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Ethiopia torchbearer in East Africa's economic integration: South Sudanese Ambassador

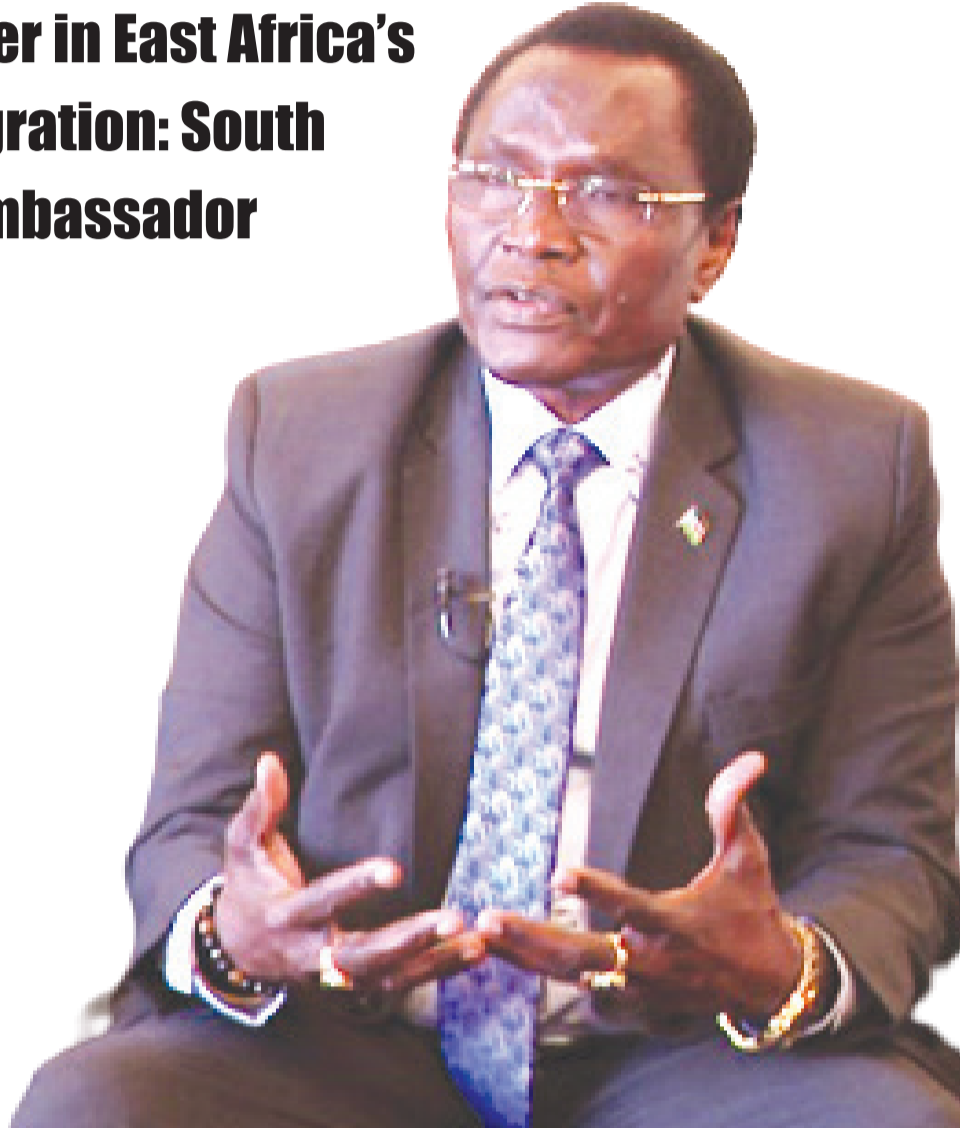
BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

ADDIS ABABA- The involvement of Ethiopian companies in South Sudan's telecom and banking sectors coupled with the infrastructure-driven connectivity will guide the East African region in a better position to achieve the economic integration vision, the country's ambassador said.

In an exclusive interview with The Ethiopian Herald, South Sudanese Ambassador to Ethiopia James Petia Morgan stated that Ethiopia has played a leading role in bringing economic integration in South Sudan and in the East African region at large.

Ambassador Morgan mentioned a telecom operator, Tele Mobile South Sudan (TMSS), which is owned by an Ethiopian business mogul AysheshimTeka, involvement in the South Sudan market as the manifestation of his above claim. TMSS, the fourth largest telecom services provider in South Sudan after MTN, Zain, and Digitel appointed the

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Ethiopia earns over 118 mln USD from mineral exports

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopia has earned 118.7 million USD from the export of minerals to the international market during the first six months of the current fiscal year, the Ministry of Mines revealed.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Mines State Minister Million Mathewos stated that the plan was set to export 165.6 tons of gold, tantalum, and jewelry minerals while the performance is 152.515 tons. The ministry achieved 92 percent of the plan in this regard.

Similarly, of the plan to export 4,914 tons of industrial minerals, some 3,003.8 tons were exported, meeting 61.12 percent of the goal.

Noting the better result gained in the export of tantalum and other jewelry minerals, the state minister highlighted that the underperformance of traditional miners remained the major impairment to gold export. Accordingly, the country only



achieved 16 percent of the plan set to export gold in the reported period.

"We have the plan to substitute metal and charcoal imports by local production and we have managed to substitute 0.03644 metric tons from the plan 0.476 metric tons. We also collected 272 million Birr from royalty fees in the reported period which is

143 percent of the 190 million Birr plan."

Million further stated that some 0.97 million Birr was gained through license, registration, renewal, and accreditation which is 119 percent of the plan. Similarly, around 326.87 million Birr was also earned from special sources whilst the plan is

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Yonas Adaye (PhD)

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News



Ex-WFP representative refutes hunger-deaths allegations in Tigray

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- The pronouncement of 'people dying of hunger in Tigray' by some international organization was a politicized attempt to put pressure on the government for other hidden reasons, the World Food Program (WFP) former Country Director to Ethiopia said.

Speaking to local media, Steven Were Omamo (PhD) stated that there was not good information revolving around the fact to make a definitive assessment of food insecurity in Tigray State. "The pronouncement of 'people dying hunger' or 'on the verge of death' needs supportive information."

As to him, any pronouncements of 'people dying of hunger' really were based on subjective assessments for the most part or it was an over interpretation of the little information that was available. A lot of assumptions to drive this analysis and the time when the analysis was completed are the most important thing.

"There was no evidence that people died of famine...but, these conclusions were based on limited information and that we needed to be very careful about it. Nevertheless, there were statements from many international organizations including the leader of WFP; saying that actually people were dying of hunger."

Omamo continued: "The conclusion that I reached in this regard is that this was a politicization of the process. It was sensibly to put pressure on the government or maybe for other reasons. Clearly, there was another narrative that was a play and largely political, I would say, it was a recurring theme."

While talking about humanitarian aid trucks that have gone into and stayed for a long time in Tigray during the war time, the ex-country director noted that the absence of fuel was not the real case. "In fact, the TPLF told us that they did have fuel in the area as I said in the book. But, there were other priorities beyond the humanitarian operation that they were dedicating."

"The reasoning that they were providing at that time was two. The one is the fuel. I think the truth has come to be clear that fuel was not the case. And the second was that some ethnic-Tigray truck drivers were being harassed and attacked."

Omamo argued that there were other factors that challenged the transportation of humanitarian trucks including looting in Tigray; recalling that his time as the WFP Country Director here was tough. "The change of administration results in many new things. Operationally for the first time, we were able to operate very smoothly in Somali State because peace had come. We had new partners in government. We had new kinds of relationships that we were able to build with NGOs and with other different main parts of government."

However, there were lots of challenges including drought, flood, and locust infestation. Finally, the civil war, (the war in north Ethiopia), was quite a challenging period, but we tried to be a partner to respond to the crises," he remarked.

Axum residents celebrate *Timket* peacefully

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- Axum town residents said that they are pleased for celebrating *Timket* peacefully.

Timket festival was celebrated colorfully in the historical place of Axum Town and other areas of Tigray state, it was learnt.

"We would work hard on safeguarding peace, love and togetherness as we have well experienced the repercussions of conflict, war and animosity for two plus years, which have caused complex social, economic and even political problems. We would like to thank the federal government for exerting unreserved effort to bring about peace, and we would like to sustain the dawn of peace," the residents said.

Timket festival celebrators in Axum also told the local media that they have had a special feeling of celebrating the festival in a peaceful manner.

"After the peace agreement concluded



between the government and the TPLF, we are breathing a sigh of relief and running in a happy manner."

As to residents, *Timket* had not been celebrated colorfully like this year's for the last two and half years due to the war. "However, this year, thanks to the Almighty



God, we are capable of celebrating the festival peacefully with our relatives and fellow citizens. We are happy to celebrate this year's baptism with joy and solidarity; and we all would work hard for the sustainability of the peace sparked around this time."

Timket celebration something everyone should experience: U.S. tourists

ADDIS ABABA/ENA/ -Tourists who came from the U.S. and attended the *Timket* celebration at Jan Meda said Ethiopia is a great place to visit and celebration like *Timket* is something everyone should be able to experience.

Followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church celebrated *Timket* (Epiphany) with various assortments yesterday across the country. In some places, the celebration continues until today.

Christians in Tigray and conflict areas of Amhara and Afar have also celebrated *Timket* peacefully with deep joy and happiness, following the peace agreement, after two years of war.

At Jan meda, Addis Ababa, *Timket* was celebrated colorfully with the presence of tourists and members of Ethiopian Diaspora. Will Brawders is a U.S. tourist who came to celebrate the Epiphany for the first time in Ethiopia told ENA that he found *Timket* celebration very special.

He added that Ethiopian people have rich culture, history and deep love for God and it is amazing to see everybody coming together to celebrate *Timket*.

It is amazing to see so many people come together regardless of ethnic background and differences and celebrate peacefully the Baptism of Jesus Christ, Brawders observed.

"Ethiopia is a blessed place; the people love God and very welcoming. So I am pleased to be here, he said. As one of the world's oldest countries, it's no surprise there's a host of incredible historic sites in Ethiopia to visit.

Among the very best are Lalibella Rock-hewn Churches, Harar Jugol Wall, the Obelisk of Axum, Gonder Castles. "Ethiopia is a beautiful country—people and culture. So, more people can find out how amazing



Ethiopia is, it is a great place to visit, celebrations like *Timket* are something everyone should be able to experience," he said. "It is my first time in Ethiopia to celebrate *Timket* and I have never seen such kinds of event in the US. This is a beautiful experience," Brawders said.

He urged tourists to come and visit Ethiopia, for the culture is beautiful, the food is delicious, the people are amazing.

Another fellow tourist, Myer Amer on his part said that he wanted to experience this celebration for the first time, in the U.S., you will never see anything like this.

My message to people out there who have never experienced anything like this or do not know much about Ethiopian culture or religion is, to really get true feeling and experience this; they have to come and experience for themselves. Come, the people here are so welcoming, he stated.

"If anybody out there, who is watching this who many not have experience something like this before, make sure come here and



try experiencing because the culture and religious is beautiful and the people are very amazing," he added. "I know that Addis Ababa has a big population, but I have never seen large gathering of people in one place like this", he added.

To see everybody gathers like this indicates how much peace is there. Sometime I think people don't understand how peaceful this places, Myer said. "When you come here, everybody is smiling, playing game with friends and enjoying. So, I think these kinds of things should show people out there that this place is very peaceful and beautiful," he said.

Epiphany, *Timket* in Amharic, is one of the grand outdoor religious festivals celebrated among the Ethiopian Orthodox Christians on 19 January or 20 January once in every four years.

Timket was inscribed at UNESCO as an intangible world heritage in December 2019.

News

Exhibitors accentuate *Timket* exhibition economic value

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA- The *Timket* Festivity exhibition held in Gondar city has opened ample opportunity to provide both local and international visitors as well as tourists with high products and unforgettable memories, so stated exhibition organizers.

As to exhibitors, the exhibition is the most important avenue to well introduce products and services to many manufacturers coming from every corner of the nation, which participated in the exhibition and bazar recently held in city of Gondar.

The Bazar and exhibition has served as a juncture to join sellers and buyers at one place without hindering factors and trade each other at recommended price.

In the exhibition, souvenirs, minerals, traditional cloths and black seed oil



products were displayed to the buyers.

One of the exhibitors in this exhibition is Kumlachew Tesfaye. He said that he has presented Opal mine and the product is well recognized by many after the Ministry of Mines held Mining Expo few months ago in capital under the theme "Mintex" mine tech exhibition.

Yared Muluneh is another exhibitor. He



said that on the exhibition he showcased the products to the buyers including mattress, curtain and decoration items. Exhibitors said that buyers have come from many places and bought our products.

Moreover, they added that the exhibition plays a paramount role in exchanging culture, sharing experience, networking and widely showcasing products of many



sort.

Amhara state Chamber of Commerce and Sectorial Association Secretary Nibret Banteyiegn also said that the exhibition has contribute a great share to economic growth following the peace deal and has added color to the *Timket* festivity, which is also a viable means for cultural sharing among exhibitors

ENDC toiling to engage Diasporas in Nat'l Dialogue

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA –Various efforts have been exerted to actively involve the members of Ethiopian Diaspora communities in the upcoming National Dialogue, so disclosed Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC).

ENDC Commissioner Yonas Adaye (PhD) told The Ethiopian Herald that ENDC has been carrying out various activities to enhance Diaspora participation in a bid to conduct inclusive and fruitful National Dialogue.

According to the commissioner, the Diaspora participation in national activities such as building Abbay Dam, widening political landscape, supporting law enforcement, building democracy,

sustaining peace, encouraging social interaction, and reconstructing the war affected areas have been augmenting over the past few years.

He remembered that ENDC held extensive discussions with some members of Diaspora communities last year concerning issues about the value, significance of the establishment of the National Dialogue and the use of connecting it with the Ethiopia Diaspora Service (EDS). Besides, the commission has promised to travel to U.S., Latin America, Middle East, Europe, Asia, and other countries to discuss a range of affairs with the Diaspora communities.

It has also planned to listen to the heartbeats of the Diasporas, which is in turn significantly helpful in carrying out a fruitful National Dialogue. In this regard,

the ENDC has finalized preparations to hold the final discussion with the Diaspora community this week.

"Particularly, the Diaspora representative in Addis Ababa has taken crucial measures in connecting the Diaspora communities with the commission by using various mechanisms like webinar and physical attendance," he added.

He further stated that taking the lessons drawn from success stories of other countries in this end, for example, the Gahanna's Diaspora living in Britain has been benefiting their homeland through significant manner. Unfortunately, the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia have failed due to inappropriate utilization of the Diaspora communities. Therefore, the ENDC is working on holding effective and successful National Dialogue.

"As the Ethiopian Diaspora communities are large in number across the globe and well experienced in various fields such as politics, economics, entrepreneurship, science, engineering and the like, they would play a paramount role in making a dialogue a success. Therefore, not only is the commission duty bound to foster conditions but also the media, stakeholders as well as the public at large are expected to play their part in the process of carrying out the National Dialogue and making it a lucrative boulevard to lasting peace and unwavering socio-economic national status," he underlined.

He called upon the Diaspora in every part of the world to play their respective role in walking the talk thereby having a peaceful nation.

Ethiopia torchbearer...

Ethio Telecom former CEO Andualem Admassie as its new head.

"Also, the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia has been operating in Juba a long time ago and it is a jumpstart to ensure regional integration be it political, economic, and social spheres."

On the other hand, Kenya-based telecom giant Safaricom has been operating in Ethiopia's market and this is clearly

shown the economic integration among the East African countries is thriving day by day. The growing penetration of cross-border roads and railways will also facilitate the free movement of people, goods, services, and capital from one country to the other.

The construction of massive cross-border roads and railways as well as telecom and electricity connectivity was also

mentioned by the envoy as the showcase for Ethiopia's leading position in regional integration.

"As each region in Africa has shouldered the responsibility for the realization of Agenda 2030, we then focus on the fulfillment of the vision that enables us to ensure sustainable development among member countries. In this regard, due attention has been given to ensure

intra-regional connectivity as well as to connect the East African region with the rest of the continent via roads, railways, airways, and so on."

Ambassador Morgan further highlighted that Ethiopia and South Sudan will consolidate partnerships and work together not only for the benefit of their people and economies but also in the context of regional integration.

Ethiopia earns...

358.15 million Birr.

In terms of employment, the ministry was able to provide 1405 jobs and exceeded the plan to employ 964

citizens. Similarly, of the plan to employ 125,355 citizens in traditional manufacturing enterprises, some 85,269 were recruited.

The limited capacity of mining companies, contraband, and the unrest in parts of the country as well as the thriving parallel market was said to be the major challenges of the export

trade. Besides putting viable policy and legal frameworks in place to boost the mining sector, integration, as well as cooperation, is needed to improve the underperformance, he emphasized.

Opinion

Food and Neo-colonizing

BY GETACHEW MINAS

The risk of overeating or obesity increases with socioeconomic status in most African countries, unlike developed countries of comparable income levels. It is, however, undeniable that there is also a link between health problems and obesity. In Ethiopia, eating fatty and greasy meat is a sign of wealth, which the nouveau riche displays in public. Raw meat is not, however, a favored food in neo-colonizing countries and their colonies. According to Ayoola Olandipupo, Africans are displeased with “insufficient” number of fast food outlets in their respective countries. African tourists coming back from developed countries missed the various types of fast foods in their home countries. On the other hand, Ethiopians on a temporary mission abroad missed eating raw meat with hot peppers.

Africans meet all kinds of people who believe that they have all the answers to the problems of their country of origin. They truly believe they know all the panacea and remedies for their difficulties. Unlike Ethiopians, people in the developed countries try to reduce consumption of fast foods with salt and sugar reduction and restrictions of fat. They begin to ask the reason behind consuming white peoples’ foods when they become wealthy. They also reflect on their own relationship with fast food in African towns. They ate burgers that are creamy with mayonnaise and crunchy with onions and potatoes. As Africans rose up the socioeconomic ladder over the years, the number of the Western food chains in African cities increased.

For some people in urban centers, consuming pizza continues to represent a perceived social status. It is not uncommon for the more privileged individuals to post photos on social media mocking lower-income individuals in supermarkets. This preference for foreign products, known as consumerism often stems from people viewing their own products, ideas, and lifestyles through the eyes of colonial prejudice. Beyond shaping dietary choices, consumerism is deeply ingrained in the social fabric of some African countries, with a relic of colonial influence. This influence, according to A. Olandipupo, resulted in importing of policies by Africans from the former colonial powers regardless of their applicability to their countries.

Researchers have analyzed the relationship of imported policy and obesity control across sub-Saharan Africa using sociological approaches. The findings showed that the rise in obesity levels was commonly presented as an individual problem. But, most of the proposed solutions emphasized the promotion of interventions to increase healthy consumption of food and engagement in physical exercise. However, this emphasis tended to “discount” the social factors that drive unhealthy food choices in African societies. The modern eating habit has been inherited from colonizers and neo-colonizers on culinary culture that remained important.

Though the rise in obesity levels is a global

reality, the peculiarity of the situation in African countries remained undetected. It may have stemmed from a rise in socioeconomic status.

There seems to be a consensus that the burden of obesity tends to shift from the upper to the middle class as a country’s gross national income increases. However, studies show that, unlike persons with comparable income level in the developed countries, the risk of obesity increases with socioeconomic status in several African countries. According to A. Olandipupo, the “dietary transition” occurring in several African countries is an inevitable result of economic development. It masks the process of colonization, neo-colonization, and acculturation. It has changed the food structures and choices in African societies. The export of Western food culture, from preparation to consumption, into African societies, including Ethiopia, is an extension of the destruction of traditional food systems by Western colonizers through the creation of cash-crop economies in Africa.

The rise in obesity and obesity-related diseases in African countries, including Ethiopia, puts strain on the national budget. The expenditure on imported food and medicines is a challenge to the economy. It has already stretched the health budget potentially making these countries more vulnerable to future disasters. One of these disasters is COVID-19 that affected the lives of millions of people.

The wealthy Ethiopians know the taste of Western food whenever they visit the Sheraton, Hilton and other hotels in the city. But, they have always gone back to their kitchen where they cooked and tasted local food, including raw meat, Kitfo with Kotcho, Injera and Watt and other popular local food items. One is amazed when observing how Western tourists are infatuated, obsessed and crazed with Ethiopian dishes. Ethiopian culinary is a gastronomic indicator of unique culture which is one flag of independence. The foreigners have always wanted to break independent modern Ethiopia with ethnic and tribal conflicts to reduce its stature, standing and importance as an independent store of local culture.

The West provides ethnic and religious leaders with resources that create havoc in the country. They wanted to exploit the natural resources of the country while the ethnic groups go to war. This is only a short-sighted approach of colonialists and neo-colonialists. They could have engaged in the development of the country with the permission and approval of the rightful owners of the country’s resources. There is no need for Western driven ethnic violence to fruitfully exploit these resources. The democratically elected government and parliament of Ethiopia have the final decision making power on the use of resources. These resources are used productively based on the long-term development of the country.

The Western investors may be able to participate in different sectors of the economy with the goal of creating employment and earning foreign exchange. Of course, in the process they have to enjoy

a return on their investment. Such positive engagement may not lead Westerners to engage in divisive colonial mentality. Ethiopians want to escape poverty and make it history. Foreigners should realize this and support the country through investment. They should not be associated with bloodshed among and between Ethiopians. They need not take sides and make profits from sell of their arms. Such a move is fatal for Ethiopians who strive to come out of poverty. There is no place for the merchants of death in Ethiopia today.

Neo-colonizing with food is an outdated and dehumanizing approach in assisting poor people. The poor can be relieved of their poverty only through development with investment and hard work. European food is enticing the newly rich Ethiopians who have money devoted to consumption. These are consumers who have strong attachment to their own local food. They do not have strong affinity for foreign dishes at the expense of the local ones. During Ethiopian holidays people slaughter chicken, sheep and goats at home and buy “raw meat” from butcher shops. These items could not be neo-colonized as they had been specific to Ethiopia. The culture of raw meat consumption has been exported from an independent country to Europe and America. The local Ethiopian grain, Teff, is also being grown in these countries. It is a flag of independence.

There is now an attempt to arrest the sign of independence that emphasizes the need for total decolonization. There is, therefore, a need for developing Ethiopian personal and collective identity that signifies freedom. This demands the promotion of increased consumption of locally produced traditional foods in common. They use healthier cooking methods with local facilities. Wood and clay are inputs used for producing traditional kitchen utensils. These include knives, mixing bowls, cutting boards, wooden spoon, cups and spoons. Local cooks using these utensils prepare traditional food without having any diploma from institutions engaged in the field. Most of them are ladies who know how to mix different types of spices for flavoring, seasoning and coloring. These spices are grown locally in different season of the year.

Ethiopian condiments have varieties that are used by local cooks for preparing traditional food items. These range from Red Pepper, Turmeric, Black Cardamom, Garlic, Ginger, Fenugreek, Cumin, Coriander, and to a number of other spices. These are grown and prepared at home for use by Ethiopian traditional cooks.

Ethiopia seems to be partly free from culinary imperialism where food has never been about the simple act of eating. Neo-colonialism, as a violent process, has fundamentally changed the way of life of a people, including their cooking habits. When colonized people look at their plates they find imported grains, which is a sign of imperialism. Though emphasis has been made on the political and economic changes imposed upon the colonized people, the question of food is rarely and infrequently

considered.

Food has always been a fundamental tool in the process of colonization. With food, social and cultural rules are conveyed. In reality, it is difficult to understand colonization without taking into account the issue of food and eating. When colonialists annexed the colonies they had been met with resistance. Studies show that the colonialists suppressed the opposition by using different methods. They used divide-and-rule tactics, conducted military campaigns, and signed treaties with local rulers. But, the most successful method was using food to quell dissent against colonialists. The scorched-earth policy of burning crops and killing livestock proved to be a most effective method for suppressing rebellion and colonizing the African people.

Once the colonialists consolidated power in the colony, there was an influx of Western settlers. They were invited by the colonial governments with offers of huge leases for the most fertile land in the colony. The fertile expanses were opened for settlement through the forceful “displacement” of the local inhabitants. Most of the natives ended up in the infertile and drier margins of their former homelands. Africans who could not find a place to settle became “squatters” on their former farms or laborers for the colonizers. The colonial state used “white settlers” to introduce commercial agricultural production as the mainstay of the colonial economy.

The colonial state forcibly seized land, livestock and other indigenous assets from certain communities and households on behalf of the settlers and the colonial administration. Colonialism systematically marginalized and subordinated indigenous African agriculture. Colonial maneuvers depleted the native stock which was critical for the economic and social reproduction, clearing the way for the increasing numbers of foreign settlers. The capital-driven process eroded the indigenous land tenure systems and gradually undermined and changed their previous way of life. Most of the arable land was under the exclusive control of the foreign settlers.

The colonial state provided the settlers and capitalists with the necessary infrastructural, agricultural, marketing, and credit facilities. Above all, the colonial state sought to create, mobilize and control the supply of African labor for capitalist settlers. Cash crop farming quickly became the source of income for the settlers, who benefited from the cheap land and African labor force that they engaged. African labor became dependent on neo-colonial food aid. Similarly, food aid in the form of grilled wheat kept Ethiopians dependent on oppressive neo-colonial yoke in the modern era. Alms and “aid” detached some of the poor Ethiopians from their tradition of farming. Alms and aid are obstacles to national pride and independence in Ethiopia.

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

Rewarding season to visitors

In Ethiopia, a number of colorful outdoor festivals including those inscribed as intangible world heritage under UNESCO representative list are celebrated throughout the year. Visitors usually summarize their impeccable moments after attending such festivals as a “rewarding”, an “authentic” and an “unforgettable” one.

Tourists who had attended the recently marked *Timket* described the events the same way as shown above as most of them were interviewed by various media outlets.

This and other outdoor holidays are attended by millions of Ethiopians of different ages ranging from kids to the elderly. The celebration has no boundaries. People regardless of differences in language, culture and other backgrounds share enthusiasm of such festivals and holidays.

Ethiopians are very hospitable people.

This has widely been witnessed by tourists who visited the country. A number of expat people who came to Ethiopia for work and visit make the country their and their descendants' home. Visitors from across the globe feel at home despite being very far away from their homes.

Most, if not all, tourists who were involved in the recent *Timket* celebration found their stay rewarding.

Those who attended this year's *Timket* celebration are living witnesses observing the situation in which the country is in a stable state after a war that lasted for about two years.

Thanks to the agreement of cessation of hostilities reached between the federal government and TPLF, people in the northern part of

Ethiopia celebrated this holiday in peace and joy after two years of tension.

Most of the tourists participated in more than one occasion of *Timket*. For instance, some foreigners attended the eve in Addis Ababa, Jan Meda, to observe the *Tabots* taken to the meadow and immediately went to other places like Gondar where they take part in another unique marking of the day.

Thus, the holidays contribute their utmost share for tourist attraction beyond their spiritual impingements and thereby invigorating the nation's income from the sector. A lot of tourists from all corners of the world come to Ethiopia to attend these festivals annually.

Taking this situation as a good opportunity, Ethiopia can promote its tourism potential by facilitating conditions for tourists to spend more nights here and visit other attractions. By doing so, Ethiopia can make the tourists partner in promoting the sector and consequently attract more tourists.

Equally to agriculture, manufacturing industry, mining, and other sectors, tourism is a pillar of the nation's economy. Its development is, thus, essential, especially in garnering foreign currency and the role of the tourists who are satisfied by Ethiopians' hospitality is of great value when they tell the other world what they have experienced in Ethiopia.

The outdoor festivals celebrated recently could be interpreted in many ways. But the most important one is the fact that Ethiopians cannot only reign peace to themselves but also reward visitors by making their stay an unforgettable experience.

Opinion

Timket promotes peace, cultural and spiritual values

BY EPHREM ANDARAGCHEW

This week Ethiopian Orthodox Church followers celebrated Epiphany/ *Timket* which is one of the holidays that the church celebrates every year. The word *Timket* refers to the revelation and unity of God the father, the son, and the Holy Spirit during the baptism of Christ.

The celebration of *Timket* started on the afternoon of 18th January. The eve of *Timket* is called “*Ketera*” which denotes the making of a dam since it is common to make a dam in places where there is no river for the celebration of *Timket*. On the day of *Ketera*, “*Tabot*” (a replica of the Ark of the Covenant) leaves each church and goes to the nearest river, lake, or pond where the communal baptism is to take place the next day. The *Tabots* stays overnight near the water and ceremonies continue overnight.

On the 19th of January, the main *Timket* celebration started with pre-sunrise rituals which include church mass and morning Prayer. Then the clergies and priests sprinkle the holy water from the holy bath or *Ketera* on the followers in commemoration of Christ's baptism in the hands of John the Baptist, symbolizing a resurrection to a new life in Christ, based on Christians' belief.

In the afternoon, all the *Tabots* returned to

their churches where the priests and young people accompanied with dance and leap like King David in the Bible. Although *Timket* is a religious holiday, it has also several cultural festivals. The people who celebrate *Timket* wear traditional clothes and compose cultural songs, chant, and dance.

Timket is a public holiday and requires extraordinary security and a safe environment since people gather regardless of age, ethnicity, social status, and so on to celebrate the holiday. Hence, the holiday requires the collaborative efforts of all people and security forces.

The Addis Ababa City Administration Mayor Adanech Abiebie said that since *Timket* has been registered by UNESCO, it becomes an Ethiopian holiday that we celebrate together without any difference or division which positively contributes to building the image of Ethiopia. The collaboration and coordination efforts of the peace-loving followers, religious leaders, and youth, at all levels, made the celebration colorful, and peaceful.

Similarly, the Joint Peace and Security Taskforce's prior preparation has supported the followers to celebrate the holiday peacefully. Even the task force in collaboration with the people has managed those who incite violence whenever public holidays come. The Taskforce was also able to prevent the plot from its

initiation due to the strong preparations and surveillance, Mayor Adanech stated.

It is true that on public holidays and festivals, people demand a safe and secure environment while the security apparatus requires to handle things in a balanced way. Because large holiday events and public gatherings could be targeted by anti-peace elements due to the concentration of crowds at celebrations. Public gatherings like *Timket* may become a target of opportunists since such events allow targeting large groups of concentrated crowds who cannot escape.

Minister of Culture and Sports Kejela Merdasa stated that in addition to the religious and cultural heritage, *Timket* has become a world tourism attraction. Hence, we should use the important values found in all religions for good and noble things. By avoiding anti-peace elements, therefore, we should protect and promote our cultural and spiritual values together.

Indeed, the peaceful completion of the *Timket* holiday and festival proves the fact that the followers are the guardians of the safety and peace of their country. This holiday is celebrated by millions of people including several foreign tourists decorated with religious and traditional values as well as accompanied by grand innovative displays without any security

problems.

The coordination of the federal, regional states and city administrations' security forces has effectively carried out their tasks in collaboration with the people and foiled the conspiracies of anti-peace groups who had planned to use the holidays for their destabilization acts.

According to The Joint Peace and Security Taskforce, the *Timket* holiday and festival ended peacefully in all areas of our country, including Addis Ababa. For this reason, the task force has acknowledged the members of security forces, religious leaders, coordinators of the festival, followers, and youth who contributed greatly to the peaceful completion of the festival.

Timket holiday participants indeed deserve appreciation since they contribute to the peaceful completion of the festival which is key to building the image of the county. Because peace and stability bring fortunes like the flow of tourism, investment, respect, and so on. Hence, the coordination among the people, the security forces, and the government of Ethiopia should continue in other development areas.

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

Art & Culture

National Geographic and the Perennial Attractions of Ethiopia

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

National Geographic is In 2020 Ethiopia made the National Geographic Travelers 'Cool List' of 20 must-see destinations. It was listed number 12 on the list and noted Ethiopia for "its new tours, improved safety, and a tourism trade that's growing faster than anywhere else in Africa....green mountainous Ethiopia is one of the most exciting places to visit in Africa, if not the entire world.

A travel publisher and tailor-made trip provider, called Rough Guides said, "Ethiopia is utterly unique. The only country clinging to independence during the nineteenth century Scramble for Africa, its culture and traditions have remained virtually intact, What's more, its history goes as far back as the beginning of human existence its age-old structures fiery cuisine, Amharic language and high latitude wildlife occur nowhere else in the world."

Other African destinations included in the annual list included Namibia at number 1 and Cairo at number 13.

The National Geographic recommendation is the second big international endorsement of Ethiopia as a tourist destination for 2020. In its citation National Geographic gave the reasons for Ethiopia's selection as the 12th most important tourist destination. It said, "The ghosts of the Ethiopian famines of the 1980s haven't been forgotten but they are not the fundamental part of the country's make-up. The shadow of war with neighboring Eritrea has been lifted, too, and suddenly green mountainous Ethiopia is one of the most exciting places to visit in Africa if not in the entire world."

The situation in Ethiopia is now bound to return to normal with the recent peace agreement signed between the government and the rebels in Tigray while there is a plan for the reconstruction of Tigray and adjacent regions that have been affected by the conflict. It would be legitimate here to go back to Ethiopia's history of travels by the first foreigners, including James Bruce, the famous Scottish traveler who put Ethiopia on the global map of fascinating countries back in 1770 and put it in proper historical perspective for the first time.

James Bruce was a Scottish voyager and travel writer who confirmed the source of the Blue Nile. He spent more than a dozen years in North Africa and Ethiopia and became the first European to trace the origins of the Blue Nile from Egypt and Sudan. According to available sources, "James Bruce arrived at Alexandria in 1768 and then travelled to Massawa that was under Turkish control and continued to proceed to Gondar and reached the then capital of Ethiopia on 14 February 1770 where he was received by the Emperor Tekle Haimanot II, Ras Michael Schul, the real ruler of the country..."

"On 14 November 1770, he reached Gish

Abay, the source of the Lesser Abay. When they reached the springs at Gish, James Bruce celebrated his achievement by picking up half a coconut shell he used as a drinking cup, filling it from the spring..."

Upon finishing his travels, James Bruce set upon writing his multivolume travel book entitled, "Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile" that were published in 13 editions in the years 1768 to 1773. His journeys took him not only to Ethiopia but also to the Horn of Africa, "which includes an eyewitness account of Ethiopian history and culture, as well as description of that country..."

From James Bruce's visit to the present, countless Western researchers, discoverers and visitors have entered Ethiopia from many directions; lured not only by Bruce's accounts of his travels to Ethiopia he published in books, but also enthralled by their imaginations of a land filled with myths, legends and many wonders that are captivating the attention of the curious travelers for more than 200 years. Ethiopia was indeed long forgotten by the outside world as it had forgotten the world.

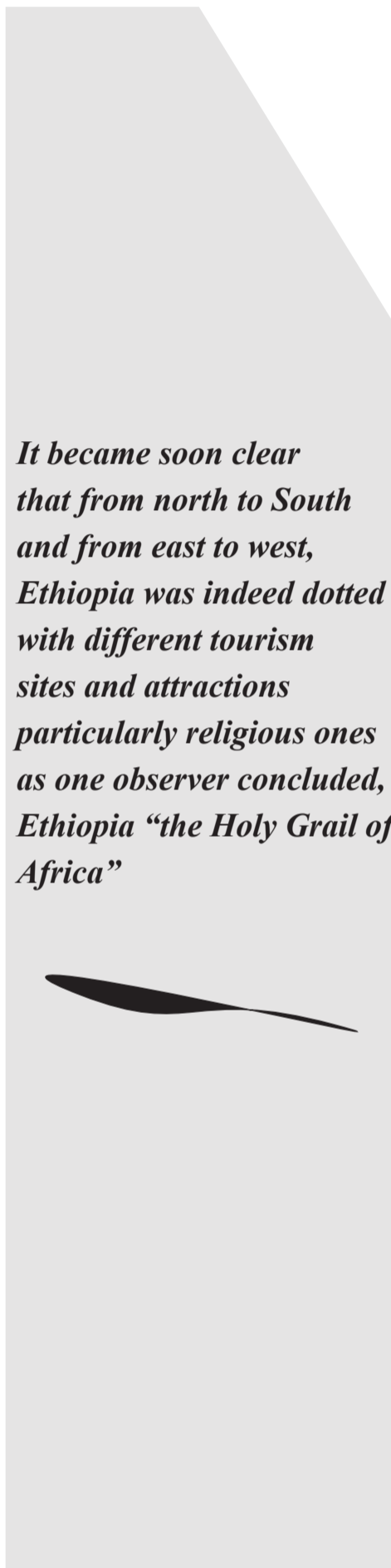
Fast forward to the present. In the 20th century, when Ethiopia emerged from its relative isolation, what emerged were the rich historical and cultural heritages and natural beauties of a land that remained hidden for two centuries started to emerge and astonish not only foreigners but also the people who have been sitting on natural treasures without realizing their significance. To foreigners, Ethiopia appeared as a long dormant land coming to life. That was a long dream comes true.

It became soon clear that from north to South and from east to west, Ethiopia was indeed dotted with different tourism sites and attractions particularly religious ones as one observer concluded, Ethiopia "the Holy Grail of Africa".

In the north we have the ancient ruins of Aksum. "The major Aksumite monuments in the town are steles. These obelisks are around 1700 years old and have become the symbol of Ethiopian people's identity." Further in the south, the holy cities of Gondar and Lalibella are found. So much is written about them that it would be sheer repetition to further elaborate on their importance here. Suffice it to say in passing that "This rural town is known around the world for its churches carved from within the earth from "living rock" which play an important part in the history of rock-cut architecture."

If you move further in eastern Ethiopia, you find the ancient historic walled city of Harar, which is regarded as 'the holy city' of Islam in Ethiopia. Besides the stone wall surrounding the city, the old town is home to 110 mosques and shrines center on Feres Megala square."

Harar is fascinating for its diverse building architectures, walled compounds, the evening rituals of the hyena man feeding a



It became soon clear that from north to South and from east to west, Ethiopia was indeed dotted with different tourism sites and attractions particularly religious ones as one observer concluded, Ethiopia "the Holy Grail of Africa"

group of hyenas by holding the meat with his teeth. "A longstanding tradition of feed meat to spotted hyenas evolved during the 1960s into an impressive night show for tourists."

Arthur Rimbaud's house is also a tourist site. where the romantic French poet spent a few years at the end of his life which cut short by cancer. Harar is often described a living tourist site because the residents' lifestyles and day to day struggle rather look like stills from a long movie reel of history. Harar has not lost much of its charms after thousands of years of existence.

The southern parts of Ethiopia are endowed

with archeological and architectural finds that testify to the unique endowment the country and its people are still proud of. A little further to the west of Harar is found the place called Hadar where it was confirmed that not only Ethiopian but also world history was started with the discovery of the remains of the oldest human remains with Lucy or the mother of all humanity leading the pack.

Go a little south of Afar, and you find the natural beauties of the Bale mountains and the caves of Sof Omar where underground lakes seem to have stopped counting the time and where the labyrinthine caves will usher you to a world of water and meandering tunnels with yellowed natural ceilings and walls through which you travel by foot stepping on the huge stones whose origin or destiny are unknown as if it has always kept its secrets to itself. If you are the religious type, you can go and see the famous Dire Sheikh Hussein shrine and pay tribute to the miraculous nature of the sheik who brought Islam to that particular place and whose ancient dwelling place has now become a destiny to thousands of Muslim pilgrims for a long time now.

"From an archeological perspective, Ethiopia has a number of fascinating finds. The Tiya Stones is a UNESCO World Heritage Site comprising 36 standing stones- a prehistoric burial ground of the ancient Ethiopians. The Lower Awash area is currently an archeological heritage site."

According to Wikipedia, "Tiya is a town in central Ethiopia. It is situated in the Gurage zone of the Southern Nations, nationalities and Peoples Region south of Addis Ababa. It is also the location of the Tiya archeological site, famous for its unique stele." Konso is also a town found in the same area. It is a town on the Sagan River in south western Ethiopia. "

The town and the surrounding villages were inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2011 as cultural landscapes for its unique cultural traditions and importance for the Konso people." There are so many discovered and undiscovered historical and archeological evidences that put Ethiopia on a par with any country in the world. That is why the National Geographic Traveler website is urging tourists to visit Ethiopia as a unique opportunity that provides them not only with many things to see but also reflect on the origin of humanity in the person of Lucy whose remains were found in Hadar, Afar region.

Putting aside Ethiopia's already discovered perennial attractions, the country is in a way, a not fully explored mine of history and archeology that continues to attract not only researchers but also ordinary tourists who are fascinated by the past and eager to know what the future holds for the development of human knowledge the stretches millennia from Lucy, the mother of humanity, to the present.

Law & Politics

Ethiopia's exemplary move in effectuating Pretoria peace agreement

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

After the end of the war that lasted for two years in the northern part of the country and the signing of the peace accord, the federal government has been bringing at all hours of the day and night quite a lot of effective measures to fruition with the aim of restoring peace and tranquility.

In the current state of affairs, the move of the federal government to bury the hatchet and return the whole thing in the war-affected areas to normalcy has been highly praised by the wider international community. It should be remembered that in the course of the war, the lives of innocent civilians had been turned into an awful experience.

However, in light of the current situation, as the federal government has been effectively effectuating the Pretoria Peace Agreement, conflict-affected areas have embarked on seeing light at the end of the tunnel and taking a turn for the better. In the face of the positive developments blossoming in every corner of conflict-ridden areas, Ethiopia's irreconcilable enemies and disgraced international media outlets have sustained disseminating imaginary stories.

As their disappointment has no limit, they have continued misleading and mystifying the global community with quite a lot of bogus stories that do not reflect the existing facts and developments on the ground. No matter how far Ethiopia's adversaries travel to besmirch the actual achievements blossoming across the country, all their endeavors have been licking the dust and meeting with disaster.

It cannot be denied that since the beginning of the cessation of the hostilities agreement, noncombatants in the war-torn areas have set in motion breathing a sigh of relief and getting back on their feet.

In good truth, a significant amount of encouraging acts have been taken by both parties that signed the cessation of hostilities agreement in Pretoria, South Africa. Over and above that their readiness for implementing the peace agreement has been oiling the wheels of restoring peace and tranquility in all corners of Amhara, Afar, and Tigray states.

The delivery of humanitarian assistance and recommencement of basic services have been making life easier for all and sundry in Northern Ethiopia in addition to putting smiles on their faces. There have already been speedy progresses within the context of basic services restoration in all quarters of the northern part of the country.

For the sake of truth, as peace is the foundation stone for human existence, authorities concerned have been standing by the side of the federal government intending to expedite peace implementation to the level expected in the shortest possible time. In the current circumstances, in the aftermath of its encouraging developments, the incumbent has been receiving appreciation from the global community, humanitarian agencies, and more of the same.

Aside from giving rise to the intended destination, the peace agreement has been assisting the path of ensuring lasting peace. It



is worth remembering that since the beginning of the war, noncombatants in Northern Ethiopia have passed through twists and turns to reach where they are in the present day. Given the current circumstances, the country has been attaining major milestones in taking the country on the subject of the peace accord to a greater level.

After the signing of the peace agreement, Ethiopia's endeavors to bury the hatchet have been achieving results.

In the wake of the unwavering stance of the government to beat swords into plowshares and bring the implementation of the peace accord into being, the people of Tigray on many occasions have been elucidating their infinite happiness. The other thing is the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed between the federal government and TPLF under the auspicious of the African Union has been bringing home the bacon.

It is important to highlight that the incumbent in several instances has shown its stance to comply with the rules and regulations of the African Union (AU) led peace agreement. In consideration of the foregoing, the global community has continued taking their hat off. As a matter of fact, Ethiopia's stance proves its confidence in Africa's capability to resolve its predicaments on its own way without third-party interference.

It should be recalled that regardless of the fact that a number of endeavors have been made by Ethiopia's arch-enemies to attach little importance to the African Union-led peace deal and downplay its role, Ethiopia at the end of the day metamorphosed into becoming victorious over the peace deal. It is common knowledge that notwithstanding the fact that Ethiopia's endeavor set in motion bearing fruits, some groups that hate to see Ethiopia's positive moves engaged in a smear campaign against the federal government.

As things stand at present, on the heels of the peace accord the lives of civilians in the northern part of the country have been changing for the better. It is witnessed

that there have been fast development and speedy progress in terms of the delivery of humanitarian assistance, restoration of social infrastructure, and other basic services. The positive achievements being taken by the federal government have been many a time and oft winning the hearts and minds of the world.

It should not be forgotten that a delegation consisting of authorities of National Dialogue, Ministers, several institutions, and other government officials headed to Mekelle. The huge move being taken by the federal government in the absence of the involvement of any third party or third party's dictation exemplifies the unwavering stance of the incumbent to end conflicts. It as well has been proven the resolve of the federal government to make peace happen in the length and breadth of Northern Ethiopia.

It should be borne in mind that since the beginning of the war, Ethiopia managed to go to the ends of the earth to get to the bottom of the problem in an atmosphere of calm. As bringing about the socioeconomic well-being of the entire nation devoid of peace is a worthless chase, the incumbent has been preoccupied with paving the way for the distribution of humanitarian assistance and restoration of social infrastructure.

On the subject of the Pretoria peace agreement, people from all walks of life have been expressing their ideas, feelings and thoughts.

Recently Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Relations Assistant Professor Yayew Genet told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the ability to solve internal problems independently would have a significant impact on creating strong unity among the people of Ethiopia. The truce also has the ability to ensure sustainable peace and development in the country.

Likewise, resolving problems in accordance with the political culture of the country should ensure inclusive growth and also avoid external interference and pressure. The situation would also open the space for

promoting the political culture and ability of countries to solve their problems by internal mechanisms.

The academician further noted that the CoHA aligns with AU's vision of seeking African solutions to African problems. The government of Ethiopia has, in practical terms, demonstrated its commitment to resolving the conflict peacefully through the auspices of the continental body.

"Ethiopia believes that the principle of 'seeking African solutions to African problems' shall dictate the policies of those involved in the conflict and those advocating for a negotiated peace."

By the same token, History Assistant Professor Ayele Bekeri told local media that Ethiopia has proved Africans' capability to manage their problems in their own capacity and without the need for third parties interference. Ethiopia has pursued its own technique to resolve the northern conflict peacefully thereby attesting to Africans' ability to solve their problems by themselves.

The sole agenda of Ethiopians are defending the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their country the people are well known by the world for the noble sacrifice paid to fend off aggressors putting minor differences aside.

In recent times in an interview South African journalist Carien du Plessis gave to the Ethiopian News Agency said that implementing the peace agreement signed by the Government of Ethiopia and the TPLF in Pretoria, South Africa, is crucial to Ethiopia and exemplary to Africa.

The journalist said that implementing the agreement will relieve Ethiopians from sufferings and encourage African countries to solve conflicts in a similar way. Carien believes that the partners who observed the peace process have also played an important role in the Africa-led peace agreement to guide other African countries with the slogan: "African solutions to African problems".



Herald Guest

The responsibility of ensuring peace, security is in our hands

Ambassador Dr. James P Morgan

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Today's guest is Dr. James Petia Morgan, South Sudan Ambassador to Ethiopia. He is also a permanent representative to the African Union, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and representative to IGAD here in Addis Ababa.

The Ethiopian Herald has made a short stay with Ambassador Morgan and talked about regional issues focusing on the multifaceted bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and South Sudan. Excerpts:

Since South Sudan became an independent State, how do you see the status of bilateral relations between the two countries?

The relationship between South Sudan and Ethiopia is very historic one and has really no way of measuring it as it is beyond relations. It is beyond economic and political cooperation. It is a trans-boundary communication based interaction between the two peoples. The people of Ethiopia and South Sudan are just like one people living in two countries.

We like Ethiopia and Ethiopians do the same to South Sudanese. As the bond between them is beyond words, one cannot describe it simply. The tie between the two sides is far away from economic, political and other affairs. It is a real relationship that has existed for times immemorial. So, we consider Ethiopia as our home, as well as Ethiopians can consider South Sudan as their home. That is how the relations between the two countries are described shortly.

In economic terms, Ethiopia has been engaging in the banking sector and now seems the time for telecom. How do you explain the current economic relation of the two countries?

We have done much. Look, first of all, let me raise some points in relation to capacity building. Ethiopia has given South Sudanese students a lot of scholarships and they are now studying in Ethiopia in various universities. Since the time we became independent in 2011, the two countries have signed a lot of memorandum of understandings with Ethiopia. One of the most important things was capacity building through government scholarships. So far, Ethiopia has given us a lot of scholarships.

Secondly, at this moment, we want to open the roads that will connect Juba and Addis Ababa because people to people relations is not enough only by aircraft. I will be enough by road, where our citizens can move freely from Ethiopia to South Sudan and vice versa. There will be freedom of movement. We also want to stamp out the issue of the visa so that the people can



move freely without a visa simply holding the identity card. A citizen of Ethiopia is coming to South Sudan and we will do it stage by stage.

So, economically, yes, we are looking to integrate some of the economical factors. For instance, South Sudan produces a lot of oil, so we need this oil to be available for the Ethiopian market. On the Ethiopian side, the Renaissance dam will provide electricity. South Sudan will also benefit from this electricity. So, it is just a way we can be able to work together on those areas. Very soon, I think the roads will start.

Our vice president says that the road should be open and the tarmacking of the road will follow later. The road must open so that big cars can be able to move from Addis Ababa to Gambella all the way up to South Sudan. That is one thing that we want to achieve within the shortest time possible.

Would you tell me about the progress of the peace deal between South Sudanese warring parties?

We are still continuing the implementation of the revitalizing peace agreement which was signed in Addis Ababa on Sept 12, 2018. We were supposed to have accomplished the interim period in the last three years. But when the COVID 19 came, some of the articles of the agreement were not accomplished. Now, the government and other political parties that were parties to the agreement have decided that we should extend the interim period for another two years and we are now working together. We call it the roadmap.

So working on this road map continues implementing the peace agreement which is better because we do not want another party again to decide to go to war. That is why all the parties signed the agreement, we all came together and produced this road map as a mechanism to make us continue all the articles of agreement are accomplished and the country now will go to the elections. And after the end of the road map, the election will take place in South Sudan and the elected government will now be able to lead the people of South Sudan to the next stage. This is very important to all of us. When there is peace in South Sudan, there is peace in Ethiopia and elsewhere in the horn countries.

Our region can prosper. Our region will now focus on our important agendas starting from agenda 2020 which we are now in. [Through] agenda 2020 Africa union was calling for the silencing of guns in Africa. Our region is a region that suffers from so many political and insecurity issues and so on. It is good now that with this peace agreement, be it in South Sudan or in Ethiopia, is also able to reach out to establish peace with Eritrea and the rest

Our region will now focus on our important agendas starting from agenda 2020 which we are now in. [Through] agenda 2020 Africa union was calling for the silencing of guns in Africa. Our region is a region that suffers from so many political and insecurity issues and so on



of the region is peaceful. We then focus on the agenda 2030 which is calling for sustainable development. This agenda 2030 will prepare the region to be ready for agenda 2063 as each of the regions has been given the responsibility to be ready for it.

Our region has to integrate itself politically, economically and socially. The region has also been connected through infrastructure development such as connectivity of the roads which can connect the whole region. We now have major other programmes which connect the whole of Africa by roads, trains, airways and so on. So these will be some of the important things that we are going to focus on. Our region should not be left behind because the other four regions, The Southern African Development Community (SADC), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in Central Africa and in North Africa are doing enough.

So why do we waste our time on security issues fighting inside and displacement of citizens. Then, at the end of the day we will not be able to catch up with the entire region. Agenda 2063 will find us as still not integrated or not developed. And we have not done anything. So we will be left behind. So we need to work together. So, the horn of Africa, IGAD and the East Africa region should be ready to meet the requirement under protocols of agenda 2063.

How do you see the support coming from the international community for the east Africa region in general and South Sudan in particular?

We have friends from the international community who always call them development partners. The most important thing is peace. If you call partners in the absence of internal peace, they do not want to be with you. So the work of peace and stability of the region really rests with us. We are the ones who are responsible for that and the rest of the things will follow. Once we are able to stabilize our region then the development partners can come and help us. The responsibility of peace and security is totally in our hands. And that is what we always want.

As you know, for two years, there has been a kind of turmoil. So now there is a peace agreement that is signed first in Pretoria, South Africa and later in Nairobi. There is a new atmosphere. What is the significance of this peace deal to the horn in general?

Yes. First of all, when the crisis started in Northern Ethiopia, specifically in the Tigray State, all of us were very sad because we did not want Ethiopia to go to war. Ethiopia has a very important role in our region. And that role is, supporting the region in the way of how we can resolve our issues peacefully without going to war.

We have seen that on many occasions when South Sudan has got problems, we always come here. So our problems have been resolved here in Ethiopia since the time of



the Emperor, 1972, all the way. If there is any problem in South Sudan, we always bring it to Ethiopia to find the solution. So when the war situation started in Ethiopia, my president, General Salva Kiir Mayardit was the first leader in the region who called for peace. He wanted the issue of northern Ethiopia to be resolved through peaceful means. And, even if the war broke out, he did not stop calling for peace.

And we are so grateful now that the Peace finally has come. We all appreciate the signing of the Peace deal in Pretoria and the ongoing implementation process in Nairobi. Because these days we think that all of us had been hoping for Ethiopia to come back to peace as the strength of Ethiopia depends on its unity.

When Ethiopia is united, that is when it is strong. We didn't want what was going on. It was not in our interest at all. It was not even in the interest of the people of this region or the continent in general. Africa did not like it. But now we are so grateful that peace is being restored.

The ongoing implementation process the Nairobi [agreement] is just a process which we believe is a mechanism to put things on our back together. So, I am grateful also. We also wish that the last two years, we call them the dark years of Ethiopia and it will never come back again.

Ethiopia from now on should keep working together. The citizens of Ethiopia should now consider themselves that because in fact nobody knows that Ethiopia was having tribes, we consider them as Ethiopians. So now they need to come back to where they were before in order to achieve that glory, which existed years and years back. So, we are so grateful about that.

As you are the representative of IGAD, What is the impact for the region as a whole?

Yeah, of course. In IGAD, we have a program, which is a call for the free movement of the people of the Horn of Africa, the IGAD region. When we have a problem in one of our member states, that problem affects the rest of the

member states. Our programs, like the free movement of the people, integrate the region, economically and politically, all these things are put aside whenever there is a problem.

So the impact of the crisis in any member state affects all of us as a region. What happened in Ethiopia was affecting us all as a region. But now that peace has come and we are so grateful because it is for our own benefit as a region first. Before it becomes a benefit for anybody else we are the ones who are the direct beneficiaries of the peace of the region. And we are so grateful about that.

Recently, Ethio-telecom signed an agreement with the telecom of South Sudan. If you know anything about that, I want you to add on that. Would you tell us the impact it would have on the economy of the two countries?

The agreement was about operating telecom in South Sudan. You see that is what we call integration. Recently, Kenya launched the Safaricom here and Ethiopia is launching also the Tele in Juba, South Sudan. That is what we call economic integration. We have the commercial Bank of Ethiopia operating already in Juba a long time ago. This is what we call economic integration. I do appreciate anything that is a sign with the aim of bringing the region together be it politically, economically, socially and all that can bring the people of the region together is a benefit to us. We appreciate it.

I also wish you a Happy New Year and I wish the people of Ethiopia that this New Year that is coming with a lot of joy and happiness. Now there is peace in the country, there is a free movement of the people in the country. The flights to Mekele have resumed and now everybody in Ethiopia is free to move the way they want. This is appreciation that Ethiopia has come back to where it was before. So we greet all the people of Ethiopia and we wish them a happy New Year.

Thank you very much.

Thank you.

The ongoing implementation process the Nairobi [agreement] is just a process which we believe is a mechanism to put things on our back together. So, I am grateful also. We also wish that the last two years, we call them the dark years of Ethiopia and it will never come back again.

Society

Timket festival boosts tourists' inflow

BY TEWODROS KASSA

The celebration of street festivals in Ethiopia have contributed a lot to the developments of the tourism sector and generate tangible income from the sector through attracting numerous international and local tourists. The Ethiopian *Meskel* (The Finding of the True Cross) and Ethiopian *Timket* (Epiphany) festivals are the prominent ones in this regard.

The colourful celebrations of *Meskel* and *Timket*, Orthodox Christian celebrations, are crucial in promoting similar outdoor festivities and boosting Ethiopia's tourism sector thereby boosting the national economy.

Different tourists who attended the celebration of *Timket* festival in Addis Ababa, Gondar, and other parts of the country also expressed their feeling about the unique identifications of the festival and its significant roles towards boosting the country's tourist's inflow.

Spanish tourists, who attended *Ketera*, the eve of *Timket* festivity, expressed their delight over the colorful conduct of the celebration. The tourists also said that *Ketera* is the most remarkable moment of their visit.

Ana Maria, from Spain, is her first time in Ethiopia to attend *Ketera*. She told *The Ethiopian Herald* that apart from its religious significance, the involvement



of millions of children, youth, and the elderly in the festivity is a big contributor to promoting Ethiopia's attractiveness for global tourists.

Maria further indicated that the majority of international tourists want to see a country with vibrant and age-old religious and cultural festivities as *Timket* and called for the preservation of such assets. "I hope, I will come back to Ethiopia to witness another holiday too."

Joan Garcia is also from Spain. Noting it is his third time to attend *Timket*, Garcia claimed that the way Ethiopians mark the festivity is quite different from other countries thereby making his coming to the country always a new experience. "I will go to Gondar to take part in the celebration

with my group. Having completed our stay in Gondar, we will visit the Rock-Hewn churches in Lalibela."

The two Spaniards recommend fellow tourists to come and visit Ethiopia's world-famous tourist attraction sites and festivities and witness the country's much-cherished culture of hospitality by their own.

Other tourists who attended the *Timket* celebration told local media that the warm hospitality in Ethiopia and the ceremonial process of *Timket* is a great potential to excel the country's tourism sector.

Sheila West, an American who is in Ethiopia for a conference and attended *Timket* celebration, said that she has never seen anything like this. "What impressed me the most is the gathering of the people.

So, many people have come to pray, to give and the way that people are giving thanks (I presume because I do not speak the language) seem to be a very solemn thing. I have never seen anything like this before. There is nothing as impressive as this one from where I come from," she explained.

One can easily feel good to be welcomed by all Ethiopians, West said, and added "but for me, the excitement is being here together with the people to celebrate this festival-*Timket*."

Finnish Laura Poussa was the other tourist who attended the *Timket* festival. As she stated, Ethiopia has different potential tourist attraction sites and Ethiopian Epiphany (*Timket*) is one of them.

"I think this is a very wonderful ceremony and something very special. This kind of event does not take place in my country; and I think it is very special among all the people," she added. Mentioning that people of different background joyfully celebrate the holiday together, Poussa pointed out that there is a lot that people around the world can learn about Ethiopians' peaceful coexistence.

True, the colorful celebrations of *Meskel* and *Timket* are crucial in promoting similar outdoor festivities and boosting Ethiopia's tourism sector thereby advancing the national economy if utilized properly. Not only that, but they can also play pivotal role in attracting more tourists to country's world-famous attraction sites.



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YTP contribution in ensuring food security

BY YOHANNES DEMEKE

Even though Ethiopia has the largest livestock inventories in Africa and favorable climate, it is not benefited from it to the level it should be. After the reform, Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) has been implementing the ten different programs to transform the agriculture sector into high level. Hence, the *Lemat Tirufat* Program (YTP) that was launched recently by the government is one of these programs.

Due to the low milk product and productivity, there is wide gap between supply and demand of milk product. Out of the total 15 million milk cows in the country, above 90percent are local breed types which are poor genetic potential for milk production. Accordingly, there is an average of 1.5 liters milk yield per cow per day from local cow and its milking period is 210 days only.

From the 7.1 billion liters annual milk production, the annual per person consumption is about 66 (CSA, 2021). This is very low according to the world standard of 200 liters per person annually. So, to meet this standard, we have to increase the milk production twice.

Although Ethiopia has large number of



hens, their production is low because of the total number of 19.5 hens above 75 percent is local breed. Its annual average productivity is 40 eggs. Even though the selected breed annual average productivity is 270 based on modern poultry development, it is not enough when it is compared with the large number of hens in the country (MoA, 2014 EC). The annual egg production is 3.2 billion eggs and the annual per person consumption is 30 eggs (MoA, 2014 EC).

There are 7 million bee herds in the country. However, it is not beneficiary as much as possible due to that about 96 percent of honey development is based on cultural bee house. Compared with the bee herds of the country, 13,000 ton

annual honey production is very low.

In the past four years, Ministry of Agriculture has been working hard to increase livestock production and productivity based on 10 years strategic plan. One of the different agricultural programs is LTP. This indicates the attention given to livestock sector.

The National *Lemat Tirufat* Program (LTP) was announced by FDRE Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) on 03/11/2022 at Arba Minch town and all regions promised to implement it properly.

LTP is a national nutrition scheme program that aimed at improving milk, poultry and honey production. It is a national initiative intended to realize a balanced

diet at a household level. In the coming 4 fiscal years (2015 – 2018 E.C), its main goals are to contribute its role for the food and nutrition security assurance, job creation opportunity, export income and substituting the import production through increasing the production of milk, poultry and honey.

The specific objectives of LTP are to increase milk production from 5.8 to 10.3 billion liters, Egg production from 3.2 to 9.1 billion eggs and honey production from 147,000 to 296,000 ton in the coming four years.

LTP has its own performance modes which are: creating the coordinating structure, extending the technical and follow up support, increasing the participation of private sector, increasing the supply of production input and technology, production marketing and value adding, and extending the system of finance needed and supply are the main modes of its performance. To implement the program responsibly and accountably, coordinating structure is established at federal level. Steering committee and technical teams are organized from federal up to kebele in which higher political leaders participate. Therefore, all stakeholders must implement the program properly in order to achieve its goals.

Verbatim and Caption

Timket Festivity, Ethiopian Epiphany, celebrated colorfully across Ethiopia

The followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church marked the baptism of Jesus Christ, Epiphany across Ethiopia colorfully on 19 January. *Timket* is a beautiful religious carnival in Ethiopia celebrated by tens of millions across the country.

The religious holiday, *Timket*, is an occasion to celebrate, honor and commemorate the day when Jesus Christ was baptized by the hands of John the Baptist. Ethiopian Epiphany was inscribed among the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2019.

Let's cement our unity with love and reconciliation- Patriarch Abune Mathias



Our

Lord Jesus Christ taught us love, obedience and humility during Epiphany. He was baptized by John to carry across humility. All followers of Orthodox Christianity should live the teachings of our God and respect his instructions. We have to respect and love all human beings without any difference. We have to promote peace, unity, love, reconciliation and humility.

Our country passed through difficult times over the past two years. Citizens suffered a lot. Now, as peace has once more reigned we have to focus on helping the affected people, supporting the needy and fostering the existing peace.

It is time to strengthen our unity through love and reconciliation. It is time to turn our faces to rehabilitating the destroyed infrastructure, comforting the bereaved and strengthening our peace and unity through love, justice and equality. Let's return everything to what it was with love and reconciliation.

Abune Mathias, Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church

Epiphany is our public cultural museum- PM Abiy

Epiphany

festivity teaches humility to Christians.

Similarly, Epiphany is an important occasion for Ethiopians as a nation to showcase citizens' colorful diversity and celebrate the holiday in unity.

For Ethiopians, Epiphany is more than just a religious celebration; it is a celebration of our cultural values. From Gondar to Harar, from Mekele to Bale, from Metemma to Jimma, Ethiopians will pour out to the streets.

People also travel from one area to another to visit relatives. It is the day when our social life is highlighted, we decorate with different clothes, and we listen to different songs. Epiphany is our public cultural museum.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed so said during his best wish message for Timket



Religious tolerance vital for sustainable peace: Mayor Adanech Abiebie

Religious tolerance, humility and mutual respect are vital to maintain lasting peace in Ethiopia at large and in the capital Addis Ababa. Timket (Epiphany) is a celebration to honor the day when Lord Jesus Christ was baptized by the hands of a human being. For Ethiopians, the festival is beyond and religious festival.

Ethiopian Epiphany festival was inscribed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) which makes it a festival for the whole Ethiopians beyond the followers the Orthodox Tewahido followers.

"During the Timket celebration, we have to promote religious tolerance, mutual respect for each-other, and humility to



strengthen sustainable peace, unity and harmony for our country and citizens."

Addis Ababa City Mayor, Adanech Abiebie so said during her Timket best wish speech at Jan-Meda

Ethiopian Epiphany strengthens unity of people- Minister Kejela Merdassa

Beyond its religious values, The Ethiopian Epiphany festival strengthens the unity of the people of Ethiopia. The festival is a religious festival and celebrated colorfully annually. In addition to its religious value, Timket is an important celebration to strengthen the unity of the people of Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is endowed with immense cultural, religious and historical heritages, of which Timket is one among these beautiful Ethiopia's values.

Culture and Sports Minister Kejella Merdassa said during his best wish messages for Timket

