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Ethiopia-China ties remain steadfast: Premier

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA- Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Ph.D) said the relations between Ethiopia and China remain steadfast as he welcomed yesterday the newly appointed Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang who is in Addis on first leg of his visits to African countries.

In his tweet, the premier added that discussion was held between the two-side highlighting on shared strategic development goals and commitment to continental and global cooperation.

Similarly, strengthening bilateral and multilateral strategic cooperation between the two countries was also raised at the

discussion as the Office of the Prime Minister tweeted yesterday. Further, it stated that “with a shared development agenda, Ethiopia and China have sustained a mutually beneficial partnership with a commitment during today’s discussions to further augment in economic and investments relations.”

IC urged to beef up support for conflict-ridden areas

• Ethiopia, China sign political consultation MoU

BY DESTA GEBREHIWOT

ADDIS ABABA—Ethiopia and China called on the international community to step up support to Ethiopia’s effort in rehabilitating conflict-affected areas.

The two countries made the call as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen conferred with Chinese newly appointed Foreign Minister Qin Gang who stopped in Addis Ababa yesterday as part of his first visit to Africa since taking office.

Addressing a joint presser after signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on political consultations aimed at expanding all-rounded bilateral ties, Demeke said that Ethiopia has suffered a lot due to the two-year conflict, and Tigray, Afar, and Amhara states have sustained huge damage. The reconstruction process requires staggering resources China and other partners should play a timely and active role in committing



more resources.

Demeke also extended his appreciation to China for its position in northern Ethiopia in what he described as a principled stance and historic engagement in supporting Ethiopia’s sovereignty and territorial

integrity.

China’s Foreign Minister Qin Gang who also held talks with Prime Minister earlier also called on other partners to prop up humanitarian support to help the war-

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Experts optimistic on truce’s role in economic recovery

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- The ending of armed conflict between the government and TPLF, which was culminated by the peace accord, would have paramount importance in recovering the national economy and channeling the resources to the development, experts in the area said.

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Economist and Researcher at Policy Research Institute, Jemal Mohammed

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Ethiopian athletes meet families in Mekelle

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- A delegation headed by Assistant Commissioner Derartu Tulu, who is the President of the Ethiopian Athletics Federation, landed yesterday in Mekelle with the aim of connecting Ethiopian athletes hail from Tigray with their families.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), the legendary athlete Derartu Tulu said apart from the family reunion, a discussion is going to take place on ways to

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‘Homegrown assets to build unwavering home’

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Maritu Legesse, folk singer famed “The Queen of Ambassel, Bati” returns home

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Pretoria peace deal: Turning over a new leaf in Ethiopia’s history

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News

Political Market: Putting nation, democracy building at risk

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA –The political marketplace is a threat to nation-building and undermines the integrity of political processes and institutions apart from jeopardizing Ethiopia's democracy building, senior government officials commented.

Speaking to local media, Government's Chief Whip Tesfaye Beljige, who said politics is about the authority of ideas over money, highlighted that the political market whereby politicians used financial rewards could hamper Ethiopia's path to democracy.

Having centered on individuals and groups, the political market is a threat to institution building thereby opening the door for dictatorship and threatening democracy and competition. These kinds of political systems will avail the space for a small elite group to collect ideas by the name of leadership and may contribute to political instability and other related crises, Tesfaye elaborated.



Tesfaye Beljige

“Of course, money is a necessary component of any democracy in which it enables political participation, campaigning, representation, and other activities. However, if not effectively regulated, it can undermine the integrity of political processes and institutions and jeopardize the quality of democracy.”

Sharing the above rationale, the Democracy



Zadig Abraha

Building Center Coordinator with the Rank of Minister Zadig Abraha stated that the political marketplace is a governance system and power dynamics which includes actors from both the government and non-governmental forces. The political marketplace has three distinctive terminologies among which one is transactional and it depends on the benefit

of the participants at the expense of national interest.

The monetized political system is the other form of political market and it is based on the actual money transfer and it is everywhere in the world. The situation whereby a group which provides the largest finance becomes the winner is also the other manifestation of the political system.

“The political marketplace is all about monetization, transaction, and competition and all the competition is among the individuals and groups not about the institution or system. Both international and local forces were highly involved in the political market process which resulted in a turbulent system.”

The mere objective of actors involved in the political marketplace is achieving their power and economic interest at the expense of the public good. On the other hand, it is a dynamic and open system that focuses on creating new things to sustain its duration and avoid failure, Zadig emphasized.

Officials underline enhancing solidarity to overcome current challenges

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA - Officials who participated in the event organized by the Ethiopian Press Agency in Semera town of Afar State under the theme, “About Ethiopia” stated that the country needs to capitalize on solidarity to solve its all rounded challenges at ease.

Speaking at the event Afar state Chief Administrator Awol Arba said that Ethiopia needs to encourage unity and active public participation to ensure sustainable peace via overcoming all sorts of problems in the country.

According to the president, the country has gone through many difficult situations over the past two plus years due to northern conflict. In this regard, enemies at home and from abroad have been working day in and day out to dismantle the country. However, the country will overcome its problems as it

did earlier and continue trekking on a rosy journey.

He further stated that Ethiopia has registered remarkable outcomes such as green legacy initiative despite conflict, drought, foreign pressure, and desert locust for over four years.

“As the country has now entertained reform-oriented administration, it would like to focus on harmonious way of living as it is a crucial step to solve the problem and ensure sustainable peace,” he added.

Seconding the above statement, Chief of African Leadership Excellence Academy (AFLEX), Meheret Debebe (PhD) on his part said that Ethiopia has a long aged history and it has been going through complex journey for the past over 5,000 years.

As to him, peace and solidarity are the fundamental issues of all things. Therefore,



Photo: Hadush Abreha

Ethiopian should focus on unity, peace, and supremacy of law to make capable of meeting what it has long aspired.

Meheret further stated that unity does not mean that being the same instead standing together whenever national interest and

sovereignty of the nation is baffled.

Participants in the discussion focused on political debate, public participation, bringing criminals to justice, and the like to ensure sustainable peace and remarkable national outcome, it was learned.

Scholars say Ethiopia's truce ushering in new dawn

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA- The Cessation of Hostility Agreement (CoHA) by the federal government and TPLF would bring about lasting peace for citizens and pen great hope as it has ushered in a new dawn of the nation, so stated scholars.

Publishing commentaries on the CoHA, Prof. Ann M. Fitz-Gerald and Hugh Segal (PhD) stated that the beginning of this new era has to earn the ongoing support of the people, parties, and international actors and reinforced by other important reform initiatives to address clear sources of insecurity in Ethiopia.

They also said: “The settlement agreed by the parties to Ethiopia's conflict offers hope for a lasting peace, but further steps are still needed to deter future violence and instability. Failing on these measures of support opens a risk that the recently brokered peace agreement will



Prof. Ann M. Fitz-Gerald

simply be an instance of kicking the can down the road.”

As to the authors, the government has to now push various reforms forward in earnest to build a plural democratic governance model in Tigray



Hugh Segal (PhD)

so as to lead a stable foundation in place for peace to move forward and rebuild the conflict-affected areas of Tigray, Amhara and Afar.

“It is also important to well discuss the contested areas elsewhere in the country, and

other ill-defined or ambiguous land issues to properly run security and economic reforms. The momentum behind capital market reforms including the proposed launch of the Ethiopia stock exchange, which could accelerate economic growth and opportunities in a more publicly accountable private sector, have to be focused on,” they underlined.

They also recommended that the commitment and resources required to support the monumental reform exercise envisioned in the text of the peace agreement should not be underestimated; nor should the requirement to end a largely disinformation-based war.

“The sustained support such as robust and accountable AU monitoring and verification capability and access for independent reporting and commitment of the Ethiopian people, the political parties, Ethiopian Diaspora groups and international actors is required and priority should be given,” they remarked.

News

MoH applauds Diaspora support for war affected areas

• *Members of Diaspora donates 27 mln. Birr worth medical supplies*

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- Ministry of Health (MoH) stated that the Ethiopian Health Professionals Association of Northern California in collaboration with MedShare has donated medical equipment and supplies to conflict damaged health facilities.

The medical equipment and supplies worth 27 million Birr, according to MoH.

The donated materials were provided to four health centers found in the North Wollo and Waghmra, and the support would help them get fully operational.

Health Minister LiaTadese (MD) stated that a lot of work has been done to reconstruct health institutions destroyed following the war. The four health centers have been provided with medical tools and materials to help serve hundreds of thousands of community members.

She expressed her gratitude to the Ethiopian community of Northern California, health professional, MedShare and all the support coordinators, and requested them to continue doing so.



Lia also praised the initiative of the professionals to help Ethiopia and their initiative to work in coordination with the Ministry of Health to start liver transplantation in Ethiopia.

A Specialist in Transplantation and the Coordinator of the support Kidist Kidane (MD) said the aid has been secured through coordinating the health professionals and

Ethiopian residents of Northern California with a view to rehabilitating the damaged health institutions.

She noted that the grant worth 7 million Birr will be distributed to the health centers in the coming days. On the occasion MoH has vowed to work hard on improving liver treatment in Ethiopia.

IC urged ...

affected communities.

Indicating that Beijing has been providing humanitarian aid to needy communities, Gang also pledged his country's active support to Ethiopia in rehabilitating and reconstructing conflict-ridden areas.

Commenting on the recent Pretoria peace deal, Gang noted that Ethiopia has entered a new stage by signing the peace deal which China sincerely and warmly welcomes. China since the outbreak of the northern Ethiopia conflict has always been considering it as an internal affair and the wisdom and capability of Ethiopians to resolve their internal matters independently, said Gang.

"We always respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country and always support the country in its path to the realization of unity, peace, and development."



Ethiopian athletes...

support the reoperation of the Tigray Athletics Federation. Accordingly, the Ethiopian Athletics Federation will provide legal, financial, and professional support to its Tigray branch.

"Now, we are going to have discussions with officials and committee members of the Tigray Athletics Federation on ways to restore the athletics sport and to support the athletes."

The peace deal allows athletes and the Federation's Executive Committee members to make themselves ready for further victories and all sides should play a constructive role for lasting peace, Derartu pleaded.

She continued: "Our athletes, whose family members are in Tigray, were disconnected from their parents and siblings, and during that hard time, we were miserably

depressed. Due to the peace accord, now the athletes will be reunited with their loved ones and an event will be held to celebrate the reunion."

Calling the public's overwhelming support to the truce, the legendary athlete emphasized the responsibility of the federal government and TPLF leaders in the normalization process and helped peace to prevail.

Gotytom Gebreselase, Gudaf Tsegay and Letesenbet Giday are amongst the senior athletes who are expected to be reunited with their families.

It is to be recalled that in her remark at the award-giving event held in connection with the 18th World Athletics Championship, Derartu called the government and TPLF to desist hostilities and allow the resumption of free movement of people and provision of essential services.



Jemal Mohammed (PhD)



Dawit Hayeso (PhD)

Experts optimistic...

(PhD) stated that the conflict deprived Ethiopia's forex reserves and forced the country to import armaments instead of tractors. The conflict-driven forex crunch has also significantly impacted the imports of essential commodities including food, pharmaceuticals, and oil among others.

Apart from the impact the conflict has caused in soaring the price of commodities, the situation has also immensely impacted the tourism sector and the revenue the country secured from international visitors.

The expert indicated the peace accord can help Ethiopia to overcome all those challenges and would stabilize the market, arrest inflation and revive the tourism industry. Also, the truce is instrumental to the reopening of manufacturing industries, which were severely affected by the conflict, and enhancing export performance.

"The rehabilitation of war-affected communities and their return to normal life coupled with the reduction of government's expenditure for the IDPs would also bring a positive impact in the economy."

Following the government's expense shift that is more likely to be made during the war, a high decline in the development

and productivity part is mainly observed, Economics Associate Professor at Dila University Dawit Hayeso (PhD) stated.

The academician further highlighted that an increased unemployment rate, as well as a reduction in product and productivity, occurred due to the conflict. Similarly, the imbalance on the supply side that followed the unrest would also create inflation.

Nonetheless, the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) signed between the government and TPLF allows the nation to fully engage in improving productivity, helps to control inflation, and boosts investment inflow. The peace would also open a new horizon of opportunities, ease the forex crunch as well as build trust in citizens to return to jobs.

"Priority must be given to war-affected areas and efforts should be geared to quickly rebuild damaged infrastructure that enables restoration of essential services and enhance product and productivity."

It is to be recalled that more than 20 billion USD is required to fully cover the damage that had occurred during the two-year conflict in north Ethiopia.

Opinion

African solutions to African problems: Let the African Union resolve the GERD dispute!

BY ALMARIAM

Is the Biden administration a “friend” of Ethiopia?

Following the US-Africa Summit last month, the million dollar question is whether Ethiopia and the US have kissed and made up. Some Ethiopians suggest bilateral relations have turned a corner with the ceasefire agreement and US-Ethiopia relations will soon be in an upswing.

Others cautiously note recent developments merely point to a thawing out of bilateral relations after two years in deep freeze over the war in Northern Ethiopia. Some non-Ethiopian “experts” suggest the nomination of Ervin Massinga (soon to be confirmed), an African American, as US ambassador to Ethiopia signals a reset/reboot in bilateral relations.

Many informed Ethiopians are cautious and skeptical and would rather wait and see. They say all that glitters is not gold and the public display of cordiality and amiability between PM Abiy Ahmed and President Joe Biden during the US-Africa Summit last month should be taken with a grain of salt.

A crusty, cynical and skeptical lawyer, political scientist and professional doubting Thomas I know who slices and dices facts for a living says any change in relations between the Ethiopian Government and the Biden administration is skin-deep. He says, “I believe improvements in bilateral relations only when I see it, slice and dice it.”

True the Scripture verse: “Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots?” *I know the Ethiopian cannot change his black skin but can the bald eagle change its white feathered head?*

Former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger is reputed to have said, “America has no permanent friends or enemies, only interests.” Despite the quaint witticism attributed to Kissinger, what he actually said was, “We have permanent interests and values that we must nurture and defend.”

I should like to believe the developments during the recent US-Africa Summit provide some hopeful signs of improvements in bilateral relations between Ethiopia and the Biden administration. But I am not convinced they will lead to real engagement.

I believe the wounds inflicted on Ethiopia by the Biden administration are too deep and harrowing to heal in a short time. For the past two years, the Biden administration and the Ethiopian Government have been at odds, indeed at loggerheads, on the question of the war in Ethiopia’s Tigray region.

The Biden administration backed the TPLF to the hilt. That has angered and deeply disappointed, disheartened, disillusioned and dumbfounded the majority of ordinary Ethiopians. I have been asked so many times, “Why does the US support the TPLF?”

Truth be told, over the past two years, the Biden administration has resorted to all kinds of dirty tricks — sanctions, pressuring multilateral institutions to deny or withhold loans, manipulate the United Nations to

launch “human rights investigations”, appointment of special envoys, coordination of demonization propaganda with the Western press-titute media and tactical support including satellite intelligence to TPLF fighters — to bring Ethiopia down on its knees.

In my November 21, 2021 commentary, I made the “legal case against US state-sponsored terrorism in Ethiopia.”

With all of the pre-Summit recriminations about “human rights violations,” “unhindered access,” protection of civilians,” “ceasefire, “removal of Eritrean troops”, etc., I expected to see some verbal pyrotechnics from the Biden administration against Ethiopia in much the same way as occurred in the first meeting between the US and China in Alaska in March 2021.

Despite my skepticism and cynicism, I was pleasantly surprised that neither Biden nor members of his administration tried to deliver a sucker punch to PM Abiy. Much to the astonishment of many observers, during the US-Africa Summit in mid-December 2022, PM Abiy Ahmed and President Joe Biden appeared in informal setting and exhibited sociability, good will, rapport, manifest comfort in each other’s presence and amity.

Some have humorously described photos of their informal appearances as bordering on “lovey-dovey.” I noted the only thing missing while PM Abiy and President Biden were watching the World Cup game was the popcorn.

In my commentary on the outcome of the Summit, I concluded with one of Donald Rumsfeld’s, former US Defense Secretary, brain teasers: *As we know [about Africa and the US], there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns.* In other words, “Que sera sera! Whatever will be, will be.”

Turning to the GERD elephant in the living room

Will the Biden administration try to arm-twist Ethiopia, as did the Trump administration, into signing over its sovereign rights over the Abay (“Nile”) River to Egypt?

The looming and soon to become cantankerous issue between the Biden administration and Ethiopia is resolution of the dispute over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) with Egypt.

The Biden administration wants to dictate the terms of the GERD agreement to Ethiopia just like the Trump administration. There are known knowns, known unknowns and the unknown unknowns in the Biden administration’s policy in Ethiopia and particularly on the GERD.

Known knowns about Biden administration’s policy in Ethiopia

That the planets revolve around the sun and the earth is not the center of the universe is a known known. Copernicus proposed the idea and Galileo proved it.

Ethiopia-US relations date back to 1903 when the two countries concluded a treaty of commerce “to perpetuate and strengthen the friendly relations which exist between” them. The Biden administration claims the “diplomatic relationship between the United States and Ethiopia is important, complex and focused on four broad goals.”

There are many known knowns about the Biden administration’s policy in Ethiopia over the past 2 years. The Biden administration has fully supported the TPLF’s efforts to overthrow the legitimately elected government of Ethiopia providing material and tactical intelligence support; used sanctions and threatened to expand the use of sanctions over the past 2 years to bring Ethiopia to its knees.

Sought to economically paralyze and thwart massive economic reforms in Ethiopia by pressuring multilateral lending institutions such as The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to deny and delay loans and debt restricting by using “the voice and vote of the United States in the respective institution to oppose any loan or extension of financial or technical assistance to the Governments of Ethiopia.”

Sought to effect regime change in Ethiopia by coordinating pressure with the European Union, the United Nations and by pressuring certain Middle Eastern governments to pressure Ethiopia claiming the Ethiopian Government is “using starvation of civilians as a weapon of war is putting at risk the lives of millions;” undertaken efforts to delegitimize and discredit democratic elections certified by the African Union as free and fair.

Pressured Ethiopia to limit its relations with China and sought to eventually make Ethiopia the graveyard of China in Africa; waged a relentless media campaign globally in cooperation with various fake news outlets including CNN, the New York Times, Reuters, etc. and so-called human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International to spoil the image of Ethiopia and demonize its leaders.

Waged psyops (psychological operations) against the Ethiopian people to create alarm, fear, panic and despair; Sought to weaponize the United Nations and its Security Council to isolate, ostracize, sanction and persecute Ethiopia.

Provided “humanitarian aid” with only the Tigray region in mind although the entire Northern part of Ethiopia was affected by the TPLF war; sought to drive a wedge between Ethiopia and Eritrea and by denying Eritrea’s sovereign right to self-defense after it was attacked repeatedly by missiles and ground incursion by TPLF forces.

Demonstrated contempt and disrespect to Ethiopian leaders as the legitimate government of Ethiopia demanding to meet without regard to protocol; sought to devise “ways to embarrass the Ethiopian government given its role in the unfolding catastrophe in the Tigray region and beyond.”

Appointed special envoys who cannot tell the

PART ONE

difference between their ***hole and a hole in the ground. One proved to be a “hitman for the TPLF” and the other a selfie-addicted gourmand who belongs in the kitchen than the diplomatic halls. The list can go on and on.

Known knowns about Trump/Biden policy on the GERD

It is a known known that US administrations have proven beyond a shadow of doubt they will put their thumb on the scale in favor of Egypt in the GERD dispute.

In his February 29, 2020 blog, former US Ambassador to Ethiopia David Shinn expressed surprise over the so-called GERD agreement “facilitated” by former Secretary Steven Mnuchin and The World Bank’s president David Malpass:

The fact that the U.S. Treasury Department is in charge of this effort is surprising. In any other administration, the State Department, which actually has expertise on this issue, would broker the agreement. So, I wonder. What is the United States up to?

Ambassador Shinn then hit the nail on the head: *The United States seems to be putting its thumb on the scale in favor of Egypt. Perhaps it is time to make the agreement public so that everyone can see what the United States is proposing.*

As I have expansively argued in “My Private Letter to U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Talks,” the Trump administration tried to snooker Ethiopia into a “discussion” and then shove down Ethiopia’s throat an agreement Mnuchin, Malpass and Egyptian foreign minister Sameh Shoukry cooked up in the back room to the exclusion of Ethiopia.

Then Ethiopia’s Foreign Minister Gedu Andargachew denounced the Treasury Department’s announcement by declaring: *The statement issued by US Treasury on GERD is unacceptable & highly partisan, Ethiopia believes in continued engagement with Egypt & Sudan to address the outstanding issues and finalize the Guidelines and Rules on a win-win basis for all.*

The Ethiopian Government issued a statement which effectively accused Secretary Mnuchin of trying to scam Ethiopia: Ethiopia does not accept the characterization that the negotiation on the Guidelines and Rules on the First Filling and Annual Operation of the GERD (Guidelines and Rules) is completed. *The “text” reportedly initialed by the Arab Republic of Egypt in Washington D.C. is not the outcome of the negotiation or the technical and legal discussion of the three countries.* Ethiopia made it clear that the Guidelines and Rules must be prepared by the three countries. The Countries are yet to address outstanding issues pertaining to the finalization of the Guidelines and Rules. (Boldface added.)

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

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Editorial

Model cooperative partnership

As part of his weeklong tour to five African countries - Ethiopia, Gabon, Angola, Benin and Egypt- the newly appointed Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang arrived yesterday in Addis Ababa for an official visit.

Minister Qin Gang and the delegation he led were accorded with a warm welcome from Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Demeke Mekonnen at Addis Ababa Bole International Airport, later Qin and the delegation met Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Ph.D). Discussions of the latter zoomed in on further augmenting economic and investment relations.

Likewise, Foreign Minister Gang would attend a ribbon cutting ceremony of the newly built Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Headquarters (CDC HQ) site in Addis Ababa, constructed, furnished and equipped by the Government of China.

This high-level visit to African countries surely cements Africa-China comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership and promotes common development as it maintains a long-term and stable strategic alliance between China and Africa based on equality and mutual benefits.

It is an open secret that since the past few decades, the relations between China and Africa have grown dynamically; and reached at the highest level.

China, being Africa's largest trade partner, investor, source of infrastructure investment, provider of financial loan and other supports and exerting all-round cooperation to help Africans advance their economies, is playing an incalculable role in accelerating African countries' growth and development aspirations.

Not only that but also by offering various short and long term trainings and scholarships to young African professionals in various areas, China is building the capacity of the human capital of African countries.

Subsequently, the Africa-China relations and cooperation which is established based on mutual interests and trusts have benefited Africans meaningfully. These days China's role in the overall growth and development of Africa is becoming visible in all arenas.

In the same manner, Ethiopia is also benefiting from the practical cooperation and assistance of China in all areas, be it in trade, diplomacy, investment, economy, health, infrastructure expansion among others. Especially, over the past few years, Ethiopia-China relationships and cooperation have deepened, seen steady developments and brought about remarkable results.

Reliable sources state that the Chinese Government donated over 12 million doses of COVID vaccines and emergency food aid worth 30 million RMB to Ethiopia. The Chinese involvement in creating a green and livable Addis Ababa has been immense. The government's plan of making Addis live up to its fame and name is properly grasped by the Chinese side and the latter's tangible cooperation is a towering one in the metropolis. This is, of course, not to mention the Chinese FDI in Ethiopia and the two-side partnership in multilateral fronts.

The two countries' comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership that prioritizes six areas such as peace and security matters, capacity cooperation, human resources, aviation and coordination on global and regional issues would only improve the respective countries' peoples but also have positive impacts on regional and global peace and development.

As Ethiopia is always stands ready to work with all parties that upholds principles, it is keen to work with the Government of China and eager to further strengthen the bilateral relations of the two sisterly countries in all streams. In this regard, the arrival of the newly appointed Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang to Ethiopia is instrumental in enhancing the partnership and cooperation for the common good of the peoples of the two countries.

Opinion

The bad eggs in the commercial social media basket

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

A disclaimer: The author of this opinion page never claims that all social media and all their posts are bad and unprofessional. The issue is about the bad eggs in the SM basket.

The advent of the social media in and about Ethiopia over the last 30 years is double faced. The social media has played and would hopefully continue to play a commendable role in fostering a peaceful, educational, humorous, entertaining role for and among its subscribers. The original purpose of this media is to ensure that social interaction will develop to its highest level turning the entire world into a small village that everyone would be able to positively relate to each other. World leaders, men and women, people in all professional streams, business entities the mainstream media outlets, scientific organization and all religions across the globe are using it to promote their views and reach out to the multitudes on their businesses and more.

Thanks to the social media, billions of the residents of mother earth are already connected, related and befriended. The social media streams are all in the hands of those who carry cellphones in their pockets or bags. This is splendid, necessary and useful but is being used and abused in the most alarming and hitherto unknown mode threatening human morality, decency, ethical standards and a threat to global peace and security.

The rapid development in internet technology over half a century and mobile telephone technology has further boosted the interaction between the peoples of the world but has also brought up new challenges and problems in the

development of ICT.

Stalking, identity theft, personal attacks, and misuse of information are some of the threats faced by social media users. Most of the time, the users themselves are to blame as they share content that should not be in the public eye. The confusion arises from a lack of understanding of how the private and public elements of an online profile actually work. This is creating an incredible chaos on public interaction in Ethiopia and elsewhere across the world.

Manipulative social media content is sneaking into the politics, business, education and family affairs in Ethiopia. Users freely post pictures of individuals without caring to seek their content and even without sharing the contents of their posts to the concerned individuals. Most social media users in Ethiopia seem to be unaware of the consequences of their posts both on their own life and the well-being of others.

The amateurish nature of the Ethiopian social media has a negative effect on promoting a positive social consciousness in the minds of the public and could only help to promote false social consciousness.

Agenda setting on the major development programs of the country and discrediting the overall gains of the reform is one of the strategies pursued by some media outlets covering Ethiopia. They discredit the formation of parks and projects like the forest project and the National Green Legacy Initiative as if it is irrelevant and untimely. They focus on the challenges of the country and try to show that everything is a mistake of the leadership. They totally refrain from focusing on the big picture and indicate no positive recommendations.

Twisting the content of the national development agenda of the country and misinterpreting the national objectives of the development strategy of the nation is one of the major intentions of agenda setting in the social media. Politicizing on every development agenda is a deliberate strategy employed by some social media outlets in a bid to discredit the national reform program.

They focused on conflicts by taking sides and try to judge everything on ethnic lines.

Again, this never means that there are no social media outlets that try to do their job in decency and in a spirit of accountability and professionalism, but still they are few.

What gave a good breeding ground for the bad eggs in the Ethiopian social media? There is more than one answer. In the first place total lack of proactivity among the public and private mainstream media, the sluggish nature of delivery of information by the Government Communication Office, lack of capacity in implementing the media laws, weak and second to nothing performance of the media council, Poor level of performance in investigative journalism, lack of peer evaluation among media outlets, absence of government media policy regarding social medias, government mistrust on social media triggered by a barrage of disinformation and disinformation on the social media and totally inability of the government to effectively enforce accountability.

Lack of follow up on the content of news delivered by the representatives of foreign media outlets on the basis of the media law and ethical standards, weak fact checking system and several other factors contributed to the

apparent prevalence of the bad eggs in the basket of social media outlets in Ethiopia.

What is to be done by way of supporting social media users to help them contribute to the national development programs of the country? The author thinks that this is a serious matter that needs to be addressed.

It is important to capitalize and focus on the positive gains that could be gained from the use of social media. Even if the contents of these media outlets are posted at the whims and desires of the users they would be of value to make a trend analysis in the public opinion barometer and provide a feedback to the concerned government institutions in public service delivery.

The mainstream media and private companies and CSOs working on media and communications could conduct researches on social media not only for research purposes but to make a professional assessment on how the other media outlets can use social media to positively influence their activities.

The Ethiopian Government has passed enough media laws that are to be followed and the EMA is making the necessary follow up on the flow of media outputs through rigorous monitoring. Educational programs particularly targeting major social media users and their affiliates need to be conducted as a tool for proactively engaging those online social media companies so that they can keep on the desired track.

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

Business & Economy

'Homegrown assets to build unwavering home'

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Nothing is more interesting and gratified than being self-sufficient and proud of oneself to lead a happy life. When such a majestic look and cordial status has stepped to a national level, it would be of a viable instrument in declaring independence and sovereignty in which other countries could hardly interfere in the internal affairs of a given nation.

The best solution and attested remedy for all rounded problems and long heaped hurdles of the country is no doubt capitalizing on indigenous assets, very untapped belongings of course.

Sense of belongingness for the country and its people, homegrown economy, homegrown knowledge, homegrown means of conflict resolution and the likes are undeniably viable means to see poverty off forever and get all potential sources of problems dried for good. These are really absolute and workable pathways to prosperity and avenue for being champion over poverty.

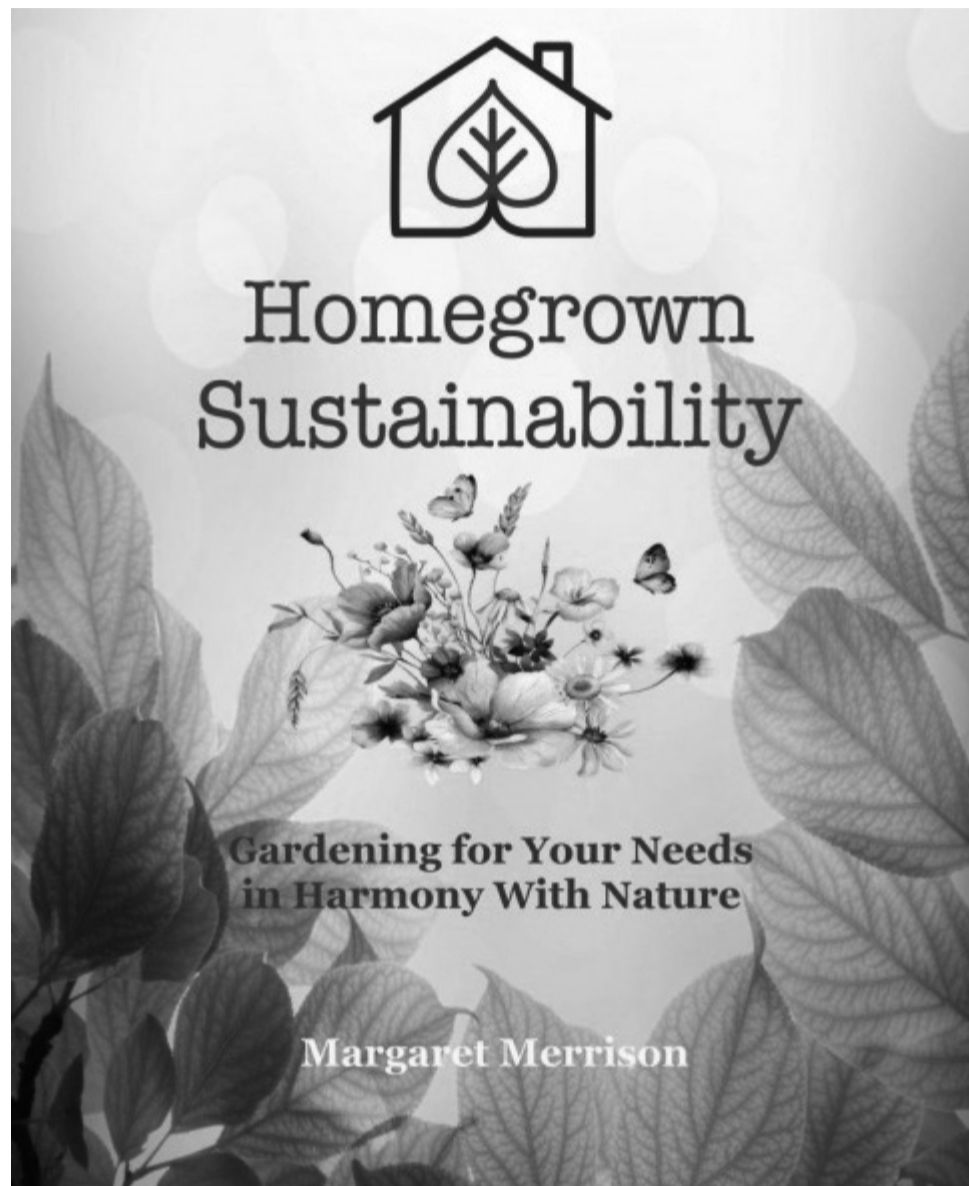
Nurturing the Grand Abay Dam and other similar water resources and using all original assets as well as local belongings is of significantly useful in fostering the march against poverty. Taking the indescribable contribution of homegrown aspects to the national economic growth thereby prettily curbing aid dependence and declaring financial freedom as a pillar for nation's economic self reliance, this writer had a stay with Melkamu Limenih, who graduated in economics from Addis Ababa University.

Melkamu said, "The implementation of homegrown economic reform aiming at tapping Ethiopia's development potentials, abundant and energetic labor force, exploiting a range of tangible and intangible heritages and you name it, have undeniable impact on stabilizing nation's economy, amid bottlenecks of course, thereby seeing poverty and aid dependence forever."

He further said that the implementation of the economic reform has to run well and responsibly so as to enable the country mitigate the effects of being dependent on aid and grant. It has indeed played a paramount role in managing debt stress, improving export performance and creating stability in the financial sector that a direct bearing with almost all activities performed throughout the nation.

He said, "Apart from stabilizing the macro-economy, the reform has been quite essential in making structural changes in the national economy in a bid to create new opportunities in all aspects, be it economically, socially, politically and even culturally and religiously."

Yes, he said ending poverty in all its forms throughout the country has to be the national slogan as Ethiopia is highly endowed with numerous viable means for crushing this social menace accompanied with a range of pessimistic basics. It is also useful to assess the effectiveness of existing poverty alleviation approaches, including well exploiting homegrown economy and assets, community-based development



undertakings, ensuring social security and good governance.

Poverty alleviation programs all over the nation have to predominantly aim at reducing the level of scarcity and shortage through various participatory and community-demand-driven angles.

"High public investments in infrastructure and human capital development fueled the country's growth. These investments narrowed fundamental gaps in transport and energy infrastructure and human capital developments thereby laying the foundation for a sustained growth via exploiting homegrown economy and homegrown wisdom," he said.

As to him, the fundamental objective of country's agenda has to be to sustain the economic growth through creating an economic environment supportive of higher private investment and structural transformation through the channel attracting homegrown economic schemes.

Yes, he said macro-financial reforms aim to reduce the risks associated with public debt, lower external vulnerabilities, arrest inflation, and enhance growth, investment, and exports including strengthening public finances, privatization, consolidating the monetary policy framework with the objective to stabilize prices and support economic growth, enhancing financial sector development and developing capital markets.

The sectoral reforms aim to address market failures and address sectoral regulatory and investments constraints to promote investment in sectors including such as

agriculture and manufacturing, and unleash new growth potentials in sectors such as tourism, mining, technology and the creative industries.

He said, "Efficacious economic reform and homegrown economic growth highly requires coordination and synchronization among forex, monetary, fiscal, financial, and capital market reforms. To balance the urgent need for addressing macroeconomic imbalances with the need to minimize potential economic costs of rapid reforms, the homegrown macroeconomic reform agenda will be implemented in the course of three to four years with careful calibration of the pacing, sequencing, and timing of specific reform measures."

He added that upon effective implementation of myriads of reforms, Ethiopia would unequivocally be a stable and economically, socially and politically sustained nation.

"A rapid and inclusive economic growth has been setting the country on a path to prosperity as it would for instance commence exporting wheat. The reform measures will set the foundation for a robust, resilient, and diversified middle income-level economy through the formation of a dynamic private sector and modern policy and institutional frameworks."

Vibrant homegrown economy, he said, would definitely lead to local economic and financial prosperity. However, if local decision makers lose sight of the attributes of homegrown economy to success and prioritize the financial bottom line over the triple bottom line of sustainability, they will place the very characteristics leading to success at risk. This will ultimately

undermines the community's homegrown economy and economic vitality in the long term at national level.

He further elucidated that community engagement and empowerment are both driving forces within, and benefits of, the homegrown economy. As a result, communities are better able to cooperate and coordinate in efforts towards advancing a shared vision and accomplish shared goals.

Enhancing domestic revenue mobilization, particularly significant improvement in tax collection, coupled with external resource mobilization will be at the core of the reform agenda's financing strategy and robusting homegrown economy schemes.

Citing the UN definition of extreme poverty reads, 'a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information,' Limenih said that as lack of good jobs, good education, warfare/conflict, climate change impacts, social injustice, lack of access to food, water and other basic necessities and related infrastructure, lack of good governance and prevalence of high cost of living are arch enemies of social wellbeing and national security, the issue of promoting homegrown economy has to be top on agenda.

He said, "As food prices are very unpredictable in certain areas, so when they rise, the poor have to keep cutting out other essentials and housing is a trying scenario especially in urban areas, stringent measures have to be taken."

Poverty does have, he said, numerous roots that need to get uprooted. True, encouraging sectors, investors and business community to engage in nation building schemes and homegrown economy have to be prioritized and well embarked on as these are instrumental in fueling growth and prosperity as well as helping citizens promote livelihood ranging from securing daily bread.

Access to infrastructure such as clean water, road, electric power and telecommunication projects should also be significantly improved via well exploiting homegrown assets. Sizable investments should also be made by state owned enterprises, outside of the budget, on infrastructure, housing, and commercial activities such as sugar, cement, and fertilizer projects.

As to *Melkamu*, the investment boom that has fueled Ethiopia's economic growth has been the outcome of the government's deliberate policy to scale up the much-needed investment on human capital and infrastructure. This bold move coupled with well crafted homegrown economic project would be of a meaningful means in bringing about ideal change in Ethiopia.

The investment has been financed through mobilization of domestic savings, reinvigorating homegrown economy, directing domestic credit to public sector projects and priority sectors, and working from dawn to dusk with a view to making new Ethiopia, he said.

Art & Culture

Maritu Legesse, folk singer famed “The Queen of Ambassel, Bati” returns home

BY KFLEEYESUS ABEBE

Ethiopian traditional song singer Maritu Legesse who is known as “Queen of Ambassel” returned back home after 23 years stay in USA. The story of her return has been a major entertainment news. She came after enjoying a warm farewell party organized by several fellow singers, artists, and her fans living in USA. Upon her arrival in Addis Ababa, a warm welcoming ceremony greeted her at Bole International airport and later at Ethiopian National Theatre. Government officials specifically Addis Ababa Tourism and culture head Hirut Kassaw (PhD) and others, representatives from Wollo University, artists and her fans have graced the occasion with their presence.

While expressing happiness over the return of this legendary singer, Artist Dame Mekonen from Wollo University Culture Club said Maritu proved an accomplished musician playing all modes or scales of Ethiopian traditional music. “She laid the foundation for Ethiopian music particularly traditional music. She is a legendary artist with a large contribution to Ethiopian music.”

Singer Elias Tebalal also describes Maritu a big music figure that is born and living for art.

“I know Maritu for more than 40 years. We were together in the prominent Hizb le Hizb (People to People) world tour musical performance along with other Ethiopian music figures such as Bizunesh Bekele, Tilahun Gessesse and Mahmoud Ahmed. I know her beginning from that time. I can say she is born for art. In addition to that, her kindness and thoughtfulness attract people.”

Another notable singer Shambel Belayneh remarked Maritu is a gifted singer that can sing in range of genres powerfully and fitting the bill.

“Whenever I listen her musics, some unexplicable feeling gallops my spine from my toes to head. She does all salient Ethiopian music scales that Tizita, Anchewye, Bati and Ambassel. I believe that is a gift from God. She is also kind and sociable.”

Maritu through her decades-long music



career is able to win the hearts of many Ethiopians. Nevertheless, she couldn't believe it when many people were present at the welcoming ceremony. “I am happy that I am now in my country. I am so excited, honored and grateful for this warm welcome. I didn't know that I have this many children (fans).”

Wollo University has awarded her honorary doctorate seven years ago, and now it is in the timetable of Maritu to receive this honorary doctorate now with a special program in Dessie. Afterwards, she will hold concerts in three major towns: Dessie, Gondar and Bahidar. She will also release a new album.

Maritu rose from small village Kedijo, just an hour ride from Dessie town. She is a self-trained musician playing traditional instrument Kirar and sang first in her village. She used to sing in local wedding and other similar occasions. From this small village, she managed to expand her fan-base capturing the interest of Dessie people and immediately controlling the ears of Ethiopians through her captivating music. While in Dessie she trained her husband and they were playing together. Coming to Addis Ababa, she opened Yebahel amba meaning stage of culture. She was among performers in the historic Hizb le Hizb/ People –to-People / music exhibition that traveled across the world. The purpose of the troupe was to thank nations that provided assistance during the infamous famine. The exhibition was an opportunity to showcase Ethiopian cultural richness, and musicians

like Maritu also seized it to demonstrate their unique talents.

In addition to her music excellence, Maritu was also self-appointed cultural ambassador to Ethiopia putting on cultural costumes all the time and preaching Ethiopian values. As she stayed 23 years in USA in exile, she was an active member of the diaspora voicing and encouraging Ethiopians to see the path of peace, unity and development. One of her music, “Endaw Zerafewa” which can be roughly translated to “Oh, my brave man” can be taken as an example as she in this music insists Ethiopians to be brave for sustainable peace, dialogue and togetherness. Translation may not give the whole picture and beauty of art product but the following translation of Maritu's “Endaw Zerafewa” is presented to give a hint to the reader.

Oh my brave man, oh my brave man (4)

Oh my brave man, oh my brave man (4)

I love the courageous. I don't dislike peace too (2)

The fruit of forgiveness ahh ha the promise of love (2)

Say brave man, brave man for peace and love

For this one, for this one country

Calling peace, peace, might be warming

But earned peace is champion of everything

Peace that comes through vanquishing is worse than terror (2)

....

Why are you covering up each other?!

Listen to each other stop the regret

Mother of a son tie a rope around your waist

Ethiopia my country tie a rope around your waist (2)

That is your child, that one is also your child, all a family

To whom you will favor, whom you will judge

The ambassel queen is also loved for her Tizita songs /song of reminiscence/. In her Tizta song, the listener can visualize Ethiopia's harmony, diversity and its yearn for peace and development. There is such a power that flows displaying nation's embedded tradition and wisdom. Usually, Tizta songs have Kene allegorical meaning that lets the singer convey different socio-economic and political messages. Accordingly, like legendary Beharu Kegne, Maritu exploited this genre to talk about her upbringing, life experience, passion, hopes and sometimes regrets. The songs are blended and beautified with the exemplary peaceful coexistence of people in Wollo as their rich culture that is strengthened by religious and cultural exchanges. Maritu raised the impact of Tizta music genre and its listenability.

Drowning in the river of reminiscence

I finished my flesh, left out with bones

I was asking for you, my heart aches

What have I done to you to send me only your memories instead

Some Ethiopians compare or say she is like Tina Turner or Whitney Houston. As admire both singers, Maritu for Ethiopian ears is more than any singer combined. Because her voice is unfailing and marvelous even without instruments. She doesn't even have resources and training unlike the above singers. The songs of Maritu are also very near to Ethiopian lives reminding them their tradition, values and faith. One amusing thing is her passion to music despite age. She has shown her talent is intact and has a lot to contribute to Ethiopian music by releasing a new single “Ereshreshu”/ meaning the bounty. The album is also anticipated to have similar magnitude of her previous works.

Mindfulness

BY SENAIT G/HIWOT

The world is meant to be heavenly

For those whose mind is empty

They don't worry or bother

About things that don't matter

They are conscious in the moment

Never once do they go out of it

For majority of us that isn't the case

We try to find a needle in a maize

Our intelligence demands definition

To every little thought and action.



Global Affairs

Partnership than patronization: China's foreign policy towards Africa

BY DESTA GEBREHIWOT

As the world expeditiously and increasingly moves to a multipolar order, countries are having bucket lists of alternatives to pursue their foreign policy and form alliances. Being at the receiving end of western interventionist policies, African countries are now getting alternatives to meet their rising financial and development demands.

Having a young population and untapped wealth, the African continent remains the target of superpowers sometimes a place of competition. Positioning itself as a neutral partner, China is forcing other powerful nations to redefine their foreign policies towards Africa.

Chinese development-driven foreign policy is luring African countries portraying the latter as the optimal choice of partner. Chinese development programs are said to be best suited to African countries' national conditions than the imperialist-like foreign policy of other powers.

Beijing, which is the world's second-largest economy with an equivalent population of Africa, has come up with a long list of partnership opportunities. From the staggering Belt and Road Initiative to other grand projects put forward in the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, Beijing presented itself as an equal partner in poverty alleviation and economic advancement which many see as a stark departure from the western patronizing role.

Now Chinese marks are becoming increasingly visible in African countries. From modern railway projects to expressways and modern road networks, Beijing is not only setting the tone but its mark at the helm of Africa's development projects.

China-Africa trade and China's investment in Africa have been on a steady rise. Almost

all African members of FOCAC have joined the big family of Belt and Road cooperation. All these have injected strong impetus into the China-Africa comprehensive strategic and cooperative partnership. To deepen their bond, the two sides have jointly prepared the China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035.

Besides increasing its presence in the continent in terms of economic cooperation, the country is also on equal footing with Africa in opposing political intervention. In his speech during the 2021 FOCAC, Chinese President Xi Jinping said at the opening ceremony of the 8th FOCAC Ministerial Conference held in 2021 that China and Africa oppose intervention in domestic affairs, racial discrimination, and unilateral sanctions. We need to unequivocally stand for the just propositions of developing countries and translate our common aspirations and interests into joint actions.

China has launched a three-year programs in 8 areas allocating billions of USD for projects ranging from poverty reduction to green initiatives. The country also funneled billions of dollars to encourage more investment and trade between the two sides.

In so doing, Beijing also increases the scope of products enjoying zero-tariff treatment for the least developed countries (LDCs) having diplomatic relations with China, in a bid to reach 300 billion US dollars in total imports from Africa in the next three years.

China also aims to provide 10 billion US dollars of trade finance to support African export and build China a pioneering zone for in-depth China-Africa trade and economic cooperation.

At the heart of Sino-Africa cooperation is Ethiopia which headquarters of the African Union. China over the past two years has been Ethiopia's shield in the Security Council preventing unfair interventions by some countries.

Both countries have in fact seen their ties cemented since the coming of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed with Beijing either financing or building mega projects in Addis Ababa.

Beijing has been opposing political intervention by the West in connection with the conflict in Tigray state.

And lately, in a gesture that showcases the strong partnership of Ethiopia and China, the latter's newly appointed Foreign Minister Qin Gang who stopped in Addis Ababa as per of his first visit to Africa since taking office pledged more elevated ties with Ethiopia.

Gang who also served previously as Chinese ambassador to the US held talks with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen yesterday.

Gang in his address to journalists after talks with Demeke said that his visit to Ethiopia carries special meaning in the two countries' bilateral ties. Ethiopia is an anchor state in Africa with staggering influence. And the relations between both countries remain unbreakable as the minister expressed Beijing's readiness to consolidate the all-rounded relation with Addis Ababa.

"I came here to demonstrate the close friendship between China and Ethiopia and the important position China and Africa partnership in the latter's overall diplomatic agenda."

Over recent years, the two countries cooperation reached a new height under the leadership of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and XI Jinping.

"Our two sides have a high degree of consensus in building political trust. And deepen and expand cooperation, the two countries to mutually beneficiary projects. China will encourage more Chinese investment in Ethiopia and will greatly engage in the construction of the country."

Both countries also agreed to strengthen coordination in multilateral matters and jointly address global challenges China wants to see Ethiopia play a big role in international and regional frontiers. China is ready to intensify communication and cooperation to be partners in jointly defending fairness and justice in the global arena.

The two countries also signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen political consultations and build on mutual trust.

Deputy Prime Minister Demeke who previously congratulated Gang on his appointment said that Ethiopia and China enjoy historic. And, the long longstanding relationships and over the years have seen elevation.

Demeke extended his appreciation to China for its position in northern Ethiopia in what he described as a principled stance and historic engagement in supporting Ethiopia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

It is to be noted that the two countries have signed a comprehensive strategic agreement and have been working towards its materialization.

"We have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to boost our political consultation and further foster bilateral ties and expand our cooperation."

"I have briefed the minister about the implementation of the Pretoria peace pact and the major activities the government of Ethiopia taking since the signing of the deal. We have reviewed encouraging security and peace development initiatives in the Horn region and Africa at large."

The two countries have also agreed to cement their historic cooperation in regional and global affairs in the face of unprecedented challenges, the Deputy Prime Minister added.

African solutions ...

Trump, for all intents and purposes, egged the Egyptians to bomb the GERD if Ethiopia refuses to sign the "agreement" cooked up by Mnuchin, Malpass and Shoukry:

And they'll end up blowing up the dam. And I said it — and ***I say it loud and clear, "They'll blow up that dam." And they have to do something.*** So whatever you can do to get them, Ethiopia, to do that, they're going to have to. Okay? ***And we've cut off all payment and everything else to Ethiopia.*** (Boldface added.)

Secretary Antony Blinken appointed US Special Envoy Mike Hammer (after Jeffrey Feltman and David Satterfield crashed and burned) who has travelled to Egypt several times since his appointment on June 1, 2022.

Hammer is a poor and pathetic excuse for a diplomat. Hammer, in his first mission, was sent to Ethiopia as a negotiator — truth be told as a hitman — for the TPLF.

Hammer's first mission failed when the African Union took over mediation and negotiations

between the Ethiopian Government and the TPLF and successfully arranged for a permanent ceasefire and transition to civilian rule.

Hammer's second mission is to reprise his role as a TPLF hit man for Egypt. Hammer's mission as special envoy is to strategize with Egyptian officials on the best way to sell Ethiopia down the Nile River.

During his first visit to Egypt Hammer said: I came to Cairo on my first official trip to the region to hear from our Egyptian partners on the critical issue of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and to better understand Egypt's water needs. ***We are actively engaged in supporting a diplomatic way forward under the African Union's auspices that arrives at an agreement that provides for the long-term needs of every citizen along the Nile.*** (Boldface added.)

Hammer gives only lip service to a GERD "agreement under African Union's auspices." ***Behind the scenes, Hammer is working like the***

devil in hell to sabotage, thwart, undermine and sideline the African Union in the GERD dispute.

Hammer fancies he will snag the Nobel Peace Prize by mediating the GERD talks to a successful completion. What a motley fool! ***The fact of the matter is that Hammer could not punch his way out of a paper bag let alone resolve the complex issues involved in the GERD.***

On July 16, 2022, in a "Joint Statement Following Meeting between President Biden and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi in Jeddah", Biden said: Regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), ***President Biden reiterated U.S. support for Egypt's water security*** and to forging a diplomatic resolution that would achieve the interests of all parties and contribute to a more peaceful and prosperous region. The two leaders reiterated the ***imperative of concluding an agreement on the filling and operation of the GERD without further delay*** as stipulated

in the Statement of the President of the United Nations Security Council dated September 15, 2021, and in accordance with international law. (Boldface added.)

So, there is no question the Biden administration will use everything in its tool box — sanctions, demonizing propaganda, blockage of loans, pressuring Middle Eastern governments to pressure Ethiopia, etc. — ***to sell Ethiopia down the Nile River.***

It reminds me of the lyrics in "Ol' Man River", a song that contrasts the struggles and hardships of African Americans with the mundane and indifferent flow of the Mississippi River (paraphrased):

There's an old man called *Uncle Sam Biden / That's the old man I don't like to be!* What does he care if Ethiopia got troubles? / What does he care if Ethiopia ain't free to use its GERD?

But Ethiopia keeps laughin' / Instead of cryin' Ethiopia must keep fightin' / Until she's winin'

Law & Politics

Pretoria peace deal: Turning over a new leaf in Ethiopia's history

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is absolutely clear that the people of Tigray have been enunciating their firm stance to stand by the side of the federal government in oiling the wheels of the peace implementation. In actual fact, since the onset of the peace agreement, they have been smoothing the path of the delivery of humanitarian assistance and restoration of social infrastructure working in close collaboration with the incumbent.

As they have learned the fact that nobody benefits from the conflict that lasted for two years in the northern part of the country, they have been leaving no stone unturned to bury the hatchet in the shortest possible time. It is true that in light of the current situation, Tigrayans residing in Addis Ababa have been successfully lending support to the federal government. Reasoning from this fact, the whole thing has been developing in the right direction time and time again.

It is a well-known fact that in the wake of the peace agreement signed in Pretoria, the federal government has been showing its firm stance to end an armed conflict and end hostilities putting into effect quite a lot of effective strategies that can assist the progress of the peace agreement and help meet the target.

If truth be told, Ethiopia's stance towards the African Union in black and white demonstrates its confidence in Africa's capability to get to the bottom of its problem on its way. Against this backdrop, Ethiopia's stance as well plays a great role in averting the interest of some foreign entities that have been working around the clock to besmirch the positive moves of the country.

The cessation of the hostilities agreement has been playing a huge role in curtailing the interference of some entities endeavoring day and night to knock off the balance of the country. It cannot be denied that given the current circumstances, the incumbent has been going to the ends of the earth to ensure peace and tranquility in the northern part of the country and thus Ethiopia has been making history.

There is no doubt that on the heels of the incumbent's commitment to getting to the bottom of the northern predicaments in an atmosphere of calm, the whole lot in the Tigray State has been drawing cheers from the wider international community in addition to receiving a pat on the back. As things currently stand, multiple changes that can smooth the path of implementation of the cessation of hostilities agreement at all hours of the day and night have been successfully bearing fruits.

It is important to highlight that notwithstanding the fact that quite a lot of efforts have been made by Ethiopia's adversaries to give a lower profile to the role of the African Union, Ethiopia in the course of time ended up becoming triumphant over the peace deal at the earliest possible juncture. Although the AU-led peace talks have been coming to fruition, some entities that hate to see a peaceful Ethiopia have been engaged in tarnishing the promising moves of the incumbent.

In the current climate, residents of the



Tigray state in every part of the country have been expressing their innermost feelings on the grounds that the whole thing has been moving in the right direction. The peace accord that has been signed in Pretoria, South Africa, between the federal government and Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) without a doubt has proved the resolve of the government to patch things up at the earliest possible moment and ensure peace and tranquility all over the country.

Since the onset of the war, Ethiopia has been bending over backward to halt external pressure that emanates from Ethiopia's adversaries under the veil of human rights violations, delivery of humanitarian assistance, and other things of a similar kind. Honestly speaking, as peace is the foundation for the survival of the whole nation, the federal government has been giving prominence to pave the way for peace implementation. On the basis thereof, all and sundry have been feeling over the moon.

As accomplishing the socioeconomic well-being of the nation devoid of peace is a wild goose chase, the incumbent has been engaged in smoothing the path of the delivery of humanitarian assistance and restoration of social infrastructure in the Tigray State. In addition to returning to normalcy, the cessation of hostilities of agreement has been giving rise to restoring peace and tranquility all over the country almost immediately.

Regardless of the fact that some entities have been downplaying the role of AU coming up with quite a lot of treacheries, the latter metamorphosed into making history at the earliest possible moment. The other thing is that some entrepreneurs of war have been many a time and oft spreading fictitious stories giving the cold shoulder to the existing reality on the ground.

As opposed to resolving the problem in an atmosphere of calm, some entities have been sparing no effort to up the ante by coming up with ample amounts of fake news stories to bamboozle the wider international community.

Needless to say, the peace agreement has been making a supreme effort in hindering the treachery of Ethiopia's adversaries that have been working around the clock to break apart the entire nation. No matter how hard they try, bringing about the

intended destination has turned out to be an impossible task.

It is common knowledge that the peace accord has been playing a pivotal role in returning to normalcy the whole lot in the northern part of the country. Other than that following the peace deal multifarious fruitful activities have been unfolding in the Tigray State.

In the current situation, in the aftermath of the free flow of humanitarian assistance and the restoration of social infrastructure, inhabitants of the Tigray state have been expressing their infinite happiness. Though some groups have been sparing no efforts to hinder the cessation-of-hostilities agreement, all their efforts have been getting off track and missing the mark. They have been persistently taking part in cock and bull stories aimed at besmirching the positive developments blossoming in every corner of the country.

It is to be recalled that the Federal Police of Ethiopia, which is authorized to protect institutions of the federal government, stated that it reentered Mekelle, the capital of Tigray State for protection purposes.

In a statement issued, the Ethiopian Federal Police Commission announced that it embarked on working to protect federal institutions.

Following the peace agreement reached by the government and the TPLF, the Ethiopian Federal Police will carry out the protection of airports, electricity, telecom services, banks, and other federal institutions that provide services to the public in Tigray.

The peace agreement reached between the federal government and TPLF demonstrates Ethiopia's capability of resolving conflict peacefully, Peace State Minister Taye Dendea said.

Tigrayans residing in Addis Ababa are deliberating on the role of the peace agreement for strengthening coexistence and ensuring lasting peace, according to information obtained from the Ethiopian News Agency.

In his opening remark, Peace State Minister Taye Dendea said Ethiopians have been resolving their problems peacefully by preventing conflicts through consultations.

In this regard, the State Minister pointed out that the peace agreement signed in South Africa has opened a new chapter

in Ethiopia's history in terms of resolving conflicts in a peaceful manner.

The peace agreement is historic and everyone should play its part to benefit from the peace dividend, he added.

The conflict has inflicted various damages, he said, adding the agreement has sparked hope for a brighter future of the country. Participants have appreciated the commitment in resolving the situation peacefully.

They urged everyone to help maintain momentum of the peace agreement implementation. Following the peace agreement the delivery of humanitarian aid has been intensified in war-affected areas in addition to the restoration of various services including electric supply, telecom, air transport, banking among others.

Tigrayans have also been expressing joy and commitment to contribute their role in support of realizing the peace agreement signed between the government and TPLF.

According to the local media, Tigrayans residing in the capital, Addis Ababa noted that the Pretoria peace agreement opens a new chapter for togetherness among Ethiopians and ensures durable peace in the country.

Tigrayans discussed on the signed agreement under the theme "Peace Agreement for our Togetherness and Durable Peace".

Participants of the discussion expressed joy and appreciated the government for its commitment to ending the two-year war through a peaceful mechanism.

The peace agreement has averted the death of lives and destruction of property, they said, adding that the agreement has opened a new chapter for a durable peace in the country. They also commended the practical commitment being demonstrated by the government to resume basic services after the peace agreement.

Noting that preceding government systems that existed in various eras had both good and bad histories, they said past histories should be taken as foundations to draw lessons instead of becoming cause for conflict.

They urged that everyone should stand firm in implementing the agreement to bear the peace dividend. Moreover, they called on religious leaders to discharge their responsibility of teaching the youth become peace advocate.

Peace State Minister Taye Dendea said on the occasion that Ethiopians have been resolving their problems peacefully by preventing conflicts through consultations.

In this regard, the State Minister pointed out that the peace agreement signed in South Africa has opened a new chapter in Ethiopia's history in terms of resolving conflicts in a peaceful manner.

The peace agreement is historic and everyone should play its part to benefit from the peace dividend, he added.

The conflict has inflicted various damages, he said, adding the agreement has sparked hope for a brighter future of the country.

Planet Earth

Expanding Orange-fleshed sweet potato production for multi-benefits

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Sweet potato is an essential food security crop for millions of people in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. Farmers predominantly grow sweet potatoes for human food consumption and animal feed. They produce carbohydrate-rich storage roots with a substantial amount of vitamins A, B complex, C, and E, as well as minerals including calcium, potassium, and iron.

Ethiopia is one of the largest sweet potato producing countries in the world and the farmers produce a variety of sweet potatoes since the highest diversity was found in the country. Despite ecological disparities, sweet potatoes broadly grow in the south, southwestern and eastern parts of the country by small-scale farmers.

Sweet potatoes are produced across the country overcoming various challenges including scarcity of land, labor and capital. According to Ethiopian Central Statistics Agency (CSA) 2014/2015 survey report, lack of improved variety, low yielding, disease-resistant and good quality seed potato varieties are major challenges that potato-producing farmers have been facing.

Hence, the provision of quality and improved sweet potato variety seeds are generally taken as essential measures to increase production and productivity throughout the country. The government, taking the challenges into account, has given due attention to the improvement and distribution of sweet potatoes.

Haramaya University Research and Extension and Publication Director Dr. Chanyalew Seyoum said that sweet potatoes have many uses and benefits in Ethiopia. Nevertheless, their yield in many areas of the country is below the potential due to drought, heat, and low soil fertility. Therefore, the government encourages higher institutions to conduct research that improves sweet potato seeds for better results and yields.

As a result, Universities have been working with local and international higher institutions, NGOs, farmers' unions, and cooperatives to improve sweet potatoes. Haramaya University has been also working with International Potato Center to improve the sweet potatoes that are planted across the country.

Accordingly, better results have been registered in improving sweet potatoes. Even the areas of East and South Hararge, which did not plant sweet potatoes before, are able to grow sweet potatoes which can alleviate food shortages caused by a frequent shortage of rain in the region. Apart from improving food security, planting sweet potatoes support the farmers in increasing their household income.

Shamil Alo Sora (2021) academic article entitled "Evaluation of Sweet Potato (*Ipomoea Batatas* (L) Lam) Varieties at Tepi, Southwestern Ethiopia" stated that sweet potato is one of the most significant root and tuber crops that has food and



feed value. It is also recognized as the best crop not only ensuring food security but also has a high potential for increasing household income, and poverty reduction. Besides, the production of sweet potatoes is significant to ensure higher yields, better income, secure nutritional value, and enhanced livelihoods in the country.

Indeed, producing sweet potatoes have a wide range of use and benefits such as being chipped and milled into flour for making snacks, baby foods, and boiled and eaten as food for families. But the country produces sweet potatoes that are white-fleshed which are poor yielding and vitamin deficient. Besides, white-fleshed sweet potatoes have low quality and nutritional values.

Hence, Haramaya University has been collaborating with stakeholders and the concerned bodies to provide Orange-flesh sweet potatoes (OFSP) variety that has better quality and nutritional values than white-fleshed sweet potatoes.

As stated by Dr. Chanyalew, Orange-flesh sweet potato, unlike white-fleshed sweet potatoes, is rich in pro-vitamin A. It is also proved that it contributes to normal eyesight, healthy skin and mucous membranes, healthy cell growth, reproduction, and immunity to diseases such as malaria, measles, and respiratory diseases.

Moreover, Orange-fleshed sweet potato is a special type of biofortified sweet potato that holds high levels of beta-carotene. Beta-Carotene is an organic, red-orange pigment plentiful in plants and fruits. Apart from being rich in vitamin A, orange-fleshed sweet potato is climate-and nutrition-smart crops. In addition to providing a valuable source of energy, orange-fleshed sweet potato is an ideal staple to grow in densely populated and drought-prone communities.

Furthermore, beta-carotene is what gives Orange-fleshed sweet potato an orange color and is changed to Vitamin A in the body after consumption to provide additional nutritional benefits. Bio fortification boosts the nutritional value of staple food crops by increasing the density of vitamins and minerals in a crop through either conventional plant breeding, agronomic practices, or biotechnology. Examples of these vitamins and minerals that can be increased through bio fortification include



Sweet potato especially, Orange fleshed sweet potato is important for fighting the Vitamin A deficiency problem which is taken as a public health challenge in Ethiopia. It is also imperative for pregnant women and children, particularly the Orange fleshed type, which produces storage-carotene, roots precursor rich in Vitamin A

pro-vitamin A Carotenoids, zinc, and iron.

In addition to the provision of Orange-flesh sweet potato to users either by selling at a lower cost or for free, the university, to meet the demands of society, also provides more than 1.5 cut sweet potato seeds to farmers via Tony Farm center that is located in Dire Dawa City Administration, Dr. Chanyalew elucidated.

Apart from providing Orange-flesh sweet

potato and improved seed to the farmers, the university has been doing various activities that will put the youth to work. In particular, the youth were given training that enable them to create jobs by preparing Orange-flesh sweet potato not only to be boiled and eaten but also to be served in bread, juice, cookies, injera, and so on. Such training should be strengthened to make the result of the improved seeds accessible not only to farmers but to all sections of society, he stressed.

Sweet potato especially, Orange fleshed sweet potato is important for fighting the Vitamin A deficiency problem which is taken as a public health challenge in Ethiopia. It is also imperative for pregnant women and children, particularly the Orange fleshed type, which produces storage-carotene, roots precursor rich in Vitamin A. Consequently, Orange fleshed sweet potato is a promising crop variety to solve the Vitamin A deficiency that is required by women and children to avoid malnutrition.

In fact, agriculture is the backbone of the Ethiopian economy, contributing over 43 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), generating around 85 percent of export income, and creating about 86 percent of the population. Ethiopia has highly diversified agro ecological environments which are suitable for the production of numerous varieties of fruit and vegetables including sweet potatoes.

Therefore, the government and concerned bodies should work to modernize and increase the production of sweet potatoes since it is necessary to transform the agricultural sector, expand job opportunities, ensure food security, support the health sector by providing Vitamin and so on. In particular, it is very important to create awareness to make society consume Orange-flesh sweet potato every day instead of consuming it only in times of drought and crisis.