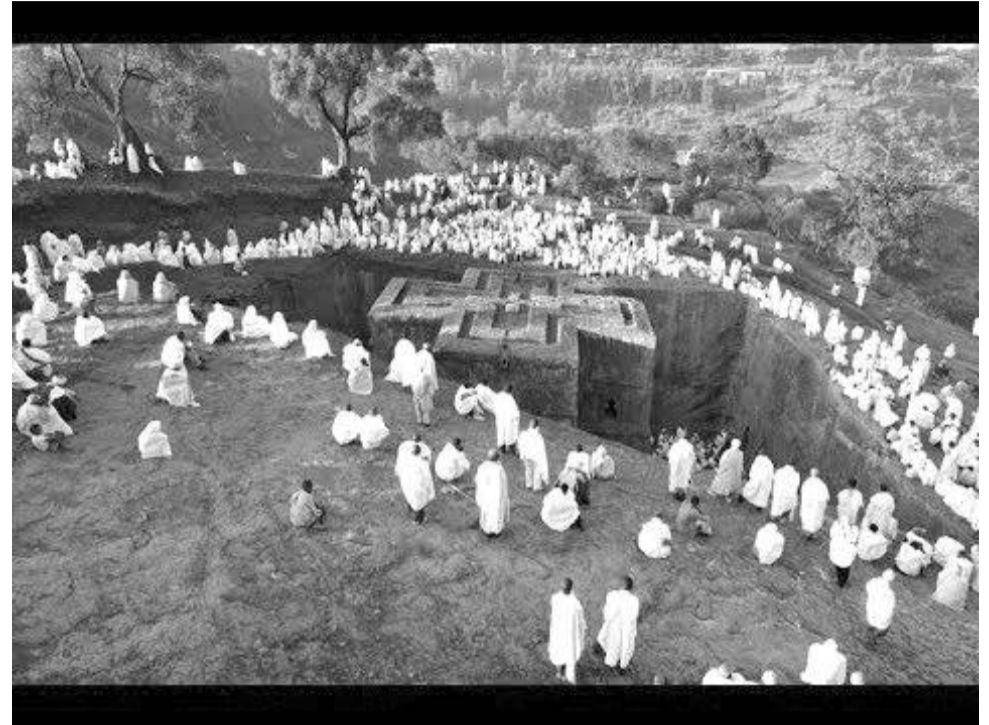
In doing so, he mentioned that around eight major committees were formed to better facilitate the celebration.

While ensuring peace and security, beautifying and cleaning up the town being their major role, he said the committees have been on stand since December to safeguarding peace in the surrounding.

Similarly, over 45 hotels have been ready for the accommodation service that the tourists may need. He added that for the language constraint that the tourists might encounter while attending the actual celebration; the town has collaborated with tour operators to fill the gap.

Moreover, a work force that is in charge of inspecting illegal trading or traders who tries to gain unnecessary profit out of the tourists is organized adding that discussion were held with traders with hope of sensitizing them of the situation.

Besides its religious and societal benefits, the celebration had a huge contribution in enhancing the economic gains as well as



stimulating the tourism. According to him, some 141 million Birr is expected to be generated from this year's celebration.

With the outburst of the corona virus pandemic and the conflict, the livelihoods in the area was hit hard by the shattered economy that followed the aforementioned problems, he stressed. “Town's economic movement is nothing without its tourism”, he underlined.

Prior to those years, the number of tourist that used to arrive at the stone-hewn churches was over 39 thousand and an amount of 260 million Birr used to be secured, he added.

Reminding that huge amount of destruction has occurred and there is decline in the number of tourists, he noted that now that the infrastructure is rebuilt and facilitation has been done, the town expects to welcome

1.8 million tourists and secure 141 million Birr.

Debre Roha Saint Lalibela stone-hewn churches Administrator, Komos Aba Tsege Selassie Mezegebu noted beside the preparation on religious aspect, works are underway with concerned bodies with regard to accommodation, beautification and cleaning.

Furthermore, spaces are also being prepared to serve participants who do not have reservation in hotels to stay in the resident's location as well as in the compounding of the churches. A group of volunteers would also help out desperate people during the celebration, he mentioned.

He finally urged Ethiopians to visit the place given its age-long and historic value that adds to its religious architecture.

Forest resources conservation, management remains gov't priority

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

ADDIS ABABA- Cognizant of its role in delivering a healthy ecosystem and protected biodiversity, due attention has been given to the conservation and sustainable management of forest resources, the Ethiopian Forest Development (EFD) said.

Speaking at the launching of the project titled “Conservation and sustainable management of forest lands in South Western Ethiopia” on Thursday, EFD Director General Kebede Yimam stated that the preservation of forest ecosystem plays a decisive role in keeping the planet healthy.

“As forest clearance for the purpose of expanding agricultural lands is the major cause of land degradation and aggravating gas emissions, conservation and sustainable management of forest has to receive due attention.”

Since Ethiopia is vulnerable to climate change and global warming, the extreme weather condition, flood and drought frequently affect farmers and the economy of the country at large, Kebede elaborated.

It was stated on the occasion that the government of Sweden allocated 7.2 million USD for the three-year project that aims to preserve the ecosystem of the South West



Gemedo Dale (PhD)

Ethiopia Peoples' State.

The director-general further highlighted that the government long ago took appropriate measures including the adaptation and mitigation mechanisms to endure the effects of climate change. Ethiopia is a signatory of various international conventions which are helpful to protect the environment from global warming and curb the challenge posed by gas emission.

Ethiopia signed the Kyoto Protocol in 2004, introduced and implemented its own adaptation mechanism as part of the global effort in mitigating climate change in 2007, and formulated and has been executing Climate Resilient Green Economy /CRGE/ since 2012.

“The Green Legacy initiative launched by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) in June 2019 in a vision of building a green and climate-resilient Ethiopia could also be mentioned as a viable step to make a difference,” he added.

“Though Ethiopia registered some achievements in implementing adaptation mechanisms, it has to go a long way to meet its objectives, and civil society organizations and the private sector should play their own part along that line.”

For his part, Global Green Growth Institute Country Representative Gemedo Dale (PhD) said that the project focused on the South West Ethiopia Peoples' State taking into account the area's immense biodiversity and huge forest stalks. The state is endowed with coffee and spices, whose products play pivotal roles in supplying the domestic and international markets.

Apart from the South West Ethiopia Peoples' State, the project, which focuses on protecting biodiversity and the forest ecosystem, also touched some parts of the Oromia State.

As to Gemedo, any development endeavor in Ethiopia should not compromise the existence of natural resources and exploiting the resource and it must consider the future generation of using resources sustainably.

News



PM, First Lady inaugurate Sodo Bread Factory

• Visit privately-operated fruit, vegetable farm

ADDIS ABABA- Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) and First Lady Zinash Tayachew inaugurated yesterday the Wolaita Sodo Flour and Bread Factory.

The factory which was built within nine month period is said to have the capacity to produce 300,000 loaves of breads in a daily operation.

The Wolaita Sodo Flour and Bread Factory is part of the Office of the First Lady's many pro-poor initiatives, Primer Abiy said in his social media post. "The project is a pathway to aspirations to make Ethiopia a regional

and continental bread basket."

With regard to his visit to a farm land, which Abiy referred it as "once an idle Bate river catchment"; he said "We returned to review the productivity potential of various fruit and vegetable varieties being developed by courageous private sector investors, utilizing surface level water."

The productivity of the area is an embodiment of collaboration beyond lines of divisions that need to be emulated nationally, the Prime Minister emphasized.

AUC commends...

Representative for the Horn of Africa and former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, together with AU High-Level Panel Members; former President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta and Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, former Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa and Member of the AU Panel of the Wise.

The Commission further expressed appreciation to the Government of the USA, Norway, UN, IGAD, the African Development Bank, and ICRC for their continued support for the AU-led process, and to the Government and People of Kenya for hosting the Senior Commanders' meeting, calling it as "a demonstration of African solidarity."

Ministry releases...

As to the minister, the finding confirmed that the flight crew members were licensed and qualified for the flight per the Ethiopian Civil Aviation Authority rules and standards. The certificate of aircraft was maintained by applicable regulations and procedures.

Noting the airplanes' weight and balance were within the operating level, Dagmawit indicated that its angle of attack (AOA) sensor failed immediately after takeoff sending forty data to the flight control system. "The malfunctioning of the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS) caused the accident. Due to this, the pilots lost control of the aircraft."

She expressed gratitude to the National Transport Safety Board of the U.S., BA of France, the European Aviation Safety

Agency, and others as well as individuals who contributed immense effort during the tragic accident and in the investigation process.

For his part, Ethiopian Accident Investigation Bureau Head Colonial Amdiye Ayalew said that the final report was conducted with the full cooperation of domestic and international experts and organizations.

The bureau head further highlighted that the failure of MCAS design reliance on a single sensor and others contributed to the accident. "There was a conflict of interest to work cooperatively with the Boeing manufacturer. However, it provided all information and documents to finalize the final report."

Transforming women idea vital for addressing African challenges: ECA

• Holds first winner of Tech African Women session

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - Expanding entrepreneurship program dedicated to empowering African female entrepreneurs, such as Tech African Women (TAW) program, by helping them transform their ideas into validated business models is pivotal in bringing about change, so stated Technology and Innovation Division at ECA.

Speaking at the first edition of the Tech African Women (TAW) program a startup competition launch in Addis Ababa, Chief of Technology and Innovation at ECA, Mactar Seck stated that the significance of such initiatives is to 'narrow the gender digital divide and harness the various opportunities that digital transformation offers for young women entrepreneurs.'

"TAW is an entrepreneurship program that is dedicated to empowering African female entrepreneurs by helping them transform their ideas into validated business models and building a strong female-led tech start-up pipeline and community in Africa."

Seck further noted that ECA will launch the connected TAW to place young women on track to create and grow their tech businesses as the program contributes to address the continent's development challenges. The continental priorities set within the Digital Transformation Strategy of the African Union that ECA jointly support digital skills and women-led tech start-ups play in the implementation of the strategy.

TAW aims to train young African females with idea-stage tech startups and provide an incubation program that supports the transformation of their idea and prototypes into validated business models, ready for market and investment products.

"ECA can advance its position as a premier knowledge institution by motivating creativity on local solutions to tackle the continents' problems; initiating

macroeconomic and structural policy development options to accelerate economic diversification and job creation; designing and implementing innovative regional responses as a contribution to global governance issues."

TAW was first launched in August 2022 with a series of boot camps in four African countries offering a 5-month entrepreneurial program for women-led and idea-stage tech start-ups that provided solutions to the Sustainable Development Goals.

These start-ups benefited from an intensive three-month incubation phase, supervised by a network of developers, designers and business experts. During their training, the start-ups were able to attend tailored webinars led by international trainers and were put in touch separately with different experts who supported them on branding, business planning, market analysis, and pitching among others.

On the occasion, eight founders representing four targeted African countries got invited to Addis Ababa to pitch their ideas with an opportunity to win a prize of 7,000 USD.

The judges picked Ujana as the winner of the TAW 1.0 based on four criteria – impact, market size, team, and competitive advantage. She scooped 7,000 USD in prize money.

Ujana was created in Tanzania by Juliana Busasi. Ujana is an e-commerce platform for accessing sexual and reproductive health supplies whereby youth can purchase products and receive sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information without fear of judgment.

A startup competition was run comprising eight idea-stage start-ups presented unit composed from Tunisia, Senegal, Tanzania and Ethiopia organized by Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) with Beta cube, and the second edition of TAW program will be launched in 2023.

ILO emphasizes ...

endeavor, the International Labor Organization (ILO) said.

In an exclusive interview with The Ethiopian Herald, ILO ProAgro project Chief Technical Advisor Ruchika Bahl stated they have learnt from their pilot project in Yirgalem Agro Industrial Park that the private sector's active participation in job creation is so critical.

"Even though we have a large number of job seekers, the availability of employment in industries and other sectors are unsatisfactory and we have learnt that the private sector's involvement in job creation should be strengthened."

Mentioning access to finance, market linkage, technology transfer, use of digitization and IT are areas that need a lot of investment; she indicated the project contributes to address the aforesaid challenges through strategic intervention. Combining both short-term and long-term measures and labor demand and supply side approaches in the agribusiness sector

are also areas that the project has given due consideration.

Capitalizing on the positive recommendation it has gained through process, the project entered into a partnership with the Ethiopian Kaizen Institute to further contribute to the development of sustainable, responsible, and competitive agro small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The project also equips enterprises with need-based capacity building and enhances productivity using the ILO SORE approach and encompasses 20 agro enterprises with the combined number of 3,000 employees.

Considering agro processing is a priority sector for the government, ILO launched the first Pro Agro project in 2000 with the aim of creating decent jobs for the ever increasing unemployed youth population. In doing so, the organization has been working in partnership with the government through the Ministry of Labor and Skills, Ministry of Industry and two employers' federations of the Ethiopian Trade Union.

Opinion

A school of humanity

BY ABERA TOLA

Last week, the Ethiopian Red Cross Society organized an event at the Inter-Luxury hotel to celebrate the International Volunteers Day and honor those humanitarian volunteers who have fallen, and their physical and emotional state was disabled because of the war and conflict in the country. I was invited to deliver an opening remark and given to read a two-pager prepared by our communication team. Instead, I chose to speak from my authentic self, share what is aching and disturbing me over the last two years. 'The ignominy of humanity'!

Why the moral decadence when we claim that we are one of the oldest nations who have contributed architectural, institutional, moral, and spiritual civilization to the

world? When we had our own highly developed democratic political-legal system called the Gada system for thousands of years, which explains a contract between citizens and state, govern the behavior and conduct of the person and his relationship to himself, God, the rest of the society and the environment? When our ancestors built the Rock hewn churches of Lalibela to glorify God and the Christian faith, and many sacrificed their lives while disseminating the teaching of Christ and Christian values? When the Nejashi Mosque remains the second oldest mosque built by people close to the Prophet is a sanctuary for Muslims and spread of Islamic values in Ethiopia and beyond? All these attest to the fact that our ancestors had, Values, which embrace humanity.

Why did we depart from moral values, beliefs, and principles, which woven us as a society?

It is easy to scape got social media or individuals who are profiting by breathing hot air and disassociating their victims from the values of humanity. The social media brought to our attention the heinous crimes committed by a person or persons against another human being. It demonstrated to us the level of brutality and demonic practice reached where killing by itself alone didn't satisfy the diabolical soul. And mirrored to us where we are as a society. How our moral threads and social values, which woven us together as a society are shredded.

What is to be done?

Education!

Education can stun a stunted mind. Education can slacken a wounded heart. A School of Humanity is a call for education to save our society, pull out the country from the current quagmire of disgrace and contribute to join the rest of the civilized and vibrant global community where humanity matters.

A School of Humanity is a vision for Ethiopian Red Cross Society to provide formal education for young men and women on humanity. However, this vision cannot be realized without the ardent support and involvement of kindhearted and generous people who are compassionate enough to contribute their time, knowledge, and wisdom. Let us build and realize the School of Humanity, together!

Editor's Note: Abera Tola is President, Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS)

The role of local media in National Dialogue

BY SOLOMON YIRDAW

National dialogues offer an inclusive, comprehensive, and participatory official discussion process for resolving political crises and guiding countries through political transitions. They are summoned to address matters of national concern, generally longstanding sources of conflict that have been forced to the fore by political protest or armed revolt. The missions of national dialogues include political change, constitution-making, and peace building. There have been various national discussions over the last 25 years in diverse political circumstances and environments, spanning from Benin to Yemen. The international community is grappling with how such discussions work and how they might contribute to successful political transitions. (*Un peacemaker*)

When we come to our country, the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission was established by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's House of People's Representatives on December 29, 2021. The objectives of the commission are to "pave the way for national consensus and keep the integrity of the country." (*The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission, 2022*). The commission attempted to carry out various tasks, and the commission's conferences disseminated information through various media outlets. They held many conferences, but the public is still unaware of the national dialogue or the work of the commission. The media should play a constructive role in informing people about national dialogue and what the commission is doing, as well as encouraging people to participate by sharing successful national dialogue experiences from other countries. Ethiopia as a country is now at a crossroads: it must either solve the ethnic conflict in order to coexist or be divided into separate countries. The government tried to cross this crossroads by establishing a national dialogue commission to reach consensus among all nations and nationalities on how

to continue as a country. The commission also tried to hold different discussions among scholars, nations, and political leaders. However, when we look at the contributions of the media, we see that they do not play a significant role other than preparing reports when the national dialogue commission held various conferences, but in my opinion, the media should play a significant role in the success of the national dialogue commission's missions.

The media are accountable for showing which circumstances do national dialogues take place in

National conversations are meant to reshape the relationship between the state, political actors, and society through the negotiation of a new social contract. The government, which is normally anti-change, often launches national dialogues with the intention of controlling the negotiation process and outcomes. Pro-change groups see the National Dialogues as an opportunity to reshape the state's future. Understanding the aforementioned idea that the media declares for the public is the best way to start national conversations is also heavily influenced by bottom-up demands for change. So the media depicts the path how the dialogue take place by providing mediated experience and indicating how the two extremes come to middle by mentioning scientific research and other countries experience how they become cope with extremes.

The media should serve as agenda setters for the general public

Setting an agenda is also influenced by a person's perception of certain beliefs. For example, a person who is highly sensitive to political issues would regard political news as important. (Bajracharya, 2018). The role of the media is more than above chasing after events and reporting conferences. The media should be set agenda about the organizations of Ethiopian national dialogue commission, the importance of national consensus, to become effective the

dialogue the community should participate and support the commission. So to succeed in the above, the media should prioritize the agenda in news, programming, analysis, and documentaries.

According to Rogers and Dearing in their book *Agenda Setting Research*, when the media sets an agenda for the public and emphasizes the importance of issues that are widely accepted by the public, the agenda is more likely to become the public agenda and, eventually, the government agenda, (Dearing, 1996). It leads to the establishment of policy. So the media should continuously give more coverage to the national dialogue, and the media should work hard to inform the public about the importance of living together and that tolerance is essential to living together. Furthermore, the media educated people about other countries' experiences with nationalism and racism conflicts, as well as how the countries they learned about living with tolerance benefited their people.

The media framed the national dialogue constructively

Freedom is a key dimension of democracy, and free and independent media are also pre-requisites for democracy. This means media and democracy have husband-and-wife relations. However, this becomes true when the media portrays the issue as a constructive national dialogue. The media should frame their news, programs, documentaries, and other programs with regard to public interest and benefit.

The media can employ episodic framing to highlight a single person's history of losing his family and property due to racial violence. Furthermore, the media can frame their news, documentaries, or programs in terms of what other countries have lost to extremist racism and destruction, as well as what other countries have experienced in terms of successful national dialogue.

The media should intentionally build its news, programs, and documentaries

thematically by integrating the ideas of community politicians, bloggers, activists, and opinion leaders. It is incredibly useful for the general populace to recognize the benefits of national dialogue and whether it may be successful or how much it is destructive as a whole country; it may not be successful through the eyes of their elite and close scholars.

These things will be accomplished, however, when the government grants media freedom and requires the media to operate independently. On the contrary, journalists and the media should follow the code of ethics established by their respective media institutes. (The author believes that the media is governed by their institution's code of ethics and editorial policy; however, because the government establishes the governing rules of the media, the media logic falls under political logic, which dominates the media; as a result, the media's independence is called into question.) And when journalists and the media violate their code of ethics and may be impeding the success of national dialogue, legal repercussions are critical. Finally, by fostering an information-armed society, the media should serve as an early warning system to protect the national dialogue from potentially dangerous impediments using investigative journalism.

"A government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter," Thomas Jefferson once said: (Jefferson's 1787) as it stands, our local media work hard to create a society that thinks like Jefferson.

Editor's Note: Solomon Yirdaw is a media and communication MA student at Bahirdar University

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

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Editorial

Disinformation must not hinder CoHA implementation

Though some western media have continued mishandling Ethiopia's effort regarding aid distribution, the federal government has kept up reaching the needy people with the necessary humanitarian assistances. Following the Pretoria's peace agreement, the government has been discharging its responsibilities in providing humanitarian aids and repairing the basic infrastructures. For instance, Between November 8, 2022 and December 8, 2022 the government along with several humanitarian partners have mobilized over 1,600 trucks to deliver more than 63,800 metric tons of food, more than 4000 metric tons of health, shelter, education, protection as well as water sanitation and hygiene supplies. The beneficiaries have recently been witnessing the reality. As a result, the reality on the ground is very far from what some media and politicians are trying to feed the international community.

It's unfortunate to see some media that are bent on disseminating fake and distractive news based on disinformation and biased news stories received from unreliable sources, or by deliberately fabricating fake stories. Driven by the misinformation, some members of the congress of the United States of America proposed the delay of loan that is meant for the purchase of aircrafts from Boing Company.

On the flip side, the implementation of the Permanent Cessation of Hostilities Agreement has shown a positive development. The African Union Commission convened the second meeting of the Senior Commanders of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in Nairobi recently to follow-up on the implementation of the Permanent Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. Moreover, the meeting finalized the Term of Reference (ToR) of the Joint Monitoring, Verification and Compliance Mechanism

(JMVCM). The meeting also discussed the implementation of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) process. Appropriately, this is encouraging development towards the effective implementation of the CoHA.

The African Union Commission commends the Parties for the positive confidence-building measures since the signing of the CoHA and encourages them to continue with their efforts to restore peace, security and stability in Ethiopia.

Hence, some media and politicians that are engaging in disseminating false information should refrain from misleading decision makers. They rather should do their report based on the facts that are available on the ground and they should receive authentic information from the horse's mouth; this saves them from misinforming the international community. In short, it would be better for them to be consistent with their professional responsibility to inform the international community to stand by those stretching supportive hands for the needy in Ethiopia. Similarly, some politicians who have adamantly been cooking skewed information to mount unwarranted pressures on Ethiopia must think twice before making destructive proposals. They should know that they are working to damage century-old relations. Thanks to the wise leadership of Ethiopia and that of the US, today, the relations of both sides have taken a new height.

Over and beyond, no purpose shall be served through attempting to arm twist a sovereign country. And it is the AU-led process that governs whether or not the promises made in the Pretoria and Nairobi agreements are being fulfilled. The AU clearly and succinctly announced the fact there are positive steps on the ground being taken by the government and the other side.

Opinion

Cementing culture of tolerance – call of the day

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

In the culture that we are grown up, respectful relationships builds feelings of trust, safety, and wellbeing. If you respect others, you should not discourage others due their political, social and economic stance. When the issue is upgraded to initiations be it political, social or economic relations, disrespect of one another should not be expected as they have their own fun, followers and supporters. Disrespect becomes worse when religious institution use as a means of promoting their own ideology.

The constitution requires the separation of religion and the state, establishes freedom of religious choice and practice, prohibits religious discrimination, and stipulates the government shall not interfere in the practice of any religion, nor shall any religion interfere in the affairs of the state.

It permits limitations on religious freedom as prescribed by law to protect public safety, education, and morals as well as to guarantee the independence of government from religion. The law criminalizes religious defamation and incitement of one religious group against another.

Ethiopians have been enjoying harmonious cooperation among different religions. Christians and Muslims usually share their happiness and sorrow. Whenever Christians celebrate their holidays, their Muslim brothers enjoy together and vice versa. Ethiopians are well known for religious peaceful coexistence.

Since time immemorial, Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia have a strong bond, tolerance and love to one another.

It is a recent history, some three decades ago, Ethiopia was one of the countries where freedom of religion was an impediment as the then ideology stuck to one nation; one religion.

As a result, people were deprived of their religious rights and they were forbidden to gather in their religious institutions so as to

perform their religious duties.

Ethiopians have now managed to enjoy their respective religion without any interference in accordance with the constitution, which guaranteed the people the right to follow any religion upon their preferences.

With so diversified religions, believers of various religions coexist peacefully with mutual respect, love and sympathy to one another in the populous country consisting of 76 nations, nationalities and peoples recognized by the House of Federation.

While religious differences were causing havoc around the world, Ethiopians have been living peacefully with respect and love to one another and the country has sustained its exemplary virtue in religious endurance.

This doesn't mean there is no problem being ignited under the pretext of religion. Some groups have been attempting to destabilize Ethiopia under the guise of religion. They have been exerting unreserved elbow grease to launch religious conflicts to the peaceful country.

Despite various poisoning attempts, citizens have been living side by side. In fact, it is impossible to separate the socially bonded Ethiopians using religion as a smoke screen. No matter hard the enemies have been attempting to drive wedges among the people, it is impossible for them to change the mindset of the people as religious tolerance has already become a norm among them.

In the not distant past, there were some signs and attempts to foment religious conflicts in the country; thereby, using religion as a pretext for political consumption. However, the recent ill practices initiated by different groups have not really affected their long lasting permissiveness.

Previously, these groups attempted hard to bring the Christians and Muslims to a confrontation. They trained some youngsters and let them go to Churches dressing in

Muslim clothes and others to disturb mosques wearing Christian clothes.

However, at the beginning there were some confusions, the people took no time to comprehend their ill motives and gave them no space.

In recent years, some extremists have also attempted to mislead a number of youngsters and used them as an instrument to carry out their hidden political agenda; thereby, to erode the religious freedom guaranteed to Ethiopians by the constitution.

The entire population, religious fathers and leaders have also witnessed that religious freedom is respected in Ethiopia. The rights to perform religious duties freely is guaranteed and practiced in the past twenty five years. The heinous motives of these anti-peace groups usually fall through thanks to the strong belief of the people to religious tolerance and peaceful existence.

While religious differences are causing havoc around the world, Ethiopians have been living peacefully with respects and love to one another despite the venom of some groups who have been attempting to destabilize the country under the pretext of religion. These groups include chauvinists, rent collectors, extremists and other politically motivated individuals have been attempting to poison the long lasting peaceful coexistence of the Ethiopian people and jeopardize the fast economic development of the country under the pretext of religion.

Religious fathers confirmed that the freedom of all religious people to freely perform their religious duties is already respected. But there is a hidden agenda behind the curtains which is destabilizing the country and jeopardize its development efforts. The group, in one or another reason felt discomfort in Ethiopia's development and stability used the religion as a pretext.

However, the people have strong belief of tolerance and peaceful existence. Religious

leaders have also a significant role in bringing peace to this country if they have enough commitment.

In fact, it is essential to comprehend the capability and need to back them towards working together for peace. All religions have religious duty to promote peace, love and hope. They could meaningfully advocate tolerance mutual respect and sympathy among people.

This will be possible under an environment where religious freedom is guaranteed. Although religions have the responsibility to work hard for peace, there are many other stakeholders: the government, political parties, peace institutions and the public at large. They share their part for the thriving of lasting peace and end of conflicts and wars in every corner of the world.

Religious fathers and leaders as well as the entire public however play the significant role in creating stability and peace. The implication is the fact that people consider any religious order for granted.

That is why extremists, exerted unreserved efforts to use religion as a pretext for their hidden agenda in contrary to what any religion preaches. However, religion is one of the crucial segments in any religious tasks.

However, this old notion must be sustained and strengthened further. Every religion has religious duty of sustaining and promoting peace, love and hope among followers. As religions have an indispensable role in realizing lasting peace, the faithful have to work in collaboration with other stakeholders like the government and political parties for the thriving of lasting peace and end of conflicts.

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

Art & Culture

Talented, emerging poet

BY NAOL GIRMA

As different books put it poetry, the highest form of literature, influences us because it shows different shades of human beings. In fact, poetry is one of the most ancient arts and also the product of human imagination. It expresses different feelings such as friendship, love, death and other human emotions. In literature, poetry stands first even today because poetry has such power to influence this world.

Poetry still dominates other forms of literature such as novel, drama, short story etc. Poetry has been in existence since ages. Poems from the ancient historical eras give us a glimpse of the previous generations, right from depicting historical events to the primeval lifestyles. The thoughts and feelings of the oldies are depicted to us. What was considered beautiful, important or even profound, is clearly stated to us through those poems.

Ethiopia's fertile womb relents not from bringing forth dear sons and daughters that quench its thirst for enchanting poets. The country is a mother to poets that run the gamut from veterans to emerging ones.

Ethiopian poetry comprises of one of the many unique and amazing secrets held

dearly by the people of Ethiopia. We are all aware of how little is known by non-Ethiopians about the countless rich and varied aspects of Ethiopian life.

Senait Gebrehiwot is one the recently rising poets here in the medium of English and known for her fascinating and sweet poetry. She was born and brought up in Addis Ababa. A bit shy of 30, poet Senait Gebrehiwot has a great passion for penning down poems. She has been contributing different poems and also articles for The Ethiopian Herald.

This journalist had a short and brief stay with Senait regarding her talent and inspirations in writing poems.

Who is Senait Gebrehiwot?

Senait : I was born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. I am 29 years old. I have a great passion in writing poetry and articles. I write articles and poems on websites like www.allpoetry.com. I am now doing my master's program in English language at Addis Ababa University.

What inspires you to write poems? What are the major contents of your poems? When did you start writing poems?

Senait : I am inspired by my inner emotions when I write poems. Writing poems is a



means by which I express my feelings and my observations. My poems are mainly based on human feelings, emotions, and interactions among people and with nature. I had a passion in writing since I was a little girl but I started writing poems in a more formal way 10 years ago.

Do you have your own style? Do you have a role model?

Senait : I don't look to any reference points or how other poets write their poems. I just write my inner deep feelings in a rhythmical way. I usually write short poems because I can capture my idea in them. However, I appreciate writers like the renowned Ethiopian poet, Dr. Kebede Michael and the American poet, Maya Angelou.

Do parents, friends and readers encourage you in your journey of writing poems?

Senait : Yes many people who read my poems and writing encourage me a lot especially my mother, Meheret Getachew gives me unconditional support and encourages me in my career.

Do you have plans to make articles out of the poems which you contributed to herald?

Senait : Yes I do have a plan to do so.

Some people say we don't like poetry! What is your take on this?

Senait : Well, it all depends on their personal interest. But, I think if the poems are authentic and expressive they might attract many people. For me, poetry is like a good friend to whom I share my inner emotions and feelings.

What messages do you convey to emerging poets and youngsters?

Senait: I encourage talented young poets to continue in their writing because poetry is a very interesting and honorable field, and I feel responsible institutions should encourage such young talented writers as this career is a big asset to our country.

Iranians, expatriates celebrate longest and coldest night of the year, Yalda

BY HASSEN IDRIS

Iranians have for three millennia stayed up on the longest, darkest and coldest night of the year, marking the occasion with beautiful long-held traditions; and now Yalda Night is officially registered by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, as a cultural heritage shared by Iran and Afghanistan.

According to Press TV report, the tradition is marked in Iran and across the Persian-speaking communities, including Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Capital dwellers in Tehran, jampack shopping centers to buy last minute items and prepare for the ancient celebration. The occasion is marked with a variety of long-held traditions which continue until dawn. Besides nuts and sweets, watermelon and pomegranates are also on top of the shopping list, as they're integral to a perfect Yalda gathering.

Iranians who live far away from their homelands also uphold Yalda based on their homeland calendars, exactly as it is practiced by their own family members and indigenous individuals back home. As it is celebrated in Ethiopia by expatriate community, friends of Iranians in Ethiopia also accompanied the Event.

The author of this piece, along with his children, had the opportunity to attend the ceremony in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It was a colorful event which different sweets and fruits made the holiday so special.

Iran is an ancient civilization with the cradle of many breathtaking cultural events and practices. Of these, 'Yalda' celebration is one. 'Yalda' is an ancient celebration whereby people cherished the brilliance of the sun along with the warmth of life. This event coincides with an increase in day-length in



the Northern Hemisphere and corresponds to the 1st Day in the Iranian calendar, which is equivalent to December 22nd. Based on Persian traditions, Yalda harbors the eventual victory of light over darkness. After Yaldā, the days will grow longer and the nights will fall shorter. It further reshapes mindset of local communities/groups and individuals in appreciating the beauty (positive aspect: Sun, light and warmth) hidden in a seemingly unpleasant condition (negative aspect: coldness of winter and darkness). It is a long tradition celebrated in a way that serves to promote culture of peace, friendship, kindness and tolerance, fulfillment of promises and commitments.

All people from Iran joyfully celebrate this festivity. It is celebrated among all Iranian people regardless of gender, religion or ethnicity. Families get together at the houses of elders where people meet around a table called "yalda chelle Night Sofre" that consists of a lamp to symbolizes light, water to represents cleanliness, red fruits (such as pomegranates, watermelons, beetroots

jujube and red and green grapes) that demonstrate warmth along with dried fruits and nuts special to this occasion. All family members and neighbors sit around "yalda / Chelle Night Sofre" and served their dinner during the nightly gathering.

In Yalda tradition, women and children are at the heart of the celebration. The significant participation by women and the children alongside with their grandparents at Yalda ceremonies create safe and healthy environment between generations to learn about their sustainable future. Children perform and engage in events such as storytelling, reading books, reciting poetry and preparation of festive dishes and table that could enhance their self-esteem and internalize their learning.

Red is the Chosen Color of the Festival. Its used in Yalda celebration refer to the reddish sky after the dusk and before the dawn. Pomegranate which is native to Iran and widely cultivated in most provinces of the country, is the major fruit that has been used during the festivity. Pomegranates used



to manifest a range of metaphors in Persian poetry due to its intense red color, round shape, and numerous seeds.

Every autumn, many pomegranate growers in Iran hold festivals to thank God and celebrate the harvest season. Ancient Iranians believed that the pomegranate was a sign of fertility due to its abundant seeds. The pomegranate has long been one of the essential ingredients for Persian cuisine to bring a kind of balance, taste, and flavor. Furthermore, watermelon is often served at the gathering. A bowl of special nuts is also a must on the Yaldā night. Broth, sweets, dried fruits and nuts that are used specifically for the occasion are also set on the table and consumed during the gathering.

Law & Politics

National Dialogue: Avenue for harmonizing diametrically opposite points of view

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is an indisputable fact that the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission has been discharging its duties and responsibilities with flying colors geared towards finding a common ground for stockpiles of predicaments handcuffing the hands and feet of the various Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples of Ethiopia. In good truth, Ethiopia in light of the current situation has been making a supreme effort to restore peace and stability in every corner of the country.

As National Dialogue plays a tremendous role in getting to the bottom of a diverse range of socioeconomic and political impediments, the population as a whole has been pinning hope on the constructive measures and positive achievements of the National Dialogue Commission.

For the sake of truth, as some predicaments hovering all over hell's half acre need an immediate solution, the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission at all hours of the day and night has been paving the way for finding some common ground and reaching a common understanding.

Under the current circumstances, it is reported that quite a lot of political parties have arrived at an agreement to work in corporation with the National Dialogue commission in its commitment to address Ethiopia's logjams of conundrum. Other than that registration of participants will be conducted across a wide range of Woredas just around the corner.

In a similar vein, intending to reinforce cultural harmony, and resolve confrontation, and other related aspects, the National Dialogue Commission has been bending over backward to resolve glitches in an orderly fashion by conducting national dialogue. As creating new dawn of possibilities in the entire territory through national dialogue is achievable, each and every one should stand by the side of the National Dialogue Commission without batting an eye.

It appears clear that a broad range of nations has conducted national dialogue in various parts of the world with the intention of resolving predicaments, finding a common position, reinforcing shared values, upgrading the culture of tolerance, and more of the same. In consideration of the foregoing, they managed to get to the bottom of their problems in a peaceful setting and structured way.

In the present conditions, the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission has been bracing for an all-inclusive National Dialogue with a focus on finding consensus on major national matters. In the aftermath of the Commission's firm stance to pave the way for national dialogue and get to the bottom of the problem, the intended destination is pointing forward in the right direction.

The National Dialogue Commission as things currently stand has been carrying out its accountabilities and responsibilities without problems focusing attention on ensuring peace throughout the national territory. Apart from that, the Commission has been putting the accent on conducting National Dialogue with the purpose of giving rise to a lasting solution.



NATIONAL DIALOGUE

unify | engage | mobilize

The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission has carried out a wide spectrum of activities with a significant degree of bodies such as religious authorities, opposition political parties, and other things of a similar kind as per the fact that national dialogue plays a huge role in establishing dependence, harmony, and common ground.

It is absolutely clear that in addition to serving as a springboard to building a democratic system in all regions of the country, conducting national dialogue will resolve accumulations of problems sooner rather than later. As the whole lot in connection with the National Dialogue is moving in the current circumstances, every Tom, Dick, and Harry should stand by the side of the Commission without a second thought.

Given the current circumstances, Ethiopia has been bracing for an all-encompassing national dialogue aimed at getting to the bottom of divisive rhetoric and other historical as well as political conundrums.

For the purpose of clarifying, as the National Dialogue plays a paramount role in resolving bottlenecks of quandaries, reinstating accord, achieving a consensus, and whatnot, all and sundry should work in close cooperation with the National Dialogue Commission for its realization. Taking note of the constructive steps surfacing on the topic of the National Dialogue, everyone should go to push their shoulder to the wheel to take the efforts of the commission to the next level of success.

In the same fashion, as reliable discussions are significant strategies for the resolution of the disagreement, settlement of differences, resolving disagreements, and many related things, all pertinent bodies should join hands for the realization of the national dialogue and bring about the wished-for target.

In actual fact, taking the role inclusive national dialogue plays in resolving the multilayered and long-heaped obstacles of the nation into account, everyone should stand by the side of the government almost immediately. Apart from ensuring peace and harmony and forestalling socio-political crises, the national dialogue gives birth to stability and prosperity throughout the national territory at the earliest possible juncture.

In a previous interview with The Ethiopian Herald Anteneh Tsegaye (Ph.D.), Assistant

Professor of Intercultural Communication at Addis Ababa University said, "Ethiopia needs a highly inclusive and bottom-up approach to a national dialogue. Engaging the public and civil society should enforce the Ethiopian national dialogue as the country owns indigenous approaches to dealing with conflicts and reconciliation processes. As history informs, the elites of Ethiopia have been at the center of political fragmentation and agenda-setting for more than a century."

He elucidated that the Yemeni National Dialogue Conference (NDC) was praised for its inclusiveness and technical quality, but its recommendations were not implemented and the country went on to face a violent conflict and deep humanitarian crisis. Participants' willingness and the technical quality of the process thus do not guarantee a positive outcome. Therefore, success or failure depends on various factors.

In times gone by the Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations Council (ECSOC) stated that it managed to undertake extensive coordination activity for the success of the upcoming National Dialogue with the aim of bringing lasting peace.

It should be borne in mind that the Civil Society Organizations held the 3rd consultation forum in connection with the CSO's role in supporting the upcoming National Dialogue process. In his opening remark, Executive Director of the Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations Council (ECSOC), Henok Melesse said that the civil society members need to play their part in the successfulness of the planned National Dialogue process.

"Concerted effort from the civil society and concerning body is crucial in order to conduct effective national dialogue which is core in bringing sustainable peace in the country. The general purpose of the discussion is to strengthen the reference group and guarantee a permanent platform to lead CSOs' constructive engagement, and participatory approach, among others, in the upcoming National Dialogue process.

In the same way, National Dialogue Commission Vice Chairperson, Hirut Gebre-Selassie and Commissioner Zegye Asfaw told the Ethiopian News Agency that the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission established 8 months ago is undertaking

activities in the process of consultation, collecting input ideas, and identification of participants.

Commission Vice Chairperson Hirut said the commission entrusted 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.

The gathering 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 Zegye said on his part 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.

The commissioners also said that as it is difficult to make all the 120 million Ethiopians participate directly in the dialogue, selection of participants representing all Ethiopians will be held.

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

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.

According to them, as the dialogue will be conducted in all Woredas, the identification process will be made carefully and without haste. Commissioners further said the commission is working with commitment to undertake the national dialogue in accordance with the schedule and to create a national consensus.

Likewise, the National Dialogue Commission indicated that various political parties have agreed to work in collaboration with the commission in its efforts to address Ethiopia's atrocious problems. It is learnt that 40 political parties and different social classes have been playing a constructive role to achieve a fruitful National Dialogue in the country.

The time has come for the world to support an African-led initiative

Gabriel Nigatu

BY WORKU BELACHEW

Today's Herald Guest is Mr Gabriel Nigatu. He is a Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council Africa Center, where he is responsible for matters relating to the Horn of Africa, East Africa region. Currently Gabriel lives in the United States, Washington DC. He regularly advises governments and corporations on matters of economic reform, good governance, and regional integration.

Gabriel Negatu completed advanced studies at major institutions including the University of Pittsburgh, the Harvard University School of Business, and the University of Manchester. He is a widely sought-after speaker and strategist, serves on several boards, and is featured in leading publications on Africa.

The Ethiopian Herald has held a brief stay with him recently on current national issues of the country. Have a nice read!

Let's start with the peace accord that was signed in Pretoria, then the implementation declaration that was signed in Nairobi, how could this promote peace in Ethiopia? And what should the international community do to consolidate this move?

The peace accord that was signed both in Pretoria and then later in Nairobi is a significant milestone in ending the conflict in the northern part of Ethiopia. First and foremost, we have to acknowledge that guns are silenced. Today, no guns are being fired, and no lives are being lost, that in itself is a major milestone. This is a region that has seen a lot of conflicts and is ravaged by war and famine and COVID. Unfortunately, every other disaster you can imagine has visited the region. So this peace accord must put an end to the conflict, there are no more combatants, lives are not being lost, and mothers in Tigray and Amhara and Afar can go to sleep, knowing that their children are not being recruited to war. So this in itself is a significant milestone. Then what needs to happen next is a very critical issue because, for the longest time, the international community was very actively pushing and pursuing and aggressively. Now peace has come. Finally, peace is upon us. Now it is time for the international community to play their role in sustaining this peace. The signing of the accord doesn't necessarily mean peace has come. It is just an intent to have peace. It is the first step towards peace. The implementation on the ground is what makes peace a reality. The international community should acknowledge that implementing the accord in Pretoria and Kenya requires a lot of resources, human, financial,

and material— all types of resources. Of course, first and foremost it is the government and people of Ethiopia that are responsible for sustaining the peace. And I think we can say this government is doing everything, everything possible to bring about the implementation of this peace accord. But it has limited capacity, like all countries. Therefore, the international community needs to step in with the required support, be them technical, financial or material, this is needed to embed peace in the community to have its root on the ground to help with the demobilization and reintegration of soldiers, create livelihoods for those who were caught in the fighting, there is a whole range of things that generally happen in stages. First, you demobilize then disarm and then reintegrate. The international community must work alongside the government, not in front of it, not dictating what needs to happen but working to help the government design and implement its agenda. This is an African solution to African problems. The government has a very clear roadmap and what is expected of them is to help implement that roadmap. That's what the international community should do, in my view.

I think one of the achievements that were highly promoted is the rallying cry 'African solution to African problems. What is your take on this?

Well, so far, the principle of African solutions to African problems has been at play. We, of course, take note that this peace was mediated by three Africans, Former President of Nigeria Obasanjo, former president of Kenya Uhuru Kenyatta and the former deputy president of South Africa Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, of course, under the auspices of the African Union. So this is very much an African-led exercise. Having said that, though, I should note that US and IGAD, were also there, as observers, I am told sometimes, observers go beyond observing and try to advise and so on. But overall, on balance, I think this was an African-led initiative. Now, being African-led doesn't mean it is exclusively African. It just means you let the Africans develop a strategy, a roadmap based on African wisdom, experience and know-how. No one knows Africa better than Africans themselves, the US, or former colonial powers cannot act on behalf of Africans. But, once that agreement is reached, the IC has to work with Africa.

Another interesting point is that the African solution does not mean it is solely Africans that put the agreement to full implementation. It means at some point that Africans will lead and at other points,



Another interesting point is that the African solution does not mean it is solely Africans that put the agreement to full implementation. It means at some point that Africans will lead and at other points, the international community will come in to support them. So it's a partnership. It's a shared initiative.



the international community will come in to support them. So it's a partnership. It's a shared initiative. And I think the time has come, the time has come for the world's community to step up and play its due role in support of an African-led; African conceived initiative.

What is expected of the government of Ethiopia in particular, may be requesting local and international partners to involve in the reconstruction and other processes.

Right. What is expected of the government first and foremost is leadership. I think Ethiopia has shown incredible resilience and leadership, even when it was being pushed and challenged and so on. It has held its ground and has shown tremendous leadership— leadership in bringing peace, and leadership in implementing the peace accord. That means, now that peace has come, demobilization camps have been set up, and soldiers are already moving in there and surrendering their arms and so on, those are the first steps. But the kind of leadership that is required is to rebuild the region. One has to remember, it's not only Tigray that was affected by this conflict, Amhara and Afar are also were devastated by the impacts of the war.

So, the government of Ethiopia needs to take the lead in doing an impact assessment. What has been the damage the war posed? Who was affected, and in what way? How many schools were



destroyed? How many hospitals? How many lives are affected directly and indirectly? How many young women were raped and victimized? ...All these need a thorough and careful assessment. Put another way, it is incumbent upon the government to conduct a study on the human, financial, economic, material, and psychological impact of the war. The next phase is costing. That requires, again, very sound technical knowledge of the cost of the stated impacts. Then comes financing.

As I said earlier, the primary responsibility for financing the reconstruction is with the government of Ethiopia. I can tell you from my discussion with people here that the government is spending billions of dollars on the reconstruction effort. Already the demobilization has started, which costs a huge amount of money, putting people back to their localities (Qeyes), wherever they came from, giving them what they need to restart their life. That costs a lot of money. And the government is already putting in a lot of its resources. This is putting tremendous stress on the Ethiopian economy because this is again an unbudgeted, unexpected financial burden on the economy. Nevertheless, the government is moving forward with implementing that with its own money. At the same time, the government needs to reach out to the international community, and get a well-developed, impact assessment and types of projects and services to be provided. You need to reach out to the international community to say 'this is the impact that we have suffered from. And these are the kinds of things we need to rebuild communities, households, families, regions, facilities, and so on.'

Do you think the government would reach out to the IC anytime soon?

My guess is once they complete the impact assessment; the government will convene what you call a donor, or a partner's pledging conference, where you invite all the friends of Ethiopia to the table to walk them through the damage, impact and cost. Then, it asks partners to pledge financial, technical and other support to the effort that ongoing which is led by the government. So when it's ready, I am convinced it will convene a donor conference to help mobilize the resources in addition to the domestic resources that are being mobilized in the country.

What role should personalities like you play in urging the IC for the said purpose?

I think all of us need to call on the international community, all of those who were lamenting the lack of peace, now peace has come. It is high time for these entities to be able to step up their support to the implementation of this peace process. Peace is here to stay but to make the peace a lasting one, it behoves members of the IC such as the European Union, the US, Russians, the Chinese, Turks, the Indians, the Middle East, the African neighbours... to throw their supports behind the efforts of Ethiopia.

I would like to urge the UN and all its



specialized agencies that used to mount complaints saying they were not able to deliver food into the country. Now is the time to demonstrate whether or not their calls are genuine. As we speak, there are now three to four channels so that they deliver whatever aid they want to supply. Can I say it this way? Let us see if you deliver the food that is required.

Maybe there are some peace spoilers; they're trying to sabotage the peace process in Ethiopia. This could be politicians of a certain country or 'paid activists'. How should the IC respond to these kinds of peace-spoiling entities?

You know, every negotiated peace always has its detractors. A negotiated peace is about giving and taking. You had a situation by the time the government of Ethiopia and the TPLF were negotiating that the Ethiopian defence forces were a few kilometres outside of Mekelle. That was the best solution at the time. And the representatives of the TPLF in Tigray were wise to acknowledge the reality on the ground and agreed to a peace deal. Is it 100 per cent perfect? No, there is no such thing as called 100 per cent perfect peace deal. But it was the best at the time. Now, there will always be this, especially in the diaspora, sitting in the comforts of the Western capitals, in the cafes and what have you and saying "no, we should keep fighting". But when they say "we", it doesn't refer to them, it means the children of the poor and the farmers and so on, who are losing their lives due to the conflict. I think the IC should call them out for they are warmongers, they are peace spoilers. And the people of Tigray have embraced this peace process. You have seen it, we have seen them being interviewed by local and international media, about how they welcome the peace agreement and so on.

So the attention should be to the people on the ground, it should not be the people in London and New York and Washington DC and Brussels. For them, prolonging

the conflict is just a business. Peace has already come, people have embraced this, and the rest of Ethiopia has embraced it. The international community should embrace it wholeheartedly, without any equivocation any qualification. This is an organic peace negotiated and finalized by Africans. And there's no reason to go back. And anyone who wishes to take us back is simply profiting from the conflict in the region, and the IC should not pay any attention to these entities.

Last but not least on my side, let's talk about self-reliance. Ethiopia has been embarking on different kinds of projects that are meant for self-reliance, we can take, as an instance the low-land wheat production. How should these get support from relevant entities?

Thank you for that question. Self-Reliance is a goal that you set for yourself and you work towards this end. The fact that you seek Self Reliance doesn't mean you don't need support today or tomorrow. It's a vision. And I think what we see in Ethiopia is that the Prime Minister has set that vision for the country. He has said we will become food self-sufficient. That is a goal. Now, will we achieve it this year? Will we achieve it next year or the year after? That should not be the issue. Some people will say oh, he said 'Self Reliance' last year, and we're still importing wheat, so it's a failure. No, that is not how you measure a vision. Vision is measured in years, not months and dates. Ethiopia has said it intends to become self-reliant, food self-sufficient meaning it will not import basic food commodities for its people. This is a country of 100 and 120 million people. You do not become self-sufficient and feed 120 million people two times three times a day in one year or two years. But the process has been started, the train has left the station, the policy on the ground is there, and you see the Prime Minister visiting these huge mechanized farms. These are the building blocks of what self-reliant food sufficiency will look like. But it will take time. So let us not rush to measure and judge this vision in one year or two years. Let's give it the time it needs. What's most important is 'Are we moving in the right direction?' You know, if we were producing 100 million tons last year, are we producing 700 million tons this year? Are we are producing one billion tons next year? Those are the steps towards achieving food self-sufficiency in 1 year, 2 years, and 3 years, which, in my view, it is immaterial, it's inconsequential. Get there in one year, if things work out. If the rains don't come, you may not. And the price of fertilizer around the world goes through the roof, you may not. Here there are factors outside of your control. If the war in Ukraine has increased the cost of fuel and fertilizer, how can you control that? Therefore, if you don't achieve food self-sufficiency, does it mean you fail? No. These are what you call exogenous factors outside of your control. But the policy is that the investment is being made in the right direction.

Thank you very much, Mr Gebriel.
The Pleasure is mine.

Peace has already come, people have embraced this, and the rest of Ethiopia has embraced it. The international community should embrace it wholeheartedly, without any equivocation any qualification. This is an organic peace negotiated and finalized by Africans. And there's no reason to go back. And anyone who wishes to take us back is simply profiting from the conflict in the region, and the IC should not pay any attention to these entities



Immunization for measles containing

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Research documents tells that immunization programs have improved the primary care infrastructure in developing countries, lowered mortality in childhood and empowered women to better plan their families, with consequent health, social and economic benefits.

The annual return on investment in vaccination has been calculated to be between 12 percent and 18 percent. Vaccination leads to increased life expectancy. Long healthy lives are now recognized as a prerequisite for wealth, and wealth promotes health. Vaccines are thus efficient tools to reduce disparities in wealth and inequities in health services, as to documents.

To garner the aforementioned benefits and beyond, Ethiopia has been working persistently to immunize its people through devising strategies and formulating expanded immunization programs.

As part of this effort, recently the nation has launched nationwide Integrated Measles Supplementary Immunization Activity (SIA) campaign to save citizens from illness and death by giving more types of vaccines.

Speaking at the launching ceremony of the campaign held at Akaki Kaliti Sub City Sirti Health Center, Health State Minister Dereje Duguma noted that Measles SIA campaign



has been conducted across the nation in number of times to increase the immunity of children to measles, and reduce the occurrence of outbreaks. In this campaign, the Ministry plans to immunize 15.5 million children nationwide, he remarked. He also called on pertinent stakeholders to support the campaign.

The government has shown strong commitment to improving Expanded Program Immunization (EPI) access and utilization by training health extension workers and setting up number of health posts which have integrated community case management. It has also endorsed sustainable development goal target which aims at reducing preventable deaths of newborns and children under-five years of age by 2030.

Immunization is a cost-effective public

health strategy. It averts nearly three million deaths annually but immunization coverage is low.

According to National Immunization Program Acting Manager Temesege Lemma, the National Integrated Measles Vaccination Campaign is vital in muzzling down the occurrence of outbreak at pandemic level. Above all, the campaign is vital to ensure citizens' well-being and productivity, at the same time minimize the burden of various preventable diseases in the community throughout the nation.

He further noted that through this campaign, COVID-19 vaccination will be provided to areas that had been in conflict. Conducting vaccination campaigns for the displaced and host communities is key to preventing an outbreak of infectious diseases such as measles. Malnutrition also needs to be

addressed. That is why this campaign is integrated with Vitamin A distribution and deworming for young children.

The Integrated Measles Campaign also helpful in strengthening further the regular vaccination programs in various health facilities including the activities of nutrition screening for children and women with fistula. Vitamin A supplementation to children aged between 6-59 months supports their rapid growth; and helps them combat infections.

Since, vaccination is helpful in ensuring economic growth everywhere, in lowering morbidity and mortality, it is cost effective.

The campaign is headed by a national task force and it includes nutrition screening for children and pregnant women who had attended or not got regular immunization; screening club foot and deworming supplementation to children aged 2-5.

At the same time, screening individuals with club foot and women with fistula health problems will be practiced. Ethiopia has launched an integrated measles campaign to contain the outbreaks and ease the burden, he underscored.

Integrated Measles Immunization campaign is underway nationally starting from December 22, 2022 and will continue to the coming ten days. Regional health bureaus could also adjust schedules as per their respective realities, it was learnt.



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South West State urban agriculture activity, youth participation

BY KASSAHUN MALETO

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Constitution article 41 says, the state shall pursue policies which aim to expand job opportunities for the unemployed and the poor and shall accordingly undertake programs and public work projects. The state shall undertake all measures necessary to increase opportunities for citizens to find gainful employment. Creating jobs for job seekers is the government's mandate.

The development activities which have taken place by the government must involve them.

Beyond this, the constitution says that the government is supposed to create jobs from which the citizens could be benefited from.

Consequently, to solve this problem in the past five years, at the Ministry of Agriculture Rural Job Creation Directorate has worked a lot of things to create job for job seekers. As a result of that, millions of the rural youths have been getting jobs and many of them are building capacity to manage themselves.

The ministry's Urban Agriculture and Job Creation Executive head Ato Seleshi Bekele said that, the agriculture sector job creation have been benefiting the youths.



In the ten year strategic plan, they have sited goal to create 10.5 million jobs to the rural job seekers in the agriculture sector.

So, in 2014 E.C they have created jobs for more than one million youths and females in the agricultural sector.

In the same way, in 2015 E.C 938,522 job seekers were registered. From this, in the 1st quarter more than 135,000 youths and females have got job opportunities.

In some areas the youths have raised issues related to the prices of animal forage which they found difficult to manage since it does not match to their income and expenditure. Responding to this, Seleshi said that the



ministry has trained many youths to create jobs in animal forage distribution hoping that it solves the problem.

In some states youths and females have been benefited from jobs created in the agriculture sector. .

For instance, Keffa Zone Bonga Town Enterprise and Industry Development Office Head Henock W/Gebrel told that youths were selected to allocate them in urban agriculture sector. And more than fifteen enterprises which each have 400 youth members were organized in this sector.

Henock added that these youths have taken trainings based on their interests

in the agriculture sector. And many of them have been participating in cattle breeding, fattening, chicken production, and producing vegetables like onion, cabbage and tomato.

At last, Tegat Milk Producers Association Chair Atrese Agito mentioned that his association was established in 2014 E.C by five group members with the initial capital 240,000 Birr. Currently they have more than sixteen cows, oxen, and five goats besides the 2.6 hector of land on which, they are producing onion, cabbage, carrot and the like. Consequently, it is expecting more than one million Birr in 2015 from both milk and farming. .

Verbatim and Caption



Service resumption, humanitarian aid flow gaining significant improvement: GCS

Humanitarian aid flow, resumption of services and reconstruction activities are gaining momentum in the war affected areas of Northern Ethiopia, especially in Tigray after the Pretoria agreement. Following the agreement, the government of Ethiopia has invested its maximum capacity to fully implement the agreement.

Immediately, corridors were opened and unfettered humanitarian flows from Afar-Abala, Gondar-Mytsebri-Shire, and Kombolcha-Kobo-Alamata corridors through road transport. Until mid-December, over 93,000 metric tons of food and nutrition transported to Tigray region.

In addition, repairing and checkup works of electric transmission lines have seen completions about 85 percent that were damaged by the war. Following these effort, major towns including the regional capital Mekele, which were cut off from the national power grid has been reconnected. Similarly, telecom service has resumed in about 65 stations in Tigray.

Government Communication Service State Minister Selamawit Kassa briefing journalists



Gov't has been providing humanitarian assistance since pretoria agreement

More than 8.35 million citizens in conflict-affected areas in northern Ethiopia have received full-fledged first round humanitarian support. This comes following the permanent cessation of hostilities agreement signed between the government of Ethiopia and TPLF to end the war in Pretoria, South Africa a month ago.

Immediately after the agreement was signed, corridors were opened for humanitarian aid flow and so far 8,358,196 citizens affected by the conflict have received full-fledged first round humanitarian support in Amhara, Afar and Tigray regions.

Efforts are underway to strengthen humanitarian aid flow to reach all affected areas and to improve the provision of medicine and nutritious foods.

Shiferaw Teklemariam, Disaster Risk Management Commissioner, said during a discussion with humanitarian aid organizations

Banking service resumed in some parts of Tigray

Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE) announced this week that its branches in Shire, Alamata and Korem towns started to provide banking service for the people. Similarly, Lion Bank also announced its branches in Shire town have already resumed services. Wegagen Bank also announced the resumption of services in its branches in Alamata and Raya-Timuga branches and preparations are underway to start services in Shire and in Mekelle districts as well.

CBE, Wegagen, Lion banks announced



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Armauer Hansen Research Institute

Efforts required improving health system through research

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Armauer Hansen Research Institute (AHRI) has recently conducted a consultative meeting with higher education and hospital medical directors on managing health research projects.

AHRI General Director, Prof. Afework Kassa noted that the Government of Ethiopia is working to strengthen the healthcare system to align it with the Sustainable Development Goals in his opening remarks of the meeting.

“As Ethiopia has a large, predominantly rural and subsistence agriculture population with poor access to safe water, housing, sanitation, food and health service, it is up to the research institutions to respond for the health problems they face. It should be well noted that the government has made significant investments in the public health sector that have led to improvements in health outcomes,” he specified.

Nevertheless, communicable diseases like HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria, hepatitis B and C, respiratory infection, leprosy, and diarrhea remain a serious challenge in Ethiopia, he detailed adding:

“Premature death, suboptimal quality of life, and nutritional diseases constitute a major health challenge. With a growing middle class, the GOE is facing an increase in non-infectious diseases such as cancer, diabetes, heart diseases, and high blood pressure. Mental health and eye problems are also becoming major issues in Ethiopia.”

He called on higher education institutions, and higher public and private hospitals found in various parts of the nation to strengthen the culture of reasserting to ease the burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases which are affecting the wellbeing of citizens.

It is high time to work in collaboration among the higher education institutions, he recalled reaffirming: “We are ready and open to usher the demands coming from various parts of the nation. We hold collaboration is vital in any health institution with health professionals from different fields because success or goals of the institutions are achieved with good collaboration.”

It should be well understood that for a good collaboration to exist in a healthcare institution, there must be set objectives and people involved must have same

interest in meeting the set objectives.

“We focus on more strategic areas and would like to focus improving the health system. Health system strengthening comprises the strategies, responses, and activities that are designed to sustainably improve the country’s health system performance. AHRI invests in health system strengthening because strong health systems underpin all other health investments and lead to greater resilience and global health security,” he necessitated.

Similarly, Deputy General Director, Dr. Alemseged Abdissa for his part noted that AHRI’s mission is to improve medical care by advancing the health and wellbeing of the public through generating and delivering scientific evidence, developing new tools and methods using biomedical, clinical and translational research, and by serving as a hub for technology transfer and capacity building in medical research and training.

“To achieve the set goals and plan we need respective health facilities and higher education institutions to work along with us because demands and challenges are getting tough. Ethiopia

is working along with the neighboring nations in TB and malaria and it should well strengthen further. We would like to urge respective hospitals and higher education to engage on research,” he urged.

Interdisciplinary research is increasingly being encouraged within higher education institutes. Internationally, in many large funding calls, there is a growing requirement for multiple researchers to work across disciplines to address complex research questions that face society.

AHRI holds the growing need for interdisciplinary research could pose both opportunities and threats for higher education institutes with a new or emergent research culture. Established universities with long serving research capacity can, for example, establish interdisciplinary groups with greater ease, for younger institutes this can be more challenging.

However, within these settings there is an opportunity to create unique and sustainable interdisciplinary research cultures that can grow and nurture over time, and this is the case for Irish higher education institutes.