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## African leaders expected to press on constructive engagement with U.S.

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

**ADDIS ABABA-** African leaders are highly expected to focus on constructive engagement with the U.S administration in a bid to enjoy cooperation in every aspect of the U.S.- Africa ties, so stated an Expert .

Addis Ababa University Political Science and International Relations Expert Prof.Yeacob Arsono told Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that during U.S. - Africa Leaders Summit 2022, African leaders need to press on becoming permanent members of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) aiming to make a difference in addressing Africa's peace and security issues.

In various times and meetings, African leaders have been repeatedly requesting Africa's membership of the UNSC. However, there is no answer for this quest or the existing members of the council are not ready to improve or amend the UNSC, he said

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## EU grants 35 mln. Euros to support Ethiopia's safety net program

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

**ADDIS ABABA-** The European Union (EU) has inked 35 million Euros agreement with the World Bank (WB) to support the Rural Productive Safety Net Programme (RPSNP) in Ethiopia.

The EU Ambassador to Ethiopia Roland Kobia said that in close cooperation with other development partners, the EU will contribute to alleviate poverty and improve the resilience and well-being of around 8 million most vulnerable people across Ethiopia.

As to the ambassador, the European citizens' commitment to this Ethiopian-led programme is long-standing. "We are pleased to continue work together to build upon the success of the RPSNP in improving food security and nutrition as well as resilience in poor and vulnerable communities."

It was learnt that EU has applauded the Ethiopian government's commitment, leadership, and increased ownership under this initiative apart from reaffirming its



commitment to be a partner of the Ethiopian people in the coming years.

The Ambassador pointed out that the RPSNP provides food and/or cash transfers

to food insecure households in chronically food insecure woredas in exchange for labour-intensive public works, while

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## More conflict- affected areas to regain power very soon: EEU

• EEU's high level technical committee in Tigray, Afar

BY HAILE DEMEKE

**ADDIS ABABA-** Electricity has been restored to Humera and efforts are underway to restore electricity very soon to many other war-damaged areas of the country,

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Photo Gebabo Gebre

## Association ready to support rehabilitation efforts

# News

## Countries vow to restore health facilities ravaged by war

MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA**—The governments of Japan, Canada and Ireland have donated ten ambulances amounting to 24 million Birr or over 400,000 USD to Ethiopia's four conflict affected states with a view to help assist national effort for a better health service.

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

The support is of significantly useful in saving lives, promoting sexual and reproductive health, as well as helping fight sexual and gender based violence.

"The donated ambulances would be deployed to four conflict affected states such as Amhara, Tigray, Afar and Benishangul Gumuz," she said.

Japan Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ito Takako said that the health sector is one of Japan's



government cooperation in Ethiopia and the former is keen to contribute to the Ethiopian people health and well-being especially in expanding gender sensitive services to tackle the problem observed today.

Japan will continue providing assistance for the health sector in Ethiopia focusing on those in the most vulnerable situations

and working together with ministry of Health and partner organizations including UNFPA, she said.

In response to the urgent and vast humanitarians needs, Japan will continue to assist conflict and drought affected regions in Ethiopia via the partnership of with international organizations, she added.

Canada Ambassador to Ethiopia, Stephane Jobinalso noted that access for survivors to services and access for the ambulances within their regions is a decisive step.

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

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

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

## Restaurants to create ample jobs, boost hospitality

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** - Over 800 standardized restaurants have been carrying out various activities to facilitate and expand the hospitality service and create ample jobs to the youth in the years to come.

Melese Sentayehu, 29, who was a driver at BeU restaurant and has lately become the owner of small restaurant said: "I had not any work and experience until I joined BeU restaurant. However, after obtaining a chance as driver in BeU, I have gained a lot of experience in the restaurant and have become the owner of small restaurant later."

He said that he is proud of serving the society anywhere and anytime. That is why he said he has become the owner of a restaurant after passing numerous ups and downs over the past years."

Therefore, he added that restaurants have been playing a paramount role in creating jobs and provide customers and tourists coming from various directions with service coupled with hospitality. Besides, he said he has planned to open five star hotels in the future.

The owners of restaurants and their employees have held discussion Saturday about the future activities including how to deliver swift services along with fast, yummy, and standardized foods and creating jobs for the youth.

Speaking at the discussion, BeU's Business Development CEO, Biruk Genene said that the BeU restaurant has been undertaking



various activities since its establishment in the past one year plus time.

As to Biruk, the BeU restaurant has created over 350 jobs over the past one year and three months though it started operating using 10 employees. In this regard, restaurants have been playing a significant role in creating jobs especially for the youth drawn inconvenient scenarios and addictions, which is a golden opportunity helping the government hit the job creation schemes.

"The restaurant has extended and delivered foods for 19 districts in Addis Ababa city and its environs. In addition to this, the

BeU restaurant has been discussing how to further create more jobs with Bole sub city administration. Besides, the restaurants have planned to extend the service delivery for some 15 African countries within two years cooperatively. It is also planned to reach Amazon level until to 2031," Biruk noted.

Moreover, the variable restaurants have been working closely to deliver standardized foods to customers through fast, yummy, and reasonable whilst attempt to maximize the level of hospitality for tourists in that regard.

## Gov't stepping up aid to conflict-affected areas

BY YESUF ENDRIS

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

NDRMC Public Relations Director Debebe Zewude told The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that aid deliveries would continue so long as the demands of needy are met.

Noting the availability of unfettered humanitarian access, he said that the governmental and non-governmental humanitarian agents are now toiling to access all possible ways to address humanitarian needs in the state.

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

1,222.76 metric to medical items, 7,651 metric ton non-food supply and 690,868 liters of fuel has been transported to the state, he added.

Afar Aba la corridor, Gondr-May Temri-Shire corridor and Kombolcha-Kobo-Alamata corridor are now busy of serving 23 humanitarian partners, he indicated.

# News

## Association ready to support rehabilitation efforts

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

**ADDIS ABABA** - The Ethiopia Diaspora Association (EDA) has expressed its readiness to extend support towards Ethiopian government rehabilitation efforts in the conflict-affected areas in North Ethiopia.

Speaking to *The Ethiopian Herald* EDA President Indris Mohammed said that the association is ready to actively take part in the rehabilitation of the war affected population and reconstruction of socio-economic facilities vandalized during the two-year conflict in North Ethiopia through providing the community with financial and material supports.

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

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

According to him, the EDA is willing to replicate the best practices recording in terms of grand Homecoming project, proper law enforcement, green legacy initiative as well as rehabilitation process and reconstruction

of the nation in Afar and Amhara.

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

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

"Many are joining hands and the EDA is working to strengthen further, we are communicating and encouraging members

of Ethiopian Diasporas hail from Tigray to take part in the effort of rehabilitation, and many are responding to extend support," he added.

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

According to the president, the Ethiopian Diaspora population has now reached about 5 million, according to information from IOM.

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## EU grants 35 mln. Euros ...

most vulnerable and labour-poor households (such as elderly, disabled, mother head of household, etc.) receives unconditional and permanent "direct support" transfers.

The RPSNP is the government of Ethiopia's multi-billion USD social safety net programme for eight million people in need across Ethiopia.

The public works component, which covers approximately 80 percent of programme participants, focuses among others, on the implementation of soil and water conservation measures and the development of community assets such as roads, water infrastructure, schools, and health centers, Ronald stated.

Ousmane Dione, the Country Director of the World Bank by his representative, said that the current phase of the RPSNP introduces several key design elements aimed at

improving the effectiveness and efficiency of program delivery and sustainably enhancing the food security and the productive base of the beneficiaries. The World Bank continues to be committed to partner with the Government of Ethiopia and the EU to support this 5<sup>th</sup> phase of the Program.

The fact that RPSNP is delivered through existing government structures - from the federal to regional to woreda and kebele levels - has led to important investments in government delivery structures and ultimately to strengthened government implementation capacity.

The European Union has supported the RPSNP initiative since its inception and remains among Ethiopia's largest bilateral assistance partner, investing over 60 million USD (over 3 billion Birr) in the last five years alone.

## China announces 1,644 duty, quota free items for Ethiopia: MoTRI

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**ADDIS ABABA**- As per to the duty and quota free market permission to ten countries, China has officially sent the 1,644 items that are allowed to access the market, so disclosed Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI).

Speaking to The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), MoTRI Communication Head Kummneger Ewnetu noted that Ethiopia are now officially permitted to send over 1,644 item using the duty, and quota free market access to China.

As the MoTRI has been waiting for the official permission of the country, she noted that China has sent the soft copy of all the

1,644 items that are allowed to be exported in its market.

According to the Communication Head, Ethiopia will be exporting the items in a manner that takes the local market into account.

"Just because we are permitted the duty free market, we will not be exporting all the items. While we export the items that are available at hand, we will make sure to produce the rest. Nonetheless, the entire export will take critical consideration of the domestic market consumption," she underscored.

She further emphasized that the information distributed in accusing the MoTRI of failing to fulfill documents to be allowed in the duty and quota free market is baseless.

## African leaders expected to press...

adding that the summit would pave a way for the African continent to convince the U.S to support Africa to this end.

"The summit has multi-dimensional implications for both U.S. and Africa as the two sides have mutual interests in a number of global affairs."

As to Prof. Yeacob, Africans should

work to ease unwarranted pressures of the U.S and some western countries and boost collaboration among countries. "They should tell the U.S. to refrain from its unnecessary interventions when African countries cooperate with other countries prioritizing collaboration in the U.S.-Africa Leaders' Summit 2022."

## More conflict-affected areas...

so disclosed Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU).

EEU Corporate Communication Director MelakuTaye told *The Ethiopian Herald* that after the successful maintenance completion of the damaged electric infrastructure, electric service has been restored in Humera.

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

He said that electricity is the bedrock for the operation of other essential services including telecom, internet, sewerage, bank and others due emphasis has been

given for the task. It was recalled that the electric service has been returned to the towns of Maychew, Alamata, Korem, Shire, Salaklaka, Aba Guna which had been cut off from the national power grid for over a year due to conflict in the area and other towns in Tigray and Afar states will be reconnected soon.

Commending the contribution of EEU staff workers are working diligently for the resumption of electricity in conflict-impacted areas, he said that the maintenance and inspection activities have been completed in different parts of Tigray and neighboring Afar state and electricity will resume in other towns in the state shortly.

He stated that technical committee which also includes a high-level leadership has



been dispatched to Tigray and Afar states to oversee the restoration of electricity in various towns of conflict-affected areas.

The technical committee has arrived in Shire

town and the other team was dispatched to Afar states of Aba'la, Barhale, Kalaba, Dalol and Magale areas to maintain damaged infrastructure, he noted.

# Opinion

## Africa taken as a pawn for US will to maintain its unipolar moment

BY EUNETU YINEGER

It is an obvious truth to state the fact that the world is in a state of flux showing signs of an epistemic, systemic, civilizational and planetary crisis. The success of China initiated by the late Chairman Deng Xiaoping and now spearheaded by President Xi Jinping and resurgence of Russia under President Vladimir Putin are seen by the US and its supporters as a “problem” to the five hundred years of unipolar hegemony of Westernization defining and ruling the planet earth.

This predicament has been early featured by the works of Zbigniew Brzezinski intended to the planners of the US international policy establishment to keep the West relevant and make US shape the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Zbigniew Brzezinski defining China as “the problem of the future” and Russia as “the disruptor of the present” counseled the US—“the aging superpower caught in the vice of history”—to hone a long term geopolitical vision to re-westernize the world according to its own interests and values.

That being said, China, Russia, and other East Asian countries altering the economic geography of the world have unmasked the inadequacy and insufficiency of the unipolar idea of the world headed by the US positing a multipolar idea of the world as an alternative road to the global future. These same countries are now acting according to multi-polarity paving ways for Belt and Road Initiative and other global development and security initiatives and frameworks. The US along with the G-7, EU and NATO unwilling to this appropriation of the capital and knowledge of the world by non-western countries is now pressuring the world again to subscribe to its exclusive international geo-strategy aimed at containing “systemic challengers” including China and Russia.

This great power completion for global primacy manifested through the Russia-Ukraine war and tensions in Taiwan Straits between China and US together with the inability of the US, G-7, EU and NATO to make strategic re-adjustment to the changing realities and power shifts of the 21<sup>st</sup> century place humanity and all life-forms in general at risk. Africa is no exception to this global completion for primacy and its repercussions. It is being afflicted by supply chain, energy, food, climate, fertilizer and health crisis.

### The US-Africa Leaders’ Summit seen from the wrong lens of power politics

The US-Africa Leaders’ Summit hosted by the US President Joe Biden is seen in light of this historical showdown for global primacy. The US is clear headed regarding the role of Africa in a bid to take the continent as one of its fronts in the fight against the designers and initiators of the emerging multipolar idea of the world. This unilateral conception of the world order turning Africa from a player into a pawn amounts to mortgaging African futures for the geopolitical end of the US—that is

keeping the West control and manage the meaning and capital of the world despite the Biden administration claims US-Africa Leaders’ Summit is demonstrative of the “enduring commitment” of the US to Africa so as to promote democracy and human rights as well as foster economic, health, food and climate security.

However, it is pretty clear that the US has already shown the world that it sees its relations with African countries through the self-serving lens of power politics. This has been clearly stated in the new U.S. Strategy toward Sub-Saharan African document issued in August 2022 signaling the fact that the US sees the strategic environment of Africa as a zone of geo-economic, geo-strategic and geo-diplomatic sphere of influence in the global strategic competition.

The strategy makes clear that the US views Africa as an arena for its geo-economic influence, testifying the strategic vision and motivation guiding the US geo-economic strategy focuses on Africa’s vast natural resources including “30 percent of the critical minerals that power our modern world”. It is in this case that the US strategic focus in relation to Africa reflects the US policy pushes the agenda of solely extracting the continent’s natural resources ignoring the interests of Africa. Worded differently, the US ignoring the geo-economic geography and sociality seeks to sever Africa’s economic engagement with China and Russia leaving Africa’s geo-economic interest hostage to the bloc politics and demonizing the synergy of African and Chinese geo-economic developmental ideas and praxis as “narrow” and threat to its hegemony and power in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Additionally, the strategy again clarifies the need to see Africa as a geo-strategic site for greater influence of the US to defend, preserve and extend the unipolar moment. The strategy stipulates that Africa does matter as a key strategic region located on the “major sea lanes of communication and trade in the Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, and Gulf of Aden”. This is illustrative of the outdated policy of the US making Africa and other regions of the Global South an appendage to its geo strategies, including Indo-Pacific strategy to contain China.

Lastly, the strategy takes Africa as an arena for the US foreign policy or geo-diplomatic influence, demonstrating the fact that the US demands African countries to subscribe to its global geopolitical agenda and needs the support of Africa at various multilateral institutions as the continent “represents one of the largest regional voting groups (28 percent) at the UN and other multilateral bodies”. The same strategy putting China and Russia high on the global US geo-strategic agenda requires Africa to join a US-led coalition in order to defend “rules-based liberal international order” as well as to win the strategic and ideational completion with China and Russia at various levels ranging from geo-economy, geo-politics and foreign policy or geo-diplomacy as shown in the US Africa strategy.

The US-Africa Leaders’ Summit is no different from the strategic objectives set from the new U.S. Strategy toward Sub-Saharan African document. The summit could be a new starting point for the US to substantively and structurally engage African countries and enable them to take matters to their own hands so that the continent contributes to the creation of an enabling regional and global environment for world politics and economy. This summit might also help both sides if the US commits itself to a new way of imagining, thinking and seeing Africa as a player in world affairs. Democratizing and reforming of the international political, economic and financial institutions making the agency, voice and interest of Africa front and center might help both sides to address the insecurity and underdevelopment.

### China’s New Geo-Economic Reality

Nevertheless, old habits die hard. The geopolitical purpose of the US policy casts Africa as a component of the West in a contest over the becoming of the world order. This shows the US policy without making any fundamental rethinking continues its paternalism and pressures using Africa as a geopolitical pawn and stage to strategically challenge other powers including China, which is an important trading partner of Africa geo-economizing the continent with the world economy.

This diplomatic pressure on African governments has been clearly illustrated by an article written by Nanjala Nyabola published in Foreign Affairs: “For many Africans, the current overtures from both Russia and the West are not about friendship. They are about using Africa as a means to an end... the dominant African position [is to] avoid having to take sides in a conflict that seems unlikely to offer much to Africa...” Sadly, the US is trying hard to maintain the physical and metaphysical control and management of African politics, economies and societies disregarding the voices, agency and interest of the African states.

Unlike the Americans, the Chinese understanding the central importance of Africa in shaping the 21<sup>st</sup> century are birthing a new diplomatic lexicon, a new geography of the world, and a new regime of knowledge of the world economically, politically and intellectually opening away from a Western-managed and controlled world order into a multipolar world order.

The Chinese have put forward new initiatives, mechanisms and formats (FOCAC, BRI, BRICS+, SCO and other institutions) engaging Africa and other regions of the world and dedicated themselves to their practical application launching themselves as an integrative and constructive force proposing a new type of international relations based on geo-economy—putting infrastructure development, connectivity and corridor front and center. China has systematically, strategically and smartly taken FOCAC, BRI, BRICS+, SCO and other institutions as geo-economic basis

to create a transcontinental and inter-civilizational Afro-Eurasian geo-economic imaginary, geography, thought, reality and community redefining development and security as indivisible elements and putting Chinese developmental strategies and trajectories in perfect sync with its partners including African countries.

Africa has been placed as a key participant and co-driver in these geo-economic initiatives to address the insecurity and underdevelopment affecting its people. Africa besides this geo-economic engagement is working in concert with China and other states promoting African interests in international forums. Africa has also joined hands with China and other powers in making international coordination to democratize and reform the UNSC and international financial institutions.

In order to make US-Africa cooperation fruitful and productive as has been shown through Africa-China cooperation, the US policy has to be re-thought and re-built from the ground up to strike a balance between geopolitics and geo-economics repositioning and recognizing Africa as a central strategic player to shape the transformations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This new US strategy as well as the US-Africa Leaders’ Summit has to initiate a long-term strategic concept capitalizing on geo-economic initiatives. So as to stay relevant in Africa, the US strategy has to move away from short-term and outdated geopolitical diktat to dialogue, look its relations with Africa from a forward looking perspective, and set aside the convention-ridden assumption of taking Africa as a bystander and passenger in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### Africa’s strategic way forward

Africa has learnt the repercussions of great power completion during the cold war. It is a truism that the cold war period was defined by the powers as “cold” for the Euro-North American bloc while it was indeed too “hot” for the people of Africa and non-western world. Being at the receiving end of such violence, most African countries today remain seized that Africa cannot be used as a site for another bloc or power politics. The same countries have shown that Africa stands ready to take what is best and most useful to their development and security mainstreaming the creative potential of diplomacy. Africa is keen to engage all the powers to equally seize and possess the 21<sup>st</sup> century while choosing talking from fighting, championing dialogue from diktat and pushing for cooperation rather than coercion to grasp a better future. In a contradictory and conflicting situation, African thinkers ought to work hand in hand with the statesmen and people of every state to think hard and deep to face up, tame, work through and survive these crises.

**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

### It's time to reinstate AGOA!

Cognizant of the fact that respecting human rights is a natural step as well as compulsory facet but not taken as collateral to get something, Ethiopia has always been embarking on it and is making human rights culprits accountable via setting up task force at ministerial committee level, too.

The country has been taking steps as per the recommendations forwarded by a joint investigation by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) into alleged human rights violations, violations of international humanitarian law, among others, in the context of the conflict in its northern part.

Since the investigation was carried out within the framework of relevant international legal norms like the international human rights law, humanitarian law, criminal law as well as Ethiopian domestic law, no need of taking further step unless somebody would like to hit a certain concealed target under the guise of carrying out reinvestigation.

Yes, trying to make the prior report valueless is a lame reason tantamount to twisting the right direction to the wrong avenue so as to use it as a political instrument. Basically, the investigation was conducted approaching a number of interviewees, victims and witnesses of alleged violations and abuses as well as holding many meetings with federal and regional authorities, representatives of United Nations agencies and nongovernmental organizations, community groups, medical personnel etc. It comprised viable living proofs as well. So what is the rationale behind reinvestigating the issue unless there is what Ethiopia doesn't know behind the curtain?

If truth be told, Ethiopia has fulfilled all the required criteria to be reinstated in the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) beneficiaries list. It has also met all the benchmarks required to be

relisted in the trade pact.

Hence, the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) is expected to accept the letter the American Ethiopia Public Committee Affairs (AEPAC) submitted to it revealing a range of convincing justifications. Besides, the US senate shall consider initiating an out-of-cycle review regarding Ethiopia's eligibility for AGOA.

So long as Ethiopia has fulfilled what is expected of it, citing unrelated concepts can be regarded as a move for diverting an economic issue to a political appliance. Queuing reasons which don't hold water to merely ban Ethiopia from being AGOA beneficiary would benefit on one instead of pampering the longstanding bilateral ties between Ethiopia and the US as well as pushing the nation into poverty by excluding it from the lucrative trade accord.

To be overt, if the real cause of delisting Ethiopia from AGOA has been the northern conflict and human rights violations, the recent firm commitment of the government to implement the AU-brokered peace deal phrase by phrase, which allows unhindered humanitarian supplies to Tigray regional state and Ethiopia's comprehensive effort to get human rights violators accountable by itself is sufficient to Ethiopia's swift return to AGOA.

In sum, the sole matter that was taken as a stumbling block is the peace situation in the northern part of Ethiopia. However, problems have been well dealt with these days as humanitarian access and services are restored, the needy are well supported and socio-economic facilities are prettily fostered. If this is so, no other intention would be reflected to hinder Ethiopia from being reinstated into AGOA. To lucidly put the issue, Ethiopia's AGOA reinstating needs no further criterion.

## Opinion

### Political and economic reforms are important for peace and sustainable development

BY EDITORIAL VIEW-POINT OF EH

Recently signed Cessation of Hostilities Agreement deserves international support. The peace deal will provide opportunities not only for stability, but also for sustainable development.

One of the friendly countries that constantly support Ethiopia in the international arena, as well as an active advocator of the principles of international law, such as sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries, is Kazakhstan.

Despite cultural differences and geographical remoteness, this country has many similarities with Ethiopia, particularly in political course towards building a just state, upholding the values of democracy and independence.

Today, Kazakhstan, as well as Ethiopia, is on the historically important stage of its sovereign development. Since the election in 2019, the President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, has been systematically implementing large-scale political and economic reforms in the country aimed at strengthening democratic institutions, the principles of the rule of law, developing the civil sector, and creating a just society.

In March of this year, after tragic events, which took place in January this year, President K. Tokayev announced the policy of creation of a New Kazakhstan based on the principles of socio-economic justice, fair and equal competition, and efficient use of resources. To bring these



Photo credit: Akorda.kz

crucial changes into life President Tokayev appealed to the Parliament to make changes into 33 articles of the Constitution, and the National Referendum on these amendments has been conducted on June 5, 2022. People of Kazakhstan supported these amendments which included limiting presidential powers, giving more power to the Parliament, decentralization of power with more competences given to regional and local authorities, a legislative ban for the closest relatives of the president from holding positions of top-level civil servants and managers in the quasi-public sector. In socio-economic sector reforms are aimed to overcome the consequences of corruption and the dominance of the super-rich in the economy, to give equal access to all people and Small and Medium size enterprises to resources, lowering barriers, eliminating the negative impact of monopolies and oligopolies in key sectors of the economy, to return funds illegally transferred abroad, to establish the Fund "For the People of Kazakhstan".

In accordance with the foreign observer's

statements, early Presidential elections held on November 20, 2022 were an important stage in implementation of all constitutional changes, made on Referendum this year. Six candidates, including incumbent President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev participated in elections. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has won the presidential election after receiving **81,31 %** of the vote. According to the Central Election Commission **8 300 046** citizens cast their ballot, a turnout of **69.44%**. Voting took place at **10,101** polling stations across the country, including **68** polling stations at **53** diplomatic missions of Kazakhstan around the world.

The election was monitored by 641 observers from international organisations and foreign states. Commenting on the election process, foreign observers noted the high organisational level of the election. No violations in the conduct of the election were reported by the observers. The election was also covered by 254 foreign journalists who received accreditation.

In line with recent constitutional changes, President Tokayev will serve a 7-year term without the right to re-election. This was the seventh presidential election in Kazakhstan since the country's independence in 1991.

As the experts on the ground saying, after early parliamentary elections in the first part of 2023, a new political system based

on a new legislative framework will start to operate for a better and inclusive governing in Kazakhstan. The political system has been dramatically modernised and democratized, many people felt this changes in their daily life and satisfied with the hearing state concept.

With regards to the foreign policy during current geopolitical turbulence in the region experts believe that Kazakhstan will continue a multi-vector and pragmatic foreign policy aimed at forming collective approaches to solving a wide range of global problems based on multilateral consultations and agreements.

It should be noted that Kazakh-Ethiopian relations last year marked the 10th anniversary of the establishment, and since then have passed the test of time. Our President Sahle Work Zevde congratulated President Tokayev on his re-election on November 20 this year, which is another example of close relations between the two countries.

Thus, not only Ethiopia, but also the largest country in Central Asia is undergoing drastic political, economic and institutional reforms. Our shared vision and mutual trust for values of freedom, equality and mutual trust that hold us together, could serve as a solid foundation for the future cooperation.

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

# Business & Economy

## Diaspora community's unfettered support to the nation's peace accord

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

Throughout history, citizens of a given nation have been defending their country no matter what happened. People even go to the extent of sacrificing their lives to defend their nation from any kind of onsets. That is what Ethiopians have been doing up to this very moment. No matter the situation is the people of Ethiopia from every walks of lives have been showing their love and readiness to stand in solidarity with their motherland.

It is not long ago to remember that Ethiopia encountered pressures from in and out because the country was determined to stand as a sovereign state just like before. The conflict in the northern part of the country has caused a number of destructions to the overall progress of the country.

Fortunately, the nation has citizens who are willing to stand in favor of the interest of their country with whole-souled devotion in any given situation. It is true that Ethiopians who live in the country and abroad have shown their eagerness to support the nation by any means. Ethiopian Diasporas and friends of the nation have been walking the bumpy road with the country when the nation experienced plenty of challenges.

Similarly, the Ethiopian Diaspora communities around the world have carried out their economic, political, and social responsibilities. Regarding politics, the diaspora communities have been busy exposing the fake news together with the ill-intended and skewed pictures of Ethiopia formed by some international media. These Diaspora communities have organized numerous rallies in different parts of the world to show the reality on the ground and support the government and people of Ethiopia.

Diasporas' unfettered support continued even when the nation was in an active war which was prolonged for two years. After the peace accord was signed between the Federal Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Diaspora communities have not quitted stretching their hands to their in-need brothers and sisters. The Ethiopian Diaspora and friends of Ethiopia are still standing along with the government and people of Ethiopia to support the overall activities of rehabilitating the Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and other organizations that are working in the country.

Having stayed with The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Ethiopian Diaspora Service Director-General, Mohammed Edris (PhD) mentioned that members of Ethiopian Diaspora Communities throughout the world should take advantage to support the peace agreement. It is true that Diasporas entertain different political backgrounds,



**It is true that Ethiopians who live in the country and abroad have shown their eagerness to support the nation by any means. Ethiopian Diasporas and friends of the nation have been walking the bumpy road with the country when the nation experienced plenty of challenges**

views, and ideologies regarding the war and even about the nation. As to the Ethiopian Diaspora Service, Mohammed noted that his institution is working in search of having a common ground for all Diasporas in the country so as to work together for a common goal.

The Director-General also disclosed that the institution holds a weekly meeting with key Diaspora communities. The purpose of this meeting is to give response to queries raised by those Diaspora members and to exchange information. This communication is a two-way channel that paves a way to circumstances that create a better understanding of the notion they are standing in behalf of.

The Director-General has mentioned the support and contributions made by Ethiopian Diasporas and friends of Ethiopia. He said that, responding to the call from the Ministry of Finance, Ethiopian Diaspora communities have contributed over 5 million USD following the peace agreement. From the collected 5 million USD, 2.3 million USD has been already transferred to the government's coffer. The remaining amount is still in the hands of embassies.

Here, one thing should be clear as to Mohammed, that they have not incorporated the promised contributions. The above figure is the money at hand. The support did not stop here; rather, the Diaspora Community has sent items including medical equipments worth 12 million USD. Since the onset of the war, the Diaspora community has not stopped contributing to carry out its responsibilities. That is why the community has funded more than 1.6 billion Birr for Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and rehabilitation activities. The Diaspora has also been making a contribution through civic society organizations using various platforms, the Director-General said.

He further said, "It is important to remember that the Diaspora is a part of the country and has its responsibilities as a citizen." The Diaspora community has a unique burden that people living in the country cannot achieve. The community has the responsibility to work as influencers in diplomacy and other activities connected with media

and information. It is undeniable that the Diaspora communities all over the world are doing their best in standing together and supporting the nation.

In order to answer the question of the government's role in supporting the Diaspora communities, the Director-General disclosed that the government has to work on two main points. The first is that government is responsible to take distinct measures to answer the queries of the Diaspora by reshaping legal frameworks and institutions coupled with fighting corruption. The second is working on diplomacy issues. The incumbent is responsible for organizing and mobilizing a wide range of Diasporas to get involved in the sphere of diplomacy. Actions must be taken regarding building Diasporas' capacity.

Likewise, Mohammed added that the Diaspora community is taking part in several activities to realize and support the peace accord. In this regard, actions have been taken on creating awareness about the needs and the benefits of the peace deal through multiple communication channels.

Besides, it is putting tremendous effort into advocating the implementation of the peace deal by putting pressure on those who were active in ending the war through various means. "They are putting enormous pressure on the international community through various ways to realize the implementation of the peace accord," the Director-General said.

Mohammed further mentioned that following the peace deal, over 21 Diaspora groups from different parts of the world have stated to advocate for the International community to support the peace accord. Prior to that, 17 advocacy groups have also released statements that were delivered to 1,200 international institutions, officials, and prominent people. The Ethiopian Diasporas have held about 300 discussions aimed at prioritizing national interest issues.

He further emphasized that the participation of the Diaspora community should lay on a sustainable foundation where they help the nation in achieving their development goals that are envisioned to get people out of poverty. As a result, the Director-General urged the Diaspora community to continue engaging in trade, investment, knowledge, and technology transfer spheres of the nation.

To conclude what has been said so far, the Ethiopian Diaspora communities and friends of Ethiopia have shown their love for their country. The community has proven itself in supporting the entire activities of the nation. The Diasporas are involved in the political, economic, and social issues of the country, and they have brought concrete results. As always Ethiopia will be proud of its children.

# In the Sphere of Diplomacy

## Ethio-Russia relations excelling in multidimensional benefits

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

In the present climate, the struggle for the power of the world has become the core objective for the super-power countries. In this regard, taking political and social advantages of Africa seems to be the fundamental strategy for the world's super-power countries. That is why countries are organizing different summits so as to strengthen their partnership with the continent endowed with untapped resources.

It is better to go back and visit the museum of the past to get an adequate picture of how the world interacted with the African continent. Africa experienced the worst history ever in its earlier days as colonialists committed crimes against the people of the continent. Even after African countries secured their freedom from the shackles of slavery, the continent is still relying on the rest of the continents because of globalization and other political, economic, and social factors.

It is true that the powerhouse countries especially the United States of America, China and Russia organize and formulate their own summits to entertain and strengthen mutual benefits with African countries. Lately, Africa has gotten involved in Russia-Africa Summit which was first held in Sochi in 2019. The summit and economic forum has the intention of promoting mutual benefits with African countries.

Ethiopian and Russia have a long lasting history dating back to even when Russian Federation used to be the Soviet Union. The two aged countries have been working on tightening their mutual benefits throughout their relationships. As Russia is one of the most powerful countries in the world, the country took a stance in favor of Ethiopia protecting the nation from unwanted sanctions in several scenarios. Besides, Russia was one of the five nations which refused the second invasion of Italy. Ethiopians could not forget when Russia stood with the Government of Ethiopia when the Somalia Government launched an offense against Ethiopia in 1977.

In the recent past, Russia showed its firm alliance with Ethiopia. When war burst in the northern part of Ethiopia, a number of foreign countries had interest to interfere in the issue just to address their secret agenda behind the curtain. At that time, the Russian Government took the stance with the Federal Government of Ethiopia. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov also stated that the conflict was an internal affair of a sovereign nation, Ethiopia.

Recently, the 8th Ethio-Russia Intergovernmental Commission meeting was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The meeting aimed at enhancing trade, investment, scientific, and technical cooperation as well as advancing and transforming the people-to-people relations of the two countries. Like in the old days, the two countries are dealing with their business based on their historical traditions of mutual respect and trust. The Chairman said, "We are keen to further deepen our comprehensive cooperation in



trade and economic, scientific and technical, educational, cultural, and humanitarian spheres."

In various reports, Ethiopia is on the fast track to registering economic growth. It is said that the country stood on the frontier in building a better economy. Ambassador Terekhin also supported the above idea. "In recent years, Ethiopia has shown steady economic growth. Thanks to the economic and political reforms carried out by the country's authorities, improvement of a legal framework, and introduction of best practices, there have been positive changes in the business climate of the country," the Ambassador noted.

The African continent is rich with untapped resources, and so is Ethiopia. In this regard, Ambassador Terekhin highlighted that both Russian and Ethiopian business persons have not yet known the opportunities though the potential of bilateral trade and economic ties between the countries are at their peak.

By the same token, Ethio-Russia Intergovernmental Commission Co-Chairman and Innovation and Technology Minister Belete Molla added, "The people-to-people relation and strong ties between Russia and Ethiopia are bound by the similarity of values, including the

commitment to our sovereignty."

The co-chairman further pinpointed that the two countries are enjoying the best bilateral friendship and partnership, but the level and volume of trade and investment between the countries are much less than expected. "The two countries have tremendous potential for trade and investment cooperation. It is then the right time to convert opportunities to realities," Belete explained.

Currently, Ethiopia is practicing the Home Grown Economic Policy along with many more reforms, and those steps and decisions have led the nation to economic transformation. Therefore, the country is on the right track to achieve the intended target of building a sustainable and green economy. Russian investors are very much welcome to take part in the nation's development endeavors, added the co-chairman.

The minister further explained that the nation has untapped potential in the manufacturing, mining, energy, agriculture, and pharmaceutical sectors. These sectors have the capacity to provide adequate opportunities for Russian businesses. Belete has also mentioned the history-long relationship between the countries and the firm stance that the Russian Federation took when Ethiopia was in need, especially

in maintaining Ethiopia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. "Ethiopia highly appreciates Russia's strong position and support, especially the support during the last two years in the UNSC meetings on Ethiopia is unforgettable."

Similarly, Russia's Head of Federal Agency on Mineral Resources Eugeny Petrov on his part said that, Ethiopia remains one of Russia's most important partners in Africa and intends to increase the bilateral trade in volume and quality. "We have the resources; we have an understanding of its consumption in the medium term. Let us form new high-margin markets. And we are ready to share our experience and technology, and organize training of professional personnel," he added.

Petrov also disclosed that, the Russian Federation is ready to share the technology, knowledge and experiences it has in various areas with Ethiopia. Such intergovernmental commission meeting has the potential to enable both countries to strengthen their intention of working together in various endeavors.

Petrov also highlighted that we observe vast demands in various areas, especially in the field of machinery technology and the management of mineral resources. Hence, we are ready to share our experience, knowledge, and technologies. Now a day, the world market is changing rapidly, and these areas will pave the way to success for both countries.

Boiling down to its historic form, history taught us that Russia helped Ethiopia during the Battle of Adwa by sending its Red Cross Society to help Ethiopian Soldiers. Likewise, a short time ago, Russian Federation agreed to work with the government of Ethiopia in the health sector coupled with the 8th Ethio- Russia Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC). To see words in action, the Russia Red Cross Society pledges to send 16 medical doctors to Ethiopia with the intention of enhancing the nation's health service delivery.

Speaking at the event, Ethiopian Red Cross Society President Abera Tola reaffirms that the two nations have plenty of areas to work together. Advancing the mobilization of volunteers and increasing members coupled with providing capacity-building programs are the areas that the two countries can exert their efforts on.

Likewise, Russian Red Cross President Pavel Savchuk (MD) on his part said that, the society is ready to support the medical sector of Ethiopia by sending about 16 doctors. The memorandum of understanding agreement enables to boost the capacity of Dejach Balcha Hospital in Addis Ababa for the next twenty-five years.

"We are ready to send 16 qualified doctors within two months to support and share the experience with Ethiopian counterparts apart from the medical support they will give here. It is an important step for us to further the two countries' already in good shape relationships in the health sector," said Pavel.

# Law & Politics

## Terrorist Shene's horrendous crimes against innocent civilians

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

As things stand at present, *Shene* which was designated as a terrorist group by the House of Peoples Representatives has continued intensifying its attacks on innocent civilians in some parts of the Oromia State and upping the ante.

To everyone's dismay, as there is nothing that makes the criminal group happier than turning the lives of noncombatants into an awful experience and night terror, it has sustained at all hours of the day and night coming up with layers of treacheries.

Apart from instigating serious criminal offences, the criminal enterprise has been perpetrating capital offenses against blameless noncombatants working in close collaboration with internal and external actors that hate to see a prosperous and peaceful Ethiopia. In the same way, the illegal organization has been taking hostage individuals under the pretense of a considerable amount of fictitious scenarios and bogies stories.

Given the current circumstances, the criminal association time and time again has been engaged in slaughtering innocent civilians, ransacking as well as abolishing their possessions. Added to that, the criminal gang without batting an eye has continued burning to ashes inhabitants' residential houses positioned in some parts of the Oromia State.

As things stand at the moment, the anarchist collection has been committing serious criminal offences in collaboration with some individuals that have lived under the same roof with the various Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia since the dawn of history. Despondently, the criminal gang has displaced civilians and burnt health institutions in some parts of Oromia State into ashes.

For the sake of truth, the recent evil deeds of the criminal group have broken at the stroke of a pen the hearts of the population as a whole living under Ethiopian skies. To put an end to the nefarious deeds of the criminal organization and bring about lasting peace appropriate authorities should work in league with the general public.

It would not be an exaggeration to say the crooked group has been throwing thousands of the inhabitants in some parts of the Oromia State behind bars under the veil of make-believe stories that do not hold water and the existing situations on the ground.

Irrespective of the fact that perpetrating an attack on noncombatants under any circumstance is an act of wickedness and inhuman act, the criminal enterprise has continued in several instances its aggression against them in an attempt to pull apart the entire nation by instigating chaos and sowing the seeds of animosities among Ethiopians.

In addition to demolishing schools, health



centers, and other invaluable social infrastructure, the criminal group has sustained many a time and oft playing a part in ransacking possessions of civilians acquired through a lot of effort and earned through struggle. In the wake of the criminal deeds of the rough group children in some areas do not have access to education.

In a similar manner, the ragtag group has been engaged in putting an end to the social infrastructure of noncombatants and increasing the suffering of inhabitants effectuating a broad spectrum of actions in violations of the law and deeds against the law.

As the *Shene* leaders do not care about the pain, suffering, and agony of civilians, they have been over and over again increasing the suffering of civilians in some parts of the Oromia State.

In the current state of affairs, the terrorist *Shene* group has been working in close collaboration with some entities aimed at turning the lives of noncombatants upside down and drag through the mire the positive accomplishments unfolding left, right, and center of the country.

It is obvious that some foreign entities have been going to great lengths to move the country into uncharted waters making the most of a broad spectrum of maneuvering working in harmony with Ethiopia's irreconcilable and deadliest enemies. Though a lot of efforts have been made by the federal government to get to the bottom of the problem in an atmosphere of calm, the criminal organization has been raising the stakes and upping the ante.

To the surprise of everyone, the disgruntled group leaders have been engaged in orchestrating conspiracies behind closed curtains in various parts of the Oromia state with the intention of breaking the bond of the various Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' of Ethiopia and place the country

between the devil and the deep blue sea and in a pretty kettle of fish.

As opposed to preaching unity and harmony among the various Nations, and Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia, the illegal group has kept on sowing the seeds of hatred and division among Ethiopians that have been living since time immemorial in unity and harmony. Though their bonds are inseparable and close enough to use the same toothpick, the criminal enterprise has been struggling around the clock to break the bond and move the country into uncharted territory.

As the criminal enterprise leaders hate to death the unity of the various Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples of Ethiopia and are allergic to peace, they have been struggling for a long time to break the unbreakable ties of Ethiopians. Apart from reducing residential houses and business centers of civilians to ashes, the terrorist group has been persistently playing a part in ransacking and displacing civilians and lining up its pockets.

As humankind is beyond political and ethnic issues, Ethiopian residing in every nook and cranny of the country should blow the whistle at the heinous deeds of the ragtag group and work in close association with numerous bodies to ensure the security of civilians. In a similar fashion, as the federal government is committed to putting an end to the criminal group, every Tom, Dick, and Harry should work in close association with the incumbent to ensure peace and tranquility in some parts of the Oromia state at the earliest possible time.

In a previous interview with the Ethiopian News Agency, American political-economic analyst Lawrence Freeman said that ethnic national militias manipulated by dark forces from outside and inside the country want to make sure that Ethiopia is permanently destabilized.

He strongly argues that the recent massacre against civilians in Oromia region is a result of ethnic polarization used as a weapon by people inside Ethiopia, governments outside the country, and intentional forces.

"The massacre that occurred in Oromia (Region) is committed by ethnic national groups manipulated from outside of the country and inside the country by dark forces that want to make sure that Ethiopia is permanently destabilized," the analyst noted.

According to him, the dark forces outside of Ethiopia and inside the country which do not want to see a stable, prosperous and sovereign Ethiopia have exploited this.

The analyst contends that as a result of a project to destabilize Ethiopia, ethnicity is clearly being manipulated in Ethiopia "because there are political forces that want to weaken Ethiopia and you should not discount the fact," Freeman pointed out.

Be that as it may, in an interview with local media in the recent past a local security head said that the terrorist *Shene* forces have caused massive damage in schools and health centers in Kuyu District, North Shewa Zone of the Oromia State.

Quoting the security head, the local media report indicated that forces of the terrorist faction posed a danger to the wellbeing of the community. The head further noted that as the combatants of the criminal group own heavy guns, they are forcing the community to live under constant fear. Furthermore, a growing number of *Shene* members have been disarmed, demobilized, and reintegrated into society.

"*Shene* members also demolished schools, health centers, and other public service institutions. On account of *Shene's* belligerence, our children are left out of school and pregnant women are dying," one of the locals was quoted as saying by the media.



# Society

## Increasing access, inclusiveness towards people with disabilities

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Unarguably, persons with disabilities are more likely to experience adverse socioeconomic outcomes such as less education, poorer health outcomes, lower levels of employment, and higher poverty rates. Poverty may increase the risk of disability through malnutrition, inadequate access to education and health care, unsafe working conditions, a polluted environment, and lack of access to safe water and sanitation. Disability may also increase the risk of poverty, through lack of employment and education opportunities, lower wages, and increased cost of living with a disability.

In fact, countries are working to address the challenges through devising systems that could help the disadvantaged segments of the society; let them use technology as well as increasing awareness towards peoples with disabilities.

Of late, the Federation of Ethiopian Associations of Persons with Disabilities (FEAPWDs) marked the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa and Ethiopian Human Rights Commission under the theme: "Transformative Solutions for Inclusive Development: The Role of Innovation in Fueling an Accessible and Equitable World."

Association Law Expert Mussie Tilahun said that, Ethiopia should take serious measures in the accessibility and inclusiveness of the disabled persons in all activities of the country. Over 20 million people have been living with some type of disabilities whilst 98 percent of



them are out of jobs, 90 percent haven't got education opportunities, and 95 percent have been living under poverty line across Ethiopia.

"Lack of awareness among the society, inaccessibility of transportation, lack of education opportunity, among others are the serious factors hindering efforts to meet disabilities' interest so far," he added. He further said that widening education opportunity, making structural institutions, bridging communication gaps, expanding accessibility, creating jobs and raising peoples' awareness help to bring significant change on the life of people with disabilities in a sustainable manner.

The U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa Public Affairs Officer, Douglas Johnston on his part said that, the main purpose of the event is widening the accessibility and inclusiveness of

disabled persons in all activities thereby raising awareness among the societies. The U.S. has been giving serious attention to the disabled persons and is keen to meeting their interests.

Commissioner for Disability Rights and the Rights of Older Persons, Rigbe Gebrehawaria on her part said that, the Commission has been undertaking various activities to ensure the benefit of disabled persons though a lot remains to be done.

Citing a recent report, she added that many countries like Ethiopia have been losing 5 billion USD a year due to the absences of disability inclusiveness. Therefore, Ethiopia should increase the involvement of disabled people in all sectors - in the business, education, employment, and other institutes to bring significant development in the country.

Meanwhile, Enat Bank and Ashagari Consultancy Firm signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to operationalize women empowerment principles with a view to empowering women in the workplace, marketplace and within the community.

Enat Bank Operational Vice President Tigist Abate told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the issue of women has received due attention at the global level. Thus, to ensure women's universal benefits in all aspects, it needs collaboration and organized work.

"Women are vulnerable to gender violence because they are economically poor. Therefore, Enat Bank is working to economically empower women joining hands with stakeholders like the UN Women and the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs."

Adviser of the State Minister in the Women and Children Department at the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs Zibider Bogal on her part said that, the Ministry is working with international institutions and private companies to provide women with economic, political, and social support. "In order to empower women economically as expected, we should work with all concerned bodies."

Deputy Representative of UN Women Schadrack Dusabe said that there are a number of works to operationalize women empowerment principles. The signature is a milestone to improve women rights via increasing their participating in political, economic and social aspects.



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with the Federal Ministry of Education

## Respecting women, averting GBV is responsibility for all: Dr. Samuel Kifle

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

Anti-Sexual Violence Day is being celebrated globally for the 31<sup>st</sup> time while it was remembered by the leadership and staff of the Ethiopian Ministry of Education with the motto 'I respect women and prevent violence against them' yesterday at the Ministry Head Office.

The occasion assisted the Ministry to convey a message that insists everyone do their part to build a self-reliant generation that prevents sexual violence.

State Minister for Higher Education, Dr. Samuel Kifle, has delivered a message saying: "Respecting women and averting Gender Based Violence (GBV) is not only a matter of modern thinking but also a shared responsibility for all. To alleviate the inattention to the GBV high in Africa due to the social, psychological and economic pressures caused by other epidemics including HIV AIDS, all communities should work together to avoid the current status."

He added that everyone involved in the education sector should do their part to build a self-reliant generation that prevents sexual violence in the education sector.



Dr. Samuel Kifle

Regarding the International Anti-Sexual Violence Day, Ministry's Women and Social Affairs Inclusive Implementation Team Leader, Iskendir Lakewu presented an article which the audience discussed.

To prevent sexual based violence, everyone is expected to do the following some of the key activities raised on the forum collaboratively and responsibly. It is a must to recognize the role of gender in violence. While boys and men do experience abuse it is important to remember that the majority of victims of violence are female and the

majority of perpetrators of violence are boys and men.

It is also essential to educate oneself on the root causes of violence. Violence against girls and women stems in male dominance and the socialization of men. Read books and articles, join a group at school and attend any training available to you. Learn about the myths and realities of gender violence and understand how our society condones it.

Besides, interrupting sexist and discriminatory language is a must to do. Words are powerful, especially when used by people who have power over others. We live in a society where words are used to put girls and women down. Gendered name-calling sends the message that girls and women are less than fully human. When girls and women are seen as inferior, it becomes easier to treat them with disrespect and violence. Change the way you speak to help change the way you think.

Likewise, be critical and question how the media portrays girls and women, whether on television, online, in magazines or in music videos. The media regularly uses images of violence against women, and sexually exploits girls and women to sell products. Write or e-mail the company about their negative images of women and girls and

don't buy their products.

Equally, the youth do not need to rely on mainstream media to get the message out. Social media is a great way to share articles, tips and tools for the prevention of violence. And reporting any photos and posts one sees that exploit or degrade girls and young women on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram plays key roles in preventing gender based violence.

Similarly, interrupt abuse, stop sexual harassment, develop an action plan, stop victim blaming, stop any rape culture and call gender-based violence what it is - violence, not "bullying."

At last, preventing GBV requires creating safe spaces to discuss gender-based violence, confronting and reflecting ideas and beliefs, stopping stereotyping men's and women's roles. And remember that violence is a choice, and it is preventable. Volunteer your time to preventing violence by speaking to others. This brings awareness to the issue, which will motivate others to act.

Boys and young men need to be respectful when entering into a sexual relationship and should not feel entitled to girls and women's bodies. Just because you are a 'nice guy' does not mean you should have any expectations.

# Planet Earth

## Support Tonic farm for utilizing its untapped Fruit and vegetable potential

BY EPHERM ANDARGACHEW

Fruits and vegetables are important sources of nutrients in diets. Consuming adequate fruit and vegetable can help to prevent non-communicable diseases. Accordingly, World Health Organization (WHO) recommended that adults consume 400 grams of fruits and vegetables daily. Yet globally, fruit and vegetable consumption often falls far below this objective and studies suggest consumption is especially low in developing and middle-income countries.

Because affordability is a major reason not to meet the WHO target since many people would have to spend 30 to 50 percent of their average income on fruits and vegetables. Therefore, sorting out methods to make fruits and vegetables more affordable must be a public health priority in developing countries.

Taking the importance of fruits and vegetables for a healthy diet, currently, fruits and vegetables among the various agricultural products have gained huge attention in Ethiopia. Ethiopia indeed has huge potential for the production of high-value fruits and vegetables that can be utilized and consumed by the communities. The Government has been putting in enormous efforts in the past few years to enhance the production of fruits and vegetables across the country.

Because at the household level, the food consumption habit, in Ethiopia, is dominated by cereals and pulses, while the consumption of fruits and Vitamin A-rich vegetables are rare both in urban and rural areas.

According to Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, “the avocado productivity endeavors we embarked upon two years ago have shown to be fruitful. We need to strengthen our fruit and vegetable production capacities, in the same manner, we have done so with wheat to enable self-sufficiency.”

It is common knowledge that fruits and vegetables play several important roles in human health. They provide antioxidants such as vitamins A, C, and E that are important in neutralizing free radicals (oxidants) known to cause cancer, cataracts, heart disease, hypertension, stroke, and diabetes.

Fruits and vegetables are good sources of minerals such as iron, zinc, calcium, potassium, and phosphorus and contain ample fiber, important for digestion and bowel movements. Overall, WHO places low fruit and vegetable consumption among its twenty risk factors in global mortality, just behind the better-known killers such as

tobacco use and high cholesterol levels.

Ethiopia has endowed with huge potential for the production of high-value fruits and vegetables. Nevertheless, ensuring food security via diversified food preferences faces great challenges due to the rapid increment of population, change of fertile farmland to construction for the urban dwellers, climate change, decline of available natural resources, inflation of basic needs, young unemployment, political turmoil, and civil conflict.

Even in the absence of supply problems usually increases the price of fruits and vegetables especially organs every day. This makes the consumption of oranges difficult for middle-income communities. Cognizant of the challenges and the potential of the country into account, Haramaya University Tonic Research Center is carrying out problem-solving research and activities that preserve and ensure the production of fruits and vegetables, especially, oranges.

Tonic Research Center Director Mr. Shibiru Wakjira said that the center has been serving as a fruit and vegetable research institute since 1972.

The center is known not only as an orange research center but also provides oranges, other fruits, and vegetation production to society at a lower price.

Every year, the center has prepared and provided improved oranges seedlings namely Enqulal, Hamlin, Valencia, Sour, Washington, and so on as well as papayas, and various types of vinegar to the communities through regional agricultural Offices, NGOs, Institutions, cooperatives, farmers Unions, and Universities, he stated.

Currently, with the support of the Tonic research center, Eastern Hararge wordas have set up nurseries and prepared more than 21,000 fruit and vegetable seedlings this year. Besides, in the past, the center had prepared up to 5,000 fruit and vegetable seedlings and provided them to the community, according to Shibiru.

In the 2021/2022 farming seasons, the center has distributed more than 10,000 saplings since the focus of the government on fruit and vegetable in the Green Legacy initiatives increase the demand for seedlings.

Apart from conducting research, the center

provides improved seedlings that are disease and drought-resilience. It also preserves over 53 varieties of indigenous mangoes and several varieties of sweet oranges. Additionally, the center has been working to reduce the cost of living by selling various fruit and vegetable products produced by the Tonic research center to the public at low prices, he added

Haramaya University researcher and project coordinator Professor Kebede Woldetsadik explained that providing improved research technologies supports the communities to improve the productivity of fruit and vegetable and the income of the Ethiopian smallholder farmers.

Local seed varieties are susceptible to pests and diseases, he added, and by making high-quality vegetable seeds, suitable to the local climate, accessible, and affordable to local farmers, the challenges could be reduced, he indicated.

It is general knowledge that research institutions, like Tonic Farm center, play a significant role in innovation, generating new knowledge and technologies, which ensure fruit and vegetable development, food security, and technological advancement. They also attract researchers, investments, and other research facilities for new knowledge.

Hence, supporting them is significant to strengthen research output and fruit and vegetable productivity across the country. Because fruit and vegetable cost is a presumed barrier to intake. Fruit and vegetable cost does impact availability and has the greatest impact on high-cost items. Although cost was inversely related to availability.

Ethiopian Ministry of Irrigation and Lowland Minister Aisha Mohammed in her part noted that Universities should work hard to strengthen the existing fruits and vegetable production to replace the imported ones domestically with the development of small-scale irrigation technology.

Major fruits and vegetable production constraints include pests, drought, fertilizer shortage, and fuel price for pumping irrigation water. Hence, universities should play the leading role that the farmers should not face scarcity of seeds and technologies important for production, she highlighted.

Indeed, the WHO recommends 400 grams of fruits and vegetables per day as a result of their taste and Vitamin contents. Despite a wealth of suitable land availability, there is currently a shortage of fruits and vegetables across the country. Therefore, supporting Universities like Tonic fruit and vegetable farms and research activities is key to utilizing the untapped potential of the country.

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