



# The Ethiopian Herald

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## Over 1 million visitors mark Ethiopian Christmas in Lalibella

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

**ADDIS ABABA** - Over 1 million local and international visitors marked the Ethiopian Christmas at the World Heritage site Lalibella while the celebration was concluded peacefully, Lalibella Town Administration Culture and Tourism Bureau said.

The Bureau's Heritage Protection and Tourism Development Department Coordinator Mandefro Tadesse told *The Ethiopian Herald* that, over 1 Ethiopian and foreign visitors attended the festivity thereby enabling the bureau to fully achieve its target.

The festival is unique because of the number of domestic tourists who have greatly participated at the world heritage site of Lalibella, where it was not held for the last two years, due to the conflict.



The coordinator pointed out that tourists including Ethiopians in the Diaspora and ambassadors and representatives of different countries based in Addis Ababa among others attended the grand event. Others arrived on foot from surrounding villages, by car, or by plane from the capital Addis Ababa.

See Over 1 million ... page 3



Yared Zema



Muuze Abrha

### Axum hotel owners pin hope on tourism revival

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA**- Some hotel owners in the historic town of Axum said that they are eager to welcome tourists back as the Cessation of Hostility Agreement (CoHA) between the federal government and the TPLF is instrumental in increasing the flow of tourists and reviving the hospitality business.

See Axum hotel ... page 3

### New Chinese foreign minister to arrive in Addis today

• To attend ribbon cutting at Africa CDC HQ here

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA** -The newly appointed Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang will arrive here today for a two- day official visit to Ethiopia .

The foreign minister headed to Ethiopia as a part of his first leg visit to Africa, the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) reported. The minister would also pay visits to Gabon, Angola, Benin and Egypt for consecutive eight days.

Qin Gang is also expected to attend a ribbon cutting ceremony of



See New Chinese... page 3

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## EEU set to fully re-electrify war-affected towns in 2 weeks

# News

## Demystifying Abbay Dam, Diaspora participation tools to thwart pressure

BY HAILE DEMEKE

**ADDIS ABABA** - The sustained participation of the Diaspora community coupled with meticulous research is crucial in clarifying and succeeding in the construction of the Abbay Dam, which is a national symbol, according to an expert in the area.

Vice President and Academic Research at Florida University and Research Fellow at the Nile House Dereje Befekadu (PhD) launched a book titled “Demystifying the Nile, History and Events Leading to the Realization of the GERD.” The book consists of a six-part summary of the events that started thousands of years ago culminating in the construction of the grand dam.

The book has also covered the researcher's trip from the two sources of the Nile River such as the Gish Abay of Ethiopia and Jinja Uganda to the mouth of the Mediterranean Sea.

The academician said in his book that, Ethiopians waited for thousands of



Photo: Eyob Teferi

Dereje Befekadu (PhD)

years to use their resources in the Nile River. “The seeds know how to wait and most seeds wait for several years before starting to grow. There are mounting pressures being exerted on the country to thwart the construction of the project.”

Ethiopians had to wait over a thousand years to be able to use their water for development. Ethiopian leaders have tried their best to build a dam on the Nile

River as part of their development effort. Unfortunately due to varying reasons and circumstances including external pressure, geo and hydro-political balance shifts and others they were not successful.

Following the decade-long negotiation and agreement on the equitable use of the Nile waters by most riparian countries and the subsequent Cooperative Framework Agreement, the Ethiopian government started the construction of the Abay Dam in 2011.

“The waiting had finally ended and it was time for the seed to grow. Unfortunately, external pressure persisted blocking all access to international funding causing the country to proceed using its means.”

“Almost 12 years later, the construction program is almost done. The reservoir already has billions of cubic meters of water. The seed has sprouted, and the tree is on track to be the tallest in Africa. At the same time, the international pressure on Ethiopia has intensified.”

History is repeating itself what had happened to Egypt in the 1950s is

now happening to Ethiopia. The same countries that are now threatening Ethiopia with sanctions had at that time denied President Nasser international loans for his quest to build the Aswan High Dam, forcing him to take drastic measures including nationalizing the Suez Canal to pay for the construction.

On the other hand, the participation of the Diaspora community is said to be crucial to accomplish the national project and it needs strong connection between the concerned stakeholders.

Foreign Affairs State Minister Tesfaye Yilma (Ambassador) said that, the book is vital in the recognition of the international community by the Ethiopian researcher and it is rich in the facts of the river.

For his part, Ethiopian Ambassador to the U.S. Seleshi Bekele (Eng. PhD) said Egypt has been using coercive ways to use the resources alone in which Ethiopia contributes the lion's share. On the other hand, Ethiopia is fully adhered to the international rule of equitable and reasonable utilization of trans-boundary water.



## Gondar gets ready to welcome visitors for Epiphany (*Timket*) Festival

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA**- Gondar Town Culture and Tourism Bureau announced that it has finalized preparations to host one million visitors including tourists during the upcoming Epiphany (*Timket*) celebration.

According to local media report, Gondar Town Culture and Tourism Bureau Head Chalachew Dagnew said that the number of visitors is expected to hit 750,000 to one million, and about 400 Hotels and more temporary tourist camps will be open to serve tourists and holidaymakers.

As to him, as the bureau is expected to secure about two billion Birr from the celebration. Hotels, guest houses, pensions, food stores and temporary tourist camps have been readied to serve guests from all corners of the county and the World as well. Besides, directives to regulate the price of food and services have been introduced to hospitality service providers.

Amhara State Tourism and Culture Bureau also

announced that, several tourism events will be organized in and out of Gondar city.

Briefing local media, Bureau Head, Tahir Muhammad said that further enticing festivities like *Azmari* festival [traditional singers' Festival] will be held.

The bureau has reached agreement with traditional singers (from several areas of the region) to host hot *Azmari* festival event, and more attractive concerts and cultural events will be held, he noted.

The bureau has also announced that, a series of hot religious and traditional festivals will be celebrated in the state this month.

The history of *Timket* Festival, in Gondar Town dates back to 400 years. *Timket* Festival is an Ethiopia religious and traditional festival which commemorates the baptism of Jesus Christ in Jordan River.

UNESCO has also inscribed the festival as Representative List of Humanity in December 2019, *The Ethiopian Herald* learnt.

## Ethio-Djibouti Railway generates 2.5 bln Birr revenue

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

**ADDIS ABABA**- Ethio-Djibouti Standard Gauge Railway S.C disclosed that, it has collected 2.5 billion Birr revenue over the last five months of this Ethiopian fiscal year.

The Ethio-Djibouti Standard Gauge Railway S.C CEO Abdi Zenebe told the local media that, the company's service delivery has been expanding from time to time. As a result, over the last five months of Ethiopian fiscal year, it collected 2.5 billion Birr revenue transporting over 500,000 tons of cargo.

He said that, company transported a total of 500,000 tons of cargo of fertilizer, oil, wheat, vehicles and others, and the revenue shows 600 million Birr an increment compared with the last year same period.

Its contribution to overall import and export trade of the country via cargo transportation reached 15 percent of total share in this fiscal year (five months of 2015 E.C). Besides, its service delivery exceeded 11.2 percent compared to the same period of last year, he added.

Company's services expansion in terms of volume and kind contributed much to the registered achievement, and it has been playing a great role in facilitating the Free Trade Zone which was launched in Dire Dawa. The Zone has a capacity to mobilize



Abdi Zenebe

212 containers at a time to the dry port. It also aimed at supporting efficient service delivery in the sector, he stated.

Abdi further stated that, preparations have been finalized to provide investors who are engaging in various sectors with prompt service so as to timely deliver export products at a fair price, too. Furthermore, efforts are exerted to bring agricultural products to the market in the areas through which the train passes.

He pointed out that, it has also finalized preparations to begin cement, sugar and gas transportation at a larger scale.

# News



## EEU set to fully re-electrify war-affected towns in 2 weeks

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** – 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 within two weeks.

EEU's North District CEO Bizuwork Demesie told The Ethiopian Herald that, consolidated activities have been carried out to fully reconnect the remaining towns in the Amhara, Afar, and Tigray states within two weeks.

Following 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, Bizuwork stated, adding that due to the severity of the damage and other factors, the restoration activities have not yet covered the whole target. For example, due to the severity of the damage, the restoration of electrical infrastructure in Sheraro town of the Tigray State will take two weeks. Besides, owing to their distance from the main cities, Satellite Towns in Amhara towns will regain electricity in the same period.

Similarly, the utility will restore the electricity service in some towns in Afar State including Kunema within three to four days.

“Due to the looting of the Woldia substation, some towns in Afar namely Chifera, Senane, and Awura still do not have access to electricity. However, the Utility has been carrying out various activities to restore the service within a week in this area.”

By the same token, Abala town of the Afar State and its surrounding, which had been cut off for more than two years due to the conflict, have regained electricity.

The EEU has been working closely with all relevant partners and mobilizing the public to discharge its aim of restoring electricity in the war-affected areas within 14 days, the district CEO remarked.

## Conflict-affected areas' infrastructure rebuilding pace encouraging: Ministry

**ADDIS ABABA**- Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure disclosed that encouraging activities have been carried out to rebuild and restore infrastructures destroyed by the war in the northern part of Ethiopia.

The bridges that were destroyed due to the war in the north have now been repaired and become fully operational, it was indicated.

Recall that, a delegation led by Speaker of the House of People's Representatives Tagesse Chafo, comprising of ministers, heads of service providing institutions and National Dialogue Commissioners visited Mekelle to discuss the issue of restoring basic services among other issues.

Following this, electricity, telecom, banking and other services were able to resume services within a short period of time.

Minister of Urban and Infrastructure, Chaltu Sani told ENA the war erupted in the northern part of the country caused damages on various infrastructures.



Following the peace agreement, the government has been intensifying efforts to put infrastructures into operation citing the restoration of all bridges, she stated.

“In the northern part of our country, the infrastructure networks that were destroyed due to the war are huge. So the government has been taking different measures. Many works are being done by the ministry in collaboration with infrastructure provider institutions. For instance all the bridges that were damaged due to the war have now become fully operational,” she stated.

The minister further noted that, encouraging results have been registered in rebuilding the infrastructure development institutions that were destroyed in the war.

“The way in which the entire infrastructure sector is being managed is very encouraging and gives hope to our people. The main reason we are doing this is by increasing the economy at a high level and thus making Ethiopia and our cities the center of prosperity,” Chaltu stressed.

The government of Ethiopia has also been carrying out the maintenance of other infrastructures as per its promises, the minister pointed out.

According to the minister, encouraging achievements have been registered in the efforts being carried out to rehabilitate and restore infrastructures ravaged due to the conflict.

She also mentioned that, the ongoing rebuilding activities will further be intensified.

## New Chinese foreign...

the Africa CDC Headquarters project site in the African Village, Addis Ababa.

Moreover, he will also discuss with African Union Commission Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister, Demeke Mekonnen where the two leaders are expected to hold in the two countries bilateral relations such as economic, political and social arenas and areas of cooperation, it was learnt.

The visit is aimed to deepen the China-Africa comprehensive strategic and cooperative partnership and boost friendly cooperation between China and Africa.

It is to be recalled that the 2018 Beijing Summit and the 7th Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China – Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) held in Beijing, the government of China further expressed its commitment to support the building of the Africa CDC HQ, and the African leaders welcomed with appreciation and committed to support

for its realization. Thus, the Chinese foreign minister will pay visit to the newly-built Africa CDC HQ in Addis Ababa. The Africa CDC headquarters building is expected to become one of the best-equipped centers for disease control in Africa, allowing Africa CDC to play its role as the technical institution coordinating disease prevention, surveillance and control in the continent in partnership with the national public health institutes and ministries of health of member states.

It is to be recalled that, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Ethiopia Demeke Mekonnen congratulated Qin Gang on his appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China a week ago. In his congratulatory message, Demeke reaffirmed Ethiopia's firm commitment to deepening the bilateral relationship between the two countries, expressing his hope that the Comprehensive, Strategic, and Cooperative Partnership between Ethiopia and China will be enriched during Qin Gang's time in office.

## Over 1 ...

One of the attendants of the festivity and Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia Zhao Zhiyuan tweeted the following “I visited the UNESCO World Heritage site Lalibella from January 5 to 6 and was impressed by the enthusiasm and hospitality of friendly Ethiopian people.”

Chargé d'affaires, Fiona Evans of the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa, visited Lalibella at the invitation of the Ethiopian Government to learn about the important cultural site in the country. The U.S. Embassy on its social media explained that it was proud of the Ambassador's fund for cultural preservation and conservation projects at two churches in Lalibella.

Regarding security, it was pleasant and all participants of the festivity returned to their homes peacefully. The hotel's service was seamless and the guests said they were treated well; the communities' generosity to the guests is also admirable, Mandefero noted.

It was learned that previously, the maximum number of tourists attending Ethiopian Christmas in Lalibella was 1.2 million.

## Axum hotel owners...

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), the owner of Yared Zema International Hotel Abay Kinef stated that the truce is of great significance to restore the huge tourist inflow to the town blessed with world-famous attraction sites.

Many foreign tourists used to visit Aksum, particularly during Ethiopia's New Year (September) to the end of February. However, the tourist inflow was interrupted in the past two years due to conflict in the area. Having restored peace

and stability, the accord has played a vital role in stimulating the tourism sector and encouraging more visitors to come here.

As to him, among other benefits, the CoHA will have the significance to attract a sizable number of tourists and create more jobs in the hospitality sector. “Currently, we have made the necessary preparation to resume our service and I believe the peace accord has paramount importance to hotels in Aksum to be reopened.”

Cognizant of Aksum's immense tourism potential, the government is expected to set a conducive environment and help the hotel owners to overcome the pressing challenges they have encountered due to the conflict, Abay appealed.

Sharing the above, the owner of Romadi Hotel at Axum and Mekelle towns, Muuze Abrha stated that the conflict left many hotel professionals out of jobs over two years. The bank loan that was accumulated in that period also created a huge challenge for the hotel's operation.

# Opinion

## Africa welcomes Chinese new FM, new fashioned relations

BY EWNETU YINEGER

According to official Chinese sources, the newly appointed Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang will arrive in Ethiopia and start his first visit of 2023 to Africa in January 10. Tradition conserved for over 30 years has it that the itineraries of Chinese foreign ministers first overseas visits attaches priority to African countries since 1991. It is Qin's first foreign tour as the Chinese Foreign Minister, and the remarkable thing is, Ethiopia is the first leg of his visit.

Ethiopia and China have forged a strong and close relationship over the past 50 years, and bilateral relations hold a special status in China-Africa relationship. Qin's visit will be surely warm welcomed by the Ethiopian government and people. This also demonstrates that China attaches great importance to China-Ethiopia relations and China-Africa relations. As Qin received an interview recently, he emphasized that "Africa is a young, promising land. China-Africa friendship is deep-seated and has a long history. It's very popular in China. If you ask a foreign minister of China, whoever he is or she is, he or she must tell you that Africa is important. China-Africa relations are the bedrock of China's foreign policy".

African countries, indeed, need partners that capitalize on mutual interdependence more than those that focus on zooming in on a mere geo-political interest, if not exploitative ones.

In his message, Qin had this to say. "We will maintain the diplomatic principles of defending global peace and promoting common development and will work to build a community for a shared future for mankind and new international relations based on mutual respect, justice and win-win cooperation."

Over the past three years, Ethiopia, along with partners like China, has been voicing its concerns that the inalienable duo, peace and development, are hard to come by unless the old-fashioned relations some quarters are advancing is replaced with a newly fashioned one. As Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed emphasized, China is a dependable strategic partner for Ethiopia, "We have been truly cooperating and effectively working together on a number of issues for the benefit of our people".

African countries in particular are still languishing in poverty despite the



imperialistic approach of development that transcended from a certain Cs to a new day Ds—more clearly, Christianizing, Civilizing and Commerce to Development and Democracy in that order. The former reminds us of an 1899 poem, 'the Whiteman's burden' and the latter, may be as they said it, "rules-based international order". The fact is the latter is an order that the global north devised to patronize the global south in politics, economy, culture and what have you.

Now it is high time to reverse the exploitative relations between the so-called advanced countries and emerging economies in the new era of cooperation as Qin clearly epitomized it.

### Principled position

Ethiopia's fight, though given a humanitarian fig-leaf from the collective west, has been to do away with the exploitative relations that have reigned for quite so long. Western countries criticism went viral on social media to put unwarranted pressure on Ethiopia. So-called rights based organizations spitted venomous statements in support of the campaign to discredit Ethiopia. Some quarters went as far as trying to weaponize the UN system hopping to trigger R2P and topple the government by whatsoever means. West's traditional meddling and interference in Africa internal affairs went rampant.

The era of cooperation is, however, counterweighting the exploitative relations. Among many other factors, one can say that it is due to some countries that pursue principled positions which included China, Russia and India as well many others that the ancient

state, Ethiopia, overcome the unwarranted pressure exerted against it.

Chinese Qin's statement speaks volume in this regard. He said that there is a need for building international relations based on mutual respect, justice and win-win cooperation.

Suffice it to say his promise that he and his government work for the betterment of humanity a noble vision. The former career diplomat who also served as Minister, Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland between the years of 2010 and 2011 as well as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the United States of America from 2021 to 2022, does not only pledge to work for his country. It is great that he also succinctly stated to work for global peace and humanity.

Ethiopia and China's comprehensive strategic relations truly showcased that the vision is being materialized. At times when the successor of the infamous League of Nations was coerced into passing unjust statements against Ethiopia, rational countries including China had been on the right position to make sure that principles were not violated. Doing so has double-aged purposes. For one thing, injustice shall not reign over justice. Principles that govern the UN and the covenant of non-interference on domestic affairs enshrined in the global body's charter will be maintained, for the other. That is what exactly means working for humanity.

It could be a great mistake to consider that those that advance principled positions proves genuine friendship only with Ethiopia. The integrity of our only multilateral body, the UN, has also been defended. Some irresponsible entities want to use the global body as an instrument to achieve narrow-interests. But tribute to countries that promote genuine positions, such individuals are checked a number of times.

### Development without pretext

In his remarks former State Councilor Wang Yi at a Coordinators' Meeting on the Implementation of the Follow-up Actions of The Eighth Ministerial Conference of The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) on August 18, 2022 epitomized it that the traditional friendship is being cemented with solidarity and cooperation, and building a China-Africa community with a shared future in the new era. He mentioned

how African countries and China stand strong in safeguarding international fairness and justice. "In the face of the various forms of hegemonic and bullying practices, China and Africa have stood with each other shoulder to shoulder."

Africa-China cooperation is visible in the form of cross-country railway, express-road, state-of-the-art high-rise building, ports, tourist-destinations, science museums and the like, not to mention the FDI flowing into Africa. Continent wise, China's import of African goods within seven months reached 70.6 billion US dollars. Chinese companies have invested 2.17 billion US dollars in Africa, as the former state councilor said. The high quality-belt and road cooperation is also a great chapter to foster mobility in Africa and spur growth. A large number of railway, highway, airport, port and other infrastructure projects as well as a number of economic and trade cooperation zones have taken shape or are taking shape, the Economic and trade zones are no less important.

The Foreign Minister's 33rd round visit, a tradition maintained, cements the new era relations of Africa and China or China and Ethiopia, if you like. What the billions of people of the two continents need is peace and development. Both sides' eyes on the betterment of their peoples' lives. China is offering and could offer skills, knowledge and technology to Africa. In return Africa could serve as an FDI destination to China. Africa's trainable labor, industrial inputs' abundance and market create and could create great opportunity to China. Over and beyond, both sides cooperate to maintain global peace.

Africans, without a shred of doubt, would like to cooperate with all partners. But pretexts and coercion in the name of democracy and development are unwelcomed in the continent. Development and Democracy themselves are not things to be imposed. Each and every country in Africa has its own priorities, culture, and other mode of living. That is why the "Ds" themselves should be contextualized. The kind of Ds any country exercises should not necessarily serve the interest of African countries. There must be Diversity (an important D) in the way the "Ds" should be exercised in every country, may be with some commonalities as a global community of course. The Chinese development aids and FDI are in this regard a most welcome one. There are no strings attached to them. Other partners should follow suit.

## Promotion of Public Private...

These benefits may include, but are not limited to, the following: innovations in design or service delivery approach; reduction in project delays and cost overruns; implementation of a life-cycle approach to infrastructure service costing; improved quality or efficiency; Knowledge transfer to the local private sector; and, increased asset utilization.

The Government is committed to meeting

the infrastructure and public service development needs of the country, and in doing so, to utilize approaches to infrastructure delivery that best leverage available resources, including private investment. The choice of delivery approach must therefore center on how to best meet development needs given existing constraints and will necessarily involve the consideration of many factors.

Although the PPP strategy was well prepared and organized, lack of implementation capacity, lack of peace and prevalence of insecurity in various parts of the country have inhibited the smooth development of these projects over time.

Encouraging local private investors in the development of agriculture-based projects like the Lemat Project and other

exported-related agricultural investments would certainly ease the efforts of the government from engaging in conducting projects that could be handled in PPP or strictly reserved for foreign and local private investors.

**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

### Time to win-win cooperation

The astounding achievement of silencing the guns that Ethiopia achieved deterring a threat of being dismantled that had been compounded by well-organized undue pressures of certain quarters has to do with its unwavering commitment to fully resort to peace.

This East African ancient state is making the unthinkable possible and the presumed unattainable one into a practical action—and continue to be a strategic partner to its friends both in the region and outside. “Peace” has been the first and foremost choice of Ethiopia.

Effectively managing and systematically withstanding the wearisome impositions thrown to it, Ethiopia has now been trekking on the right track to make a difference in all aspects. True, it is appealingly willing to work with every nation of the world so long as they are ready to enjoy running mutual respect and understanding depending on a win-win strategy.

No matter how geographically distant and what system of government they are exercising, Ethiopia is quite ready and capable of practicing bilateral and/or multilateral relations with countries of the west or east so long as the latter are prepared to grow together, work collaboratively regarding economic integration, fighting terrorism, bolstering investment and beefing up education and so on

Taking Ethiopia’s amicable gesture and wide open diplomatic passage right now, numerous countries of the world are recurrently portraying keen interest to have Ethiopia as an a reliable ally.

Addis these days is welcoming high-level delegations of countries that opt for boosting their strategic partnerships. Indeed, the friendship Ethiopia established half-a-century ago and even beyond

are paying off immensely in various respects—be it at bilateral or multilateral levels. As Ethiopia has set the wheels of peace, reconstruction and restoration as well as sustainable development in motion, the good gestures of its all-weather friends is most welcome.

The interest of these countries in Ethiopia is a clear manifestation of Ethiopia’s commitment towards taking its diplomatic ties to even a higher level.

The fast-paced development and an excelled resolve to detach from extreme poverty should get supports. Ethiopia needs to cooperate with partners to scale up better results that similar countries have already secured. Ethiopia’s partners have a lot to offer in this regard.

Ethiopia’s focuses on irrigable cereal productions that include wheat and rice in its fertile lowlands and elsewhere in the country have already born fruits. The country in short period achieved in meeting local demands in wheat production for instance and is set to export to its neighbors and even beyond. The multi-sectoral development drive also needs finance, expertise and products need market.

Cognizant of the fact that mutual interdependence is of significantly useful in bringing about real changes, Ethiopia’s basic policy aims at working toward closer relations and better understanding with all world nations.

The reform undertaking in the sphere of diplomacy is yet another showcase to the country’s determination to further its all-round ties with partners of all sorts. Our time is a time of equality, win-win cooperation and mutual respect. In this fashion, cooperation between and among countries help to improve the way we live.

## Opinion

### Promotion of Public Private Partnership, a viable strategy for Ethiopia’s development

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

The private sector in Ethiopia has been neglected during the Derg era which claimed to follow the socialist-oriented path. Restrictions on capital investments and the negative attitude of the command economic system on FDI have dwarfed the nascent private sector which started to develop during the imperial era, particularly through investments in agriculture and the consumer industries that flourished in the country during those days.

Public-private partnerships involve collaboration between a government agency and private-sector companies that can be used to finance, build and operate projects, such as public transportation networks, parks and convention centers. Financing a project through a public-private partnership can allow a project to be completed sooner or make it a possibility in the first place.

Public-private partnerships allow large-scale government projects, such as roads, bridges, or hospitals, to be completed with private funding. In addition, such investments will help to ensure quality outputs in the sector that is responsible for producing machinery and major infrastructure facilities.

While allowing the private sector to involve in the telecom sector has just started over the previous year, allowing foreign banks in the local financial sector is yet to be accomplished.

These partnerships work well when private-sector technology and innovation combine

with public-sector incentives to complete work on time and within budget.

For instance, the involvement of the private sector in the manufacturing of electric cars and heavy-duty trucks is a promising trend as it not only enhances the participation of the private sector in the Ethiopian economy but is also important for the transfer of technology to ensure sustained growth and development in the manufacturing sector. However, it is important to also consider the risk factors of private enterprises.

Ethiopia has enacted a new Proclamation No. 1076/2018 facilitating Public-Private Partnership (PPP), recognizing that the private sector is essential to support the country’s economic growth and improve the quality of public services, particularly in infrastructure, education, foreign direct investment and other joint ventures involving the private sector and the public.

A PPP Board was also formed to grant approvals at key milestones in the project development process, especially, since it has the responsibility of approval of PPP pipeline projects, approving a PPP project to tender and award. The Board consists of the Ministry of Finance (that chairs the Board), the National Bank of Ethiopia, the Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Electricity, the Minister of Transport, Public Enterprises Holding and Administration Agency, the National Planning Commission, Ministry of Peace and two members from institutions representing the private sector.

Within the Ministry of Finance Public-Private Partnership Directorate General (PPP DG) is also established and acts as Secretariat to the Board. The directorate general endeavors to meet the growing demand of the public for service delivery and infrastructure. Moreover, it promotes PPP conceptualizing, identifying and categorizing projects, making recommendations, establishing policy and guidelines, coordinating activities and ensuring compliance. These are core powers in the Proclamation, depending on the level of delegation to it agreed upon by the Board. The Board as well approves appropriate structures and feasibility studies, set minimum standards and requires a value for money to be demonstrated.

There are three main departments which are organized in the General Directorate. These are PPP Project Development and Monitoring Directorate, PPP framework Management and Contract support Directorate and Capacity Building, Knowledge Management, and Communication Directorate.

The major objectives of the PPP have been supported by Ethiopia’s Ten-Year Development Plan (2021-2030) and the Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda (2019-2021), which both aim to increasingly liberalize the economy while addressing structural bottlenecks inhibiting private sector activity.

The strategy of PPP benefits the partners to share experiences in development endeavors, sharing expertise for cooperation, resource sharing and conducting joint research. The

program would help the Government of Ethiopia to get the benefits of a shared budget and reduced expenses as well as obtain high-quality project performance and collaboration.

PPP provides relevant and quality education by linking all levels of education to be productive and adding value and creating assets that are of national significance. Well-educated and problem-solving citizens could be produced through PPP.

The Ethiopian government has identified key areas of PPP cooperation which among other things included scaling solar projects, hydropower plants, expressway projects, wind power, affordable housing projects and petroleum storage depots.

The objectives for the use of PPPs according to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation are to support the implementation of individual projects two-fold: To increase the financial resources available for the development and delivery of infrastructure services in Ethiopia through leveraging private sector investment and management; and, to capture the benefits of private sector involvement in infrastructure development through the alignment of public and private sector incentives and the use of appropriate risk transfer, where such benefits exist.

See Promotion of public ... page 4

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

# Business & Economy



Some of the combine harvesters which were funded by German KfW Development Bank and purchased by DBE

## DBE effort in boosting lease finance product to benefit customers to improve quality of productivity, mechanization

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Lease financing is a contractual agreement between the asset owner and the user of the asset in which the owner allows the other party the right to use the asset in exchange for a periodic payment. The lessor is the owner of the asset, the lessee is the user of the asset under the agreement, and the rent paid is known as lease rental.

Yinager Dessie (PhD), Governor of the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) once said that “We believe this venture has huge potential to boost the economy while providing significant financial gains for the country.”

According to documents, lack of access to capital and credit is one of the biggest barriers facing small and medium enterprises (SMEs), microbusinesses, and new ventures in developing nations even though they are crucial to economic growth and job creation. The paucity of funding required to increase productivity typically undermines such a substantial role.

The government of Ethiopia passed the country's first leasing law in 1998 in response to the need of hastening the growth and development of SMEs by allowing access to financing and providing operational machinery and equipment to businesses. Five capital goods finance companies (CGFCs) were granted licenses by the National Bank of Ethiopia in the early months of 2014. With the further entrance of the first foreign-owned leasing company and the revitalization of an already existing leasing service, lease financing seems to be slowly progressing amidst inter and intra-institutional challenges.

In Ethiopia, despite the enormous importance of the SME sector to the national economy with regards to job creation and the alleviation of abject poverty, many of the SMEs are unable to realize their full potential due to the

existence of different factors that inhibit their growth and performance. One of the leading factors contributing to the unimpressive growth and performance of the enterprises is limited access to finance. In a similar way, comparing small and large firms the World Bank finds that small firms face more challenges in obtaining formal financing than large firms; they are much more likely to be rejected for loans, and are less likely to have external financing. In this paper, we analyze the assessment on lease financing of SMEs particularly in development bank of Ethiopia and recommend ways of addressing the lease financing.

Main functions of Development banks include: It is a specialized financial institution; it provides medium- and long-term finance to business units; unlike commercial banks, it does not accept deposits from the public; it is not just a term-lending institution. It is a multi-purpose financial institution; it is essentially a development-oriented bank. Its primary object is to promote economic development by promoting investment and entrepreneurial activity in a developing economy. It encourages new and small entrepreneurs and seeks balanced regional growth; it provides financial assistance not only to the private sector but also to the public sector undertakings; it aims at promoting the saving and investment habit in the community; It does not compete with the normal channels of finance, i.e., finance already made available by the banks and other conventional financial institutions. Its major role is of a gap-filler, i. e., to fill up the deficiencies of the existing financial facilities. Its motive is to serve public interest rather than to make profits. It works in the general interest of the nation.

In our today's edition, we will try to share with you the effort made by Ethiopian Development Bank (DBE) on lease financing in a bid to increase productivity through mechanization.

According to local media, German KfW Development Bank-funded and Development Bank of Ethiopia (DBE) -purchased 9 combine harvesters were delivered recently to lease finance customers with the view to enhancing agriculture mechanization.

During this 5th round delivery of the combine harvesters, DBE President Yohannes Ayalew said that the German government through KfW Development Bank has allocated 30 million euros to finance the purchase of agricultural mechanization machineries such as tractors and combine harvesters.

In the 5 rounds, the banks have delivered 41 combine harvesters, 9 tractors, and 39 implements — 89 machineries in total, to agricultural mechanization leases around Addis Ababa, Hawassa, Bure, Shahemene, Adama, Assela, Halaba, Goba and Batu, the president disclosed.

“I would also like to inform you that 61 tractors, 35 combine harvesters and 17 implements are in procurement process,” he added.

According to him, DBE, which has been promoting agricultural mechanization, will further strengthen its commitment and make a difference in transforming the agricultural sector.

Out of the more than 33,000 small and medium enterprises that received training since 2021, 530 have applied for agricultural lease machineries estimated to cost 82.2 million euro, it was learned.

KfW Development Bank Director, Diana Hedrich said on her part that KfW is working in close cooperation with the Development Bank of Ethiopia (DBE). The mandate of KfW Development Bank is to finance investments such as infrastructure and equipment as well as policy financing.

“We have been active in Ethiopia for more than 50 years and currently we finance

projects in a total amount of 750 million euro,” she said.

“Our sectors of engagement are technical and vocational education training, private sector and financial development, rural development and agriculture, good governance, displacement and migration,” Hedrich elaborated.

KfW is supporting the Ethiopian government's initiative to enhance agricultural mechanization and modernize agricultural practice in the country.

The Agricultural Mechanization Leasing Project has been funded by Germany's Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development through KfW and executed by the Development Bank of Ethiopia in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture to accelerate agricultural mechanization and realize the potential of the agriculture sector.

DBE which was established in 1909 is a specialized state owned development financial institution; it is supervised by the Public Financial Enterprises Agency.

DBE is one of the state-owned financial institutions engaged in providing short-, medium- and long-term credits over the last hundred years. The Bank has been playing central role in promoting the overall economic development of the country.

DBE is the only bank in Ethiopia in its kind, nature, and objective endowed; so, it is different from other commercial banks. Development Bank of Ethiopia is a specialized financial institution established to finance and provide close technical support to viable projects in line with government priority areas by mobilizing funds from domestic and foreign sources while ensuring its sustainability. In addition to project financing DBE has given great task in financing the Small and Medium Enterprises through Lease Financing program to enable them to acquire capital goods and machines.

# In the Sphere of Diplomacy

## Why we need a structured parliamentary diplomacy for Africa

BY JOEL OKWEMBA

Foreign Policy is Public Policy. Foreign policy has hitherto been a prerogative of the Executive arm of government despite the globalized nature and complex interactions in the 21st century that demand creative solutions in maintaining peace and stability.

The Executive through Parliamentary bodies and committees allows the policies to be scrutinized in an effort to create harmony within government agencies. Constitutions in democratic states now demand that the State cannot engage in Wars without the approval of Parliamentary bodies. This remains the foremost engagement on International Relations for most parliaments to date.

However, opportunities are abounding when it comes to: how Parliaments interact with Foreign Policy questions; how Parliaments engage with the State on these questions; how to create form and structure on Parliamentary Diplomacy; and in the development of academic and theoretical literature on the Parliamentary Diplomacy theory in Africa.

Parliamentary Diplomacy also referred to as Parlomacy creates opportunities that are alternatives and complimentary to traditional diplomatic approaches that rely on the Westphalian State-Centric Model. In a world where sophisticated technology has determined the nature of interactions amongst peoples, the diplomatic options should consequently evolve to meet this level for globalization.

### Reflections on the Evolution of Parliamentary Diplomacy

Ancient history dating back to the Roman Empire, depicts an instance of parliamentary diplomacy, where the Roman Senate – though on behalf of the Roman Generals sued for peace and sanctioned war with Philip V of Macedon after the failure of the Treaty of Phoenicia (205 BC).

However, the recollection of Parliament as formed today traces to The Magna Carta, signed on the 12th June 1215 (AD) by King John “Lackland” of England and a coalition of rebel barons written by the Archbishop of Canterbury Stephen Langton.

The barons displeased with the rule of the King, demanded accountability, freedom and rights that cut across political, economic, social and cultural spheres of existence. Even though the process of acceptance by the King was not immediate, the barons’ efforts would show that the population had been enlightened

and willing to demand and defend human dignity by peaceful means. Among the 63 rules agreed included aspects of International Trade, Treatment of Prisoners of Wars.

Since then, developments in the relations between the Rulers and the Governed has metamorphosized to have greater representation of the public in law making through modern parliament and to the election of the ruling class by the population through the secret ballot, challenges notwithstanding.

The role of Parliaments having extended to enhancement of global relations and stability, both positively and negatively, is now accepted as an important move in the democratization of diplomacy.

A report sponsored by the International Parliamentary Union (Beetham, 2006) distinguishes types of parliamentary cooperation as: technical parliamentary cooperation, inter-parliamentary cooperation and parliamentary diplomacy. This further put emphasis that parliamentary diplomacy is not just limited to parliamentary cooperation and is more institutionalized currently in parts of the world. It also precisely states that:

“A diplomat is an envoy of the executive branch and represents the positions of the state. Members of Parliament, however, are politicians who hold political beliefs which may or may not coincide with their respective country’s official position on any given issue. This allows parliamentarians a margin of flexibility that is denied to the diplomat. They tend to bring a moral dimension to international politics that transcends narrow definitions of the national interest, particularly in their principled support for democracy and human rights. Time and again we have seen that this flexibility allows parliamentarians to debate more openly with their counterparts from other countries and to advance innovative solutions to what may seem to be intractable problems”.

The spirit of parliamentary diplomacy undoubtedly takes the role of ‘Moral Tribunes’ on Foreign Affairs, the conscience of international politics, that takes a rather long-term approach by: building trust and understanding amongst peoples through dialogues; sharing of experiences and expertise in key areas such as youth unemployment, conflict



*The strength of parliamentary diplomacy is perceived when distinguishable from the executive diplomacy, noting that this can also be considered a weakness owing to its sporadic manner which is deficient of continuity.*

resolution, election monitoring, cultural dialogue, migration, economic issues; as well as bringing balance between values and interests, usually having to take positions that could be lesser of the two evils.

Senator Gabriel Elorriaga of Spain has enumerated instances of parliamentary diplomacy as: The activities of multilateral international parliamentary organizations; Bi-lateral parliamentary groups and in particular the so-called ‘friendship groups’; International agreements between parliaments; The activities of parliamentary foreign affairs committees; Plenary sessions dealing with foreign policy questions; Parliamentary participation in elections monitoring processes. The strength of parliamentary diplomacy is perceived when distinguishable from the executive diplomacy, noting that this can also be considered a weakness owing to its sporadic manner which is deficient of continuity.

### The Low Hanging Fruits for Africa

In view of the ambitions of the 21st Century Africans for a robust Pan-African Agenda and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, the opportunities that can be harnessed include: Strengthening the independence of African Parliaments to not only compliment but also offer alternatives to executive diplomacy; Structuring the form of parliamentary diplomacy in Africa through a consistency in activities, reporting and follow-ups; and Enhancing research by Academia and Think Tanks on parliamentary diplomacy especially in the African Continent. Source:(THE CITIZEN)

## Law & Politics

# The continued positive developments unfolding in Tigray state

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Ethiopia in the context of the peace implementation has been making significant strides in improving the overall humanitarian situation in Tigray state. It is abundantly clear that given the current circumstances the smooth flow of humanitarian assistance has been on the increase and fixing the humanitarian predicaments brought about in consequence of the conflict that lasted for two years.

Since the start of the peace implementation, the people of Tigray have been getting humanitarian assistance from the government and its partners unrestrictedly. Regardless of the fact that the situation in Tigray has seen massive and positive improvements, Ethiopian adversaries to play down and discredit the AU-led peace agreement signed between the federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).

In a similar vein, some of them have been doing everything possible to sully the bright spots of the delivery of humanitarian assistance and peace implementation. Notwithstanding the fact that engaging in this kind of evil act is in the DNA of some foreign entities and their internal collaborators, the whole thing in the northern part of the country has been making progress in the right direction.

As things stand at present and contrary to the continued misinformation campaign an extensive amount of humanitarian assistance has been entering the Tigray State through various routes.

In the present climate, the restoration of amenities and basic amenities comprising electricity, telecom, banking, and other crucial services have been developing in the right direction and the people of Tigray are breathing new life. There have been strong numerical indications that things are taking a turn for the better.

In the current circumstances, repairing damaged infrastructure, recommencing basic services, and maintaining peace and stability has been producing an outcome and generating results. In actual fact, the provision of unencumbered humanitarian assistance, recommencement of basic services, and other important services have been winning the hearts and minds of the global community apart from restoring peace and tranquility.

According to latest information obtained from the Ministry of Health (MoH) revealed that around eight hospitals and 26 health stations have recommenced basic service to the community in Tigray State. While on the subject, in an interview, Health State Minister, Ayele Teshome, gave to local media said within a few days of the operation over 83,000 people have gained health services through hospitals and health stations.

Likewise, in recent times Wegagen Bank reported that 28 branches situated under Mekelle District, Tigray State, have embarked on delivering services again.



The Bank's Marketing and Corporate Communication Director Afework Gebretsadik also told local media that the bank has restarted its regular operation in Mekelle. However, on the heels of peace agreement, the Bank has restored its operation in about 28 branches in the reported area. He further indicated that 17 branches have restored their services in the Shire district of Tigray State.

As things stand at present, humanitarian assistance and basic humanitarian services have been stepping in the right direction following the firm stance of the government to beat swords into plowshares in the length and breadth of the country as stipulated in the cessation of hostilities agreement.

If it had not been for the unflinching stance of the two parties, bringing the peace agreement into play would have been an impossible mission. For making the impossible possible and the unthinkable thinkable, the federal government and Tigray People Liberation Front deserve respect and appreciation on the grounds that without their genuine efforts achieving the intended objective would have been a wild-goose chase.

In the current circumstances, the incumbent has been firmly determined to reach humanitarian assistance to the conflict-affected communities by giving the green light to unrestricted access. In the present circumstances, several organizations have been working in close collaboration with the federal government for the rehabilitation and restoration of essential services in the war-affected areas.

By the same token, some 225 metric tons of health facilities amounting to over 200 million Birr were delivered to the State by the government and other development partners.

It is worth recalling that in the recent past Ethio telecom said it has greased the wheels of telecom infrastructure access for around 54 bank branches positioned in Amhara, Afar, and Tigray states. Speaking to local media, Ethio telecom CEO Frehiwot Tamiru

stated that telecom infrastructure access was provided for about 31 branches in Shire, 21 branches in Waja, Alamata, and Korem as well as one each in Aba Guna and Adwa towns.

Peace Minister Binalf Andualem disclosed that over 106,000 metric tons of humanitarian aid and 1,400 metric tons of medicine have been provided for the Tigray region after the peace agreement.

Binalf, who is also Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Support and Rehabilitation Coordination Head, told the Ethiopian News Agency that the federal government has been supplying unfettered humanitarian aid after the peace agreement.

Basic commodities needed for humanitarian aid are being supplied through all the humanitarian corridors of Kobo, Gondar and Afar Abala devoid of any restriction, he pointed out.

After the peace agreement, 106,957 metric tons of emergency food was transported to Tigray region and delivered to citizens, according to the minister.

He added that the government has demonstrated its determination to implement the peace agreement by providing humanitarian support in cooperation with partners.

In addition to humanitarian food aid, 1,400 metric tons of medicine and 10,000 metric tons of non-food items have been provided, Binalf stated.

The government has not only provided humanitarian aid in war-affected areas, but it has also achieved tangible results in the implementation of basic services restoration and reconstruction work, the minister noted.

He particularly mentioned that the Government of Ethiopia is rebuilding damaged institutions in Tigray region and starting interrupted services.

In this regard, electricity, telecom, banking and road infrastructures and service facilities such as hospitals have started providing services, Binalf stated.

Some 43 out of 55 towns have already received electricity and the rest will receive same soon, the minister added.

The federal government and 29 international aid partners have been delivering sufficient humanitarian assistance to the conflict-affected areas of the country for the last 50 days, so disclosed National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC).

NDRMC Public Relations and Communication Director Debebe Zewede said that, about 135,487 metric tons of food, non-food items and 879, 980 liters of fuel were sent to the conflict areas in northern Ethiopia particularly in Tigray apart from sending over 1.12 billion Birr cash there.

Debebe said that, the government in collaboration with international aid partners has been delivering food and non-food aids to the needy in the conflict-affected areas of Tigray, Afar and Amhara states. Accordingly over the past months about 135,487MT of food, non-food items have been dispatched to these states.

He further stated that, the government together with humanitarian aid agencies has continued providing various kinds of assistance like food and non-food aids, medicine, fuel, cash, fertilizers supplies and educational materials in those conflict affected areas in the northern part of the country.

The director also stated that, the first round of aid has been successfully provided and over 34 percent of the second round of aid has been covered so far. The aid has been dispatching to the Tigray state via Afar Abala, Gondar, Maytsebri, Shire, Kombolcha, Kobo and Alamata corridors.

Likewise about 1534.76 MT of medicine, non-food aids like WASH, Protection, Education, Agriculture and others amounts 15,252.6 MT and about 879,980 liters of fuels have been transported to the conflict affected areas so far. Around 29 international aid partners and 3,389 heavy trucks have been involved in aid distribution, it was learnt.



# Society

## Humanity has no borders

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

Ethiopia and Israel are one of the oldest nations in the world; and the history of the two countries dates back to the ancient eras. It is common knowledge that the two ancient countries have a long deep-rooted history mentioned recurrently in the Holy Book, which testified this reality.

As documents indicate, the relations between Ethiopia and Israel were first established six decades ago. Since those times, leaders of the two nations have been working to further strengthen their ties in all areas targeting to meet the aspirations of the peoples of the two countries.

As part this objective, recently, the Embassy of Israel in Ethiopia has organized an experience sharing training for Ethiopian medical practitioners.

A delegation of Israel medical team led by Dr. Barak Levit has shared their knowledge and skills to their Ethiopian counterparts focusing on trauma and emergency care.

The training, organized in collaboration with the Ethiopian Health Ministry and St. Paul's Hospital Millennium Medical College, was held from December 27- 30, 2022. In the training, Ethiopian healthcare practitioners drawn from the capital Addis Ababa, have participated and shared their experiences.

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Certified General Surgeon, Trauma Surgeon and Trauma Unit Manager in Israel, Dr. Barak Levit mentioned some points regarding

the objectives of their visit. As to him, the training aims at building partnership between health professionals of the two countries and to creating an opportunity to share professional experiences.

According to Dr. Barak, the Israeli medical delegation is the collection of volunteer doctors and nurses. They travel around the world with the purpose of serving humanity. Accordingly, the team chose Ethiopia because Israel and Ethiopia have very good partnership; he added underlining the long- rooted history of the two nations.

While talking about the existing reality in Ethiopia regarding trauma and the emergency care system, Dr. Barak said: "All of us are really impressed by what we have seen here. The doctors and nurses are well trained. The skills and the level of knowledge here is not less than any other part of the world. We also

learn from each other."

The training was offered focusing on topics related to trauma and the emergency care system. To this end, the major talking points were trauma, surgery trauma, and critical care for injured patients. "Most of the sessions are practical in relation to surgical and emergency procedures with the help of trauma simulation system."

Mentioning that they are from a place where there is frequent war, terrorism, and bombardment; he said that they have a lot to share. As to him, the team of physicians had been on trips to different parts of the world and witnessed that there is a gap in trauma centers.

Dr. Barak also affirmed his team members' readiness to support the nation in any means if the nation calls for help.

What makes the delegation team's stay in

Ethiopia different from the other places, as to the team leader; is the team suggested on alternative system and how we can use some other equipment when there is shortage.

Besides, the trainees and the team of doctors have discussed how to divide resources. Trauma care system can save more lives during a war, Dr. Barak added.

"In the future, we have so many projects that we can do together including disaster management, trauma system building, and constructing a new trauma center here," he remarked.

By the same token, St. Paul's Millennium Medical College General Medical Doctor, and professional Development, Project and Business Development Program Officer with the Hospital center, Dr. Rebeka Mesfin said: "The most important lesson we draw from the seminar is how to perform our jobs with alternative ways and help our patients. All of us have learnt and shared experiences with the team."

Members of the delegation team have plenty of experiences regarding trauma and emergency care. The mechanisms used by the trainers and the ways they elaborate the ideas are eye-opening. The training was delivered practically. She added,

"We observe the idea in a wider perspective and learn how to counteract sudden happenings. In our part, there is a shortage of facilities; so the team promised to support our center in the future. They have generously provided some of the equipment they brought," Rebeka further remarked.



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## Request for hand on teachers' capacity building

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

'Ethiopia 2050 Initiative' was established to provide professional assistance in various fields in Ethiopia. It does this through bringing together Ethiopian scholars from abroad and at home.

It is also suggested that the initiative will provide professional assistance in various fields, mainly considering the figure that the population of Ethiopia is expected to reach in 2050.

Thus, it provides professional assistance and research recommendations in other basic areas including education, water and energy supply and industrial development.

It has been stated that the initiative has established five task forces focused on education, artificial intelligence, water, energy and manufacturing to facilitate its work.

Consequently, on January 4 2023, the Ministry of Education held a forum with the initiative members, university teachers under the theme, "What should we focus on to improve the quality of education in Ethiopia?"

**The Ministry of Education has requested the 'Ethiopia 2050 Initiative', to support the teachers' capacity building on a discussion. The Ministry called on it to do its part to sustenance the teachers' professional skills development.**

In the discussion, a paper was presented and consulted on the history of modern education in Ethiopia, the level of primary, secondary and higher education and their respective problems with solutions.

On the forum, the Ministry of Education has requested the 'Ethiopia 2050 Initiative', to support the teachers' capacity building on a discussion. The Ministry called on it to do its part to sustenance the teachers' professional skills development.

Speaking on the discussion, Higher Education Subsector State Minister Dr. Samuel Kifle, has mentioned that there are currently 26.7 million students in Ethiopia explaining: "The development of the country should be done by equipping students with the required knowledge and skills. He said that this will be realized when the knowledge and skills of teachers are improved."

As a result of this, he called on the Initiative to do its part in training teachers and building their capacity.

In addition this, he called on the initiative to work in cooperation with the government on this, as the strengthening of

centers of excellence focused on education and research is the basis for ensuring the quality of education.

By the same token, Ethiopia 2050 Initiative Education Task Force Leader, Prof. Sebsibe Damsewu confirmed that the task force will continue to work diligently to improve the quality of education in Ethiopia noting that the discussion was a part of it.

He also explained that having a comprehensive education system from the lower to the higher education institutions is important for ensuring the quality of education.

In the same way, Elazar Tadesse, a teacher at Wolayita University and a member of the task force, said that good results has been achieved as the educational institutions and the number of students in Ethiopia have increased.

However, at last she pointed out that there is a gap in maintaining the quality of education. "Therefore, efforts on the work to expand access to education should be carried out in harmony with maintaining the quality."

# Planet Earth

## The need to control environmental hazards from the construction sector

BY FIKADU BELAY

Ethiopia is among the countries of the world that are scoring rapid economic development. The main indicator of the economic development is the speed of urbanization, infrastructure and overall construction sector. Especially the construction sector also tends to expand to a large extent in response to the impetus of the economic growth.

Regulating the construction sector usually is related to the quality of the construction project, design and adaptability issues, among others. Yet, another important topic that should be considered in the construction sector during urbanization or infrastructure development is the environmental impact.

The construction sector contributes to climate change and global warming since every project produces large amounts of carbon dioxide and methane. Infrastructure construction activities are a source of pollution and produce waste across the country. When the construction industry expands, there is likelihood that the negative effect and the damage to the industry also increase. Hence, the industry requires careful planning and implementation of infrastructure projects.

Environmental Laws and Standards Compliance, Monitoring and control Director with Federal Environmental Protection Authority (FEPA), Abate Getnet remarks that when any project is built, it should be based on the environmental impact protection proclamation and everyone should pay attention to environmental safety in the work they are engaged in.

Those who do not comply with the proclamation issued by the authority and do not meet the requirements of the guidelines will not be allowed to work. Besides, when individuals and institutions build various infrastructures, they should plant tree seedlings elsewhere to reduce the damage caused by deforestation, he added.

Indeed, the construction sector has both negative and positive environmental impacts during the initial work on-site through the construction period, the operational period and the final demolition when a building is finalized. Hence, along with forcing to follow environmental impact protection decree and guidelines, the government and the concerned bodies should encourage the construction sector to utilize eco-friendly materials and input to minimize environmental hazards.



It is general knowledge that all activities on earth affect the environment, infrastructure development, especially the construction of buildings and road speeds up urbanization, making the city an attractive area to the resident.

Studies indicated that, the construction industry is responsible for up to 50 percent of climate change. However, the sector has employed various technologies to reduce the negative effects of construction and protect the environment for future generations, but it still creates challenges such as landfills and air, water and noise pollution.

Taking these facts into account, Ethiopia has made several efforts to mitigate the negative effect of climate change. Ethiopian Construction Authority Design Expert Million Tesema explained that when infrastructure is constructed such as buildings and roads, the authority checks and monitors their plans and design to ensure the project does not pollute and harm the environment.

When any infrastructure design is submitted, the authority cross-checks the design, especially the land escape designs that have a significant contribution to reducing and preventing the impact of buildings and roads on the environment, he stated.

Building Inspection Director with

Ethiopian Construction Authority Abebe Banjawu in his part noted that, it is not only the construction industry that affects the environment but also buildings that provide services such as expired drugs and other waste from hospitals, as well as by-products from factories pollutes the environment.

Apart from damaging the environment, various infrastructure projects often cause sound pollution during the construction and maintenance of roads. Besides, temporary alternative roads create dust, which can cause the common cold and other related diseases.

Liquid and solid wastes as well as unnecessary chemicals that are released from the construction industries into the rivers cause serious health problems to animals and humans in addition to atmospheric pollution. Besides, wood and other by-products from these industries cause significant damage to the environment.

As a result, our planet has been affected by unseasonal weather conditions, drought, heavy rain, floods and tsunamis that have been taking the lives of people and destroying properties. Moreover, at the end of 2022, human beings and properties were destroyed by wildfires which are caused by high temperatures.

Despite the challenges and the negative

impact of the construction industries, Ethiopia has been doing several activities to mitigate the effect of climate change at the national, regional and international levels. For instance, the Green Legacy Initiative, which was completed last year and brought awarded to Ethiopian Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, has planted more than 25 billion tree seedlings from 2019 to 2022.

According to Million, planting tree seedlings, protecting the environment, cleaning the surroundings, and proper waste management systems are imperative to curb the negative effect that causes by the construction sector. Because giving due attention to environmental protection would not only improve the attractiveness of the city but also reduce the temperature between the houses and allow good airflow.

Hence, when any individual or institution constructs any type of building, they should not only focus on constructing the building but they should prepare a green area that can balance the environment, Million pointed out.

Moreover, during construction infrastructure projects, individuals and institutions should pay special attention to reducing environmental hazards. If not, the concerned body will take action to protect the environment, Abebe noted.