



# The Ethiopian Herald

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## Ethiopia building green foundation for posterity

### • Shares greenery success in Abu Dhabi climate Summit

BY BILAL DERSO

**ADDIS ABABA** - The Ethiopian government is building resilience and setting a green foundation for generations to come, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said, adding that it has mobilized 25 million citizens to plant 25 billion seedlings within four years.

The Premier made the above remark in the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week (ADSW)

Summit held in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) capital yesterday.

In 2019, Ethiopia launched a practical action through the Green Legacy Initiative that within four years mobilized 25 million citizens to plant 25 billion seedlings. This is equivalent to 250 seedlings per Ethiopian and the impact could be equated to removing 64 million gasoline-powered cars from the roads for a whole year, Abiy told the Summit.

The government is taking bold actions to

install a green culture and the initiative has created national awareness of climate change. The initiative also enabled the creation of green jobs and is making a positive impact on the environment.

Noting a sustainable future is predicated on the commitment of a nation to collectively and inclusively realize such a future, he stressed that Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative is the most extensive afforestation

*See Ethiopia building ... page 3*

## Ethiopian envoys prioritize economic diplomacy

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA** - Ethiopian diplomats expressed readiness to prioritize economic diplomacy and to create the linkage between the former and the private sectors of countries of deployment.

Speaking at the discussion forum held recently between diplomats and the private sector, Ethiopian Ambassador to Italy Demitu Hambisa said due attention has been given to taking advantage of Italy's enormous investment opportunities and growing economic dynamism.

*See Ethiopian envoys... page 3*



## Boat procession to lure over 200,000 visitors

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** - Batu Town Culture and Tourism Office announced that it has planned to collect over 1,000,000 Birr from over 200,000 tourists during this year's boat Timket/ Epiphany/ procession

at Dembel lake.

The Office Head Aman Ediwo told The Ethiopian Herald that the town has finished preparations to welcome over 200,000 visitors, in doing so, the office to secure over 1,000,000 Birr.

*See Boat procession... page 3*

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## GENA Mobile Package



## Timket cements social bond, deepens national unity: Ministry

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**ADDIS ABABA**- The colorful celebration of Timket (Ethiopian Epiphany) strengthens the long-cherished societal bond as well as deepens the sense of unity among people,

*See Timket cements... page 3*

# News

## Gorgora showcases nation's swift tourism dev't: *Ambassadors*

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA** – Ethiopian ambassadors and diplomats have recently visited Gorgora, one of the three potential tourist destinations which is also part of “Dine for Nation Initiative” project.

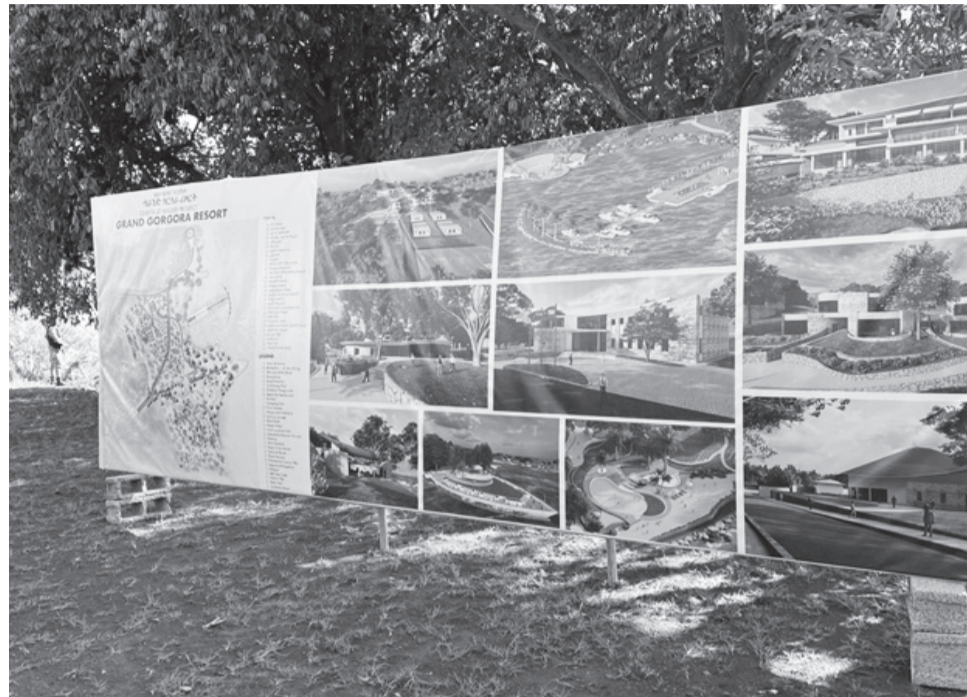
During the visit, Foreign Affairs State Minister Ambassador Birtukan Ayano stated that the construction progress of this giant project is not interrupted by many diplomatic pressures, conflict and others.

At the event, she urged the ambassadors to play their role in promoting this tourist site across the world.

Ambassador Ababi Demissie on his part said that Gorgora surely will change not only its habitants but also the entire development of the region.

During their visit, ambassadors also said that this huge project is a gearshift for the nation's image building and development apart from leading the country to prosperity.

It was learnt that the ambassador's visit will contribute to strengthening tourism and investment activities.



The Gorgora project is designed to captivate tourist flow and establish various development projects by harnessing its natural resources and enticing energy. It is also stated that Gorgora project consists of modern seaside cafes and cycling and horse riding, restaurants, the development of

agricultural research development of fishing activities and related mega projects.

So far, the government of Ethiopia has introduced the tourist attraction sites in Amhara, Oromia, and Southern Nation Nationality and People's states under the nationwide 'Dine for Nation Initiative'.



Mesay Hinsene

## Enterprises create 17,000 jobs via goods finance

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

**ADDIS ABABA** - Some 4,500 enterprises, which are provided with pieces of machinery amounting to 1.2 billion Birr from Addis Capital Goods Finance Business S.C (ACGFB), have created jobs for 17,000 citizens over the last six years.

General Manager ACGFB Mesay Hinsene told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the company has provided some 4,500- enterprises with pieces of machinery at an outlay of 1.2 billion Birr, in turn it has created 17,000 jobs.

He said that the enterprise development and capital equipment finance services lease is instrumental in buttressing productivity and growth in various enterprises.

Capital goods finance is one of the sectors of finance that has a wide contribution to the international level and is a service sector needed by many countries.

Mesay also explained that ACGFB has been operating in Ethiopia for six years. Capital goods financing is great potential for enterprises to obtain training, set up space, and develop their skills.

“Instead of going around looking for a government job after graduating from university, they are engaged in the sector as per their desire to change is growing.

Enterprises will be able to start their operations after obtaining/fulfilling a business license, place and a 15 percent advance payment for manufacturing and 25 percent for the service sector,” he added.

The Manager said that the advance payment is to keep the idea of ownership of the machinery, where they can work and share.

Many enterprises are not aware of the existence of financial services. Realizing this, he called upon the users to take advantage of the opportunity to be effective, he claimed.

Addis Capital was established with a capital of 955 million Birr and launched its services in 2014, with a view to providing machinery to Addis Ababa-based medium manufacturing enterprises on a lease and loan basis without collateral.

## Canada donates 8.8 mln USD for WFP Ethiopia

BY HAILE DEMEKE

**ADDIS ABABA** – Canada has donated 8.8 million USD for World Food Program (WFP)'s humanitarian response in Ethiopia.

WFP has expressed gratitude to the people of Canada for timely contribution and partnership in meeting the most urgent food and nutrition needs in Ethiopia.

Likewise the government of Ethiopia's National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) and UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) jointly released report that the humanitarian supplies continue to be delivered to Tigray region of Ethiopia through all corridors.

According to the recent joint report, about 2,570 trucks of food supplies and 384 trucks of non-food supplies transported since mid-



November 2022. The response however is still inadequate to meet the needs. The report covers from 15 November to 12 January, it was learnt.

It was also known that the humanitarian supplies continue to be delivered to Tigray through all corridors via road and airlifts through Mekelle and Shire. While onwards dispatch to affected communities is progressing.

UNHAS and Ethiopian Airlines are also conducting regular flights, while humanitarian staff convoy movements are being coordinated to mobilize staff and supplies from Mekelle to other towns. Telecommunication and public and private banks are being restored in more towns. Meanwhile, considering the upcoming rehabilitation and recovery plan in Tigray, the Return Working Group reported transitioning to a Durable Solution Working Group.

## University sets environmental conservational projects in motion

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA** - Debre Markos University has launched several projects aiming at preserving natural and cultural resources of Choke Mountain and the ecosystem around its environs.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), the university Choke Mountain Watershed research and development Director Migbaru Hunde (Ph.D) said that the biodiversity in the mountain was threatened by human made factors. For that reason, Debre Markos University has launched conservational projects intended

to augment biodiversity.

“The mountain is known for its source of water. But, it was losing its name, water tower of Africa. Nowadays, the biodiversity and ecological features of the mountain are reviving again,” he said.

In parallel with conservational works, the University has built platform with Ministry of Tourism; and advertisements about the destination are being publicized via social media and broadcasters, he added.

Ten to 15 percent of the Nile river water is also from this mountain, and the forest coverage of the mountain was badly declined due to overgrazing and deforestation. If it

was unanswered, the environmental change across the Nile basin would be harsh, he explained.

Community based development projects including bee keeping and bamboo plantation have been launched and expected to create 5,000 jobs to the local community. Over 1,000 local youths are working on apiculture project, he indicated.

Last month (December 21), the World Tourism Organization (WTO), a UN specialized agency, has named Choke Mountains Eco village in Ethiopia among the Best Tourism Villages 2022, named the Eco village as best tourism village for its cultural and natural resources.

# News

## More war affected towns regain electricity

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA** - Additional war affected towns' regained electric service, the local media report indicated.

The local media indicated that Towns in Tigray state such as AddiHageray and Shiraro have regained electric service as of last Sunday.

The media also announced that the towns

received electricity from the Shire power distribution station, and the two towns in Tigray region were reconnected to the electric power following the completion of electricity infrastructure maintenance, which was damaged during the recent conflict.

The report also indicated that last one month, the power services were restored in most parts of Tigray state.

Moreover, very recently efforts are underway to maintain damaged power lines in all war affected areas of Tigray, Amhara and Afar states.

In the wake of the peace agreement, technicians have been deployed to Tigray in addition to the two regions; Amhara and Afar, and damaged facilities have been reequipped with the necessary spare parts.



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Ethiopian Electric Utility

### Ethiopia...

and reforestation program in the world next to Amazon.

“Our initiative will certainly contribute towards removing the equivalent of hundreds of millions of tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and reduce deforestation. This implies Ethiopia’s significant contribution to the global climate change mitigation efforts.”

Apart from the Green Legacy Initiative, Ethiopia’s home-grown economic reform program is underpinned by principles of sustainable growth and the recently-launched Ten-Year Development Plan also emphasizes a resource-efficient and climate resilient industrial economy.

Despite such progress, Ethiopia is still among the developing nations that are vulnerable to climate change. Considering this vulnerability, the government is cognizant of the pressing need for climate change adaptation across all sectors in the country. “Although we are at the mercy of high emitters, we are nevertheless committed to doing our part,” Abiy added.

To reverse the challenge, Ethiopia developed its long-term net zero and climate resilient 2050 strategy which will enhance its ability to plan for the decarbonization of the economy. The strategy outlines ambitious scenarios in priority sectors which will contribute to making Ethiopia’s economy more innovative and sustainable.

“Ethiopia is also blessed with abundant renewable energy resources and entirely generates electricity from hydroelectric, wind, solar and geothermal sources. While we have been making progress in effectively tapping into this energy potential, we still have more room and opportunities for growth.”

Emphasizing the importance of global partnerships in sustaining Ethiopia’s success, the Prime Minister expressed his government’s desire to replicate the strong trade and investment partnership with the UAE in realizing a green economy.

Compared with the past similar period, this year’s expected revenue has showed double increment.

It was learnt that the Timket celebration will be held on January 19, 2023 on the lake that the ark of covenant drawn from two islands and coming on the lake using boats. The faithful get baptized on the shore of lake just to commemorate Jesus’s baptism.

Aman said that the town is capable of providing visitors and tourists with great hospitality, infrastructure, accommodations like food, resorts, hotels,

### Boat procession to...

and the likes. Therefore, tourists coming from everywhere to the town can enjoy freely, confidently and will be embraced warmly.

According to the Head, Batu town has huge tourist destinations as it houses more than 200 bird species, ancient churches, monasteries, birds’ islands, hippopotamus, and the likes. Particularly, Gelila Island is different from other islands due to the presence of one church and one person who has been living alone there.

Aman further noted that the town has been promoting tourist destinations and

developing lake shores by allocating a huge amount of finance. This move would bring paramount contribution to ensuring destination development, widening infrastructure, realizing best tourist sites, creating more jobs, and ensuring adequate benefit out of the tourism sector upon project completion.

It is to be recalled that the baptism celebration is memorizing the baptism of Jesus by the hands of John in the river Jordan, while Ethiopians mark baptism in different places on 19 January each year.

### Ethiopian envoys...

Demitu further noted that Ethiopia’s Embassy in Milan and the Consulate General in Milan have held regular discussions with Italian companies and investors on the way to invest in Ethiopia. Accordingly, in the last year alone, several large-scale Italian companies invested in different sectors in Ethiopia and created a sizable number of jobs. “We are working to link the Ethiopian private sector with Italian counterparts.”

Ethiopian Ambassador to South Korea Dessie Dalke also stated that a preliminary agreement that allows South Korean technology companies to invest

in Ethiopia has been reached. “There are positive developments in partnering the Ethiopian private sector with the South Koreans. The embassy has given special consideration to economic diplomacy.”

For his part, the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations President Melaku Ezezew (Eng.) said that the economic situation of Ethiopia still needs rigorous diplomatic partnerships with industrialized nations. “Ethiopian investors need technology and knowledge exchange; so diplomats should create vital events and platforms that aim to interlink Ethiopians with foreigners.”

Foreign Affairs State Minister Ambassador Misganu Arga also stated that the government desires diplomats and missionaries to capitalize on international bazaars and trade expos to promote Ethiopia’s trade and investment opportunities.

Diplomats should follow scientific and international approaches. The economic potential of Ethiopia can pull real investors if it is promoted properly. So, the growing foreign direct investment needs further steps for more favorable results, the state minister remarked.

### Timket cements...

the Ministry of Tourism said.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Tourism State Minister Seleshi Girma stated that Timket, which is among the most-cherished street religious festivities in the country, has a paramount significance in cementing social bonds.

“Timket signifies solidarity of the people as it is being marked by the faithful who are coming from all walks of life.”

Moreover, the religious festivity serves the nation to promote its long-standing values of respect, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence. A simple example in this regard is the participation of non-Orthodox Christians in cleaning and beautifying churches and the roads that the arks are brought out by priests and cantors to pools.

Apart from the apparent religious value,

Timket also enables Ethiopia to generate a substantial amount of foreign currency from international tourists and is among the main reasons that visitors come to Ethiopia. To increase the forex earnings, extensive promotion of the festivity has been carried out, the state minister elaborated.

“Not only the tourists come to take part at the religious festivals, but they also come to visit Ethiopia’s world-famous attraction sites, and taking the aforementioned facts into account, tour operators must exert their responsibilities decently and responsibly.”

Welcoming and appropriately serving the tourists should not be left to a single entity, thus, every citizen must play their role in every possible way. Furthermore, activities are carried out to make the

tourists’ stay memorable and comfortable which could entice other tourists’ interest to visit the country.

Noting preparation has been finalized for the successful conduct of the festivity, Seleshi indicated that volunteer youth groups are working in unison with law enforcement organs to ensure law and order in the grand event. For his part, Addis Ababa Diocese’s Sunday School Organizing Department disclosed that over 40,000 Sunday school youth will accompany the procession which is led by priests and cantors.

The Department Deputy Head and the youth coordinator and trainer of the committee established for Epiphany, Priest Tekelereit Gebrewold indicated that there are over 250 churches as well as 72 nearby rivers and pools ready for the festivity.

# Opinion

## Roles of volunteers in developing community

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Volunteers play significant roles in developing Ethiopian communities in both the rural and urban areas. They help individuals, groups, and communities without any financial or material gain. They play pivotal roles to achieve individual and institutional goals. Volunteers pull together resources through their network for achieving objectives that serve the interest of communities around them. They are motivated to enhance the capacities and potentials of communities for guaranteeing their common wellbeing. They engage in advocating policy for social work education and practice. They give emphasis to the role media plays in promoting volunteerism and its challenges. In Ethiopia, where the majority of the people suffer from poverty, the role of volunteers in eradicating or minimizing poverty is immense.

Volunteerism contributes significantly to the individual, social, economical and psychological wellbeing of people in the developing countries, including Ethiopia. Generally, the concept has been understood as a voluntary and free contribution of individuals and groups to socio-economic development within a given society. Volunteers serve as reservoirs of knowledge for preparing and implementing socio-economic development programs in a country. Through their active participation, volunteers can empower people with the confidence, skills and knowledge necessary to effect change in their respective communities. In this respect, voluntary non-governmental organizations, NGOs, are key players in communities as service providers, enhancing the overall economic growth of Ethiopia. In so doing, they are expected to reduce the burden on government.

A key role by volunteers is creating a fertile ground for the economy to grow through investing in people. They help in imparting skills through training that improves the employability of people seeking jobs. Volunteer centers can help to expand the opportunities for engagement in the public sector. They also facilitate private investments in various sectors of the economy. If the state offers its recognition to volunteer organizations, it will have an impact on socio-economic development of the country. In addition to the state, the civil society, the private sector and international agencies all have a role to play. They can create and foster an enabling environment for people's participation in the economic development of Ethiopia.

According to some charities operating in Ethiopia, volunteers are people who are prepared to give all forms of assistance to the people with all expertise and time they have. As a result, some Ethiopian volunteers are important instruments for the non-profit sector. They improve the delivery of services to the people

by increasing the effectiveness of entities they serve. In return, they may be rewarded with acquiring new skills and attitudes. It is also suggested that volunteers are individuals and groups that contribute to community development by committing time and energy for the benefit of individuals, families, communities, the society and the environment. Volunteers' act is undertaken freely and without any financial gain. Their contribution is vital to the delivery of services to people in need.

Concerned institutions have realized that they alone cannot build communities without the involvement of volunteers. These volunteers could understand and respond to the social needs of the people who wanted assistance. They improved service delivery by mobilizing and becoming involved in projects that generate income through cost effective response to the needs of the poor people. Volunteers also ensure a variety of community response to emergency situations such as flood, fire and harvest loss. They could influence public attitudes for the wellbeing and cohesion of individuals, communities and agencies. They ensure that these agencies are being effective in assisting volunteers. They use successful programs and projects that will attract the active engagements of agencies in volunteers' missions. This will lead to less stress and confusion.

It is not only wealthy people who volunteer to help those persons with lesser economic opportunities. Many volunteers may live in poverty themselves but they take actions to improve their livelihoods and those of the communities in which they live. Volunteers are valuable human resources. Most charities could not perform without these volunteers. They certainly would be less productive and responsive without them. There are agencies that organize and mobilize volunteer services which aim to solicit resources to meet the needs of individuals and groups that live in utter poverty. The main focus of these agencies is to mobilize voluntary services and develop sustainable resource base in order to support their beneficiaries and the society at large.

These agencies strengthened mutual support and care at neighborhood and community levels. They mobilize "only" those that have strong belief in assisting the poor communities. The volunteer service has been supported and promoted by different sectors that played active and vital roles to stimulate and strengthen volunteerism. The objective of such effort is to assist poor citizens to lead quality of life using local resources. Being human centered the main role players are the people themselves. People from all walks of life including students, workers, professionals, elderly, young people and women actively participate in volunteer services. There is a growing consensus that volunteer services can make a difference in the lives of many Ethiopians and lay the

base for community development.

In Ethiopia, volunteers have a great role in community development. Such development has a goal of empowering individuals and groups of people by providing them with the skills they need to effect change within the society. The application of skills creates confidence in people. These skills are often created through the formation of large social groups working for a common agenda. This involves changing the relationships between ordinary people and concerned authorities so that everyone can take part in the issues that affect their lives. It starts from the principle that within any community there is a "wealth" of knowledge and experience. If it used creatively, it may be channeled into collective action to achieve the desired goals of 'development. Social workers engage themselves with key people to build relationships with concerned organizations.

The concerned agencies create the avenue for identifying common concerns of poor people. They create opportunities for the community that enabled poor people to act together. Using these agencies social workers and practitioners assist volunteers to foster social inclusion and equality.

The concerned Ethiopian agencies, both public and private, mobilize both the Diaspora and local people as volunteers to provide services by using their resources, including skills, money, material, labor and idea. The agencies may also use volunteers who have worked freely in supporting service delivery to the poor. They engage diverse groups of people in various activities to provide services. They use volunteers in multidimensional efforts to empower vulnerable groups and alleviate their poverty through hard work. The national defense force is exemplary in this regard assisting the community in harvesting crops and participating in other social ventures via investing their money, energy and time.

Volunteers have direct and indirect impacts on recipients, including changing their attitudes towards them. According to S. Howlett, volunteers gained "intrinsic and extrinsic" benefits through their participation with concerned public and private organization. Volunteers operating in sanatorium and soothing and calming care centers have guiding principles on how to provide assistance and support to terminally ill patients and to their families. The aim of involvement of volunteers is to enhance the quality of life of the patient by offering their time and practical support with commitment.

Volunteers come to help for many reasons. They bring a wide range of skills, experiences, and personal qualities. They also come from all parts of the social spectrum. Volunteers give invaluable assistance to the medical staff and help to create the special environment of peace and comfort to patients and relatives.

The relationship between the public and private sectors at all levels is to incorporate the perspective of all concerned institutions. The community cannot achieve its aims without the help of the public sector that provides essential resources, services and security.

Both public and private sectors cannot achieve their goals without the energy and commitment of each other. In reality, both of them need the facilitating role of volunteers who act in tandem. Most successful societies are those that harness the energies of volunteer action, giving due recognition to the voluntary and community organizations. Volunteers are integral to achieving the aims which the process of community development is seeking to realize. Volunteering is one of the main conduits through which the principles and values of community development can be implemented.

In the analysis of volunteerism, it is necessary to investigate the role of NGOs in community development by focusing on a few of them. Research findings show that the NGOs are set out to ameliorate the plight of the people in dire needs. Their role in societies is enormous and inexhaustible and their activities cut across all spheres of human endeavors. They motivate volunteers to devote their energies towards accomplishing projects that alleviate poverty and improve the living standards of the poor Ethiopians. Voluntary work can be divided in to several broad categories. These are: long term pay in kind; short, medium and long term, unpaid positions; and short term projects in which volunteers are self-funding.

It is believed that volunteerism is a way of life. Hence, volunteers constitute part of the social capital in the community and the entire society. Volunteering does not only benefit those who are in need but also those volunteers in many aspects. There are a few studies in Ethiopia that deal with the impact of volunteering in terms of community development and self-development.

Volunteerism exists in every society in forms that are related to its social and cultural context. It is, therefore, essential to investigate how volunteering activity enhances community development in a given society. Although mobilization of volunteers has been an old phenomenon, questions always arise about the "true motive" of its efforts. Yet, the role of concerned agencies and volunteers in relation to community development in Ethiopia are not systematically studied. Hence, the major purpose of future studies should be geared towards investigating the purpose and "role of volunteers" in community based development in Ethiopia and the driving force behind it.

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

### Must-see celebrations coming up!

Not only does Ethiopia enjoy thirteen months of sunshine but it has also possessed a range of tangible and intangible heritages for which it is globally well known for. The latter that comprises religious aspects is of paramount importance in bolstering cultural diplomacy, snowballing tourists' inflow and solidifying people-to-people ties apart from being a religious asset.

Religious festivals are expressive ways to mark glorious heritage, culture, tradition and norms of the society. Besides, they are means to rejoice special moments and emotions.

Ethiopia has been marking public holidays like Epiphany (*Timket*) year in, year out. There are two celebrations ahead of us namely, *Timket* (Epiphany) and Cana ZeGelila (Cana in Galilee). Both fall on Thursday, Jan. 19, 2023. Per religious scripts the former is to commemorate the baptism of Jesus and the latter marks the turning of water to wine in Cana at a wedding. While the celebrations happen across the length and breadth of the country, awe-inspiring ones could be observed in the Gondar and Batu as far as *Timket* is concerned. The marking of Cana in Galilee goes with grand events at Sekela where the famous Abbay (Blue Nile) originates.

Epiphany is a day of joyful celebration where people of all ages, of the faithful of course, have nothing but fun and togetherness regardless of language and other backgrounds.

Besides, as part of their annual tradition to celebrate Epiphany, Ethiopian Orthodox Christians bathe in rivers and pools to mark the baptism of Jesus Christ in the river Jordan by John the Baptist.

Apart from playing an indispensable role in adding value to

firm social lives, religious festivals like *Timket* (Epiphany) connect people and provide them with inspirations to solidify their co-existence and togetherness. Such worth celebrating occasions can help pass legends, knowledge, traditions and cultural assets to posterity.

*Timket* is instrumental in serving the purpose of respecting one another's values as well. One may see people of a different faith cooperating with Christians to make the celebration peaceful and enjoyable.

Having places worth visiting, too, Ethiopia has won the confidence of many and grabbed their attention from all corners of the world as it possesses numerous religious and/or cultural assets. These are also the best manifestations of peaceful coexistence and amicable ties.

One surely argues that tourists from across the globe that set foot in an Ethiopian soil at this particular season find their visits outstandingly rewarding. They experience the culture and togetherness of Ethiopians, to say the least. From enjoying the hustle and bustle of holiday market, attending religious rituals, engaging in dancing and chanting at streets to observing the colorful dressing styles and local embroidery, the festivals give visitors an unforgettable moments.

Last time, during the marking of Jesus' birthday at the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela, also attending a ceremony of *BezaKulu* there, resident ambassadors of various countries experienced the authentic ancient celebrations on the spot. Similarly, the diplomatic community would feel the real vibe of the markings in places like Gonder, Batu, Sekela (West-Gojjam) and here in Addis.

## Opinion

### It's time to use Diasporas' potential for national image building

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

State and diaspora engagement has improved in the last decade as states increasingly require the resources that Diasporas can provide to their country of origin. It has broadly recognized that Diasporas and diaspora communities deliver valuable thought, wealth, and other resources which are significant for the economic and social development of their country of origin.

Diasporas, either individually or in groups, can contribute to their country by sending remittances, transferring knowledge, participating in investment and business, trade, researching and lecturing at higher institutions, consultation, and so on. More importantly, for a country like Ethiopia Diasporas play a critical role in building the image of the country.

The negative view attaches to recurrent drought, civil wars, and diseases, and the absence of economic revival affects the image of Ethiopia. Particularly, the 1984 famine coupled with bad photographic representation of the country remains in the mind of the majority of people over the past century up to the present day. This in turn affected the country's socio-economic development in many ways including decreasing the flow of tourism and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

D.J Clark (2007) academic article entitled "The Production of a Contemporary Famine Image: the image Economy, Indigenous Photographers and the Case of Mekanik Philpos," stated that the name Ethiopia is

closely associated with drought, famine, and war. There are films, and books that subtly implicate these images until recently. There are several false or imbalanced reports about Ethiopia disseminated by inflammatory diaspora media. The wrong image of Ethiopia in Western Medias and mentality further denude the role the country playing in international relations and the international political arena.

Therefore, this negative image of the country should be changed by positive and consecutive diplomatic and combined efforts of the Ethiopian Diasporas. Because a positive national image is imperative for the socioeconomic development of the country. Furthermore, a positive national image gives a complete impression of a given country in the eyes and minds of the public across the world which is key for interstate cooperation in local and international issues.

Hence, the diaspora should participate in image building by understanding the material, spiritual, institutional, and behavioral elements of the country since a positive national image helps to clarify the political order, public identity, and policies of the nation. The image of the country has also irreplaceable significance for the language, culture, service sector, and internal political, economic, social, and diplomatic affairs of a certain state.

The Diasporas are also expected to promote Ethiopia's various heritages such as languages, and cultures which can be taken as important elements for image building of the

country. Ethiopia is the cradle of humankind and is recognized as being hospitable. The country also contributes tangible and intangible heritages to this globe which is inadequately promoted to the outside world. Therefore, the Diasporas should use these resources, heritage, and glorious history to counter the bad image of Ethiopia that the western media negatively portray.

Ethiopian Diaspora Service Director General Mohammed Idris said that Ethiopian Diasporas have been playing a crucial role in ensuring peace, building the image of the country, and accelerating development efforts in the country. They have also contributed finance and knowledge, particularly over the past two years in Ethiopia's effort to defend its sovereignty by overcoming the challenges it faced. So, it is important to honor and work closely with them.

Apart from honoring and awarding the Diasporas who have been intensively engaged in the development and image-building activities of the country, it is also imperative to encourage their networks to enhance their overall participation. The government is also ready to acknowledge some 45 strong diaspora networks and organizations that are engaged in various sectors in 25 countries for their support to Ethiopia, he added.

Besides, efforts will be made to create a favorable situation for the diaspora organizations and networks to enable them to form a coalition and work in unison for the development and image-building of

Ethiopia, he explained.

Indeed, the image of Ethiopia has been affected by the past images of drought, famine, war, and poverty that occurred in the country. Hence, it is critical time to make the diaspora organizations and networks strong and vibrant since the country needs to rebrand its negative image that affects doing business with other countries, the coming of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), tourist inflow, attracting potential enterprises, and promoting export.

Moreover, the Diasporas anticipate to participate in a very patriotic way to protect Ethiopian national interest on the world stage, support the socio-economic development plans of the country, and make the international community support the peace agreement so that Ethiopia can focus on its development and prosperity.

It is obvious that diaspora mobilization is the most significant diplomatic instrument every country possesses for image-building and nation re-branding. Therefore, each Ethiopian diaspora should take up the roles of mini-ambassadors, formal and central roles of rectifying mistakes and refuting lies while the government must work to create the most conducive environment for them to play a constructive role. This as a result helps to fully utilize the potential of the diaspora for image building of the country.

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

# Business & Economy

## Tapping river potentials in Ethiopia

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Where are Ethiopia's rivers? For how long is the country dependent on rain fed agriculture? These questions can be well answered when the country is in a position to properly exploit its huge rivers and other water resources and employ irrigation. True, irrigation plays a vital role in promoting food security in Ethiopia, and offers room for improvement though the country's irrigation has so far been quite minimal.

It is thus recurrently heralded that Ethiopia is highly endowed with a number of rivers and lakes across its horizons. The mother of the Abay or Nile River, which originates in Ethiopia at Lake Tanna, Awash, Genale, Omo, Tekeze, Dawa, Akobo, Wabi Shebele and other numerous tributaries has been suffering from deficiency of food and other related societal necessities.

Sharing borders with Djibouti, South Sudan, Somalia, Kenya, Eritrea and Sudan, Ethiopia is regarded as the icon of the continent. Topographically, it is rugged, full of mountains, flat landscapes or plateaus as well as a range of lowlands, highlands, semi-high lands and others with respective temperature.

Besides, Ethiopia's population is now surpassing 120 million and is the second populous country in Africa next to Nigeria. Most of the population in Ethiopia lives in highland area, with 85 percent being rural and dependent on agriculture with a low level of productivity. As this low level of productivity has to be well supported by other means of promoting production and productivity like irrigation, all potentials have to be well exploited.

Taking this fact into account, this writer talked to Wondimagegn Sojato, an agricultural economist to forward expertise. He said, "One of the drivers of growth in the agriculture sector has been the expansion of irrigation as the country has a number of potentially irrigated rivers. The country has witnessed fastest growth in irrigation, and this has been achieved by investing in the sector and harnessing technology to expand irrigation to farmers who traditionally rely on rainfall to water their crops."

Wondimagegn further elucidated that there is huge potential to expand irrigation and unlock economic growth. Besides, institutions have to set up clear commitments to the benefits of water control and irrigation systems as well as the private sector and farming communities need to be involved in expanding irrigation.

Wondimagegn stated that irrigation areas determine the socio-economic and environmental effects in the nation, the intensity of required irrigation methods, and agricultural production. The size of irrigated area and adopted operations such as intensive irrigation affect crop yield and application of irrigation water.

He said, "It is well recognized that Ethiopia has significant groundwater and surface water resources. As learnt from studies, agriculture has been the main driver of the Ethiopian economy accounting for forty percent of the economic value addition, and approximately over 45 percent of export earnings."

He also said that expansion of irrigated farming coupled with reliable agricultural



Abay River

inputs and stable markets for the expected growth in farm products, has the potential to propel Ethiopia to the forefront of African countries that have embraced agriculture as the engine of economic growth.

He said, "No doubt, Ethiopia has many river basins, but due to lack of water storage infrastructure and large spatial and temporal variations in rainfall, there is not enough water for most farmers to produce more than one crop per year. This trend has to be well altered to help the nation declare food self-sufficiency so as to defeat poverty."

Given the amount of water available, even while passing through the semi-arid, arid, and desert areas, it is evident that the promotion of water development technologies, especially irrigation, at both small and large-scales, can provide an opportunity to improve the productivity of land and labor and increase production volumes, he said.

According to Wondimagegn, Ethiopia is increasingly investing in this sector to utilize the advantages of irrigation development. However, there is no clear information and database available. The extent of irrigation development, the locations of developed schemes, their performances, their positive and negative roles and impacts towards food security, poverty alleviation, national economy, environment, etc., have not yet well known so far, of course.

Identifying the existing irrigation development categorized by various river basins, it is also necessary to accurately quantify the area irrigated so that we can understand the extent, distribution and possible impact and contribution of irrigation agriculture to food production, he stated.

As to him, water resource potential is said to be abundant in Ethiopia but still difficult and expensive to exploit. Harnessing some of the sizable rivers can produce some medium- to small-sized irrigation projects.

The small-scale irrigation development will be beneficial for this region for supporting the realization of food self-sufficiency and food security, improving the living quality and standard of the people through the provision of sustainable agriculture. Besides, as enhancing the contribution of irrigation in attaining national development priorities, programs and objectives is of paramount importance in bolstering national economy as well as ensuring food security.



River Awash

Efforts should also be made to enhance and improve the efficiency and productivity of traditional irrigation to support small-scale irrigation.

He further underlined that the choice of a specific irrigation method depends on a variety of factors and constraints, overall economics of the scheme, subsidies available, accessibility of the site, quality of the soil, extent of irrigable land, and seasonal variation of available water.

"Some research works were carried out in the areas of planting time, irrigation interval, crop water requirements, irrigation and water balance, farmers' participatory research etc. by development agents, and research and higher learning institutions. There is a great problem in getting sufficient trained manpower in relation to the number of farmers in the area," he said.

As to him, Ethiopia's irrigated croplands represent minified magnitude out of the potential irrigations, and so irrigation water withdrawals in the Abay river basin are almost negligible.

"The history of modern irrigated agriculture in Ethiopia was started with the production of industrial crops (sugar, sesame and cotton) on large-scale farms by private investors in the Awash area during the Derg era. Having a water irrigation system saves time and money while conserving water and contributing to a lush, healthy landscape and protected environment," he opined.

Irrigation has been the main initial water development and still supports important irrigated agriculture sector. "The country has

to further investigate the role of agricultural activities as drivers of salinization and find common contributions of irrigation-specific activities (irrigation water withdrawals, return flows and irrigated area) in sub-basins of high salinity levels and increasing salinization trends."

Yes, he said, Ethiopia has to choose the right system as it is time to dig the lines for the pipes and irrigation routes. Rivers in irrigated basins typically serve both as the sources of the irrigation water and as the sinks for the drainage water.

He also said that while most of the irrigation water is diverted from the upper reaches of the rivers, most drainage water returns to the lower reaches. This irrigation-induced increase in river salinity generally reinforces already existing natural trends.

Control of the river salinity is usually possible but generally requires the adoption of costly and painful changes in current water use practices and/or poses equally painful restrictions on further developments in the basin.

In sum, as irrigation makes multiple crop productions in places highly dependent on rainfall and contributes a lot to ensuring food security and enables citizens to grow year round without waiting on the rainy season, Ethiopia has to embark on this feasible scheme. The country is also expected to focus on irrigation as it has many irrigable rivers at every state. Besides, irrigated land is more productive than non-irrigated ones, and crop yields that are professionally irrigated would provide farmers with high production than rain fed crops.

# In the Sphere of Diplomacy

## Ethio-China tie: A time-tested bond

BY SOLOMON WASSIHUN

It is amazing how many beautiful sayings Ethiopians have about friendship. One of them roughly translates as: "The good thing about hard times is it removes doubts about who your true friends are." The troubled times of the past two years have given Ethiopia yet another opportunity to know who are its all-weather friends. It turned out that China is among the top three on the very short list of Ethiopia's time-tested friends.

In addition to continuing to maintain and upgrade its economic partnership with Ethiopia, China has taken an unwavering stance to stand beside Ethiopia in the face of the diplomatic and media war waged during the past two years. The solidarity China demonstrated along with other friendly nations has helped avert international sanctions and interventions plotted to violate Ethiopia's interests and freedom as a sovereign nation.

Ethio- Chinese longstanding relations were not dictated by the ideologies of their respective governments which at times were highly contrasting. It may be a surprising fact that the diplomatic relation between China and Ethiopia was established in 1970 when the former was under the leadership of the communist party and the latter was under the pro-western absolute monarchy.

The risk of alienation by the West Emperor Haile -Selassie took in 1971 to travel all the way to China to have historical handshakes with Chairman Mao was not in vain. It has borne a lot of fruits cherished by the subsequent generations until today.

The Chinese did not forget the pivotal role 23 African countries including Ethiopia played in 1971 with the passing of the UN resolution No 2758, which allowed the People's Republic of China, PRC, to return to the UN after more than two decades of absence. –A resolution that implied the fully-fledged international recognition of the Beijing government and its One China policy.

Since the inception of the Ethio-China ties, China has always been a loyal ally of Ethiopia regardless of who is in charge at Arat Kilo Palace. What is more, the level of the Ethio- China relations reached an all-time high, under the incumbent Ethiopian government over the last four years.

Ethiopia is now the most important African destination for Chinese investment. China has become Ethiopia's closest development partner by way of providing various supports to accelerate economic development through provisions of finance and technical assistance. Records of the last year show that China has become the most important trading partner to Ethiopia, accounting for Ethiopia's 18 percent total imports and 8 percent of its total exports.

In recent years, Ethiopian authorities and

business leaders signed various partnership deals with Chinese companies to further intensify the trade relations between the two nations by exploiting the advantages of recent technologies and e-commerce. China has proved itself as a strong reliable alternative development partner to Ethiopia. When the Americans delist Ethiopia and some other African countries from AGOA, the Chinese initiated a new tax-free import initiative for African countries including Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is now among the top five destinations of Chinese foreign direct investment in Africa. In addition, Ethiopia is also among the top five African countries receiving development assistance in terms of concessional loans, zero-interest loans, grants, and also debt relief [cancelation].

Chinese development aid to Ethiopia provides critical support mainly for the development of the transport, power, ICT, and industry sectors. These sectors are pivotal in the rapid modernization of the rural population, which accounts for the majority of the Ethiopian population. Electrification and better access roads for rural communities would be translated to better access to a fair market for the product they produce, increased employment, and better access to social services which are major factors in bringing poverty reduction.

Similarly, Chinese infrastructure development aid in urban areas has advanced the transportation system and helped the effort to mitigate issues regarding urban and highway transportation. The construction of the Addis-Djibouti and the Addis Ababa light railway systems, inter-city expressways and highways, and air terminals are some of the instances of Chinese endeavors, that contribute to the modernization of the urban transportation system of Ethiopia. That would have huge economic and social significance by way of expediting economic growth and helping promote import-exports trade.

As things stand now the Ethio- China development partnership appears to further flourish in the years ahead, as Ethiopia ensures its peace and stability, and its political and economic role in the continent advances. The fact that Ethiopia is the first destination for the new Chinese Foreign Minister African tour, is an indicator of Ethiopia's growing importance in the Chinese foreign policy priorities towards Africa.

The new Chinese Foreign Minister has brought the good news this week that his government made a partial cancellation of Ethiopia's debt to China. This news could not come at a better time. Due to the hard times of the conflicts and the accompanying economic pressures of the past two years, debt servicing for Ethiopia has been quite challenging. Like a good friend, China has

demonstrated it always gets Ethiopia's back.

The Chinese are working with their Ethiopian counterparts in almost every field of endeavor from mining to manufacturing, and from agriculture to commerce and health care services. The Chinese are making a strong footprint in Ethiopia's journey of economic transformation. They have participated in such huge projects from the Addis Ababa beautification projects to the construction of GERD. Sources close to the construction industry say that the majority of high-rise buildings, roads, and dams, railway, airport projects throughout the country are being handled by Chinese contractors.

The people-to-people relations between China and Ethiopia have developed so much that is now almost common to see Chinese in the remotest Ethiopian towns. Finding a Chinese working in tomato fields, fishing by the side of the river, or enjoying in bars and restaurants in rural towns is no longer a thing of surprise at all. Even intermarriages between people of the two nations are on the rise and not no longer uncommon.

Some Ethiopian universities have already launched Chinese language studies programs at a degree level. On the other hand, several thousand Ethiopians are pursuing their higher education at various colleges and institutions in China. Thousands of workers take skill upgrading courses at institutions in china.

After he arrived in Addis and observed what is going on the ground regarding the Ethio-China all rounded co-operation, The Chinese Foreign Minister, Qin Gang has been quoted as saying: "This time I have felt firsthand the fruitful outcomes of our cooperation and I am deeply proud about the achievements we have made. I am fully confident about the bright future of our bilateral relations.

This is the second visit by a Chinese Foreign Minister in less than 14 months. This is indicative of Ethiopia's increasing importance in the implementation of the ambitious Chinese development initiative in Africa- the Belt and Road Initiative. The former Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi has said a year ago, "China and Ethiopia have a traditional friendship and the two sides have become comprehensive strategic partners. Through the test of international turbulence, relations between the two countries have not been disturbed by external factors or affected by domestic changes."

The memorandum of understanding signed this week between the two countries, is indicative of the determination of the two countries to further widen and deepen their bilateral corporations in all fields of endeavor. The intensification of the political and economic alliance of the two nations would expedite the realization of Ethiopia's vision of emerging as the economic powerhouse of east Africa [the African equivalent of Asian Tigers], thereby shifting the dynamics of the Horn's geopolitics in favor of the African players.

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# Law & Politics

## Throwing full weight behind reconstructing war-affected areas

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Noncombatants residing in the war-ridden areas of the northern part of country have been still faced with a broad range of challenges arising from the last two years of conflict.

By the same token, in addition to demolishing schools, higher learning institutions, health centers, and other social infrastructure, the war has caused unimaginable and unprecedented human sufferings.

The conflict also displaced millions of people igniting dire humanitarian situations and requiring lofty resource to rebuild and rehabilitate war-ridden areas. However, after the signing of the peace deal in Pretoria, South Africa, between the federal government and Tigray People's Liberation Front, the restoration of a wide spectrum of social infrastructures, delivery of humanitarian assistance, and other important things have been moving in the right direction in addition to reviving the economy of the country.

As things currently stand, all pertinent bodies and organizations have been trying to help communities affected by the war in Amhara, Afar, and Tigray. As part of reviving the economy of the aforesaid areas, multifarious organizations have been toiling to paving the way for building infrastructures. It is widely known that a number of organizations have been fully engaged in restoring social services with the purpose of reinvigorating the economy of the country.

Given the current circumstances, quite a lot of organizations have been working in close collaboration with the federal government to expedite restoration works in the war-affected areas in the northern part of the country more than ever before.

Be that as it may, the Industrial Parks Development Corporation (IPDC) announced lately that it is relentlessly working and carrying out preliminary works to reinstate the industrial sector in war-affected areas thereby attracting new investors.

In an interview, Corporation Media and Marketing Department Head Zemen Juneddi lately gave to the Ethiopian Press Agency said that the corporation has been carrying out various activities to revive the industrial sector in Amhara, Afar, and Tigray states.

Promotion of investment opportunities is among the activities that the corporation has carried out to restore the industrial parks that were heavily affected by the recent conflict, Zemen added.

The incumbent has been doing a lot of activities such as constructing physical infrastructure and providing people in need with unfettered humanitarian support,



restoration of peace, and development to the former status. As peace and adequate infrastructure are crucial issues for the industrial sector; the corporation will fully operate upon completion of the physical infrastructure in the war-affected states, according to the Head.

In a related move, speaking to The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Kombolcha Industry and Investment Bureau Head Habtamu Haile stated that the government's commitment to providing support for investors whose properties were damaged and looted during the conflict has played a key role in the success.

In the 37 days of conflict, Kombolcha incurred a 10- billion- Birr loss due to the immense destruction and looting of manufacturing industries and other public and private properties. Now, law and order are restored in Kombolcha and apart from the 35 industries that resumed operation, there are other firms in the pipeline and they have conducted discussions with banks and other relevant institutions to this end. Currently, 131 companies with an aggregate capital of 53 billion Birr have been investing in various sectors whilst the manufacturing industry, which permanently employed 8,200 citizens, takes the lion's share.

In a similar vein, a number of organizations have been smoothing the path of social infrastructure in the northern part of the country aimed at taking the country to the next level of accomplishment and economic rehabilitation.

Very recently, there have been activities to pull more investment and boost economic activities to reenergize weakened business. Last weekend, Debre Birhan town kicked off a nine-day International Trade, Investment, and Finance Expo in a move to spur investment activities and pave the way for post-war rehabilitation works

The international expo which brings

together over 200 local and foreign businesses came into being after three years of preparation. Marred by the COVID outbreak and the two years of northern Ethiopia conflict, the town is set to see more investments following the Pretoria peace.

Opening the expo, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen vowed his government's commitment to ensure enabling investment climate to shore up economic undertakings and help war-stricken areas in all ways possible.

The two years of war have impacted heavily the Amhara state and it requires the contribution of all to rebuild the state and revitalize economic activities as the government throws its full weight behind restoring peace and stability. "Our priority is to rehabilitate war-hit areas through encouraging more investment and business."

The international expo is timely and valuable to revive economic engagement and foreign direct investment. For his part, Amhara State President Yelekal Kefale(Ph.D.) said the state has been hard-hit by the conflict and as the country strives to make peace and reconstruct the region, the focus now is to pull more investment and reactivate economic activities.

"Poverty is rife; unemployment is high with the cost of living surges. And, it is time to double down endeavors to redress the setbacks." The incumbent is keen to see more investors come in droves and engage in business activities. To make this happen, the former will take decisive measures to ensure peace and ease barriers to business entry by addressing issues related to finance and land provision. Over the years, encouraging results have been registered in terms of productivity but, much is needed to unleash the untapped potential of the country.

The government is making extensive activities for industrial expansion. The expo in this regard will have an essential role

in linking local and foreign business and make the town an investment hub. Various local and foreign companies engaged in investment, trade, and finance sectors exhibit their products and services at the expo.

Minister of Urban and Infrastructure, Chaltu Sani also told ENA the war erupted in the northern part of the country and caused damage to 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 as a result of 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.



# Society

## Celebrating Timket while enjoying peace agreement

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

The darkest time has passed witnessing Ethiopia's greatness and its commitment for peace by going extra miles for the sake of peace itself. Ethiopians are now preparing to celebrate the feast of Epiphany- Timket- under the spirit of forgiveness, love and kindness. Decorating with traditional costumes Ethiopians have a century old culture of marking holidays, which is a unique identity of all Ethiopians across the world.

Timket and Ethiopians are two sides of a single coin. There is nothing Ethiopians will compromise when it comes to Tabot (replica of the Ark of covenant) and their sovereignty. As the masses show their commitments by escorting their parish church Tabot to Timkete- Bahir (a pool, river or artificial reservoir) and spend the night attending night-long prayer and hymn services, they also express their genuine love and commitment to Ethiopia by paying all necessary sacrifices.

Whenever the peace and stability of the nation is under threat no single soul remains silent or spends the night at home. What is more, as the day of sprinkling of blessed water marks baptism and repentance, forgiveness and humility are the true identities of Ethiopians.

These unique identities are the secret behind Ethiopia's sustainability and driving factors towards its height. Timket, which signifies the baptism of Jesus Christ in the river Jordan in the hands of John, is one of the religious holidays Ethiopians enjoy every year. Beside its religious



Photo By: Social media

values, Timket has also a significant meaning to show the world Ethiopia's unity, diversity and sustainability.

The Ethiopian epiphany that magnifies unity and tolerance among different nations and nationalities is always having a special place among all Ethiopians and Ethiopian lovers. No matter where they live or what kind of religion they follow, Ethiopians are always eagerly awaiting the feast of Timket. For this very reason, as a land of diversity and the multitude

lives in tolerance, Ethiopians have a unique way of marking such special days individually as well as in groups.

Multiple factors make this Year's Timket special and memorable for all Ethiopians. The first and the most important one is, it is a year where Ethiopians stood together for peace, wiped out anti-united Ethiopian sentiment and came into an agreement for the sake of peace. As testified by local and international media, the agreement between the Federal government and the TPLF

is the milestone in Ethiopian politics as well as a lesson for other African countries. After two years of conflict the two signatories have reached an agreement to cease fire and sign an agreement to benefit Ethiopia and its loving children.

As Timket is arriving, several tourists are also flooding to Ethiopia to mark the holiday in various parts of the country. Places that were centers of conflicts within the past two years have now turned into tourist centers. Using this opportunity, Ethiopians are also showing their hospitality to their guests and are doing their level best to meet the interest of their guests. On its part the Ministry of Tourism has also disclosed that special tour packages have been prepared for tourists coming to Ethiopia to attend the Timket festival.

As indicated by the State Minister of Tourism, Seleshi Girma, Timket has been celebrated in Gondar with special events by Ethiopians, members of the Diaspora community and international visitors for a long time. In this regard, for this year the Ministry has prepared special tour packages so that guests could visit other tourist attraction sites in the Gondar area and in other parts of the country. "The exclusive tour packages include providing opportunities to tourists to visit tourist attraction sites in Addis Ababa, the South, North, West and East of Ethiopia after or before the Timket festival."

Timket is a UNESCO registered intangible international cultural heritage site. For that reason, when Ethiopians mark Timket, the whole world will be reminded of Ethiopia's unity in diversity and will be aware that the country is founded on a strong foundation.



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## Addis Ababa City Administration Cabinet's decisions on multilingual curriculum

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

The Addis Ababa City Administration Cabinet passed resolutions related to the Multilingual Curriculum in its 2nd year, 8th regular meeting held on January 12, 2023.

In the regular meeting, the cabinet discussed the new curriculum that Kotobe Education University has been studying regarding the multilingual curriculum. And the university has conducted a wide range of consultations and discussions with the public including students' parents and made a decision based on the recommendations of the study.

Accordingly:

1st:- Consistent with the study of the new curriculum, Amharic should be given as an additional (second) language to students learning all subjects in their mother tongue Afan Oromo;

2nd:- Afan Oromo will be learnt as an additional (second) language by the students who learn other subjects in Amharic as their mother tongue;

3rd:- From the 7<sup>th</sup> grade onwards, all the



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subjects are taught in all the schools in the city besides the two local languages;

4th:- 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students will be taught Arabic and French as optional subjects at the high school level;

5th:- The starting age of pre-primary education should be 4 years;



6th:- According to the new curriculum framework, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade occupational and technical education will be taught in different options. And as it requires a lot of resources, it should be offered in clusters in cooperation with technical and vocational colleges and they should be constructed based on the research;

7th:- In order to overcome the shortage of books to be purchased by private schools, an additional budget of 250 million Birr revolving fund is decided for book publication.

Following these, the curriculum that was borrowed from Oromia State and being implemented in the city for teaching Afan Oromo will be replaced by the new curriculum.

# Planet Earth

## Capitalizing on Ethiopia environmental protection efforts

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Ethiopia is a country with immense natural resources and variety of climatic conditions. It is also one of the mega hubs of biodiversity in the world. Its landscape also ranges from its alpha highlands to the lowest depressions on earth.

Ethiopia is one of the countries that are highly vulnerable to climate change and environmental degradation. Widespread environmental degradation across large parts of Ethiopia is disrupting ecosystem services. Soil erosion and land degradation are the largest challenges faced in maintaining soil fertility and productivity of agricultural and range lands.

Climate change has brought a negative impact in the country's economic development leaving millions vulnerable to socioeconomic challenges. To overcome this impact Ethiopia has been implementing the climate resilient green economy strategy. The strategy is well aligned with the national development plan and its NDC that intends to meet its commitment and NDC objectives to climate action.

Ethiopia is firmly committed to advancing adaptation mainstreaming, ensuring that ecosystem based adaptation and more broadly speaking, nature based solutions are fully considered within this mainstreaming effort to ensure a sustainable path to climate resilient recovery and development.

According to the Climate Resilient Green Economic Strategy, at current rates of exploitation of forests, between the period of 2010 and 2030, an area of 9 million hectares might be deforested. The annual cost of land degradation in Ethiopia is estimated to be 2 to 3 percent of agricultural GDP.

Climate change, war and drought have revealed Ethiopia's vulnerability to various shocks, for which the country needs to build resilience. Considering the bottlenecks stated earlier, Ethiopia has taken urgent and

important decisions to take up nature based solutions to adapt to climate change and ensure a resilient recovery.

Nature based solutions designed to address the co-vulnerabilities of the climate crises. If we take ecosystem based adaptation, it helped the nation to restore and protect economically important ecosystems, and generates both direct (planting, monitoring, developing nurseries, supplying seedlings, etc.), and indirect employment, from tourism, timber and non-timber forest product and is estimated to yield 1 trillion USD in net benefits by 2030 by the GCA.

Ethiopia's nature based solutions to overcome the impact of climate change resource focuses on the restoration of degraded lands that will result in the development of the livelihood of the majority agrarian population.

Since the actual implementation of the climate resilient green economy millions of hectares of land has been restored in scientific interventions of soil and water conservation and significant majority of households have improved their livelihood throughout the country.

Besides the intervention made in nature based solutions with all development actors, sustainable land management and its uses are given due attention. This happened with the coordinated effort of all sectors and development actors.

The late Kenyan environmentalist, Wangari Maathai was a Councilor of World Future Council. Once she said that the success of the restoration that we see in Ethiopia is a classic example of coordinated effort and collaborative impact. They (Ethiopia) have transformed a landscape in previously considered as a basket case. That is incredible and perhaps unprecedented.

Adapting to the negative impact of the climate change and building resilience is garnered if sustainable land management is in place. Ethiopia's transformative approach towards land management system is designed in an integrated approach by which all concerned stakeholders are jointly operating to meet the national

objective set out in land, soil and water conservation endeavor. Nations efforts are aimed at creating resilient society through improving agricultural productivity, ensure food security, increase alternative income and maintain the environmental wellbeing among others.

Farmers also willingly accepted the strategy. Many of them are witnessing that the strategy of using sustainable land management to eradicate poverty has been very effective. Planning starts from the communities who share the same interest in their own micro water shades. Experts support them with options and knowhow.

This shows how Ethiopia has made instructive and integrative intervention to enhance its adaptable capacity to climate change to transplant and grow with forest cover from current baseline 15.5 percent to 30 percent by 2030. Ethiopia has planted over 25 billion seedlings in a four-year period hitting above the set goal for the Green Legacy Initiative. It already achieved the target set ahead of time.

It also integrated three plantations in urban areas renewal programme and expansion of tourism through landscape and river side restoration activities. The Sheger beautification and Entoto tourist destination is a milestone achievement in this regard. With a vision of capitalizing on existing natural attributes, the nation has also been on the verge of finalizing projects in Koyssha, Wonchi and Gorgora. Apart from protecting the tourism destination sites, the projects will create sizable job opportunities to the community.

It is obvious that there is an immense cost to inaction on climate and disaster risks, and that human beings are fast losing nature's capacity to regulate fundamental water, climate and other life support systems on earth.

Thus, Ethiopia's commitment and leadership in Green Economy and Nature Based Solutions should further be recognized as Ethiopia has made several commitments at policy level. Aside from devising various policies, the country has been made contributions so as to reverse the

climate change impact taking countrywide action.

In 2019, the country launched the Green Legacy for a greener and cleaner Ethiopia, an ambitious undertaking to become a green society by planting various types of eco-friendly trees to combat environmental degradation, with the goal of planting 20 billion trees over five years and restoring about 15 million hectares of forest. Surprisingly, Ethiopia has planted over 25 billion seedlings in a four-year period hitting above the set goal for the Green Legacy Initiative.

Considering that the impact of climate change could not be managed by the solitary intervention, Ethiopia has been encouraging other African countries to second the climate change move. Ethiopia has been deploying its youth delegations to African countries to plant seedlings under the banner 'Plant African Fraternity' with a view to strengthen unity and brotherhood among countries in the continent through green diplomacy.

Nature-based solutions (NbSs) are critical to climate action and one of the most requested areas of support to enhance nationally determined contributions (NDCs). Importantly, NbSs in NDCs can support climate mitigation and adaptation, as well as slow biodiversity loss, in a cost-effective manner. These intertwined crises require an integrated approach and unprecedented cooperation to achieve a nature-positive economic recovery and an equitable carbon-neutral and sustainable future.

"We recognize Ethiopia's commitment and leadership in Green Economy and Nature Based Solutions. Ethiopia has made several commitments at policy level," once said Haoliang Xu, UN Assistant Secretary-General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of Bureau for Policy and Programme Support.

"We can also avert climate cataclysm and restore our planet. This is an epic policy test. But ultimately this is a moral test. It is time to flick the "green switch". We have a chance to not simply reset the world economy but to transform it".



### Published Bimonthly in Collaboration with Industrial Parks Development Corporation

**Vision**

- \* Being the world's best industrial park a developer and an administrator in 2025 E.C.

**Mission**

- \* Contribute to Ethiopia's economic growth by developing and managing industrial parks, creating quality jobs, increasing exports, and accelerating industrialization to make Ethiopia one of the middle-income countries;
- \* Accelerate the development of knowledge-based society and economy by prioritizing innovation and implementation of information communication technology;
- \* Increase their satisfaction by providing timely and high-quality international counseling and

training services to our clients;

**Values**

- \* Professional ethics and honesty
- \* Always learning
- \* Attention to environmental protection
- \* Efficient and effective
- \* Customer oriented
- \* Social acceptance and inclusion

**Mandates:**

- \* Develop and administer industrial parks, lease developed land and lease and transfer, through sale, constructions thereon;
- \* Prepare detailed national industrial parks master plan based on the national special master plan and serve as the industrial park land bank in accordance with the agreements concluded with

regional governments;

- \* In collaboration with the concerned bodies, ensure that necessary infrastructure is accessible to industrial park developers;
- \* Outsource, though management contracts, when it is deemed necessary, the management of industrial parks;
- \* Promote extensively the benefits of Industrial Parks and thereby attract investors to the parks;
- \* In line with directives and policy guidelines issued by the Ministry of Finance, sell and pledge bonds and negotiate and sign loan agreement with local and international financial sources; and
- \* Engage in other related activities necessaries for the attainment of

its purposes.

**Main Services provided by IPDC and stake holders:**

- \* One-stop-shop services (customs, bank, etc., services);
- \* Facilitation and after care service;
- \* Occupancy certificate for leased factory sheds and serviced land;
- \* Waste treatment service including CETP and ZLD;
- \* Fire prevention and protection service;
- \* 24/7 security service;
- \* Common services such as cafeteria, shopping mall and others.
- \* Issuance of IP identity and access pass cards and renewals;
- \* IP infrastructure maintenance services;