



The Ethiopian Herald

Vol. LXXIX No 136 16 February 2023 - Yekatit 9, 2015

Thursday

Price Birr 10.00

Deputy Premier

lauds Africans role for Ethiopia's peace

• Opens 42nd Executive Council Session

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA - Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen praised the African Union and its institutions' role in Ethiopia's peace process and the solidarity African brothers and sisters have demonstrated to his country.

The Deputy Premier made the above remark while opening the 42nd Ordinary Session of the African Union Executive Council here yesterday.

"We are grateful to the AU's overwhelming support to Pretoria's Peace Agreement and we are also very delighted by the solidarity that fellow African brothers and sisters have shown for Ethiopia's cause," Demeke told the session.

As to him, the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) between the government and TPLF showcases the success of the AU's principle of seeking African solutions to African problems. "I am pleased to inform you that the peace agreement is on course for full implementation."

"We maintain the provision of humanitarian aid to Tigray State and have made considerable efforts to restore essential services and amenities in the area. We are also working with the African Union

See Deputy Premier ... Page 3

Photo - Eyob Tefert



DERBA MIDROC CEMENT



OUR PRODUCTS

- > PPC 32.5N
- > OPC 42.5N
- > Premium OPC 52.5N
- > PPC PLUS 42.5N

We give Door To Door Service

Call Us at 8688 or

- 0111 26 26 27 0922 11 53 24/26
- 0111 26 26 28 0922 72 74 48/49
- 0111 26 26 29 0922 72 38 70
- 0111 26 26 30 0922 72 38 72

Fax: 0111 26 23 45 & 0111 26 23 18
Ready for Tomorrow!

Valentine Day surges Ethiopia's flower export revenue

• Country secures over 3 mln USD in 13 days

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA - The celebration of Valentine's Day has surged the demand for Ethiopia's flower export and enabled the country to secure over 3.28 million USD in 13 days of operation, the Ethiopian Horticulture Producer Exporters Association (EHPEA) disclosed.

Association Executive Director Tewodros Zewde told The Ethiopian Herald that the Valentine's Day has brought a significant boost in the production of flowers. Accordingly, Ethiopia exported over 2,165 tons of flowers from February 1 to 13, 2023.

Noting nearly 60 companies contributed to the export earnings, the director indicated that the EU, U.S., UK, Canada, and the Middle East have gotten into the list of Ethiopia's major export destinations for flowers.

Ethiopia has conducive climate for flowering, fertile soil and human resources, which play a crucial role in the development of the sector. Though flower export has a short lifespan in Ethiopia, the result is promising.

See Valentine Day ... Page 3

AfCFTA: Opportunities, challenges

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

Helping the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to see the light of day is crucial for Ethiopia to better integrate with Africa's economy and enhance the presence of its products in the continent's market, noted economists said.

See AfCFTA ... Page 3



AfCFTA

Photo - Gebabo Gebre



Academy to stage Pan-Africanism forum

• Premier, African Heads of States to be in attendance

Page 3

Page 7

We never leave behind the child we once were

The multifaciated gains of African Continental Free Trade Area

Page 9



Ethiopia inks wheat export accord with countries

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia's Wheat Export National Committee stated that the country signed a contract of three million quintals of wheat export this year with six countries.

Speaking to local media, the Wheat Export National Committee Coordinator Ambassador Girma Birru said a total amount of three million quintals of wheat to be sold to six buyer countries, including Sudan and Kenya. Following the signing of the contract, wheat producing areas have been identified and wheat is being collected for export.

Amb. Girma pointed out that Ethiopia has the capacity to export over 32 million quintals wheat after quenching domestic consumption. The government produced wheat on a large scale following the

national reform targeting at substituting wheat importation within the shortest time possible.

He stated that donor organizations and other local organizations signed a contract of 2.9 million quintals through the Ministry of Finance to substitute what they have bought from abroad, and the national committee is working hard to make the wheat export successful.

"As of last year, Ethiopia has stopped importing wheat. The country will write a new history by exporting million quintals of wheat starting from this year. As per the national goal set by the Prime Minister, Ethiopia officially started exporting wheat in Bale Zone of Oromia region last week."

The ambassador expressed his happiness to see the successfulness of Ethiopia's wheat export dream.

Water database system to go operational soon

BY MEKLIT WONDEWOSSEN

ADDIS ABABA - A central database system capable of predicting and recording overall water information like its depth, future quantity and the amount of soil it holds has been set up and would go operational soon.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), the Ministry of Water and Energy, Hydrology and Basin Information Head Debebe Deferso said that the project would be fully completed and put into operation soon.

It was noted that the equipment has been entered into the country with all its spare parts following Sweden government assistance.

He said: "We have a device that tells how much soil is moving in the water, measures the level of water quality and the water level as well with the help of a telemetry system."

He also said that the monitoring devices that send information from water bodies every 15 minutes have started working. The device shows how much water has been diverted from the basins and helps estimate the level of the rivers in the future.

As to the head, the devices are installed on river and water pumps so as to state the water information on the Awash River as a pilot move and works are being carried out to allow flood water to enter the underground in a systematic way.

It was learnt that a range of activities are being done to foster water undertake siltation in areas that are often susceptible to flood disaster such as in Dire Dawa, Afar and Somali states.

The central database system has employed comprehensive information from relevant bodies like the Ethiopian Meteorological Agency, National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) and the Ministry of Water and Energy to have an integrated disaster risk forecast.

He also said the ministry has started working



Photo- Gebabo Gebre

Debebe Deferso

together with the World Bank not only to extract water from the ground but also to push it into the ground.

"After the water extraction is done, it is known how much groundwater is enriched by recording the data. Having water resource information registration for water resources management allows identifying water for human and animal use. The database system also provides agricultural operators with real information as employing modern equipment enable to have accurate water information."

"Dams, bridges and other infrastructures are built based on accurate information. If we predict the amount of water in advance, there will be resources that will save us from any water disaster."

There are sensors in dams and bodies of water that measure the volume and temperature of water. Researchers working on artificial intelligence have expressed their opinion to help properly measure the water level of water bodies and pay attention to it, as to him.

The system itself takes global water flow data, water flow information from our country and rain forecast from Ethiopian National Meteorological Agency to successfully forecast water flow by integrating previous disaster information taken from NDRMC.

Embassy opens disability vocational training center in Bekoji

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA -Japan Embassy has inaugurated a disability vocational training center in Bekoji town in a bid to create jobs for people with disabilities.

According to the Embassy's press release, this project was inaugurated in the presence of Japanese Ambassador to Ethiopia ITO Takako and Arsi University President Duguma Aduzna (PhD).

During the inauguration ceremony, Ambassador ITO delivered a congratulatory message and also expressed her appreciation for the collaboration with a Japanese snack manufacturing company IEDA SEIKA that has donated 2 cereal cookers to Arsi University. President of IEDA SEIKA, IEDA Kaoruko, also demonstrated how people with disabilities are able to operate the cookers in the training center.

She stated that these cookers will help people with disabilities to get more opportunities to work and earn income, and that puffed cereal would spread out from Bekoji town to other areas in Ethiopia.

A total of 89,162 USD was provided through Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots and Human Security Projects (GGP) to build one vocational training center for people with disabilities, 20 wheelchairs and some training equipment.

It is also stated that this project would enable about 250 people with disabilities in Bekoji town to increase their job opportunities and encourage them to be finally independent. Since its establishment in 1989, Japan has implemented over 400 projects across Ethiopia in various sectors such as education, economic growth, health services, women's empowerment and other basic human needs, it was learnt.



Academy to stage Pan-Africanism forum

• Premier, African Heads of States to be in attendance

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA - The first Pan-Africanism forum is slated to be held on February 19, 2023 at the premises of African Leadership Excellence Academy (AFLEX) in Suluta, so disclosed AFLEX Chief.

It was learnt that the forum would take place on the sidelines of the 36th African Union (AU) Ordinary Session.

Briefing journalists on the forum yesterday, AFLEX Chief Mehret Debebe (PhD) said that “Reinvigorating Pan-Africanism for a Changing World” is the theme of the forum and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), heads of states, policymakers, academicians, civil society organizations, youth and women representatives would be in attendance.

Accordingly, the forum would feature paper presentations and lectures as well as panel discussions on Pan-Africanism and so forth.

He said that: “As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the OAU and the 10th year of the launching of Agenda 2063, we are pleased to host this forum to celebrate Pan-Africanism while envisaging a better Pan-African future in the quest for the “Africa We Want” at a facility established to further African excellence.”

The AFLEX academy is setup to become a premiere learning institution-nurturing development and growth-oriented mindsets with the capacity to meet the demands of



Photo - Gebabo Gebre

21st century leadership in the public, civic and private sectors with a Pan-African orientation.

Re-established in June 2021, the AFLEX is located on the outskirts of Addis Ababa, and the academy focuses on its core business of leadership development, policy research and leadership consultancy. The Academy is governed by an executive board and led by a Chief of Academy.

Since its establishment, it has run and managed three types of programs; leadership building programs for high

level government officials and executive level, private or civic sector leaders with essential leadership skills allowing them to deliver on their role as public servants more effectively.

A leadership program designed to incubate the next generation of young leaders who are currently not yet but aspire to be in executive roles. In addition it conducts workshops, policy research, and leadership consultancy programs that will positively influence and enable decision makers in the right direction, he stated.

AfCFTA: Opportunities,...

Established in 2018, AfCFTA is a free trade area encompassing most of Africa. Consisting of 43 parties and another 11 signatories, the AfCFTA is the largest free-trade area by a number of member states, after the World Trade Organization.

Political Economy Analyst Shewaferaw Shitahun told The Ethiopian Herald that the AfCFTA has paramount importance in enhancing the accessibility of landlocked countries including Ethiopia for continental trade and business. The agreement would also ease bureaucratic setbacks, and reduce clearances by establishing a one-stop shop thereby increasing the availability of goods in the market.

Noting the billions of dollars Ethiopia has incurred annually for port rent, the expert highlighted that the AfCFTA implementation is crucial to reducing such staggering costs and supplementing the overall economic performance. Moreover, due emphasis should be given to exploiting the agreement to find destinations for Ethiopia’s agricultural exports and promoting its wider market opportunities among African stakeholders.

“I have a firm belief that the execution of the agreement requires the political will of African leaders and a consensus of its elites. African leaders who will attend

this year’s summit are expected to make genuine deliberation to pass decisions on the implementation of pro-poor policies including AfCFTA that will lift their people out of poverty.”

Sharing the above rationale, Addis Ababa University Economics Lecturer Birhanu Denu (Ph.D.) said that AfCFTA has an immense role in Africans growing together. The agreement is also instrumental to increase intracontinental trade and the flow of investment among Africans thereby bolstering economic competitiveness and productivity.

The academician noted; however, that African countries’ tendency of keeping strong trade ties with ex-colonial-chiefs, the similarity of exportable commodities, limited logistics, and connectivity, among other factors hampered intracontinental trade.

“This situation needs time and when we consider Ethiopia for instance, it has trade and investment relations with few African countries apart from its neighbors. In addition to the House of Peoples’ Representatives ratification, the agreement needs security arrangement and evaluation of its importance as sovereign countries will take part.”

For Shewaferaw, the implementation of the AfCFTA was delayed by dissimilarities in tariff and non-tariff regulations, security threats, bureaucratic red tape and other factors. Countries’ tendency of evaluating the agreement from their politico-economic benefits and priorities is another obstacle to putting the accord to the ground.

African countries’ economic reliance on former colonists and the overwhelming presence of European companies in the African market have significantly hampered the effort to foster intracontinental trade.

Both scholars highlighted that these challenges would remain possible impediments to Ethiopia’s meaningful participation in Africa’s market. Lack of uniformity in policy formulation among African countries has also been obstructing the single country’s efforts from generating desirable outcomes.

Multiple efforts of all stakeholders are crucial to transform the low-level intracontinental trade into a more vibrant one and African leaders are expected to forage for uniform policy formulation and tariff and non-tariff regulations. By doing so, the leaders will sustain Africa’s rapid economic progress whilst ensuring the AfCFTA brings about a trickle-down effect for the benefit of the masses, they commented.

Deputy Premier...

Commission to support the work of the Monitoring Verification and Compliance Mechanism.”

The mechanism consists of a joint committee and a team of African experts tasked to supervise the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of TPLF forces.

Speaking at the occasion, African Union Commission (AUC) Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat also praised CoHA saying it was one of the leading manifestations of the union’s problem-solving capacity. This year, AU tirelessly pursued its principle of African solutions and its institution made a notable contribution to the Pretoria Accord.

The AU has also initiated a tripartite peace mechanism to resolve the border issue between Ethiopia and Sudan. Similar efforts have been carried out by the AUC and the commission initiated mediation under the leadership of the Angolan President to resolve the problem in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The chairperson also praised the role Kenya’s former President Uhuru Kenyatta has played in brokering the governments of Ethiopia and DRC with rebel forces operating in the respective countries. “The AUC is engaging based on the African common position of supporting domestic solutions.”

The AUC is also being reformed to operationalize its roadmap and plan of action and to speed up the establishment of the African humanitarian agency.

“All the institutional reform of the AU we have put forward is based on the evaluation of the implementation of programs and projects... Africa is moving forward and yet we have a long way to go. The future will depend on the level of how we take constraints and prospects into account,” Mahamat remarked.

Valentine Day ...

Also, Ethiopia is the second largest in Africa and the fourth largest in the world in terms of horticulture growth in a short period.

Tewodros further stated that the association provides various capacity-building training to its members and helps them to maximize production. As women constitute about 80 percent of the total employment in the horticulture sector, the association also plays a vital role in women’s economic empowerment.

The association has carried out various activities to ease resource problems and bureaucratic red-tapes as well as build infrastructure that will play a crucial role in putting Ethiopia on the front line in the world’s horticulture market, he emphasized.

Opinion

More commitment for the realization of AU dreams

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Ethiopia is one of the founding member countries of Africa Union (AU) in 1963 then Organization of African Union (OAU) in Addis Ababa. Some of the objectives of the establishment of OAU were liberating the then colonized countries from the yoke of operation and exploitation; to work together for the wellbeing of their respective citizens; to create regional economic integration; eradicating poverty and attaining of socio-economic development. The role of the founding fathers such as Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, Gamal Abdel Nasser Hussein of Egypt and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana had been immense for the establishment of this continental organization.

When the continental organization was established, most of the countries were under the yoke of colonialism and westerners regarded Africa as a dark continent. Before the advent of colonialism since 1500, African productive human resources had been robbed by Europeans through slave trade by crossing Atlantic Ocean to Caribbean and North America for three centuries. The slave labor had played pivotal role for the booming of cotton plantations in America which again is utilized as inputs for textile industries established in Western Europe following the industrial revolution.

Industrialization needs raw materials that are used as input, cheap labor and market. Hence, in 1888 the then super power countries such as Great Britain, France, Germany, Spain and Portugal eyed towards Africa and agreed to craft their own map for the creation of vassal states and imposed colonialism by force and regarded the population as their subject and governed as they wish; exploited labor, robbed resources and imposed their culture and language upon the victims.

Great Britain pursued the colonial policy of divide and rule along ethnic lines while French pursued the policy of "asimilado" which means assimilating the colonized people with a nominal French citizenship.

Italy, as a late comer country and relatively weaker than other European countries, tried to expedite to Ethiopia for its colonial ambition but denied by the Adwa victory in 1896. This time, except Ethiopia, all African countries had been under the rule of European colonization.

Nevertheless, though African countries had been colonized, they had not given up in their struggle for their independence nearly for about 8 decades. They coordinated both their peaceful disobedience and armed struggle. The "Mao Mao" the disobedience movement in Kenya in 1920s against Britain colonialism can be taken as a showcase. The armed struggle waged by freedom fighters of Angola and Mozambique against the Portugal colonialism; the struggle

against white minority rule in Zimbabwe and the fierce and heavy fighting against French colonialism in Algeria can also be mentioned as the case in point.

Ethiopia as an independent country played pivotal role in supporting anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggle by providing training, morale support, finance and diplomatic support to freedom fighters. The role of both the imperial and the Derg regimes in supporting the struggle vividly remembered.

After decades long anti-colonial struggle in the late 1950s and earlier 1960s the ray of hope of freedom for Africans became apparent. Most countries colonized by France except Algeria won their independence through negotiations. Countries under the British colonial rule also gained their independence through negotiation.

However, due to various reasons, after independence, realizing political stability and economic progress faced various challenges which pushed the continent in to instability, military coup, and civil war and cross boarder violence.

When colonial rule imposed by European, new institutions were established to serve the colonial-rule by dismantling the traditional indigenous institutions. Hence, when the colonialists left the countries, the new African leaders unable to govern the countries due to absence of institutions which fit the independent countries. This again affected the effort to establish rule of law and gave the way to the emergence of dictatorship. According to historians, in the post-colonial era, only within two decades 40 military coup had taken place and cost life of 25 presidents and prime ministers.

The other challenge which put the continent in to crises was boarder conflict among neighboring countries. As it is mentioned above the map of African countries was crafted arbitrarily by colonialists without considering the reality on the ground. It defined one ethnic group up to three countries. The Somali ethnic group who are living in Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia and Kenya can be mentioned as the case in point. Such situation took Ethiopia and Somalia to engage in a bloody war in 1964 and 1977 by claiming the large swath land of Ogaden territory.

The war ravaged the two poor countries' economy and infrastructure, caused human causality and death. The civil war which broke out in Sudan and lasted for 30 plus years gave birth to the formation of South Sudan in 2005 was directly related with the colonial administration. During the colonial era, the British rulers governed Sudan in a discriminatory manner. They paid attention more to the development of the northern part of the country. They expanded infrastructure such as education, health and other vital necessities while ignoring the southern part of the country

and let it back ward.

When the country gained independence in 1958 the new rulers sustained the discriminatory governance against the south and regarded the people as inferior than the northern part and such situation posed the outbreak of war between the south and north and ultimately gave way for the birth of new sovereign South Sudan republic.

The colonial administration also responsible to some extent to the rampant poverty and underdevelopment witnessed today. The economic system designed by the Europeans in that era had reduced Africa to be raw material supplier to the European industries. Roads' construction works during that era were intended to connect mining and plantation areas to ports so that the products find their way to the European markets. They had not been constructed to connect countries each other to attain trade and economic integration and facilitating movement of goods and people from place to place.

The education system introduced by colonialists also brought its own demerits. The objective of any education system and curriculum is to address the society's problems and attaining socio economic development. But in the era of colonialism the education system created the elite group who aspire to develop European culture and life style which again left them in identity crises.

Therefore, some of the elite groups, instead of engaging in addressing the society's problems, they promoted themselves in to the governing class by being part of the statuesque.

On the other hand, due to absence of rule of law and the prevalence of dictatorship and political upheaval, as a result of the above mentioned reasons, many educated people left their country and employed in foreign countries which in turn negatively affected their country of origin by posing shortage of academically well trained people. As a result, the continent left as unachieved continent with respect to economy, politics and social affairs.

Now, 60 years later, since the establishment of the OAU the continent find itself in chronic poverty, unemployment, political upheaval, dictatorship, military coup (witnessed in West Africa) and population explosion.

One can find the longest serving presidents in the world in Africa. The President of Equatorial Guinea and Uganda can be mentioned here. They stayed in power for 45 and 37 years respectively. They regarded their country as their personal life. Many countries conducted election but only to perpetuate the power of the incumbent presidents.

Due to deep sited political crises and external intervention, countries such as

Libya and Somalia have been failed state and the civil war which has taken place in these countries consumed their economic resources and cost their opportunity to embark on the right development path. The youth residing in these countries has only two options to sustain his/her life either to be recruited to be soldier and prop up the killing business or to migrate to the unknown destiny.

Desperate young men and women who lost hope on their country from various parts of the continent attempted to cross Mediterranean sea to enter Europe illegally and as to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) report, only in a decade, thousands submerged in the sea and lost their life

The contribution of Africa to the world trade is only three percent and still it exports raw materials to the world market. It imports more than it exports. As a result, the trade balance of all countries is still negative. Nevertheless, there are undeniable facts that one can explain the positive outcome of the African Union dedication for attaining peace, economic progress and the protection of human rights. Au deployed its peace keeping force in Somalia, Sudan Darfur, Abiye and in other parts of the continent and to somehow brought stability.

The free trade agreement between the member countries also brought opportunities to countries to trade each other in lower price than importing commodities from outside the continent. Agricultural and manufacturing products have also obtained markets within Africa and supply their products to the market free of tariffs.

Member countries are also signatories to the protection of human rights in their respective countries. When the AU get report regarding violation of human rights in the member countries, it dispatches investigators and based on the evidence, it takes various measures to bring justice to the culprits.

It also cooperates with ICC (International Criminal Court). The AU constitution also refutes that assuming power by unconstitutional means is illegal and in this regard the new military governments assumed power by force in Guinea, Burkina Faso and Mali are banned from membership until they transfer power to the legitimate government elected by free and fair election.

This week, the 36th African summit will take place in Addis Ababa where its head office is found and we hope the leaders will be committed to the objectives of the establishment of African Union.

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

Editorial

opinion

Ethiopia's wheat success aligns with continental, global goals

Ethiopia's successful journey towards producing extra wheat and embarking on export can be taken as both a national success as well as a feat to discharge continental and global responsibilities.

As the government indicated recently, Ethiopia is set to export a large volume of wheat this year, without affecting the local demand. This means the country is in a position to cover its local demand for wheat and become one of the countries in the world that supply the staple crop to countries that are in need of it.

In Ethiopia wheat is highly demanded crop along with its close contestants especially Teff, barley, maize and sorghum, among others. Still in spite of the availability of all these crops, the demand for wheat in the country never loses its place.

As a result the government has taken stringent measures to boost the country's wheat production and productivity in the past couple of years. These measures are the summer wheat production and the lowland wheat production initiatives. These initiatives are now bearing fruits that they have reached to the level to cover the local demand fully and have started availing extra amounts for export.

By now the country has harvested a surplus of wheat during the last rainy season alone. Aggregated with the amount that the country would produce in the coming season, it is clear that there will be a considerable volume of wheat to export.

During the inauguration of the country's maiden wheat export, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmad (PhD) said "Ethiopia is entering a new chapter that will change its image" Indeed there is no exaggeration in claiming that the country's success in exporting wheat ushers in a new chapter.

Ethiopia is one of the countries of the world with vast arable land suitable for cultivation of wheat and other staple crops. But due to poor and backward agricultural practice, coupled with environmental and policy related problems, the country has been subject to depending on wheat received as foreign aid.

Gradually the country boosted its productivity to cover majority of the local demand for wheat including the amount required by humanitarian organizations for domestic emergency relief purposes. This means the country was able to substitute the relief aid that used to be imported by the humanitarian agencies from abroad with the locally harvested wheat.

Lately, through applying technology and appropriate policy to increase its productivity, it has succeeded to quit the import. By now it has gone beyond producing adequate volume of wheat for local demand and is bracing to join the line of wheat exporter nations of the world.

The country's success in transforming itself from waiting for wheat aid to export aid is an exemplary one and aligns not only with its national goal of becoming self-sufficient in wheat production but also the continental initiative of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) as well as the global Sustainable Development Goal (SDG).

Established by the AU assembly in 2003, CAADP's goal is to eliminate hunger and reduce poverty through agriculture. To do this, African governments have agreed to increase public investment in agriculture by a minimum of 10 percent of their national budgets and raise agricultural productivity by at least 6 percent per annum.

The 2nd goal of the 17 SDGs also states 'Zero Hunger'. Even though the ability to produce as much wheat as to be able to export the surplus does not fully guarantee elimination of hunger, it is a significant leap from towards it. Therefore, it is important to build up on this success to ensure sustainability of Ethiopia's achievements, to replicate the experience and realize the continental and global goals.

The need for pro-poor, inclusive policy for African countries

BY STAFF REPORTER

In recent years our world has faced severe blow from the outbreak of COVID 19, climate change as well as the outbreak of the war between Russia and Ukraine.

Out of the countries in general Africa is likely to face the brunt of the problem due to its fledgling economy, susceptibility to climate change impacts, among others.

Following the multiple financial, health, and climate crises affecting Africa, countries should accelerate inclusive recovery efforts to boost economic growth, the Economic Commission for Africa's Acting Executive Secretary, Mr. Antonio Pedro, has urged.

Speaking at a press briefing ahead of the 55th Session of the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (CoM 2023), Mr. Pedro said the impact of the shocks caused by COVID -19, the war in Ukraine and climate change have pushed more people into extreme poverty and have increased inequality worldwide.

"Africa is falling even further behind, with the continent now accounting for the highest proportion of the world's poor of any region globally," Mr. Pedro warned, emphasizing that the growing number of newly poor and vulnerable people make it harder to close the gap between the rich and the poor.

"Recovery efforts must be pro-poor and inclusive, with a view to fostering a new social contract that offers equal opportunity for all," he said, adding that, "It is important that our growth does not leave anyone behind and if we do so then the social contract that is key to have stability and prosperity will be completely disrupted."

Mr. Pedro indicated that pro-poor and inclusive recovery must be deliberately incorporated in the design and implementation of policies, including by securing the input of all stakeholders such as Small and Medium Enterprises in such processes.

The 55th Session of ECA's Committee of Experts of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, a statutory meeting of the ECA will be held from 15 to 17 March 2022. It will be followed by the Ministerial Segment of the Conference on 20 and 21 March 2023.

The Conference brings together Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development from African member States, governors of central banks, entities of the United Nations system and pan-African financial institutions.

In addition, the conference will also attract African academic and research institutions, development partners, intergovernmental organizations and other key stakeholders to discuss statutory issues pertaining to the function of ECA, engage and exchange views on economic and social development in Africa as well as take stock of progress on regional integration and other issues pertinent to the continent.

This year, the Committee of Experts and the Ministerial Segment will convene under the theme 'Fostering recovery and transformation in Africa to reduce inequalities and vulnerabilities.'

"The ability of African countries to effectively tackle poverty and inequality is also severely constrained given declining economic growth, narrowing fiscal space, rising debt, commodity shocks and tightening global financial conditions," said Mr. Pedro, warning that Africa faces a higher risk of missing the poverty and inequality targets set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063.

Lamenting that the COVID-19 and the Ukraine conflict have wiped some of the development gains made in the last decade in terms of economic growth, social inclusion and poverty reduction, Mr. Pedro said Africa's trade flows and supply chains were also disrupted. As a result, it was pertinent for Africa to promote local solutions. He said for his part Africa has reacted positively to the impacts of COVID-19 with the creation of the Africa Exchange Trade Platform (ATEX) digital platform to boost trade in critical commodities under the AfCFTA.

Mr. Pedro said the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development aims to renew focus and action on reducing poverty, inequality and other factors that have left Africans vulnerable to these scourges.

He noted that Africa has considerable opportunities to build strong, resilient and competitive economies through accelerated implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area, development of carbon credit markets, fostering the emergency of regional value chains in the battery and electric vehicle subsector, to name a few.

Speaking at the same press conference, Second Vice-Chair of the 54th Bureau of the ECA and Zimbabwean Ambassador to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the African Union and ECA, Ms. Sophia Nyamudeza said that the theme of CoM 2023 was timely as African countries are recovering from COVID-19 and were experiencing world food crisis and suffering climate change shocks.

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



The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943

Published daily except Mondays
By The Ethiopian Press Agency

Office of the CEO

Tel. 011-126-42-22

Fax. 251-011-156-98-62

Advertisement and Dist.

Department

email: etpresspromotion@gmail.com

Tel. 011-156-98-73/011-811-13-15

Editor-in-Chief: Worku Belachew

email- workubelachew@press.et

Address- Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-city

Woreda - 05, House No----

Tel- +251 111 26 41 98

Managing Editor: Wakuman Kudama

Email: wakuma220@gmail.com

Deputy Editors-in-Chief:

Alem Hailu

Elizabeth Mengistu

Zekarias Woldemariam

Desti Geberehiwot

Daniel Beyene

Website: www.press.et

email: ethiopianherald@press.et

Fb/ /Ethiopian Press Agency/

The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

Mobilizing investment for development, real change

BY MENGESHA AMARE

If the public sectors in collaboration with private ones in a given country can fuel investment and entrepreneurship targeting at creating more jobs and increasing income of the poor, it is possible to deduce that vigorous and sustained economic growth is hit.

Having this concept in mind, *The Ethiopian Herald* talked to Musa Abdella, an economic expert graduated from Dilla University in economics, to have a piece of information about the close association of investment and economic growth thereby coming up with real change in the country.

He said that developing countries like Ethiopia are expected to embark on macroeconomic stability, improve the functioning of market-regulating institutions and strengthen procedures for contract enforcement and dispute settlement. They have also to improve the coherence of their policies in a range or areas such as trade, tax, competition and investment promotion, which can potentially affect the volume of investment and its development impact.

In so doing, they will be capable of generating the revenues they need to expand access to health, education and infrastructure services to help improve production and productivity.

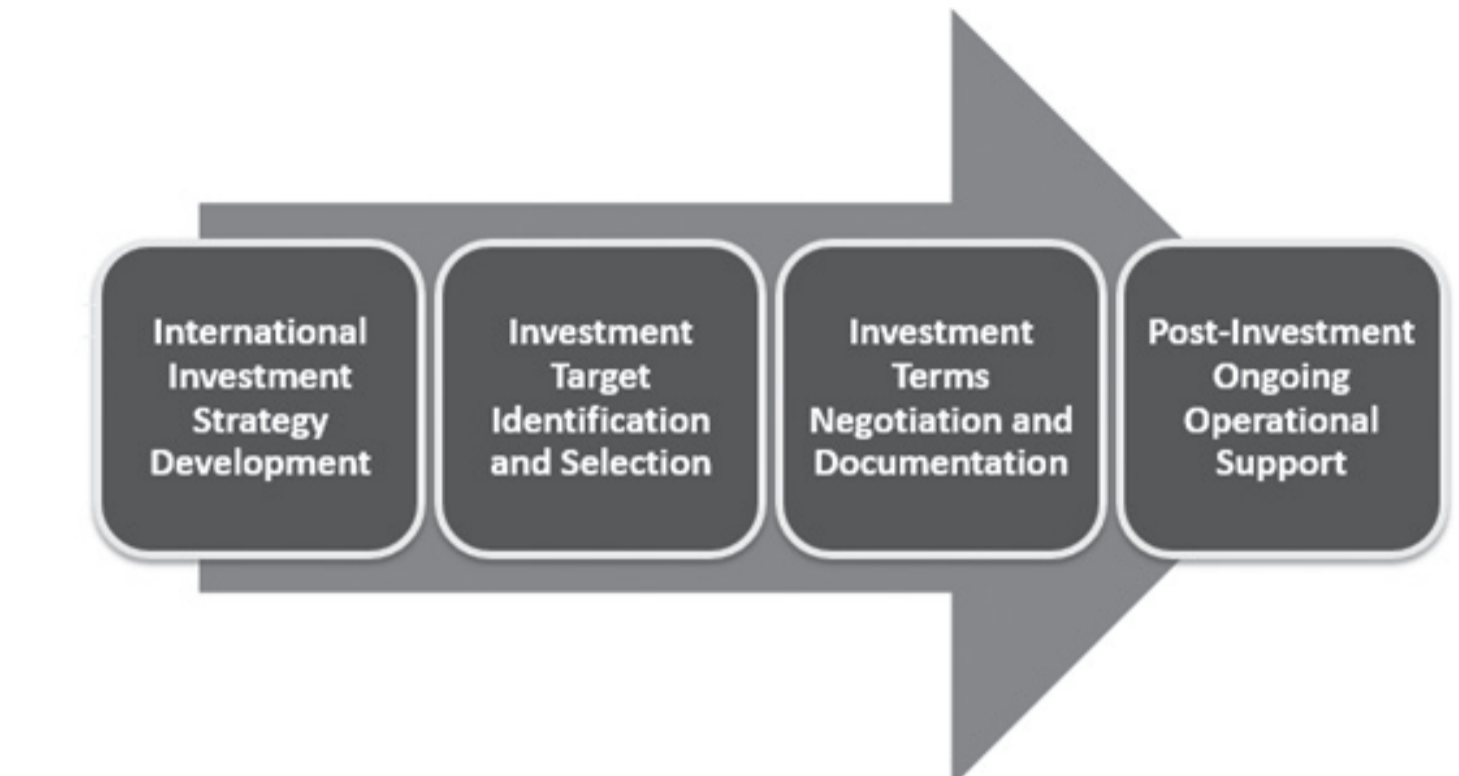
The problem here, however, is in Ethiopia investment rates are too low; productivity gains are insufficient; incentives for innovation are inadequate; returns on investment are not sufficiently predictable; and not enough secure, safe though activities are undertaken to come up with creating adequately paid jobs in the formal economy.

The country has to work much more to address the market failures and structural impediments that are holding back productive investment (both domestic and foreign), and to do it better, for longer periods and in a more strategic way, he underlined. The country in turn has to help foster an investment climate that enables the private sector to flourish and fulfill its role as the main engine of growth.

He said, "Yes, mobilizing private investment, both foreign and domestic, is recognized as a priority area for development and real change. But reaping the maximum benefits of investment is not automatic as policies matter. Here, a key challenge is how to frame investment policies in a way that supports and reinforces economic development."

As to him, Ethiopia, in collaboration with development partners of course, has to create luring policy environments needed to unleash the full benefits from investment, in terms of economic growth, poverty reduction and sustainable development. Though it has been relentlessly working on the area, a lot remains to be done, indeed!

Government's commitment to bring about real change in terms of economic, social and even political aspects, as they are highly intertwined, is badly required, he said



adding that officials' development assistance to mobilize private investment would unequivocally strengthen implementation capacities and best practices among investors, be they public or private ones.

According to Musa, human resource development is a prerequisite needed to identify and to seize investment opportunities, yet Ethiopia has so far underinvested in human resource development, but has to do in the future.

He said sound infrastructure development policies are used to ensure wise use of resources and help come up with the most promising projects via addressing bottlenecks limiting private investment.

No doubt he stated that effective financial sector policies facilitate enterprises and entrepreneurs to realize their investment ideas within a stable environment. Besides, regulatory quality and public sector integrity are two dimensions of public governance that critically matter for the confidence and decisions of all investors and for reaping the development benefits out of investment.

The government of Ethiopia has obviously had the right to safeguard national security and other public interests as it has legitimate concerns and capacity to do so, he opined.

The government should also be more strategic, and its interventions need to be harmonized and guided by more systematic learning of lessons focusing on helping to lower the costs of investment, reduce risks, improve competition and develop human and institutional capacities. It is also duty bound to give high priority to economic infrastructure investment and financial market development, as these are key areas for promoting investment across the nation.

He said, "The government should also pay greater attention to the determinants of domestic investment, both formal and informal thereby strengthening the capacities of local firms to respond to new investment opportunities and to expand business relationships with foreign investors."

According to Musa, enhancing the contribution of investment to pro-poor growth reducing barriers to formalization, promoting environmental sustainability, expanding access to knowledge and technology and unleashing the economic potential in rural areas need to be given special attention as they are viable avenues towards growth and prosperity.

Seeking out reliable, representative and accountable domestic partners who can drive reform programs' wheel well and help catalyze change and using market-based approaches to supporting firms are also among the best ways to be entertained, he highlighted.

He further elucidated that evaluating the cumulative impact of interventions on promoting investment and share examples of successful and unsuccessful practices is quite significant as reforming the investment climate requires political will, drive and leadership to take on the national entrenched interests and inertia.

As to him, the very point that needs to be well hammered here is working on the range of subjects relevant for mobilizing investment should be run in a well-coordinated fashion. The public sector partners in Ethiopia need to be encouraged to engage more with the private sector, such as through public private partnerships since mobilizing investment for sustainable development and economic growth has to be a priority for Ethiopia.

At the national level, he stated integrating investment policy into development strategy, incorporating sustainable development objectives in investment policy and ensuring investment policy relevance and effectiveness need to be strengthened.

He also said that investment adds to the stock of capital, and the quantity of capital available to an economy is a crucial determinant of its productivity. It has thus contributed a lot to economic growth and job creation.

He said, "Development happens through

structural transformation, which shifts the balance of economic activity away from agriculture and towards manufacturing and service sectors, in the process creating increasing numbers of better jobs becomes possible."

The road investments will primarily benefit the border locations that gain the most in terms of market access. As some regional states, in some parts of them, do not benefit out of road investments, they have to receive infrastructure investments with a view to fostering trade facilitation and safely transporting products to and fro, he explained.

"In the long run, good public policies that encourage permanent increase in private investment rates lead to increase in sustainable economic growth, development and welfare," he said.

As to him, private investment being typically allocated more efficiently than public investment has been the best strategy for public investment to be complementary for greater returns.

The affiliation between sustainable growth and public investment, considered as one of the key factors, is a topic of interest in the context of sustainable development strategies. Private investment also drives the business cycle when it is well synchronized and run in a coordinated manner, he added.

In a nutshell, it is necessary to prioritize public investment in those sectors capable of stimulating sustainable economic growth and attracting private investment like renewable energy, telecommunications and the likes. Institutional quality is also a key element on which public investment depends and leads to economic growth.

It is also important to consider that any increase in public investment must be assessed by government decision-makers in light of criteria of efficiency, financing, and associated costs, especially in the eyes of economic and social benefits for society like creating more jobs for a number of citizenry.

Art & Culture

We never leave behind the child we once were

BY NAOL GIRMA

Born in 1971 in Figueira da Foz, Afonso Cruz is a Portuguese writer. He is a multidisciplinary artist (illustration, music, literature, photography and film). He is also author of more than 30 books, among which are found novels, theatre plays, picture books, juvenile novellas, poetry, photo-text and essays translated to more than 20 languages.

His books are published in more than 20 languages. He had bagged many awards, for the novel Kokoschka's Doll. Afonso Cruz is also a columnist, illustrator and member of the band The Soaked Lamb.

He was awarded the European Union Prize for Literature in 2012 for his novel Kokoschka's Doll. Jesus Christ Drank Beer was considered the Best Portuguese Novel of the Year by Time Out Lisbon magazine and the Best Novel of In 2013.

As an illustrator, Afonso Cruz had won the 2014 Portuguese National Illustration Award for Capital. Besides writing and illustrating, he is a director of animated films in 2016; he published the novel Not All Whales Fly. In 2017, his most ambitious outing, a non-fiction book, Jalan Jalan: A Reading of the World. In 2018, he published his latest novel, The Karenina Principle, and a book for children, How to Cook a Child.

As educational psychologists put it, illustrations help the early reader to associate objects and actions with words. This helps the child to begin comprehending the words and move onto becoming a fluent reader. Illustrations also hold the attention of an early reader and help the child to move the narrative forward without adult help.

Inspiring Visual Thinking - Illustrations in a picture book help children understand what they are reading. It allows new readers to analyze the story. If children are having difficulty with the words, the illustrations can help them figure out the narrative, which can increase their comprehension.

Illustrations are widely used in children's books because of their visual appeal. They assist the child understand the text better. In fact, at early stages of child development, the books may consist exclusively of illustrations but as children become more adept at reading, they move on to books with more text and fewer images.

Illustrations in story books help in the overall child development by stimulating the reader's imaginations, heightening perceptions about the narrative and increasing the reader's sense of observation. Accurate and professional illustrations are also invaluable learning aids for children with short attention span and learning disabilities. Comprehension is made

easier for these readers since they can use the images as a support system to strengthen their understanding of the text

At a three - day workshop illustration for children's books was held at NALA, the Nationals Archives and National Library this week. Alfonso Cruz and Ethiopian illustrators discussed different aspects of illustrations such as techniques, visual languages, and shared experience. Together they created a story that was presented to children, at the Ethiopian Reads Library. Three children were invited to decode the images and tell the story. The story illustrated during the workshop by the participating artistes was decoded and interpreted by children who were writing their version of the history according to their understanding of the visual narrative. The children were amazing in getting the meaning and creating the story-line. The next step in the workshop was awarding books to the children who participated in the library event writing the story, and some other materials to the library. Obviously a pledge was made to publish the collective book in Ethiopia and in Portugal, including the children's best stories.

The Ethiopian Herald has intercept the noted



The final activity of the workshop



At a three - day workshop illustration for children's books was held at NALA,



Artist and writer Afonso Cruz

versatile artist Afonso Cruz for interview.

How come you become a versatile artist? Could you tell us about the international prize you won?

I always felt convened by different artist. Some are with me since childhood. They invite me to engage in art like drawing and reading. That determined my passion in writing, cinema and illustration, which I developed later. I always found interesting turning these passions into objects,

like books, films and songs. My family encouraged me to develop my autistics endeavors, in particular in the area of visual arts. Both my grandfather and father were photographers and I grew up in such environment that really stimulated my interest and exploits in the arts.

It is not difficult to write children's story being an adult?

We never leave behind the child we once were. To be creative we should nestle characteristics of our childhood, as being curious, insistent and keep on asking WHY?

Literature is printing with words. If so why the need for illustrations for children's book? Is it demanding? How do you describe the task from your experience?

Illustration and writing are two different languages. They perform different roles in the narrative: they are complementary. For those who had never seen the red colour, the word 'red' do not evoke the right image; visual experience is fundamental. It is not a natural extension of the verbal experience. Illustration has the power to inspire kids to alternative interpretations of the story, and to have a more immersive experience while reading.

How did you find the work of Ethiopian authors of children's story and illustrations?

I noticed the work of the Ethiopian writers and illustrators for children is very important in raising the children interest in reading. Such type of great stories and well-illustrated books invite children to read and love books. Children could also develop their aesthetic appreciation.

How was the three-day workshop you organized here, what particular message do you pass to Ethiopian illustrators?

The workshop was rather interesting; all participants had the chance to share experiences and cultures. The workshop created the environment for introducing its main messages: cultivate openness to other influence and different technical approaches, accumulate the visual richness in order to have the sufficient ingredients to combine and recombine and to cook original works.

If you have any message to convey you are welcome.

Exercise your ability to read and interpret images. Go to museums, art galleries; revisit traditional art- like this. You can mingle the past and contemporary creating something unique within the context of your own culture.

Indepth

The National Dialogue is a first step towards lasting democracy

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

Ever since the inclusive national dialogue has been a subject of discussion among people there have been contrasting opinions about its success and whether it would really manage to solve all the perennial problems of the country. Many have said it looks wonderful on paper but is it practicable and can it achieve its intended objectives remains a huge asks, they say. There have been several explanations on the media about how this dialogue could proceed and what ways it will use to attain its goals.

We have seen several of the commissioners who lead the national dialogue present their case to the public trying to wash away the skepticism expressed by some people including certain political parties who view the national dialogue as yet another creation of the ruling party and indirectly a means to prolong its monopoly of power.

The members of the commission have been busy explaining that the National Dialogue and the ruling party or the government for that matter do not have any direct or hierarchical relations because the commission presents its works to the House of Peoples Representatives and they have been promised that no one from the ruling party or the executive would interfere in their operations and still less give them orders.

In interviews we heard and read from the chief commissioner of the national dialogue commission Professor Mesfin Araya that if there was any intervention in the commission's works he would resign. He has said multiple times that the members of the commission are all professionals who had their own jobs and engagements and did not join the commission for any gain. They were volunteers who wanted to contribute their share of knowledge and expertise with their country men and women and be useful in the construction of a new society based on democratic principles and peaceful discussions to solve any national issue or create a sense of national purpose based on thorough understanding of one another and never resort to conflicts or violence in order to handle an issue.

They were suggested by people who knew them well and presented to the House who gave them the appointment. Hence these commissioners are people with no political or other interest except that of seeing a society that is based on open and candid discussions to solve all sorts of problems that have been leading it to continued misunderstanding and continuous conflicts.

The National Dialogue commission may not have been well promoted so that everyone would have a clear understanding of who it is and how it functions and what its objectives are. Clearly the chief commissioner says those who are skeptical about the duties and missions of the commission do not have a clear understanding of the commission. Its major objective is to give a chance to all vested interests in the country in their capacity as citizens and every sector of the society will have to be given a chance to contribute their share for the discussion. There should be no exclusion of any one nor

should there be any perception of exclusion in this huge discussion that will be carried after the preliminary activities have been carried out throughout the country.

The commission is now in its tenth month carrying out its responsibilities once its offices have been established and the necessary personnel have been recruited and filled so that the commission can go into its mission. This has been a daunting task because it took a lot of time and resources according to the commissioners' explanation. But above all the main challenge for the commission is to create a sense of hope and purpose on the activities and operations of the commission because if people do not have confidence and trust in the commission's activities and programs, there cannot be any hope of success.

This is a nationwide activity but it also involves those who are not residing in the country such as the diaspora. There are an estimated five million citizens living abroad and the commission cannot ignore them by any means. May be it is even easier to reach them and have their opinion on what sort of issues must be raised for discussion. In fact the first activity of the national dialogue commission is to gather and select agenda items that will be presented for discussions. No item will be excluded a prior and no interest group will be left out because every citizen whether they live in the urban areas or in rural areas or whether they are very far away from the centre of the country or near will not be left out. That is why people need to have trust in the process because it is going to be all inclusive and the preliminary activity carried out up to now has been selecting agendas from all corners of the country. It has been a very valuable operation but there still remains a lot to do including the areas where sporadic instability due to conflicts reigns. The chief commissioner has insisted that even groups who have been involved in conflicts are not excluded from the discussions but they need to lay down their arms.

There are those who have reservations about how all these agendas can be gathered and about how they can be discussed thoroughly given the vast number of issues that may be presented on the table. The commissioners have however explained that the process will be as inclusive as possible and all major issues will be entertained for consideration. It is clear that there is no chance of representing each and every individual idea to the table but concise groups will be considered. People have their own associations and gatherings when they live together in communities in a certain area and the commissioners will go there to take notes of the major problems these people face as citizens. Hence they will definitely have a chance to air their views and ideas. The advantage of collecting all the issues of the people is to be able to select those that can be hammered out locally and leave them there and those that need national intervention or must be included in the dialogue at the national level.

Ethiopia has never had a similar experience in the past and whenever there were complaints of a certain group of people

No item will be excluded a prior and no interest group will be left out because every citizen whether they live in the urban areas or in rural areas or whether they are very far away from the centre of the country or near will not be left out. That is why people need to have trust in the process

against a perceived enemy or rival, what used to be done was resort to force rather than try to iron out the differences with discussions and negotiations. And we have seen how this mechanism failed us several times not producing lasting solutions to the problem but also securing lasting peace. Problems that have been resolved by force do not actually end by resolving them for good. The use of force may seem to solve the problem for a while but then after some time it will re-explode and result in more violence and conflicts. It is hence such vicious circle that must be broken once and for all with the understanding of the problems clearly and discussions for a permanent solution.

During the past decades there have been more than enough clashes among peoples in Ethiopia and these have caused the country immense resources it could hardly afford. It has been pulled back by the conflicts whenever it was trying to extricate itself from abject poverty. This is because there were no chances of a national dialogue that would give the opportunity for everyone to have their say in front of a neutral body such as the national dialogue commission. It may be unprecedented in Ethiopian history but it is worth trying because we cannot afford to be entangled with the kind of problems we are facing for ages and continue with this pace.

Ethiopia is not the only country in the world that has several social issues not only present ones but also historical ones that are cause for strife today. But these countries have realized that with discussions and singling out the problems they have resolved those they can and progressed ahead. They have established that past stories cannot be changed because they are gone and they have realized that they had to live with them. But they have also used them to learn from the past problems.

History has taught us that there have been horrible wars between nations and groups of people in a certain nation but once those years have passed and days have changed there have been adaptations to the current reality changing what can be changed and leaving aside what cannot. When it is the case there have been admissions of guilt and asking of excuse and when appropriate and possible compensations for the wrongs have been carried out. But that history gets to rest and we go ahead. This must be attempted in our country too because there are those who continue to live in the past and attribute today's generation for what allegedly happened years ago.

The national dialogue is expected to dig out all these wrongs and discuss them clearly so that people have a clear understanding of their historical chapters and then fix them when possible or go ahead with a new state of mind. The most important thing to do is to look for a better future for the coming generation and not get fixed on a certain stage of history that is already past and continue to create cases for conflict and in some cases even revenge. Revenge on account of what has already happened in the past is not something that will help us face the future peacefully and the vicious circle will continue and one of the most important objectives of this inclusive national dialogue must be to avoid all these excesses and wastage and begin afresh with a clean state of mind and purpose.

In the end discussions will clear our thoughts and open a new era of democracy in our society. It is only through open and frank discussions that we can heal the wounds of the past. Get over them and reach a national consensus that we definitely need in order to progress in an atmosphere of peace and reconciliation. In a way the national dialogue will be a basement for true democracy in our country. It will not solve all the problems of the country but it will be one step nearer to that objective.

Law & Politics

The multifaciated gains of African Continental Free Trade Area

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Everyone agrees that if the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement is implemented, the continent of Africa for sure would reinvigorate trade, create job opportunities and foster free movement of people, alleviate poverty and seal deeper economic integration.

As it is impossible to pursue the aforesaid facts unless the agreement sees the light of day, member states of the African Union should go the extra mile to expedite its implementation and smooth the path of strengthening regional integration. Notwithstanding the fact that African nations have been closely working with the intention of cementing regional integration in the continent of Africa, the anticipated goal has not been achieved yet the level expected.

In actual fact, until today, African nations have been collaborating in a wide range of economic, social and political matters as well as other development activities that can take the continent of Africa to the next level of accomplishment. If the continent continues putting AfCFTA agreement into effect, the regional integration in Africa would be stronger than ever before.

Apart from amalgamating economic cohesion of the continent as well as firming up Africa's resilience, AfCFTA agreement plays a huge role in giving center stage to industrial development and all-encompassing socio-economic growth and bringing the sons and daughters of Africa together.

In a similar vein, as the agreement plays a huge role in oiling the wheels of investments through the creation of a large market, strengthening productivity, encouraging industrial growth, augmenting competitiveness and other related aspects, the continental bloc should move heaven and earth for the implementation no matter what the cost may be.

In a related move, it is common knowledge that if the agreement is effectively put in place, it will lift millions of Africans out of poverty besides improving the income of the continent of Africa, bridging the manufacturing gap, and other things of a similar kind.

The other thing is as AfCFTA plays an extremely important role in bringing together the entire nations of Africa and eight Regional Economic Communities, transforming the continent to global powerhouse, smoothing the path of job creation, industrialization, investment, the continental bloc has been playing a part in taking the continent of Africa to whole new level.

As a matter of fact as AfCFTA plays a major role in improving the lives of 1.3 billion people of the continent of Africa and abolishing trade obstacles and oiling the wheels of intra-Africa trade and widening market opportunities.

If African nations give prominence to the huge market potential of Africa through AfCFTA by getting to the bottom of technical predicaments making use of taking practical measures, the continent of Africa for sure would enhance the establishment of regional value chains.

While on the subject, as the continent of Africa is inundated with young population, the continent for sure would be the biggest market place just around the corner.

As the intentions of the AfCFTA are to generate a single market for goods and services, accelerate the movement of people, promote industrial development and sustainable and inclusive socio-economic growth, leaders of African nations should roll up their sleeves to resolve the issue almost immediately.

The AfCFTA is the world's largest free trade area bringing together the 55 countries of the African Union (AU) and eight (8) Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The overall mandate of the AfCFTA is to create a single continental market with a population of about 1.3 billion people and a combined GDP of approximately US\$ 3.4 trillion. The AfCFTA is one of the flagship projects of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, the African Union's long-term development strategy for transforming the continent into a global powerhouse, according to information obtained from a document.

As part of its mandate, the AfCFTA is to eliminate trade barriers and boost intra-Africa trade. In particular, it is to advance trade in value-added production across all service sectors of the African Economy. The AfCFTA will contribute to establishing regional value chains in Africa, enabling investment and job creation. The practical implementation of the AfCFTA has the potential to foster industrialization, job creation, and investment, thus enhancing the competitiveness of Africa in the medium to long term.

Trade experts, business executives and advocates of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) called upon to accelerate the ratification of the Protocol on the movement of people, during the Africa Prosperity Dialogue.

In Africa Prosperity Dialogue held in Ghana from 26 to 28 January on the theme: "AfCFTA: from Ambition to Action delivering prosperity through continental trade," African countries are called upon to "accelerate the ratification of the Protocol."

Economic Commission of Africa (ECA) on its website stated that, the Agreement has, thus far, been signed by fifty-four of the fifty-five African Union (AU) Member States. Forty-four countries have deposited their instrument of ratification, but only four have ratified the Protocol on the movement of people.

The Protocol initially contained in the 1991 Abuja Treaty aims to facilitate and increase the movement of Africans within Africa, while enhancing their rights to entry, residence and establishment in AU member states. With more people able to move freely, countries will easily tap into a wider labor market to bridge skills gaps while trading across borders.

"Continental integration is an existential necessity and therefore a natural destiny for



Africa," said Stephen Karingi, Director of Regional Integration and Trade at ECA.

President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo of Ghana at the event called upon to champion the Protocol on the free movement of persons. "Readily accept in all humility." He cautioned, however, that "I need the approval of the AU before I can become the champion of anything"

The President urged "all of us here to see ourselves as champions of intra-African trade." "We cannot afford to fail. As African nations, we must join hands with each other and work diligently to pursue this noble cause."

"When our governments sign or ratify an agreement of this nature, they are making a collective promise to all of us...It is thus incumbent on all of us to support them to be true to their words, but also to hold them to account when they fall short," said Melaka Desta, Coordinator of the African Trade Policy Centre at the ECA.

"Let Africans roam freely. Free movement of people is a must if Africa wants to enjoy the full benefits of the AfCFTA," said Joseph Atta-Mensah, Senior Regional Adviser on Trade at ECA.

The Dialogue was organized by the African Prosperity Network in partnership with the AfCFTA Secretariat, the Government of Ghana, UNDP, and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). Organizers agreed to "meet annually, under the Africa Prosperity Dialogue," and take stock of the progress of Africa's prosperity agenda.

Ensuring the supply of energy among countries is pivotal for steadfast economic integration and accelerated implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), according to experts.

In an exclusive interview with local media, Kenya Renewable Energy Association (KERECA) CEO Andrew Amadi energy, specifically electricity is the most important determinant of economic growth.

There is no country in the world that has become rich without electricity, he said, and added that countries need to move towards using energy for production and value addition.

There is no meaningful development that can

happen without the use of electricity, Amadi stated, and noted "I think the integration of electricity is very timely because it will level the availability across countries."

"So if we connected for example; we have connected Kenya to Ethiopia, if we connect Kenya to Tanzania, then from Tanzania to Rwanda; you can be able to supply electricity from the hydro in Ethiopia to Rwanda and turn down the generators they are using to generate electricity. That is the importance of integration," the CEO elaborated.

Furthermore, Amadi pointed out that availability of energy supply will reduce huge capital investment on building electricity generation infrastructure.

Speaking of AfCFTA implementation, he stressed the need to remove any barriers that hamper easy facilitation of intra-trade in Africa.

According to him, there is huge market that could be exploited for the benefit of the region if all agree to work in harmony together.

"If the barriers are less, if we harmonize customs and tariffs and if we all agree and say we want to grow this then we instantly create a big market in east Africa. East African community, we are talking 380 million people if you add Ethiopia we are at 500 million people market. If that market can allow goods and services, people move freely then we do not need to export to western markets. We can be able to supply our local markets and grow our economies trading on what each country or region has got capacity to produce and exploit," the CEO noted.

Association of Power Utilities of Africa (APUA) Director-General, Abel Didier Tella said on his part there will be no meaningful development unless countries invest on energy.

The energy issue in Africa should be considered as priority sector, he said, and added that governments have to put maximum effort in developing energy sector.

"When investors come to Africa; they see Africa as a place where you can come and take raw material. Now they have to change their views; they have to see Africa as a place where mining development support energy development, where we transform our raw materials before export, where we transform our raw materials and manufacture to create jobs and empower the youth with skill to work in factories," Tella explained.

The Director-General underscored "transforming products through value addition is the only way to exit from poverty in energy."

Ethiopia has been working to strengthen its hydropower generation to export electric power to neighboring countries with a view to expedite regional economic integration and secure foreign currency.

The demand for electric power by neighboring countries is increasing from time to time; the government has been intensifying efforts to expand infrastructures vital to addressing this need.

Ethiopia has already been exporting electric power to Sudan, Djibouti and Kenya while agreement is underway with South Sudan.

Women in Focus

A woman who walks in purpose

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

Emebet Tafesse is the General Manager of Erkab Transit and Consultancy Service Plc.

Born and raised in Addis Ababa, she has earned her first degree in Economics and studied Accounting at certificate diploma level.

Growing up, Emebet was very fond of with the idea of business as it allows communicating, and sharing business ideas with people

Her enthusiasm coupled with her love for animals like cattle, made her join organizations working on animal and animal products.

She has served in different government institutions on various positions; one of such institutions was the Ethiopian Leather Company where she worked as the Chief Executive Officer for several years. Similarly, Emebet has also been working in Ethiopian Coffee Exporters Association as a Deputy President.

Currently, she is running her private company called Erkab Transit and Consultancy Service Plc, which is engaged in facilitating various services in the export market.

Throughout her childhood, Emebet grew up with deep attachment to business as well as animal and animal products to the point where it led her grasp vast knowledge about it through profound reading.

“It gives me a great pleasure whenever I see people wearing and using leather products. What is more, thinking about the entire product development processes still amazes me. This is why I stayed in the leather industry for long.”

Reminding the opportunities that she had to visit different exhibition and expos organized on leather and leather products, Emebet expressed her regret that the nation has not benefitted from the sector meaningfully.

Given the abundant resources that the country is endowed with as well as the fact that most Ethiopian leather especially those found in Gojam, Gondar, Sidama and other areas are highly demanded in the global market, the nation has not benefitted at the desired level, as to her.

“It is sad to see that the market is still not blooming as it could have been. It is with this fear that I tried to warn concerned bodies back in the days through my writings to take some measures before it reached to this level.”

Though she primarily intended to stay in the leather industry, she had to enter the logistics sector due to number of



external factors. As it is natural to feel valued when served rightfully, she was delighted that she was destined to engage in the service industry however, it was early that she realized the drawback of the logistic service industry.

“In most of the occasions that I seek service from institutions, I have never felt that I was served right. Thus, I used to put myself in the service gives place and asked myself how I would have treated them.”

She dwelled on this idea for so long given the

There is no better person than us to solve our problem. I am more than delighted to share my knowledge to improve the logistic sector better. We have too much resource that can even benefit others. We need to make use of it wisely.

broad aspect of the challenge regarding the comments raised with provision of quality products timely to the global market.

It is essential to have better facilitated logistics to deliver as well as add value to products prior to reaching the customer. Let alone that effective, quality and timely delivery of products allows becoming competitive in the market, but it will also enable both producers and consumers to benefit equally, she stressed.

Though much of her customers are coffee exporters, she is also working with different customers who are engaged in importing various products to the country.

While the logistics company imports products from Djibouti, Kenya and other countries, it also exports different products to countries. “The fact that our services are effective and timely, the company has become choice of many peoples”, she underscored.

Logistic remained a challenge when it comes to supplying the coffee collected across the country and reach the Capital. Nonetheless, had not been the problem with logistic addressed, it would have impacted the import export market and nation’s competitiveness in the international market.

With the aim of supporting the logistic sector, Emebet is also providing consultancy service to equip new exporters with the necessary information.

Despite the fact that logistic service accounts for 40 percent in the process of production, she said infrastructure is the major bottleneck in the logistic sector, adding that it is exposing customers for additional storage expenses since the transportation is taking too long, according to her.

Besides exerting her corporate responsibilities, she is very friendly with her employees. She has so far secured permanent job for about 26 citizens in the logistic service while she created job for other people (60 people) in coffee sector in which the number varies at pick seasons.

“There is no better person than us to solve our problem. I am more than delighted to share my knowledge to improve the logistic sector better. We have too much resource that can even benefit others. We need to make use of it wisely.”

Emebet has set a plan to engage in the coffee production as well as horticulture sector through fruit and vegetable production and export to different countries. Currently, she has finalized her pre-preparation activities and she is ready to commence.

Donate blood, save lives

BY TEWODROS KASSA

“The chairs are empty and waiting for you! Please come to donate blood today or tomorrow. Our current blood supply is very low; blood donations help to save the lives of those in accidents, surgeries, and other emergencies,” says a notice posted on the social media page of Soddo Christian Hospital.

True, there are several loyal Ethiopians who are heroes and heroines of humanity and known for donating blood in a regular manner to rescue the lives of people who are in need of blood due to various medical conditions.

Regardless of any differences, students, public and private organizations’ employees, artists, journalists, among others are actively participating in voluntary blood donation programs.

However, following shortage of different blood types in the Blood Bank, the Ethiopian Blood and Tissue Bank Service (EBTBS) has urged the community for more blood donation to save more lives. Particularly, due to scarcity of certain blood types, the Bank is compelled to call upon the society to visit nearby blood bank service centers and donate blood for the reason at this point in time there are numerous individuals who wait other’s blood donation to sustain their life.



The Ethiopian Blood and Tissue Bank Service (EBTBS) Deputy Director Habtamu Teye told *The Ethiopia Herald* that the number of voluntary blood donors is getting minimal due to overlapping of public festivals, schools’ semester break and fasting season.

According to him, peoples’ being overly busy following a series of festivals such as the Ethiopian Timket and Genna holidays during the recent times, caused limitations among the public to stick on the habit of donating blood continuously.

Thus, volunteers should continue to donate blood so as to meet blood shortages challenges across the country. As to him, though the culture of donating blood among the society has improved over time, they still have a lot of work to do.

“The standard set by the World Health Organization (WHO) requires that 1 % of

the country’s population should be blood donor. In this sense, we have a lot of work to do to meet the country’s blood demand.”

As to him, 10 % of the total blood donors should be regular blood donors in order to have a reliable blood reserve. This means that a blood donor should donate blood regularly every 3 months. Currently, the permanent donor the Bank has is 2.3 %.

Scarcity of blood supply can be addressed through volunteers’ continuous donation and their commitment to do so. Therefore, the Ethiopian Blood and Tissue Bank Service (EBTBS) calls on voluntary blood donors to continue donating this lifesaving fluid in all blood banks across the country.

According to him, in Addis Ababa the Bank is collecting blood in an organized way. Presently, there are 11 temporary blood collection sites.

Awareness raising activity is being done using various media to overcome the existing shortage; and the Bank is working with 147 high schools and 147 religious institutions in a bid to increase the number of volunteer blood donors. In the first half of the budget year, 167,850 units of blood was collected and distributed to medical institutions nationwide.

The National Blood Transfusion Services (NBTS) was established in 1969 by the Ethiopian Red Cross Society; since 2004 it has been transferred to Federal Ministry of Health Ethiopia, and entrusted with the responsibility of managing the Blood donors, collection, testing and transfusion of blood and blood products in Ethiopia.

Its main center is located in Addis Ababa and it has also the responsibility to oversee, support and monitor the activities of regional blood bank in the country which are administratively under their respective regional health bureaus.

In addition, it is responsible for mobilizing and recruiting blood donors; organizing blood collection sessions and collecting blood from blood donors. It is divided into central clinic (collects blood at the main office of the blood bank) and five mobile case teams which are responsible for conducting blood collection sessions outside the premises of the central blood bank.



Published Weekly in Collaboration with Haramaya University

HU’s bold move in promoting peace, stability

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Haramaya University (HU) has been making smart move to promote peace and security in the Borena Zone by implementing a project called the “Borena Cross-Border Peace Building Project”.

The project, which brings a lot of benefits to peace and security in the Zone, has been implemented for six years together with the Borena Zone administrative authorities’ tribal leaders and Abba Gadas.

Indeed, higher education institutions play a key role in promoting peace in communities since they raise issues that are imperative to develop trust, safety, and social cohesion within the communities.

They can also provide age-cutting ideas, concepts, and research that could be used to strengthen economic, social, and cultural development across the community. They can also facilitate inter-ethnic and inter-group interaction and dialogue.

Taking the role of higher education to promote peace and stability into account, Haramaya University has been implementing various projects in collaboration with stakeholders and relevant actors. Especially, the Borena Cross-Border Peace Building



Project which is being implemented by the Haramaya University College of Law along with the government, community leaders, and stakeholders has brought about encouraging results in building peace in the Borena Zone.

Project Coordinator Wariyo Dima said that to promote peace and security in the Zone, the University has given various peace and related training besides undertaking a series of dialogues with the residents, tribal leaders

and Abba Gadas.

These have enabled the administration of the Borena zone to mobilize the people, the tribal leaders and the Abba Gadas to make the peace-building efforts effective and successful. Accordingly, all parties who have participated in the project deserve special thanks for their commitment and encouraging results, said Wariyo.

The Borena Zone Security and Peace Bureau

Head Buzayahu Marga on his part stated that the project has helped the community to solve security related problems that have been observed in the Zone. The project is also encouraging traditional ways of conflict resolution methods to avoid recurrent conflicts. According to Buzayahu, the Zone, taking the effectiveness of the project into account, is ready to work in collaboration with the government to ensure the continuity of peace and conflict resolution efforts in the area.

Besides, the people who live in the Borana zone Gomale district held a cultural show and peace conference with the support of Haramaya University, College of Law and USAID Ethiopia.

In actual fact, higher education institutions like Haramaya University have the potential to support peace-building endeavors in a certain place by creating anti-war messages, facilitating positive intergroup communication and topics for conversations.

Hence, the project is imperative in supporting efforts that promote peace and stability by collaborating with religious leaders and elders who are important actors as brokers of peace since they enjoy the respect of their communities and encourage peace efforts at the grassroots level.