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Historic recognition further maintaining links with homeland: Diasporas

• Gov't values Diasporas role in Ethiopia's dev't

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA- The Diaspora recognition program is historic since it creates an opportunity for Ethiopians living abroad to be part of their home country's development and increase their contributions to national issues, representatives of the Diaspora communities said.

For their noble contribution to the national calls that have been made on various occasions, 52 Ethiopian Diaspora organizations received recognition on Thursday from President Sahlework Zewde and Deputy Prime Minister Demekle Mekonnen.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald* at the sidelines of the grand event, the representatives stated that the recognition also encourages them to make concerted efforts to change the livelihoods of fellow



Photo - Eyob Teferi



brothers and sisters here.

Accordingly, the Washington, D.C.-based ABREN Association Representative Daniel Eyasu said that award greatly motivates

Ethiopians living abroad to be actively involved in the overall development of their country of origin. ABREN has hugely engaged in exposing some English media

See Historic recognition ... Page 3

Invest Origins participants show keen interest in investing here

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- Foreign and domestic companies that took part in the Invest Origins 2023 forum expressed desire to explore Ethiopia's enormous investment opportunities and growing economic dynamism.

Speaking at the forum, Trade and Development Bank (TDB) Senior Adviser Reginald Max stated that the Abbay Dam and Ethiopian Airlines are the game changers in luring the interest of multinational companies to Ethiopia's market.

Apart from the above two, what is important to understand is that Ethiopia is

See Invest Origins ... Page 3



Ethiopia set to hit over 9 bln USD from industrial exports in decade

• To generate 5 mln jobs

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- The Ministry of Industry has revealed a plan to secure nine billion USD from industrial exports in the ten-year strategic period, adding it is working on creating five million jobs in the reported period.

Industry State Minister Tarekegne Bululeta told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that under the auspicious Ethiopia Produces program, consolidated efforts have been carried out to enhance the foreign currency earnings from industrial products apart from satisfying the local demand.

See Ethiopia set ... Page 3



Ethiopia to launch ETRSS-2 observation satellite soon

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – The Ethiopian Space Science and Technology Institute (ESSTI) disclosed that it has carried out various activities including feasibility studies and other tests to launch the enhanced ETRSS-2 remote sensing satellite soon.

See Ethiopia to ... Page 3

Gondar city's unfading spiritual and historical grandeur

Page 6

Reconnecting Tigray to essential services

Page 7

Anti-corruption struggle should be led by qualified personnel

Samuel Kassahun

Page 8

News

Stumping coffee trees boosting productivity, quality

• over 300, 000 hectares of coffee stumped in 4 years

BY SEMIRA BERHE

ADDIS ABABA - Coffee trees that cover over 300,000 hectares of land across the country have been stamped during the last four years, so disclosed Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority.

The Authority's Public Relation and Communication Director Sahlemariam Gebremedhin told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the stamping is carried out as part of the nationwide annual coffee stamping initiative which aims at rejuvenating the coffee plantations to boost their productivity and quality.

According to Sahlemariam, Ethiopia's

coffee plantation covers a total of 950, 000 hectares from which some 680, 000 and 800 tons of coffee is harvested annually.

Yet, 67 % of the coffee plantation in the country is over 40 years old. This decreases the productivity of the coffee trees. An old coffee tree can lose its productivity as well as quality and may stop giving product gradually. But stumped coffee tree can start to yield coffee beans after two years with good quality and quantity.

For this end, the authority conducts annual coffee stamping campaign on the month of January. Accordingly, Sahlemariam added, the authority in the past 3 to 4 years has conducted stamping of old coffee trees



all over the country that rests on 300,000 hectares of land. He further indicated that the newly planted coffee trees in the same

period only accounted for 45,000 hectares.

As can be recalled Ethiopia has secured 1.4 billion USD during the last fiscal year alone. The stamping of the 300,000 hectares of the coffee plantation has contributed to the large amount of revenue obtained from coffee export.

Before three years many coffee farmers have no knowledge of stamping and insisted on maintaining the old coffee trees as heritages from forefathers. But there are improvements after the authority provided the farmers with trainings on the importance of stamping coffee trees. This is believed to increase their capacity to be competent in the international market, he noted.

Zone to boost rosemary export

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Siltie Zone Agriculture Office said that it has been working to export 48,000 quintals of rosemary and to generate 2.5mln USD income this year.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Siltie Zone Administration Deputy Head and Agriculture Bureau Head Musal Aman stated that 31,000 quintals of rosemary production was made available for market supply in aggregate, of this 3,625 quintals, which helped generate 800,000 USD was supplied to foreign market.

"Last year, two thousand hectares of land was covered with rosemary agriculture, and we have broadened the area coverage to 3,080 hectare this year. So, we are eying to produce 48,000 quintals and to supply 10,000 quintals of rosemary to foreign market," he said.

As to him, farmers engaging in rosemary production are now benefiting a lot. They have sold a kilogram of rosemary with an average price of 75 Birr in the local market.

Beyond this, the export market has lightened hope to them, he noted.

He said: "Rosemary is one of most wanted agricultural products in the global market and we have both market and production opportunities. It does not need fertile land. We can simply cultivate rosemary on hilly and acidic lands with little labor."

The zonal agriculture bureau has created platforms to train farmers as they are unfamiliar with the product, he added.

Talking about the market chain, he said that the zonal administration has been wording to structure legal chain of rosemary marketing. Now, illegal traders and brokers are taking advantages of the market, he indicated.

Investors to commence production in Dire Dawa free trade zone

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - Industrial Parks Development Corporation (IPDC) stated that Dire Dawa Free Trade Zone, the first of its kind in Ethiopia, to commence production.

IPDC CEO Aklilu Tadesse told local media that the corporation has been working to make free trade zone to be one of the huge industry related working area and industrial center, too. Apart from focusing on manufacturing sector, it is also aggressively working to make hub of various logistics working too.

"Free trade zone is the newly industrial move work well taking the best experience from other nations. It has also taken the Ethiopian



current situation into account to put into effect through revising tariff and improving policy cautiously," he noted. "Free trade zone would enable the nation to compete with other countries of the world engaged in a similar activity and it serves as one way for the nation to secure foreign exchange.

Currently, about eight investors in areas of manufacturing start operating, he stated.

As to him, when these companies start working, about 2,500 citizens would get jobs and investors would start their work at initial capital of 10 million USD.

Moreover, Aklilu Tadesse signed a memorandum of understanding with seven local companies and one foreign company managers that are entering to Dire Dawa Free Trade Zone.

Free Trade Zone was inaugurated by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) last August 2022, which is believed to improve Ethiopia's entire economy boosting the import and export trade of the country, it was learnt.

Ethiopia shares its best experience at Africa Food Summit

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia has shared its best experience in food system and stated that Africa's food system depends heavily on the ability to create strong backward-forward linkages and the potential to come up with adequate decent jobs for the youth.

Speaking at the Africa Food Summit Dakar II that was held under the theme: "Feed Africa: Food Sovereignty and Resilience," organized by the African Development Bank Group (AfDB), Ethiopia's Planning and Development Minister Fitsum Assefa (PhD) said that the Summit seeks to bring Heads of State and Government, stakeholders, development partners and private sector participants to mobilize financing to harness Africa's food and agriculture potential.

She also said: "The resilience of our food system depends heavily on our ability to create strong backward-forward linkages and that is when we can be able to create enough decent jobs for our youth."

She also tabled a presentation of to the leaders of various countries and development partner organizations concerning Ethiopia's effort in the agriculture sector, and her delegations were taking part in the summit in Dakar, Senegal which was held from 25-



27 January 2023.

She also underlined that: "Africa should not keep on selling its agricultural products raw and we should be able to process them and create jobs for our youth."

The action-oriented summit 'Feed Africa: Food Sovereignty and Resilience' is aimed at sharing successful experiences on food and agriculture in selected countries and successful platforms to scale up support for agriculture.

During the first implementation of the African Development Bank (AfDB) program, wheat production and the results it achieved were also presented and discussed.

The former Ethiopian Prime Minister and the Chairperson of the Board of Sustainably Growing Africa's Food System (AGRA), Hailemariam Dessalegn on his part said that the Russian-Ukraine crisis may have caused serious disruptions in our efforts to achieve food self-sufficiency, but it has

presented great opportunities before us and the urgency of implementing them.

"We must take agriculture as a business, not as a development activity. We must strongly support farmers, especially smallholder farmers, majority of whom are women, and get more young people into agriculture," he added.

At this summit, the President of AfDB, Akinwumi Adesina said, "It is time for Africa's food sovereignty and resilience. While gains have been made in recent times the continent remains over-dependent on food imports. We import over 100 million metric tons of food, valued at 75 billion Dollar annually."

It is also stated that the summit is expected to mobilize high-level political commitment, development partner support and private sector investment around production, markets and trade to increase food production in Africa.

News

Invest Origins participants show ...

undergoing an economic miracle, private sector development strategy, Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) as a value proposition to private sector development, Reginald added.

“We are discussing various initiatives around the stock markets and introducing bonds, among others. And as a development bank, we are here to ensure the development of the country, not only just in trade finance but in all sectors.”

The advisor further noted that the bank envisioned making Ethiopia an African beacon of prosperity by creating a pragmatic market-based economic system and enhancing the role and participation of the private sector. Maintaining macroeconomic stability, ensuring rapid and sustainable economic growth, and creating decent jobs are also parts of the bank’s vision.

Likewise, the TDB strives to bring structural economic transformation by promoting overall productivity and competitiveness and creating an enabling environment where every citizen becomes the owner and beneficiary of Ethiopia’s development.



Keeping the quality and accessibility of essential services and the provision of infrastructure are also areas that the bank has given equal consideration to.

Commenting on the issue to *The Ethiopian Herald*, an economist and Global Chairman of Fairfax Africa Fund Zemedeneh Nigatu said Ethiopia’s economy did not collapse and the country stayed strong despite all the challenges it had faced over the past two years. “So, this is the reason we have the

foundation to be even a greater economy in the next 15, 20 years and there is a growing desire among the U.S. and European anchor companies to do business here.”

For Ethio-American Chamber of Commerce (EACC) Chairman Elias Weldu, the forum brings many incentives to the chamber members, adding that he is here to identify Ethiopia’s prevailing investment opportunities for the former.

Noting EACC has more than 400 Ethiopian

Diaspora-owned businesses as its members, the chairman expressed the chamber’s commitment to promoting Ethiopian investment opportunities among U.S. potential investors.

Brook Taye, Capital Market Authority Director General, pointed out that the authority is drafting several directives that would allow it to establish the Ethiopian Securities Exchange where people could exchange equities.

Historic recognition further...

dissemination of lies and repelling their well-funded and coordinated propaganda against Ethiopia.

Daniel urged Ethiopian youth to be optimistic as their country is on the right track to overcoming the pressing challenges noting the situation has created extra homework in the Diaspora community to exert more efforts to support development back home.

For Ethiopian Community Association Representative in Djibouti Ashenafi Marege, the recognition will enhance the role and contribution of Ethiopian Diasporas in the development goals of their home country. “The award motivates us to contribute more than ever for our country and it enables us to encourage our fellow Ethiopians living abroad to be actively involved in the country’s national goals.”

Meanwhile, Ethiopian Community Association Chairman in Beirut Deacon Behailu Getaneh expressed his delight over the recognition, emphasizing the award’s multifaceted benefits in increasing the Diaspora’s involvement in Ethiopia’s accession to prosperity. The association purchased Abbay Dam bonds worth over 7.5 million USD.

Remarking at the occasion, President Sahlework Zewde said the recipients deserve to be recognized as they significantly contributed for the unity and sovereignty of Ethiopia in so many ways. “Diaspora Ethiopians are expected to strengthen their participation for the advancement of their country of origin.”

The government understands that an integrated engagement of the Diaspora is important towards realization of development goals and protecting Ethiopia’s national interest in global arenas, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Demeke Mekonnen noted.

The Deputy Premier further highlighted that the Diasporas be the voice of their home country during a testing time, and they have demonstrated overwhelming participation in curtailing the unwarranted pressures of some interest groups. The government has been working to make Diaspora organizations the main development partner of Ethiopia.

“Ethiopia overcomes the pressing challenges it has encountered over the last two years with the active participation of Diasporas who are vigorously engaged in public rallies, countering false propaganda, sending petition letters and other forms of campaigns.”

During the event, the Ethiopian Diaspora Service launched a book that presents contributions and information of 100 Diaspora organizations, it was learned.

Ethiopia set to hit over 9 bln USD from...

Noting the program has brought about a positive change in productivity, the state minister indicated that in the next ten years, the ministry is working to increase its production capacity from the current 50 % to 85 %. Also, a plan set to increase the import substitution capacity of Ethiopian industries by 30 % in the reported period.

By adding value to products and exporting, as well as adding new export products, efforts are being made to reach nine billion USD in exports by the end of the strategic period. The ministry will work in collaboration with various institutions for this to happen.

As to him, the expansion of industries will be done by taking into account the potential of the area. “For example, to take advantage of the vast cotton

resources we are expanding the textile industry in the Gondar area. In order to use the bamboo production in the Benishangul Gumuz State, there is a need for value-added factories in the area.”

By strengthening these and similar activities and expanding the industry, the industrial sector will create job opportunities for five million citizens by the end of the strategic period. Similarly, there is a plan to enter 11,000 new enterprises into the market.

The rationale of the Ethiopia Produces program is to attract the government’s attention to the manufacturing industry, strengthen coordination, and bring structural transformation. The ministry has registered promising results in this regard during the past year, the state minister emphasized.

Ethiopia to launch ETRSS-2...

Speaking to *The Ethiopian Herald*, ESSTI Communications and Public Relations Chief Executive Girma Dejene stated that the launched satellite is unique from the previous ones as it has high resolution and provides decision-makers, developmental organizations and the like with better information.

Particularly, the institute has made adequate skilled human power, who have enabled it to lead satellite operations, work effectively with technology activities, and maintain the satellite drawing important lessons from that of the previous one.

According to Girma, the institute has been working cooperatively with other countries, sharing experience and technology considering the current situation of the country, and providing a market alternative solution to launch the ETRSS-2 satellite efficiently. The exact day when ETRSS-2 will be launched is not known as it requests huge finance.

“Since the country has no infrastructure and technology to launch the satellites and it is highly costly to do so, Ethiopia had better employ ways of experienced countries along that line.”

Recalling Ethiopia started space science technologies in 1952, the executive claimed that nowadays, the country is progressing well in the field of satellite technology from the East and Central African countries.

“Currently, Ethiopia has been carrying out a lot of activities for ensuring competitiveness, maximizing the number of skilled human power, conducting enormous research, and the like to serve its interest in the sector. To realize this, the institute has been working with Addis Ababa Science and Technology University and building workshops to launch and fabricate small satellites shortly.”

Girma called on the private sector to work closely with the institute in geospatial and space science to bring about a remarkable outcome and ensure Ethiopia’s ambition towards the sector.

It was learned that the will be an earth observation satellite with higher quality, and resolution, and collect enormous information compared with that of the previous ones.

Opinion

Africa has a major new carbon market initiative

BY STAFF REPORTER

Climate finance for the African continent got a boost at the 2022 United Nations Climate Conference (COP27), with the launch of the African Carbon Markets Initiative. This aims to make climate finance available for African countries, expand access to clean energy, and drive sustainable economic development.

Led by a 13-member steering committee of African leaders, chief executives and industry specialists, the initiative promises to expand the continent's participation in voluntary carbon markets.

Carbon markets are trading platforms which allow individuals, firms and governments to fund projects that reduce emissions (instead of reducing their own emissions).

Kenya, Malawi, Gabon, Nigeria and Togo have already indicated their intention to collaborate with the market.

Climate projects include reforestation and forest conservation, investments in renewable energy, carbon-storing agricultural practices and direct air capture. In return for funding projects like these, investors receive carbon credits – certificates used to “offset” the emissions that they continue to produce.

The African initiative's goal is to produce 300 million new carbon credits annually by 2030, comparable to the number of credits issued globally in voluntary carbon offset

markets in 2021.

However, there is considerable scepticism about whether carbon offset credits do mitigate climate change.

Two important issues

In assessing the effectiveness of carbon credits, one important concern is the concept of “additionality”. Emission reductions or removals are “additional” if the project or activity would not have happened without the added incentive provided by the carbon credits. For example, if a landowner is paid to not cut down trees, but had no plans to cut them down in the first place, the project does not deliver additional emissions savings. The landowner is paid for doing nothing and the buyer's emissions are not offset.

Providing carbon credits to projects that would have been implemented anyway delivers zero climate mitigation, and can result global emissions that are higher than if the credits hadn't been issued. This is a serious challenge for carbon offset markets because additionality is not measurable, despite industry claims. While project managers may claim that they are unable to proceed without funding, there is no way of knowing whether these claims are true.

A second issue is permanence. Carbon offsets have to be permanent because carbon emissions remain in the atmosphere for hundreds of years. It is almost impossible to guarantee that emissions will be offset for this length of time. But it depends on

the type of offset project.

There are two types of carbon offset project:

- Those that reduce the amount of carbon that is emitted
- Those that remove carbon from the atmosphere.

In the case of carbon reduction projects, overall emissions remain positive. Examples of carbon reduction credits include investments in renewable energy. Even though the supplier of the carbon credit is not generating any emissions, the buyer continues to emit, and so the overall level of emissions is positive. Carbon neutrality – net-zero emissions – cannot be achieved using carbon reduction credits.

There should be more funding available for carbon reduction activities in Africa, but investors should not receive carbon credits to offset their own emissions when supporting these activities. Such investments would be philanthropic – for the good of the planet, not to balance the carbon accounting books.

Carbon removal projects do, however, have the potential to deliver a permanent net-zero emissions outcome. Direct air capture projects, which use chemical reactions to extract carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store them deep underground, can meet this goal. The cost of direct air capture, however, remains very high.

Forest growth, a less costly type of carbon removal project, is less permanent.

Landowners may commit not to cut down trees, but wildfires, disease, and other disruption events can release much of the stored carbon back into the atmosphere. There is still value to forest carbon credits, but they can't guarantee permanence. Forest projects provide “carbon deferrals”. Additional forest growth projects remove carbon from the atmosphere for a fixed amount of time. There is value to this delay because it can reduce peak warming and gives society more time for the costs of decarbonising technologies to fall. While there is value to these carbon deferral projects they should not be used to generate carbon credits that are used to permanently offset the emissions produced through economic activity.

Goals of the market

The African Carbon Markets Initiative has bold ambitions. It will attract investments in Africa by firms, consumers and governments in countries that have historically contributed the most to climate change. Whether these investments result in any meaningful climate benefit, however, is unclear. Time will tell.

Existing carbon offset projects lack credibility. This doesn't mean that carbon credits can't be more useful in future. Being transparent about what projects actually deliver, rather than what we hope they deliver, is paramount. Given the limited resources available to mitigate climate change, we need more than good intentions.

On International day of Education, We must prioritize girls in humanitarian crisis

“Is it a sin to be a girl? We don't want to be at home and illiterate. We want to go to school, study and be intelligent.”

In just a few words, this plea for education from a young Afghan girl has captured the world's attention. Her heartbreaking question shows how the Taliban's recent ban on girls attending secondary school and university effectively ending education opportunities for all Afghan girls and women is not only violating their fundamental human right to education but shattering countless hopes and dreams in an instant.

Elsewhere in the world, millions of other girls living through humanitarian crises are also being deprived of the right to go to school. In their case, it isn't necessarily a proclamation that bars them from learning, but hunger, conflict or the consequences of extreme weather induced by the climate crisis, sometimes a combination of all of these. And underpinning this, gender inequality means that the sheer fact they are girls means their education and rights often aren't prioritized.

For example, at present, hunger is causing huge damage to girls' education opportunities in the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, Haiti and other hotspots around the world.

The reasons for this are many and interconnected. When food is scarce, it is often girls who shoulder the responsibility of travelling long distances to find sustenance,

or caring for siblings while their parents do so, leaving little time for their studies. When small quantities of food are shared amongst a family, evidence shows girls often eat last and least, making it difficult for them to focus and truly benefit when they do go to school.

Elsewhere, from Ukraine to South Sudan, conflict is disrupting girls' education as families are forced to flee for their safety – indeed, half of all refugee children are out of school.

Whatever the reason, when girls are forced to drop out of school, it isn't just their education and life opportunities that suffer. Adolescent girls in particular then become even more vulnerable to violence, exploitation, early pregnancy and harmful practices, from child marriage to female genital mutilation. Indeed, the chances of a girl marrying as a child reduce by six percent with each year she remains in secondary education.

Inclusive, quality education is a lifeline which has a profound effect on girls' rights. But more needs to be done to make this a reality.

Girls in crisis settings are nearly 2.5 times more likely to be out of school than those living in countries not in crisis. One reason for this is that in emergencies and protracted crises, education responses are severely underfunded. The total annual funding for education in emergencies as a percentage of

global sector-specific humanitarian funding in 2021 was just 2.9%.

Together with partners, Plan International and Education Cannot Wait (ECW), the UN's global fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises, are calling for this proportion to be increased to at least 10% of humanitarian financing. This must include increased multi-year investments in the institutional capacities of local and national actors.

Today, on International Day of Education, we stand in solidarity with girls in Afghanistan and in all other crisis affected countries to say “education cannot wait.” Education is not only a fundamental human right, but a lifesaving and life-sustaining investment for girls affected by crisis. We must stand with girls as they defend this right.

Next month, when world leaders will gather in Geneva at the Education Cannot Wait High-Level Financing Conference, we urge donor governments to immediately increase humanitarian aid to education. We must translate our promises into action through bold, courageous and substantive financing.

This funding is essential if we are to build resilience in the most climate-exposed nations, where the consequences of extreme weather will all but certainly pose a threat to girls' education in the years to come. Education budgets – which declined by two-thirds of low- and lower-middle-income countries after the onset of COVID-19 –

must be protected and increased, especially in crisis-affected countries.

Investments should be geared towards building stronger education systems and tackling gender inequality and exclusion, with girls' needs prioritized at every stage of programming. Governments should also ensure that refugee and internally displaced children aren't overlooked, and make concrete commitments towards inclusive quality education for displaced children and youth at the Global Refugee Forum in December of this year.

Right now, 222 million crisis-affected children and adolescents are in need of urgent education support and more than half of those are girls. It is critical that Education Cannot Wait is fully funded with a minimum of US\$1.5 billion in additional resources over the next four years, so that partners such as Plan International and others can deliver the critical programs needed.

Too often, girls' voices are silenced during emergencies, leaving their experiences invisible and their needs ignored and overlooked. It's up to us to change this, for a more just, equal and peaceful world.

(Source: <https://www.ipsnews.net/>)

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

Praiseworthy role across the Horn!

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Ph.D.) has recently had one-day working visit to Sudan. During his visit, he said, "Ethiopia stands in solidarity with Sudan in their current self-led political process." He also appreciated General Abdel Fattah al- Burhan for the warm welcome besides his discussion with the Transitional Sovereignty Council Vice President Lieutenant-General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo. More interestingly, the Prime Minister encouraged the Vice President to tap into the abundant capacity of the Sudanese people in solving their own challenges.

Moreover, the Premier held discussions with various Sudanese political parties engaged in the ongoing political process as well as members of the trilateral mechanism. Concurrently, he affirmed that Ethiopia applies its non-interventionist principle not only to its own experience but also to others as well.

Indeed, this recent visit of the Prime Minister has highlighted Ethiopia's roles in ensuring peace and security across the Horn and beyond. The nation has been playing commendable role in curbing strategies of anti-peace elements across the continent.

Fortunately, Ethiopia and Sudan share several identities that strengthen their relations. Ethiopia's border with Sudan is the longest of its kind, and the two countries have a strong people-to-people relationship. This recent visit has a significant share in improving this long-standing relation between the nations. The Premier has brought the relation to the next level when he shared Ethiopia's solidarity with Sudan in the political dialogue process that they have embarked upon, citing the wisdom and ability of the Sudanese people to successfully lead the process without any intervention.

As Africa's oldest independent country and one of the fastest growing economies today, it has been playing its praiseworthy

roles in supporting other African nations to improve their security situations. Being the second most populous country in the continent, it has emerged as a major power in the Horn of Africa, enjoying rapid economic growth and increasing strategic importance in the region.

Fortunately, in addition to making strides in health and education, it has seen some of the world's highest GDP growth in recent years. This year, according to International Monetary Fund (IMF) projection, Ethiopia's economy will expand by 13.5 %. This remarkable achievement is the result of the national reform introduced in 2018. After taking office in 2018, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed responded to prolonged unrest with promises of dramatic political and economic reforms. And the contribution of the indigenous economic reform has played significant share in this regard.

Indisputably, Ethiopia achieved notable success in fighting anti—peace elements in Africa, particularly, across the Horn. It also developed its security diplomacy with other nations; for instance, the Ethio-US partnership along with others maintained multilateral and bilateral cooperation against al-Shabaab is a showcase. Their collective counterterrorism curbed the evil strategies of al-Shabaab besides driving it from the center and many districts were liberated in Somalia as a result.

In short, as an emerging power across the Horn, Ethiopia has continued playing its roles in ensuring sustainable peace and security in the region. It also believes the economic development among the Horn nations is inseparably interwoven; hence, it continues cultivating cooperation and integration. The recent visit of the Prime Minister Abiy to Sudan attests the growing and historic relations between the two nations.

Opinion

Private sector urged to "own and drive" Africa's continental free trade agreement

BY STAFF REPORTER

The private sector is recognized as an indispensable stakeholder in the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), especially given its ability to catalyze sustainable economic development and job creation.

"Africa's private sector accounts for 80 % of total production, two-thirds of investment, and three-quarters of credit, and employs 90 % of the working-age population," said Stephen Karingi, Director of Regional Integration and Trade at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

Speaking during the opening of a three-day Africa Prosperity Dialogues on 26 January in Ghana, Mr. Karingi called on captains of trade and industry to "own and drive the implementation of the AfCFTA by supporting their governments but also by holding them to account."

ECA estimates that by 2045 intra-African, trade in agri-food, industry, and service sectors will increase by nearly 35% compared to a situation without the AfCFTA. But governments must implement the Agreement "fully and effectively" for such impressive projections to come true, and the private sector must also seize the

opportunities of a large single market created by the AfCFTA.

The role of the private sector was also echoed by the chairperson of the African Prosperity Network, Gabby Otchere-Darko, who stated "we (the private sector) should make the fulfillment of the promises of the AfCFTA "our agenda."

The event was officially opened by Ghana's Vice President, Mahamudu Bawumia, who pointed out that "we have everything we need to transform Africa into a global powerhouse of the future," adding "the AfCFTA has set the stage for Africa's industrialization."

UN Assistant Secretary-General and Director of UNDP's Regional Bureau for Africa, Ahunna Eziakonwa, said "it is through the AfCFTA that we will industrialize" and create rather than "export African jobs"

"An Africa that produces its people's needs is not just the Africa we want, it is the Africa we need," Ms Eziakonwa said.

Mr Karingin noted, however, that the African private sector of which 90 % are small and medium enterprises face challenges in conducting cross-border trade due to non-tariff barriers such as complex customs

procedures, lack of access to finance, high costs of transportation and logistics, and lack of access to information, among others.

He cited inadequate infrastructure connectivity, rudimentary productive capacity, and risky or expensive payment systems as some of the barriers to trade, adding "the cost of doing business across African borders remains high, leading to the regrettable situation where African products are uncompetitive in African markets."

Africa's weak productive capacity and consequent excessive reliance on imports for essential products expose the continent to external shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war.

"When COVID struck, African countries were confronted with a lack of access to basic medical supplies because Africa imports over 90 % of its supplies. When the Russia-Ukraine crisis dawned, several African countries faced a crisis of food security because wheat and corn exports from Russia and Ukraine were suspended," Mr. Karingi said.

The AfCFTA is expected to integrate and consolidate Africa into a single USD 2.7 trillion market by eliminating many of the barriers to trade present across the Continent. It provides the platform for

Africa to diversify its economy and achieve resilience to natural and manmade shocks, including climate change.

Wamkele Mene, Secretary General of the AfCFTA Secretariat, posited that the ambition to integrate Africa dates back to the founding of the Organization for African Unity (now the African Union). But the challenge now, he noted, is to "transform such ambition into action," citing vaccine manufacturing in some African countries as one of the ways in which the continent is moving from ambition to action under the AfCFTA.

The maiden Africa Prosperity Dialogues is organized by the Africa Prosperity Network in collaboration with the ECA, the AfCFTA Secretariat, and the Government of Ghana

Mr. Karingi reassured participants that "ECA has been there from the beginning; ECA will be there to the end. Africa is ready to turn the promises of the AfCFTA to reality, and ECA will be there all the way."

Source: UNECA

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

Art & Culture

Gondar city's unfading spiritual and historical grandeur

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

The northern Ethiopian city of Gondar is recently undergoing a resurgence following the recent celebrations of both *Genna* or Christmas and *Timkat* or the baptism of Jesus Christ in the hands of the John the Baptist an event sometimes referred to as Ethiopian Epiphany. The resurgence of Gondar city assumed a particular importance as the historic city shook of the shackles of two years of conflict and returned to its old self as one of the cradles of Ethiopian history.

What is also striking about my discovery of the British writer who has produced a long historical novel out of the famed historical city of Gondar, came with my painful realization that Ethiopian history or Ethiopia's story, was mainly being written by foreigners and mainly by the British while we are still the passive recipients of the literary productions thrown at us from here and there.

To be frank, foreign authors have contributed a great deal to the popularization of Ethiopian history than Ethiopian historians, with the exception of Professor Emeritus Bahru Zewede who gave us important and uncontroversial works based on more recent Ethiopian history. Notable among these books are *A History of Modern Ethiopia 1855-1991*, *Pioneers of Change in Ethiopia* and *The Quest for Socialist Utopia. The student Movement 1960-1974*, among others.

Ethiopian scholarship on the other hand has not yet awoken from its long slumber to either critically review or comment on books written by foreigners or have not yet produced the books themselves.

There is a 1986 historical novel about Gondar written by a little known British author called Nicholas Louard. The book is simply entitled "Gondar" and is a long read of more than 600 pages. According to the description of the book, Gondar is "an exotic fantastic story of the struggle for control of the fabled 19th century Abyssinian kingdom. Richly created and lushly told, it is peopled with unforgettable characters both real and imaginary set in an Africa of violence spectacle and romance."

According to the same source, the author Nicholas Louard is a well-known author, some of his books are a fascination for readers like in the Gondar book, and this is one of the most wanted Nicholas Louard author readers around the world. Personally I saw the book many years back but did not have the opportunity

to read it for some reason. The book is available for sale on line but is largely unknown in this country. I have never encountered anyone who said they know or read the book as we Ethiopians are not fans of foreign authors even if they write about us.

Anyway, judging by the length of the book and the reputation of its author, my guess is that it must be a very interesting read judging by the sheer description of the book by its blurb as exotic and fantastic story of the struggle for the control of 19th century Gondar. My purpose here is not of course to review the book because I have never put my hand on it yet but to indicate my impression about the subject of the book because of the central place where the history of Ethiopia has been shaped by the struggle to control of the kingdom which has a contemporary relevance as the struggle for control of Gondar was repeated more recently, giving us the impression that how much Ethiopian history has not changed.

There are also other books and treatises written about Gondar by Ethiopian researchers or historians. I have also come across another book called, "History of the City of Gondar" by Solomon Getahun and reviewed by a certain Sereke Berhan in "African World Press" in 2005. A partial excerpt of the review reads as follows:

"The establishment of the historical city of Gondar in northern Ethiopia around 1636 signaled the end of the medieval tradition of roving capitals. Emperor Fasiladas may have chosen Gondar as his seat of government for its strategic placement and fertile lands. More significantly, in the relative peace of 17th century northern and central Ethiopia, caravans from Sudan and the Red Sea converged on and dispersed from Gondar."

The city of Gondar is strategic now as it used to be in those distant centuries both as a trade center and a place of interest for people who come from the north as well as the west. Gondar is of course famed for its ancient castles and historic churches that have now become Ethiopian heritages. At present Gondar is also recognized as one of the most important tourist attractions in the country because of its long history and the amazing architectural works of Ethiopians from those remote times.

Gondar is always in the news, either during times of war and time of peace. Barely emerging from the devastating consequences of a two-year conflict, Gondar is once again claiming the headlines as a city leaving its recent

past behind and indulging in its ages-old religious practice of celebrating both Ethiopian Christmas and *Timkat* or the celebration of the baptism of Jesus Christ by Jhon the Baptist in the River Jordan.

According to media reports coming from Gondar last week, residents of Gondar have been making the necessary preparations to welcome domestic and foreign visitors and show the world that their city has emerged from difficult times without its history and vision unscathed. The compassion and hospitality of the residents was most evident as they welcomed visitors who came to the city for *Timkat* and Christmas before it by giving them shelters in their own compounds, providing them with what they eat and drink as well as other accommodations.

According to the same reports, peace has fully returned to the city and the residents were enjoying the newly found hope of better's days despite the sufferings of the recent past. The streets were full of people and youngsters who like their brothers and sisters here in Addis Ababa, were busy preparing the historic city both on the even and the actual days of the celebrations. The tourist flows to Gondar might not have reached its pre-war level but with lasting peace and stability, the city is slate for quick recovery as incomes from tourism would start to rise. Like any town in the region, Gondar too has endured its share of upheavals but what counts now is the everything is going to return to normal.

Given future opportunities, it is up to the tourism authorities in the region and Gondar city to be more creative in promoting its resources and attracting more visitors in the coming few weeks and months. COVID-19 and the absence of peace will soon recede into the past so that Gondar would assume it's never fading charms and become one of the tourism pearls of north Ethiopia, alongside Axum and Lalibela.

If only Nicholas Louard could visit present day Gondar with all its hopes and energy and its people determined to reclaim the old Grandeur of a their historic city. The writer would find a new inspiration to write yet another book about the revitalization of this glorious city and its people and the brighter future it is facing. The plot line of a new book about Gondar would include the people's optimism, compassion and resilience that would serve as powerful ingredient that would push the plot forward as Ethiopia as a whole is an impressive story that is not yet fully told.

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two-year conflict*

Law & Politics

Reconnecting Tigray to essential services

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Ethiopia has been accelerating the restoration of social infrastructures in Tigray State without hitch and with flying colors. In the aftermath of the encouraging moves burgeoning in the aforementioned area, the population as a whole have been taking their hat off to the federal government and breathing sigh of relief.

It is abundantly clear that in the course of the conflict, Tigray, Amhara and Afar state were largely cut off from basic services due to damages. In consideration of the foregoing, the entire situation in the Tigray State has been fully taking a turn for the worse in the shortest possible time.

Given the current circumstances, the restoration of amenities and essential services including electricity, telecom, banking, and other things of a similar kind has been moving in the right direction.

The Ethiopian electric utility has restored electric services in various parts of the Tigray State that were damaged as a result of the damage to electric infrastructure as a result of the conflict that lasted for two years in Northern Ethiopia.

Needless to say, as far as this, appropriate authorities have been oiling the wheels of restoring all the necessary things.

As a result of the determination and perseverance of the federal government, the aforementioned areas have been reconnected to basic services and communities are now able to have access to medical and other essential services.

In the same way, in addition to accelerating the restoration of broken social infrastructural amenities comprising power and telecom services with success, a broad range of positive developments have been unfolding in Tigray. Other than that the federal government has been busy of fast-tracking the restoration of broken social infrastructural amenities encompassing power and telecom services. In addition to this, quite a lot of humanitarian organizations have been hastening the delivery of medicine and medical equipment to Tigray State successfully.

Notwithstanding the fact that the incumbent has been successfully restoring social infrastructure devastated in the course of the war, some entities failed to give credit where credit is due and engaged themselves in a smear campaign against the positive moves of the government.

To everyone's dismay, albeit some entities know the fact that the delivery of social infrastructure has been making good progress; the disenchanted groups have been time and again preoccupied with the whispering campaign and slanderous attacks. They have still continued making a lot of endeavors to put a damper on the positive developments unfolding throughout the northern part of the country. However, the incumbent has been working round the clock to further improve the situation in Tigray and other states.

By the same token, the restoration of power



lines in various parts of the Tigray State has been pointing in the right direction. In recent times The Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU) announced a plan to fully restore electricity in cities and towns that have not yet been reconnected in the war-affected states.

In an interview, EEU's North District CEO Bizuwork Demesie in recent time gave to *The Ethiopian Herald* said that consolidated activities have been carried out to fully reconnect the remaining towns in the Amhara, Afar, and Tigray states.

In the aftermath of the restoration of peace, the EEU planned to reconnect some 59 cities and towns across the three states and has managed to repower most of them.

It is abundantly clear that in the aftermath of the AU-brokered peace accord, the federal government has been expediting the restoration of social infrastructure in every nook and cranny of the country in accordance with the plan. Besides that, the provision of unfettered humanitarian aid, resumption of basic services, and other related aspects have been heading in the right direction.

Given the current circumstances, the restoration of electricity, banking, telecommunication, and other basic services in the Tigray State has turned out to be the talk of the world.

Irrespective of the fact that nobody had anticipated the intended destination could be attained in the Tigray state subsequent to the signing of the peace agreement, the whole situation is moving in the right direction on account of the firm stance of the incumbent to smooth the path of the delivery of humanitarian assistance and restoration of social infrastructure.

In the same way, the federal government has shown unflinching stance in the peace accord signed in Pretoria putting the catchphrase African Solution to African problems into effect devoid of the involvement of any third party's dictation. Other than that it has been paving the way for the restoration of social infrastructure.

In point of fact, the cessation of hostilities agreement signed between the federal government and Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) proves Ethiopia's competence in resolving conflict.

In the same manner, the federal government has been successfully delivering basic medical equipment in the war-affected areas in addition to providing wheelchairs, stethoscopes, and other inputs.

Recently, Ethio Telecom CEO Frehiwot Tamiru announced that telecom services have been resumed in 27 towns of Tigray region.

Ethiopian Electric Utility for its parts disclosed that almost the entire Tigray region has been connected to the national power grid, according to information obtained from *The Ethiopian News Agency*.

Officials of government service providing institutions held discussion with community representatives of Mekele.

During the occasion, CEO of Ethio Telecom Firehiwot Tamiru said that several telecom infrastructures have been destroyed due to the conflict.

Accordingly, she stated that the maintenance of some 1,800 kms fiber optics line is underway. The maintenance of 931 km of the line has so far been completed, she said, adding that as a result 27 towns were able to regain telecom services.

According to the CEO, efforts have also been carried out with great commitment to restoring telecom services to enterprises and humanitarian organizations in addition to service providing institutions and banks.

Works are also underway by deploying maintenance team in six directions, she said, adding that areas that have not yet started telecom services will soon access the service.

Ethiopian Electric Utility Deputy CEO, Solomon Tassew for his part disclosed that almost the entire Tigray region has been connected to national power grid.

As a result of this, several towns have started to get the service, he added.

The government of Ethiopia is also providing basic medical equipment loans to health facilities in the conflict-affected areas through credits, Ministry of Health (MoH). In an interview with *The Ethiopian Press Agency* (EPA), MoH Medical Equipment and Input Director Regasa Bayisa highlighted that, health facilities in those war affected areas have been damaged and become non-functional due to various reasons.

Owing to this fact, he said that a number of activities are being carried out to replace the medical equipment with new ones. In doing so, the government is providing wheelchair, stethoscopes and other inputs to health facilities on loans.

Though the medical equipment is on loan from Ethiopian Pharmaceuticals Supply Service (EPSS), he said efforts are being exerted to cover the loans by the Ministry of Finance on behalf of EPSS.

Since most of equipment was not operational for too long, maintenance activities are being carried out by professionals, he said.

However, the director further noted that primary health care service is being delivered to the public in most of the health stations located in war affected areas.

Medical follow up and examination of pregnancy, family planning, emergency surgical treatment and other services, among others are being provided in the health facilities.

Subsequent to the prompt activities undertook to rehabilitate health facilities in war affected areas in Amhara and Afar states, almost all health stations have currently become operational, as to him.

By the same token, he said following the peace deal, efforts are being exerted to start providing medical service in Shire, Axum and Adwa areas, thus, around eight hospitals and 26 health stations have gone operational. And, within few days of operation, over 83,000 people have gained health service.

Anti-corruption struggle should be led by qualified personnel

Samuel Kassahun

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Today's Guest Samuel Kassahun is executive manager of Transparency International Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Herald made a short stay with him to learn about the anti-corruption movement that has been underway for the past 20 years and the contribution of CSOs including his organization to stamp out this social menace. Have a nice read!

Ethiopia has been showing its commitment to fight against corruption by establishing an entity called Federal Ethics and Anticorruption Commission. How effective do you think is the struggle so far?

The anti-corruption effort that is run by the Federal Anti-Corruption Commission (FEACC) is not effective or as such did not bear fruit. In my opinion, the commission has not done tasks that make it effective. However, it is accurate to appreciate the commitment of the government as it proactively established the commission at federal level providing the entire mandate in order to combat corruption.

Apart from that failure to organize it in the way it could be effective was one of the challenges. The main problem observed in the struggle against corruption was the influence of high level political authorities. This means the political scenario did not help the institutions to stand on their feet by discharging the mandate given. Even if human beings are running the activities, institutional leaders have played significant role to make their organization effective. If institutions need be effective, the appointment of officials should be merit based. You are not sure whether leaders of institutions are fully partisan or not, however they should not act as a public wing.

Countries that are effective in the fight against corruption have equipped their institutions with high caliber professionals. Unfortunately, the appointments, structural adjustment of institutions are free from any political intrusion. For a long time we heard political loyalty is one criterion to be appointed as a leader of an institution. People are still assigned to a certain position taking their political commitment into account. We were not giving a chance of leading the FEACC and other institutions to the ordinary citizens.

Since its inception, politically affiliated people or people loyal to the ruling party were assigned to lead the commission. The politics had turned the institutions fragile. Even the academic institutions were not free intellectual villages for academicians as



they were filled with politicians. Likewise, the federal anti-corruption commission should also be free from any influence and that is useful to strengthen the fight against corruption. Some people considered the FEACC as if it was an institution established to protect and serve the corrupters instead of holding them liable by the law.

At times leaders of the institutions try to exercise the mandate given, the political leaders have taken their own measures on them instead of encouraging and pushing the struggle forward. For instance, previously, the anti-corruption commission was established having all the mandates including prevention and combat.

Awareness raising, discretion and investigation of corruption cases were part of its mandate. Later on, the government has taken the mandate given to FEACC when it started to exercise its power. Accordingly, some of the mandate was given to the Federal

Attorney General and Federal Police.

Lastly the Commission resorted to acting like a religious institution by only restricting itself on the prevention methods. This shows the then authorities lacked political determination so as to fight against corruption. Accordingly, the commission also lacks the guts. As a result, corruption should not be rampant throughout the country. On a day to day basis, the crime is aggravating and things are almost on the brink of going out of control. This clearly depicts, the task has not been done properly. Politically appointed leaders collect their own clients in the name of ethnic federalism and political ideology and do whatever they wish creating a network.

The very problem for anti-corruption movement in Ethiopia is, the struggle did not involve strong personalities who prioritized the interest of the society than keeping their own curiosity. Many of the institutions are

still filled with politically affiliated people who work for the interest of corrupted people. I think the anti-corruption move is the second priority for the government. Though there are efforts, the anti-corruption movement is not going in the required level.

Still now the problem is political determination. Sometimes, the top government officials may be confused looking at the chain of corruption. As we know all the new government chooses reform instead of making revolution. This political procedure claims the reform government to pay unnecessary sacrifice. The network of corrupted officials who have not lost their position previously held the institutions has diluted the capacity of the incumbent.

Ethiopia has its own constitution. Unless it makes it practical, how could the nation be effective in the fight against corruption?

Misinterpreting the law of the land that governs all laws is an instance of corruption. Corrupted authorities are manipulating and customizing the constitution for their interest. In Ethiopia, the legal institutions should be reorganized in order to strengthen the fight against corruption. If these things are arranged, in my opinion, the institution will be able to discharge its responsibilities.

In our country many legal issues have remained paper tiger. Some corrupt official can violate the proclamation with a single phone call. He bypasses the law and does as he wishes. The legal framework has not been properly protected. In the absence of respecting the law of the land, it is hard to strengthen the fight against corruption.

The country has no problem in signing international conventions such as United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUPCC). Even our domestic laws are strong, but the law enforcement problem is a challenge that can transcend for years. Thus, individuals use the enforcement for their own benefits.

Political commitment is highly required from the government side. We need to declare an anti-corruption revolution. Still many corrupted individuals exist within the government institutions. Since the regime of EPRDF, we have seen some initiatives that can assist the movement against corruption. Though the anti-corruption commission was primarily initiated by the government, it is this government that put a bottleneck not to activate as per its mandate. The commission should be filled with merit based individuals and replicate best practices of countries that are effective in the anti-corruption movement.



In order to strengthen the fight against corruption, the existence of political determinations is quite imperative. You can see better tasks when individuals are assigned based on merits. Here it is good to mention Ethiopian Human Right Commissioners Dr. Daniel Bekele as a good example. If the same thing has been applied in the case of FEACC and if it has a full mandate, we can see better changes.

The Ethiopian government has now established a national committee to lead an anti-corruption campaign. Why do you think is the need to establish this committee?

The initiative of the government should be acknowledged. FEACC can do tasks better than the committee if things are facilitated for it. FEACC, Federal Attorney General and Police are institutions who have given legal grounds in order to stamp out corruption. However, the task done so far had not been effective and that may be the reason for the government to establish a committee at the federal level. The new committee may assist these institutions so as to discharge their responsibility as per the law of the land.

Corruption is being carried out by the thieves who knew the intrigue. They always think one step ahead of the legal procedure. This is one factor that makes corruption unique. Grand corruption is always done by the authorities who have the capacity to manipulate the law. Some people try to preach that there is no grand corruption in the country, however, illicit financial flow and money laundering are some of the issues that are clearly observed. We are now admitting it when the grand corruption manifested itself. On the other hand, petty corruption is now a reality seen in every village. Every service providers door cannot not be opened without money.

The establishment of a new committee tells me how the government is confused with regard to the ever increasing number of corruptors or depicts how things are out of government's control. However, instead of fighting the social malice by simply forming a committee, it is easy to capacitate the FEACC providing additional mandate.

As things have not been transparent and there is no accountability, one cannot surely predict the thoughts of the government. Fighting corruption with the help of the new committee is not an easy task. The new committee is drawn from high level government officials but does not involve outsiders. The other thing is members of the committee have no ample time to fight against corruption as they are working under a tight schedule. How can they work aggressively is the question any individual can ask. The fight against corruption requires thinking more about it coupled with applying various systems and strategies. It is a task that should be handled independently. Had some of the members been partisan, the committee would bring radical change on the fight against corruption.

FEACC has now restricted itself in

corruption prevention activities such as raising the awareness of society towards corruption and so on. How do you evaluate it?

As to my observation and according to a mini research conducted, the awareness of the society towards corruption is somehow increasing. They know the methods that corruptors applied to. On the other hand, condemning corruption and related activities are now decreasing.

These days, corruption is not considered a social taboo. The awareness raising task would focus on loathing the bustles of corruption. However, many corruptors have not been aware that they are committing crimes. There are officials who assume their position is beyond the legal system.

People's awareness towards corruption is rising but this does not necessarily mean that the level of understanding reaches to the peak. Astonishingly, the society surrenders to corruptors considering that corruption is systemic. The level of exposing corruptors is now decreasing. By and large, corruption is considered a social norm. This emanates from the political systems that have been transcended from one generation to the other.

The high level government officials oppressed the landlords and the society gave a special place for its rulers and prostrated to them. This sort of culture highly exposes the society to give high value to the officials and do as per their words to exercise their right. Even if social identity was expected in connection to Land to the Tiller movement, it failed without succeeding its vision. The EPRDF regime was also developing the aforesaid norm instead of minimizing it. Our society is a society that is not assertive. We simply received things as they are.

Property registration is taken as one method of anti-corruption movement. How effective is it?

We have enough rules and regulations so as to fight against corruption. The property registration proclamation is one. The political client-lism could not touch the corruptors. Who is enforced to register their property? Apart from registering the property of officials, verification of the property is quite imperative. However, the verification task was very complicated as the property at the hands of officials is not correlated.

In Ethiopia there is a proclamation to provide for the disclosure and registration of assets (PROCLAMATION NO. 668/2010). There is no question about the significance of the rule but the implementation is zero. The commission has been striving to make it a reality. As per the information that I have, because it is not been modernized, the task was so arduous. They use a manual document. Now, they are trying to digitize it. We need to touch the untouchable officials who are still making corruption hidden in the shadows.

Does digitization narrow the activities of corruption or modernize it than ever before?



Digitization assists the anti-corruption movement. The very problem here is implementation. As they are operated by human beings, it may be manipulated. They are very decisive instruments and we need to fully transfer to the digital world. We are late to apply the advanced technologies compared to neighboring countries. Those who lead the struggle against corruption need to have political determination.

Our problem is lack of integrity. We are serving the people in the absence of veracity. Poverty and price hikes are pushing factors for corruptors to manipulate laws, procedures and digitization services. Hence, if we properly utilize them, digital instruments are helpful to stamp out corruption.

Your organization Transparency International Ethiopia has been making consultancy and advocacy works for the past 20 years? How many people utilized the hotline arranged to the public?

In the EPRDF regime, CSOs were not functioning well. Had it been an NGO that facilitated everything to do the jobs, Transparency International Ethiopia could assist the fight against corruption. However, as a CSO, it performed less than the expected as the regulation enacted by the EPRDF had discouraged CSOs. The desire of leaders who come and go in the political ladder

decides not only the fate of the country but also CSOs like ours.

Therefore, the CSO sector was strangled for a long time as they were considered subservient of the interest of foreign powers. So, we were not able to actively engage in the fight against corruption in full capacity. One of the mandates given for Transparency international is doing advocacy work. We are also assisting policy makers so as to formulate policies and implement the existing laws which are decisive for the society. We also provide free legal consultancy service for those who are abused by the legal entities. However, we could not able to provide full legal assistance for those who seek our support.

Indeed, our service makes many people beneficiary. We also mobilized many segment of the society. Awareness raising and ethics building tasks have also been assisting the fight against corruption. Though we have the capacity to do a great deal as per our mandate, we did not act accordingly due to the less political willingness of the government to strengthen institutions. Following the coming to power of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the CSOs regulation has been amended. It has created enabling environment for CSOs.

Thanks for your time.

It is my pleasure.

Diasporas' incalculable role in nation-building

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Ethiopia had gone through various challenges at different times and different situations. It faced severe drought, war, hunger and the like challenges. However, the Ethiopian Diasporas and friends of Ethiopia across the globe in general and Africans in particular have been exerting utmost effort and playing a crucial role in reversing the challenges the country encountered. The active participation of Ethiopians residing at home and abroad helped to ease the challenges and sustain the socio-economic development of the country in the past. Especially, over the past few years, the Diaspora community and friends of Ethiopia have carried out a lot of activities to promote Ethiopia at the global arena and advance its economic growth.

Recently, the Ethiopian Government has recognized various Diasporas organizations that have been actively supporting the government's efforts of building a peaceful and prosperous country. The recognitions were given to some 52 Ethiopian Diaspora organizations drawn from 25 countries and members of the Diaspora who actively participated in support of their country on various occasions.

After recognizing the Diasporas organizations, President Sahle-Work Zewde said that the Diaspora organizations deserve recognition as they have been contributing a lot in the nation's development efforts and in remittances, among others.

According to her, the recognition is for all members of the Diaspora all over the world for doing good job for their country. The Diaspora organizations worldwide have been contributing significantly towards safeguarding the national interest as well as its economic and social development.

The Diaspora organizations also expressed their commitment to working committedly to increase the role of the Diasporas in national development.

Accordingly, the Diasporas organizations were awarded for their extraordinary involvement in various activities, including public diplomacy, image building and resource mobilization, among others. The Diasporas have also exerted noble contributions in fending off the unwarranted pressure of some interest groups and promoting Ethiopia's reality among global actors.

Over the past two years, the participation of the Ethiopian Diasporas on different national issues has been significantly improved and they have played a unique role in making the voice of their home country be heard at the international level. They have also served Ethiopia as a bridge to connect it with the outside world.

Ethiopians in the Diaspora have staged numerous public rallies in major cities across the globe and denounced the undue



Accordingly, the Diasporas organizations were awarded for their extraordinary involvement in various activities, including public diplomacy, image building and resource mobilization, among others

pressure some interest groups exerted in their home country. Accordingly, over 70 public rallies were held in 40 global cities in which hundreds of thousands of Ethiopian Diasporas participated.

Besides, the Diaspora community from all walks of life actively participated in discussions held with political representatives in their respective countries of residence; sent petition letters to concerned bodies and organized and carried out campaigns.

Defend Ethiopia Taskforce and Diaspora Belgium Community Coordinator Ephrem Zewdu told local media that the Ethiopian Diasporas have to play constructive role for the full implementation of the peace deal and continue to mobilize resources to support the government's effort to restore infrastructures in the conflict affected areas.

According to him, the Ethiopian Diaspora community has to continue supporting the full implementation of peace agreement in advocacy, digital diplomacy and in defending anything that comes to sabotage and undermine it. The Diasporas also need to continue their constructive role for the full implementation of the agreement. Mobilizing resources to support those who have been affected by conflict in Afar, Tigray and Amhara states as well as victims of natural disasters in other parts of the country is expected to be the other areas of engagements of the Diaspora community.

Currently, there are many Ethiopians who need emergency humanitarian assistance due to either the conflict or natural disaster. Thus, the Diasporas have to mobilize resources to backing the efforts of the government in delivering humanitarian assistance.

Moreover, the Diaspora has to play a long term role for the development of Ethiopia, which is the most important thing that the government needs to emphasize on. The Diaspora also has to participate

in investment, technology transfer and mobilizing resources, which would be done in the long term; and the most important part that the Diaspora has to play, and the government needs to the Diasporas to continue their participation, he underscored.

The other Diaspora, Emebet Mengistie living in the U.S. told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the Diaspora community has been contributing a lot to the efforts exerted towards safeguarding national security and interest, sovereignty and territorial integrity, particularly over the past four years.

As to her, the Diaspora community has been playing an indispensable role in supporting the country's construction process such as the Abay Dam; restoring conflict affected areas, in peace building, reducing foreign exchange crunch, avoiding the foreign pressures, providing different provisions to people in need of support, canceling the draft laws that were to impose on Ethiopia, collecting petition, and submitting the letter for the right body in a bid to ensure the national interests of the country thereby enforcing the external bodies to rethink their biased approach on Ethiopia.

Diaspora Abinet Alemayehu, resident of Toronto in Canada, said that as the country has been affected highly by the conflict, it deserves mass supports from Diasporas and international communities.

In sum, the Diaspora communities have done a lot and have been supporting Ethiopia through their resources, expertise, time, and energy, among others. The Ethiopian Diaspora Service (EDS) announced recently that among the various significances that the country gained from the Diaspora includes over four billion USD as remittance. Apart from this, the Diaspora community has been playing a crucial role in transferring technology, knowledge, experience, involving in investment, and the likes.

International

Boeing pleads not guilty in fraud case over 737 Max crashes

BY STAFF REPORTER

Boeing pleaded not guilty to deceiving US regulators about changes made to its 737 Max flight control system that led to two horrific crashes, before relatives of some victims made tearful appeals to the judge to hold the aircraft maker accountable.

The arraignment in federal court in Fort Worth, Texas, marks the first time the company has been forced to publicly answer to a criminal charge connected to the disasters in 2018 and 2019. Two years ago, Boeing reached a controversial deferred prosecution agreement with the government that granted the company legal immunity.

Mike Delaney, Boeing's chief safety officer, entered the plea Thursday on behalf of the company, telling US District Judge Reed O'Connor that Boeing stands by its admissions of fault expressed in its agreement with the Justice Department, even while it's contesting the pending felony charge.

The not-guilty plea could put the company at risk of violating the DOJ agreement, which forbade it from denying its role in hiding issues with the 737 Max flight control system from the Federal Aviation



Administration. The system was faulted in the crashes of a Lion Air plane in October 2018 and an Ethiopian Air flight less than five months later.

Paul Cassell, an attorney representing the families challenging the deal, said he planned to file a motion with the judge arguing that Boeing had violated the terms of its agreement.

London: Boeing pleaded not guilty to deceiving US regulators about changes

made to its 737 Max flight control system that led to two horrific crashes, before relatives of some victims made tearful appeals to the judge to hold the aircraft maker accountable.

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Naoise Connolly Ryan, who lost her husband Mick Ryan, is one of the few relatives who have refused any of the \$500 million Boeing was required to set aside as compensation under the DOJ agreement.

Source: Gulfnews

Nigeria: CBN Unveils Nigerian National Card Scheme

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Thursday unveiled and officially launched the country's domestic card scheme.

Speaking at the launch, the CBN governor, Godwin Emefiele, said the event signals another major step in the drive to ensure a thriving and competitive payment landscape in Nigeria.

"I am indeed most gratified that the Nigerian Banking Community has risen up to the challenge of further strengthening the national payments system through the implementation of a Domestic Card Scheme," he said.

"The Cash-less Policy which commenced in 2012, signposts our common drive to strengthen the national payment system and deepen the usage of electronic platforms in Nigeria. In line with the National Payments System Strategy, the CBN has been deliberate in collaborating with relevant stakeholders to enhance the national payments infrastructure through initiatives such as the Bank Verification Number (BVN), Real Time Gross Settlement System (RTGS), Shared Agent Network Facility (SANEF), Regulatory Sandbox, Open banking and the eNaira, the Central Bank of Nigeria's Digital Currency, to mention a few".

The national domestic card is expected to rival Visa and Mastercard, the market's biggest players.

Visa and Mastercard have dominated the card payment market in Nigeria. While they remain convenient, especially for international transactions, domestic cards are expected to better serve the unbanked market and increase competition within the payment landscape.



The cards should also have the capacity to reduce Nigeria's reliance on foreign-owned financial services companies.

The bank, last year, announced it will launch the card scheme this January through the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement Systems (NIBSS) in partnership with the Bankers Committee.

On Thursday, Mr Emefiele said the cash-less policy has created value, engendered competition and attracted investment into the Nigerian banking and payments ecosystem.

"We have witnessed the proliferation of products, channels and participants with significantly increased foreign direct investments into the Nigerian payments space," he noted.

"The CBN has also over time focused attention on robust development of financial service touch points including the ATMs, POS terminals and agent networks. The success of the Shared Agent Network Expansion Facility has led to growth in the

number of agents to about 1.5 million across the Federation with the capacity to accept card payments from Nigerians".

According to him, many Nigerians are still excluded despite the penetration of card payments in Nigeria over the years. The CBN boss stated that the challenges that have limited the inclusion of Nigerians include the high cost of card services as a result of foreign exchange requirements of international card schemes and the failure of existing card products to address local peculiarities of the Nigerian market.

"Given the limited usage of cards by Nigerians and in a bid to deepen penetration, the Bank actively promoted the National domestic card scheme which will be accessible to all Nigerians and also address our local peculiarities.

"This Scheme is therefore an important plug in the gap that has remained with us since the cash-less policy was introduced".

Nigeria, by this initiative, will therefore be joining countries like China, Russia,

Turkey and India which have launched domestic card schemes and harnessed the transformative benefits for their respective payments and financial systems, particularly for the under banked.

Mr Emefiele said the establishment of the card scheme is in line with global trends.

The effort, he said, is not a quest to prevent international service providers from continuing to provide services in Nigeria. Rather, it is aimed at providing more options for domestic consumers whilst also promoting the delivery of services in a more innovative, cost-effective and competitive manner.

"The CBN is committed to a robust, efficient and safe national payments system and welcomes innovation from both domestic firms and foreign investors. The Nigerian market is vast, and the current participants have done so much in the last twelve years to transform the ecosystem. Yet there is much ground to be covered as millions of Nigerians are yet without payment cards to consummate transactions," he noted.

"We can no longer neglect the vast majority of Nigerians whose daily payments need micropayments. We need to capture them in national statistics to further understand their transaction dynamics and properly target interventions in that sector of the economy.

"Indeed, the National Domestic Card Scheme bodes opportunities for our economy to integrate the informal segment of our economy, reduce shadow banking, bring more Nigerians into the formal financial services with attendant diversification of deposit portfolio which will further strengthen the stability of the banking industry.

Source: All African.com

Verbatim and Caption

The role of scholars in nation-state building

This week, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) holds discussion with scholars gathered from all higher education institutions across the country. During the discussion, the scholars and the PM exchanged views on current affairs and ways forward to solve current challenges and on the way of building a peaceful, strong and prosperous nation. The discussion was organized with the theme “the role of scholars in nation-state building” and the view of focuses to foster the role of intellectuals in nation building process.

PM Abiy underlines scholars' substantial role in producing solutions for challenges

Scholars have the intellectual capacity to build a developed and peaceful country. The idea of scholars is vital for state building process. All citizens, including scholars dream to see a developed, peaceful and strong country. Scholars should contribute their maximum capacity to realize the ideal state that they want to see.

Scholars have the capacity and the ability to produce substantial solutions for current problems that Ethiopia is facing and can predict and put possible scenarios for the future. By producing and contributing substantial ideas, scholars can make the nation building process peaceful and smooth.

The role of scholars in cultivating the next generation is critical to the nation. I urge all university scholars in doing their part in this regard. Applying intellectualism to produce substantial solutions to national challenges is expected of our scholars.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said during the discussion with university scholars



Ethiopia needs selfless scholars to solve current challenges- scholars



At this critical time, Ethiopia needs selfless intellectuals. Ethiopian scholars should produce constructive ideas to solve the current challenges that our country is facing. To build strong, peaceful and developed country, it needs scholars' selfless effort and contribution.

I have spent for over 29 years in teaching. I love the discipline and it is all about cultivating generations. It is all about scarifying to cultivate generations, not to fulfill for self needs. In addition to fulfill our responsibility in our respective institutions, scholars have additional responsibilities in contributing constructive ideas for national development and for nation building process.

The challenges and the problems that our country is facing are multifaceted and complex. Our country is facing internal and external challenges. Solving these challenges should become among the priority agendas for Ethiopian scholars. We have to give due focus on producing ideas to solve current challenges of our country.

A scholar from Arba Minch University who attended the scholars' discussion with PM Abiy said



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AHRI-Led health research projects in central, western, northeastern and southwestern Ethiopia

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

The recognition of high-quality operational research (OR) as an integral component of a successful public health program is no longer a foreign concept. Increasingly, Ministry of Health, donors and other stakeholders have placed a high priority on strengthening this once neglected area of work.

The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) — through the United States Agency for International Development (US-AID) supported TREAT TB (Technology, Research, Education and Technical Assistance for Tuberculosis) Initiative — developed a guide for programmatic OR support in 2012. A central theme of this guidance was a framework that viewed OR support as a cyclical activity of which OR training of health workers was only one component of a much bigger effort, including leadership within the program, regular OR priority setting exercises and program evaluation.

In Ethiopia, this vision of a multi-faceted approach to strengthening OR in the country was accepted long before OR climbed onto the global TB agenda. The establishment of the TB Research Advisory Committee (TRAC) in 2001 followed a TB control program assessment that identified



implementation gaps where evidence was unavailable to guide action.

As a result, TRAC members (research institutes and universities) committed to strengthening OR to advance TB control efforts. Included in these efforts was a joint annual TB conference with the Ministry of Health (MoH), where research findings were presented and discussed and research priorities regularly updated. For their part, the MoH pledged to translate relevant validated findings into practice. TRAC was eventually integrated into the National Stop TB Partnership as a formal structure within the Ministry.

A major challenge in this effort was the limited capacity of TB control program staff to conduct OR efforts independently. With the support of the US-AID-funded TB CARE Initiative, practical team-based training was developed to strengthen this capacity. TRAC also organized new consultations on research

priorities, which culminated in a National TB OR Roadmap issued by the MoH in 2013.

Importantly, these renewed priorities served as the basis for the research topics selected in subsequent OR training. The research topics presented in this supplement, such as assessing impact of ambulatory care for multidrug-resistant TB in Addis Ababa and evaluating community-based treatment in Oromia, stem from this priority-setting exercise, and as a result are more relevant to current programmatic issues.

The subsequent step of assessing the impact of OR on public health programs and policy change is a challenging but vital task that has more recently been undertaken by others working in the field. This important component must also be addressed in the Ethiopian context. It, too, will require ongoing leadership and support that has been instrumental in the country to date.

As part of the series of consultative engagements that AHRI has been conducting; The Institute, at the end of December 2022 held a forum in Adama with diverse leaders and experts from Addis Ababa CAHB, Oromia, Amhara, Gambella, Benshangul Gumuz, and Southwest Ethiopia Regional Health Bureaus as well as University Vice Presidents of Research and Community Service, Health Science College Deans and health research experts across 23 universities.

During the meeting, various AHRI researchers acquainted the distinguished attendees on core AHRI health researchers conducted across the regions in pertinent researches of; Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases, Bacterial and Viral diseases, Mycobacterial diseases, Non Communicable Diseases, Clinical trials and Research Training.

Moreover, engaging poster sessions were had, showcasing evidence to policy generated briefs and research projects across the various regions.

Interactive discussions, reflections and side meetings have also been conducted to spearhead inter-regional cooperation for seamless health research undertakings; in addition to in-depth discussions on areas of collaboration.