



The Ethiopian Herald

Vol. LXXIX No 133 12 February 2023 - Yekatit 5, 2015

Sunday Edition

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Fasil Dawit (PhD)

MoA underlines applying Blue Economy strategy for fishery

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) stated that it is applying Blue Economy Strategy with the help of IGAD to bring significance change in fishery sector centering the Horn of Africa.

MoA Fisheries and Aquaculture Resource

See MoA underlines ... page 4



Page 3

Ethiopia, Russia heed partnership in nuclear energy

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA -The Ethiopian Nuclear Science Society (ENSS) said it is on the verge of inking a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Russian Nuclear power company, Rosatom that will allow them to cooperate on nuclear energy.

Approached by The Ethiopian Herald at the sidelines of an international conference the Russian Global Energy Association held
See Ethiopia,Russia ... page 4



Ethiopia reports over 1 bln USD agricultural exports in half-year

BY TAMERU REGASA

ADDIS ABABA- The revenue obtained from agricultural exports in the first six months of the current fiscal year reached 1.07 billion USD, the Ministry of

Agriculture said, adding that coffee remains the leading exportable commodity.

Presenting the six-month performance to stakeholders, the Ministry's Strategic Issues

See Edthiopia reports ... page 4

Photo - Hadush Abreha



News

WHO chief continues sabotaging Ethiopia's peace process: *Ambassador*

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopian Ambassador to France said that World Health Organization (WHO) Chief has continued sabotaging and undermining the peace process by making hostile remarks using the official WHO platform.

The Ethiopian Ambassador Mahlet Hailu said that: “After the peace agreement signed between the parties we are treated to another theatrical display of blatant lies and misinformation by World Health Organization (WHO) Chief Tedros Adhanom (PhD).

The peace agreement that ends the conflict of the northern part of the country is being implemented among the signatories.

She stated that Tedros has been undermining the African Union (AU) led peace process which is contrary to the peace agreement. Even as the process is making tremendous progress the director has continued his hate, propaganda, and others compromising the WHO neutrality.

“The director wants again continue to spread harmful misinformation, ignored the his party's indiscriminate killings, destruction of health facilities and others. He must stop sabotaging and undermining the peace process by making hostile remarks from the official WHO platform,” she said.

She, therefore, said that these are treacher-



Ambassador Mahlet Hailu

ous behavior is unheard of by high United Nations (UN) officials. The director must be held accountable for all violations as he has not lived up to the integrity and professional expectation required from his office and position.

She stressed that Ethiopia expects an investigation to be commissioned to identify the full extent of his misconduct and violation of his professional and legal responsibility.

Ethiopia regrets and the WHO integrity needs to be ensured, she noted.

Saudi pledges decent treatment to Ethiopian employees

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA - Saudi Arabia, the principal Ethiopian domestic workers' hiring country, disclosed readiness to receive Ethiopian employees and to change their working situation in terms of fair salary and protection from violent acts.

Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Ethiopia Fahad Obaydullah Al-Hamidani (PhD) told the above to Labor and Skills Minister Muferehat Kamil Muferehat Kamil in the discussion they held here recently. The parties also exchanged views on the rights and safety of Ethiopian citizens going to the Kingdom for work.

Ambassador Fahad said on the occasion that his country is developing a new system that will ensure the safety of workers, including employment and medical insurance. The new system will also ensure Ethiopian citizens in Saudi Arabia including salary payment, leave, and protection from domestic abuses and human rights violations by their employers.

According to Muferehat, the Ethiopian government has carried out various activities to enable employees to meet certain criteria



in terms of knowledge, skill, and language of the country before allowing them to leave. To protect the rights and safety of the citizens, the requirement is supported by technology.

The government has also made extensive dialogues with Saudi Arabia and other Middle East countries to sign labor agreements to ensure the rights and benefits of its citizens. The discussions centered on ensuring the rights of Ethiopian domestic workers and regulating contractual obligations among employers, she added.

In his Twitter post on the issue, Ethiopian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Lencho Bati testified to the Kingdom's readiness to accept and issue visas for Ethiopian workers looking for jobs.

“The pre-departure preparation, orientation and digitalized management of the labor migration system will solve most of the problems the labor migration system encountered in the past. The new system will also put in place an orderly lawful labor migration process that would benefit our citizens as well as countries interested in recruiting Ethiopian workers.”



Temesgen Tefera

Ministry plans to build 160,000 bio digesters until 2030

BY SEMIRA BERHE

ADDIS ABABA – Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE) says it plans to build 160,000 bio digesters across the country until 2030 as part of the efforts to expand clean energy for rural populations.

MoWE National Biogas Program Manager Temesgen Tefera told *The Ethiopian Herald* that bio gas is a source of clean and affordable energy for rural areas where many people raise cattle but do not access other sources of energy like electricity.

He said building biogas digesters needs the house hold to own at least four cattle and can cost only Birr 30,000. As per this calculation, some five million Ethiopians can afford to build bio digesters in their homes. Yet, only 40,000 households across the country have utilized such facilities. Therefore, the government plans to build about 160,000 bio digesters across the country until 2030.

As a source of clean cooking fuel and lighting homes in rural households, he noted that the bio digesters that are in use so far have helped reduce work load for about 25,000 women and allowed their children to go to school rather than spending most of their time collecting firewood. Furthermore, households who have built bio digesters in their homes are believed to have gained a monthly benefit estimated at Birr 600.

In terms of environmental protection the biogas technology has saved over 90, 000 hectares of forest from deforestation, as well as prevented the release of the air polluting methane gas to the air.

The bio-slurry is an effective fertilizer, and can be composted with other organic matters to be used as organic fertilizer. Accordingly, over 240, 000 hectares of farm land has been harnessed using the bio- slurry, the manager said.

The bio gas technology has also created job opportunity for engineers who install the technology, train the households how to use it and deliver aftersales or maintenance service.

The Ministry is working to raise the number of bio digesters across the nation to 160,000 by 2030. For this end it is providing training for the private sector to update them with new technology.

Out of the 30,000 Birr required for building one bio digester the government supplies 20,000 of it.

The biogas technology started in Ethiopia by the support of Netherlands government, in 2009

Editorial

Joint thrust for common growth

Ensuring regional peace and fostering chemistry among member countries set the springboard for them to jump in headfirst into an all-rounded, rapid and synchronistic development. This issue has been belabored.

But rapid development presupposes the expansion of infrastructural facilities that fast track the surge towards common affluence by joint effort actualizing connectivity.

Bolstering pushes to this effect tapping on the back coordination works as well as hailing feasibility studies, diagnostic researches on top of injecting them with much-needed finance is pressing. Seeing to the development of well-skilled task force, ensuring institutional capacities and rendering technical assistance goes without saying.

It is out of the Horn of Africa's Infrastructural Connectivity and Regional Economic Integration thrust the HAOI's project was brought to life. Atop the project's priority list are found energy, transport and digital development.

Efforts towards AU's 2063 development goal, punctuated in periods, could make a confluence if and only if each country and by defector each region showcase steps to the required effect. Meetings of Africa's head of states like the one due to be held here soon help to assess practical actions taken and setbacks encountered. In such occasions words of encouragement will be recorded or rectification measures recommended so as to double check ahead of time the sought-for affluence is in sight.

When we zero in on the Horn of Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular we notice as part of Ethiopia's flagship projects it is materializing a win-win gigantic dam that could feed the region the lifeblood of industrialization—electricity, the dearth of which was a pain in the neck for its neighbors and itself. What regional glue worth emulating!

Towards rail and road connectivity Ethiopia has portrayed practical actions in concert with Djibouti and Kenya respectively. There are also laudable efforts towards developing ports jointly and independently.

Also Ethiopia, standing out for Ethiopian service, is working towards a single air transport as part of the Aviation Integration dabbles.

Also, the task of creating a vibrant network among countries in the region undoubtedly ushers in a fertile ground for the thriving of Africa's Free Trade Zone. Higher learning institutions in the region are expected to be initiators in spurring the unprecedented exertion in the area, among others.

All should do its due share cognizant that the trade perks of the joint and multifarious push of East African countries could ripple to Middle East and European countries not to mention countries clustering around the Red Sea.

As exemplified above, African countries are attempting to troubleshoot their common socioeconomic challenges individually and jointly forging multifaceted communications. But the effort seems to beg for sustainability.

The problems of East African countries are similar and recurrent. Hence, the countries have to strengthen their interconnectivity and cooperation. The subjects in point have been vulnerable to multifaceted challenges. Climate change, poverty as well as peace & security hurdles were among the formidable roadblocks affecting the strife-ridden region, which more often turns unlivable.

At this precise moment in time the world is shrinking into a global village, warding off stumbling blocks in the absence of socioeconomic and political clicking will prove an uphill battle. That is why a vibrant regional and continental clicking is called for.

In the sociocultural front countries could give a kiss of life to their people-to-people chemistry and familiarize to one another their relics, history and traditions. In so doing, in concert, they could render the smokeless industry robust in their respective domain in a bid to harness as much benefit out of the industry turning tourists' hub.

Global development partners are expected to lend hands in watering the holy joint push for a common growth.

opinion

A glance at AU's continental feats so far

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Addis Ababa is getting ready to host the 36th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government from February 18-19 and the 42nd Ordinary Session of the Executive Council. This provides an excellent opportunity for the city to upscale its hospitality and tourism development industries.

The African Union, a continental organization representing 55 African countries was formed in 2000 at Durban, South Africa based on AU Constitutive Act in 2000 to become a leading regional agency to coordinate the development, economic, political, and cultural affairs of the entire region. Given all the achievements that the AU has registered over a period of more than two decades and the shortfalls it has encountered, can this organization still up to the continental socio-economic objectives for which it was established? The author of this opinion based article wishes to briefly explore the achievements and the challenges that AU has recorded over time.

It would therefore be appropriate to answer the question stated above in the affirmative and then outline some of the prerequisites that the organization has to fulfill before it can successfully meet the objective for which it was established.

Africa has abundant and hitherto untapped natural resources. The continent is endowed with the major mineral resources, vast agricultural expanse and other of land, water resources and other natural resources that could have been exploited for the benefit of over one billion populations in the region.

The continent has 40 percent of the world's gold and up to 90 percent of its chromium and platinum. The largest reserves of cobalt, diamonds, platinum and uranium in the world are in Africa. It holds 65 per cent of the world's arable land and ten percent of the planet's internal renewable fresh water source.

Africa offers an attractive economic potential due to, amongst other things, the diversity of its natural resources, its young demographic profile, the emergence of a middle class with greater purchasing power and increasing urbanization. It is for these various reasons that multinationals are hastily trying to penetrate this market; but in doing so; they are often misled into considering Africa as a perfectly homogenous region or even a single country.

As of 2022, the GDP in Africa was estimated at roughly three trillion U.S. dollars. This was the highest value since 2010, when the continent's GDP amounted to approximately two trillion U.S. dollars. In the same year, the total value of exports (FOB) from Africa was US\$ 205,741

million. The total value of imports (CIF) is US\$ 249,728 million.

In terms of economic structure, AU operates through several principal decision making organs:- The Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the Executive Council, the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC), Specialized Technical Committees (STCs), the Peace and Security Council and The African Union Commission. It is composed of 10 Officials: A Chairperson, a Deputy Chairperson; Eight Commissioners and Staff members. The structure represents the Union and protects its interest under the auspices of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government as well as the Executive Committee. This clearly shows that the organization is well structured to be able to accomplish its socio-economic objectives.

Agenda 2063 focuses on 7 pillars for African development including prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development, An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance, an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law, peaceful and secure Africa, An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics, Africa as a strong, united and influential global player and partner.

Since its establishment, the AU has now become a continental lead agency to formulate agenda and design making on issues concerning the continent. The AU has accelerated its participation on global affairs up scaling itself as a biggest continental block second only to EU. The organization has enabled African states to have a common voice on issues like peace and security, infrastructure and energy, climate change, innovative development financing and several other continental programs.

The AU has since been able to bring together its 55 member states to take common positions on many critical global issues such as building consensus on UN reforms, the COVID-19 response measures, and financing of African development initiatives. Over the last two decades, the AU was coordinating the efforts of the member states in promoting Agricultural development (food security), fighting crime and violence, environmental sustainability and climate change initiatives, equal opportunity for all, promotion of trade by promoting negotiations on tariffs, financial markets governance and regulation, promotion of FDI, good governance, health services, quality education, promotion of renewable energy, infrastructure development, peaceful negotiation of conflicts and the struggle against terrorism and a host other projects like ICT and transport.

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

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News



Radiya Nesha



Shifa Ballo (Ph.D.)

Icipe-funded project benefits women in Oromia

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - Women silkworm producer's enterprise said the market linkage that was created by the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (Icipe) is bearing fruits in increasing their revenue from time to time.

The enterprise, dubbed Radiya, Shomba, and Friends Silkworm Farming Enterprise is operating in Eastern Shoa Zone Adami Tulu Jido Kombolcha District of Oromia State. Established in 2020 with 11 members, the enterprise obtained a plot of land and other support from the local administration.

Enterprise Chairperson Radiya Nesha told *The Ethiopian Herald* that apart from expanding customers, the market linkage is benefiting the women to harvest wheat, maize, and other agricultural commodities and earn 220,837 Birr in the current year. In the same period last year, the women

earned 90,000 Birr.

The chairperson further noted that the women also planted castor plants to feed silkworm pupa to pass through all five stages to produce cocoon and icipe MOYESH Program in partnership with MasterCard Foundation.

Adami Tulu Jido Kombolcha District Agriculture Office Livestock and Seed Improvement Facilitator Gemechu Jambo said the local administration has provided various supports to the enterprise including offering a plot of land and water pumps.

"Accordingly, agricultural productivity is improving from time to time. The summer wheat, poultry, fishing, and milk production is developing in the district. The use of modern farming practices was also intensified and 18, 000 hectares of land was covered with summer wheat irrigation."

According to Icipe Ethiopia Sericulture Manager Shifa Ballo (Ph.D.), the project, which is being implemented by icipe in partnership with MasterCard Foundation, focuses on silk and honey production. The project provides market linkage and material support to women silk growers and supplements the government's engagement in the area.

Implemented in 17 districts across the country, the project created 20,000-30,000 jobs for low-income women and supported them to bring products to the market. "In MOYESH program, we plan to create an additional 100,000 jobs nationwide in the coming five years," Shifa added.

There are records indicating the production of silkworms dates back to the 1970s but modern production was started very recently and the activity is underdeveloped.

MoA underlines...

Development Desk Head Fasil Dawit (PhD) told *The Ethiopian Herald* that IGAD is facilitating conditions to connect non-coastal nations with coastal nations of east Africa to help them work cooperatively, and develop together in fishery activities thereby ensuring the new Blue Economy Strategy in the region.

The head also said that over the last six months, Ethiopia produced over 40,000 tons of fish from lake and rivers. Over the last fiscal year, about 73, 000 ton of fish was produced at national level. In its ten years perspective plan, the country has planned to produce 247,000 tons, and the achievement indicated that the country can produce more than this.

"Some 2000 youths have got jobs over the last six months in the nation and "YelematTurufat" development campaign is also being undergone on fishery this time. This is why community's habit of taking fish changes and demand for fish is highly increasing," he said.

Some 200 fish species are available in Ethiopia of which 40 are endemic and six species out of this are commercial active; however the majority of lake fish are at this day deleted or overfished. "We are rehabilitating the vanished ones by hatching millions of fish establishing vast hatchery sites in Amhara, Sidama, Oromia and SNNP states and distributing more in lakes and rivers."

Fishing equipment is entering to the nation in free of charge so as to encourage fishery in the nation.

Clear fishery policy is prepared, sharing experience with other nations of experts the main achievement help seizes the ladder of success, he said.

Ethiopia reports...

CEO Zenawu Habtewold stated that 664 million USD was obtained from coffee, tea, and species export. The country also gained 140 million USD from flowers, vegetables, and fruits while the meat and dairy sector generated 52 million USD.

The income generated from the cut flower has shown steady progress due to the participation of anchor companies in the business and strong global demands. Conversely, the forex that was secured from fruit and vegetables failed to meet the plan owing to the past unrest in parts of the country and the soaring transportation cost.

Zenawu further noted that the ministry has achieved good results in organizing

farmers in the cluster and enhancing product and productivity in farmlands. Accordingly, over 2.2 million farmers have been organized in 85,000 clusters and harvested 1.6 million hectares of land in six months.

In its efforts to streamline the role and contribution of the agriculture sector in the overall economy, the ministry has also made praiseworthy activities in creating 521,000 new jobs in the reported period.

By the same token, the ministry has made concrete jobs to make farming more efficient and mechanized while enabling 725, 000 farmers to get access to a variety of agricultural machinery and equipment, he remarked.

Ethiopia, Russia...

here in the midweek, ENSS President Emeshaw Damte stated that preliminary activities have been underway to conclude the MoU soon.

The cooperation agreement is designed to train experts and academicians and enhance the public's understanding of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

"The signing of the agreement has been postponed due to some challenges, and despite such setbacks, both parties are very determined to formalize the cooperation. We discussed this with ROSATOM officials during our annual summit. They have shown keen interest in nurturing cooperation on nuclear engineering."

Emeshaw added: "Many Ethiopian scientists have specialized in nuclear science, and we are also working to nurture the public's understanding of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Accordingly, we are initiating educational institutions (from high school to university level) to design programs on the subject.

In April 2021, Ethiopia and Russia's ROSATOM signed a MoU to cooperate in nuclear science human resource development, it was learned.

Opinion

The Ethiopian Diaspora engagement in the country's affairs before, now

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Information sources indicate that there are more than three million Ethiopian Diaspora spread throughout the world. Most of these Ethiopians reside in the US, the Middle East, and Europe. The Ethiopian Diaspora in the US is a very vocal critic of the political developments in the country. Its views, vision and outlook are as diverse as the ethnic, religious and regional origins. Studies have examined the real and potential roles that the Ethiopian Diaspora may play in Ethiopia. Most of the Diaspora comprised students, including military officers that have been sent for higher education to the US. In the past decades, the relationship between these students and the imperial Ethiopian government became acrimonious. The strained relationship between the students and the government became more vicious during the military regime.

The Ethiopian Diaspora in the US was composed of asylum seekers, government officials and diplomats and students. The Diaspora continued the tradition of being critical of the military government in Ethiopia. On the other hand, the government regarded these Ethiopians who left the country as counter revolutionaries and lackeys of imperialism who wanted to destabilize "Socialist Ethiopia." The EPRDF regime, which replaced the military regime, has a mixed record in its relation with the Ethiopian Diaspora. It welcomed some members of the Diaspora and encouraged them to invest in the country. It was accused of discriminating against some individuals and organizations. The regime was known for detaining some Diaspora-Ethiopians from leaving their country. The ethno-centric policy of the EPRDF government was a challenge for some of the Diaspora Ethiopians.

The narrowing of political space and the monopolization of political power pushed the Ethiopian Diaspora to voice their anti-EPRDF opinions using all available means. They engaged churches and sport arenas as a platform to expose and condemn the regime. They also used the various radio and television stations for propagating their views. ESAT (Ethiopian Satellite Television) is one of the most noted anti-EPRDF television station. Congressman Chris Smith (R-NJ) and Rep. Mike Honda were some of the supporters of the Ethiopian Diaspora in the US. Such support threatened the EPRDF and its cronies, and contributed to the positive developments in Ethiopia. Economically, the Ethiopian Diaspora used every available means to support their needy families in Ethiopia. Earlier, the military regime had detected anyone who received money from abroad as a counter-revolutionary.

The Diaspora that was apprehensive of the dangers of sending money to Ethiopia devised a means to evade government

detection. Instead of sending the money through the banks, they used other means. Using individuals to deliver money to relatives in Ethiopia was the most common manner by which Diaspora-Ethiopians were able to support their families in Ethiopia. Accordingly, Ethiopia was one of the countries where most of the remittance came through informal channels. Distinct from the military regime, the EPRDF welcomed remittance from the Diaspora through any means. However, the ethno-federalist government and its affiliates were accused of participating in money laundering. In an attempt to financially cripple the regime the political organizations in Diaspora advised Ethiopians not to send money to Ethiopia.

Frustrated by measures from the Diaspora, the EPRDF government openly began to deny access to foreign currency to business and individuals whom it suspected of being against its developmental-state ideology, cronyism and its human rights violation. The most who suffered were business owners who represented other ethnic groups. Thus, business and individuals that the EPRDF denied hard currency were able to circumvent the regime's discrimination against them in many ways. One of them is to use their relatives and friends abroad. Ethiopian Diaspora sent money through other countries from which most of the Ethiopian businessmen import goods. Businessmen in Ethiopia paid in Birr for Ethiopian Diaspora who was in the country for a visit.

Though these practices weakened the EPRDF regime's ability to monitor, they also negatively affected the country's weak economy. The foreign currency had other ways to leave the country illegally. People sold, for example, property in Ethiopia to a person who resided abroad, who would deposit the money in dollars in banks abroad. Both the seller and the buyer benefitted in many ways, including saving time, evading taxes, and avoiding discriminatory practices. One of the consequences of the mushrooming illegal money laundering between Ethiopia and its Diaspora was the "disparity" of remittance. Lower official remittance to Ethiopia was caused by diverse and interrelated factors. One of the reasons was the prevalence of "informal" channels that Ethiopians used to send money home.

Ethiopia had been given the highest index for being unstable and hence a failing state some time ago. This partly explained the limited inflow of remittance from members of the Ethiopian Diaspora. Countries in the Middle East did not welcome Ethiopians to work for them. In the past decades the Arab countries used to recruit Ethiopian laborers and most of them used human traffickers and smugglers. This practice limited their ability to remit or send money to their relatives in Ethiopia. Moreover, the laborers that the Middle

Eastern countries wanted from Ethiopia were mostly illiterate and unskilled. Consequently, remittance to Ethiopia was very low. Moreover, the Ethiopian Diaspora to these countries had suffered from inhuman treatment while in jails.

Legalization of emigration through bilateral agreements and diplomatic channels would make the lives of Ethiopians in the Middle Eastern countries safe and prosperous. These measures may curb the proliferation of non-government actors in the emigration process. It may also increase the remittance inflow to Ethiopia. The quality of emigrants was believed to be one way of raising formal remittance inflow into Ethiopia. Informal money-transferring may not be used to finance terrorism. Currently, the Ethiopian government has been trying to formalize the labor migration between Ethiopia and the Middle East countries. Besides, unlike previous years, agencies that were shipping Ethiopians, especially women and girls, are now required to have a license and the knowhow to check and facilitate Ethiopian maids traveling to their destination.

There were countries that had been sending highly skilled workers, including PhD holders, to the developed countries. These countries were among the top remittance recipients in the world. Bilateral agreements between countries must ensure the sending of highly educated professionals abroad. Countries that were able to capitalize on their Diaspora community abroad did it through their bilateral agreements. It is expected that Ethiopia should do the same if it wants to financially gain from its Diaspora living and working abroad. It should use its diplomatic missions and qualified diplomats in facilitating high paying jobs for the Diaspora. Studies have exposed the lack of concerted efforts between the various government agencies, the absence of standardization and bilateral agreements between Ethiopia and some Middle Eastern countries.

Bureaucratic oversight and lack of strict adherence to employment policy may lead to abuses of labor abroad. If proper attention is not given to the rights and duties of workers engaged abroad, it would result in loss of foreign exchange or remittance flowing into the country. Negligence and lack of strict observation of labor agreements by Ethiopian government officials may open the door for "corruption and human smugglers." Studies show that several Ethiopians leaving the country on tourist visas are lured by human smugglers to the Middle Eastern countries. Some of these Ethiopians are very young searching for jobs. Money laundering entrepreneurs are the other perpetrator and criminals causing lower or insignificant remittance inflow into Ethiopia.

Money laundering is illegal cash

transferring activity that competes against official financial institutions. As a result, they charge the highest fees for sending money to destinations other than Ethiopia. The highest charges levied encourage illegal money operators to look for other venues and hence the continuations of the informal ways by which Ethiopians send money home. Through networks of individuals they charge less those who travel back home. Studies reveal that the development of new technologies such as smart phones has encouraged emerging new competitors who use software that enable sending and receiving money. In countries like Ethiopia contentious power interruption, unreliability of the internet and wireless service, lack of knowhow and knowledge on using smart phones and the poverty of the people hinders the use of such gadgets for money laundering.

To avoid hard currency crunch in Ethiopia or to stimulate more remittance, the government is encouraging Ethiopians to send money to their country. As part of this initiative, every Ethiopian is requested to save foreign currency and remit it to the country. With the money from the Diaspora, the government pledges to build schools, clinics, and other basic services. To this end, the Ethiopian government has even established a committee composed of members of the Diaspora. Though the Diaspora-Ethiopians enthusiastically supported the scheme, their initial performance was abysmal and disappointing. It is noted that the number of Ethiopian Diaspora who remitted a small amount of foreign currency was very low. In short, the participants were too few compared to the expectation.

In the past few years, the participation of Ethiopian Diaspora was dismal and insufficient compared to the needs of the country. According to reports, those who contributed to the Diaspora fund have not done enough when they could do a lot more. To gain sufficient flow of fund from the Diaspora, the government has to develop smooth diplomatic relationship. Its former initiative should be refreshed and reinvigorated. Experts in the field advice that the Diaspora-Ethiopia relationship should be evolved into a kind of institution that specifically serve all Ethiopians abroad. The Ethiopian ambassadors should be highly educated professionals than political appointees. Similarly, the Diaspora should also recognize the post-war situations Ethiopia is in before presenting demands that the country cannot satisfy at present. The country is currently facing structural constraints that consume time to resolve. In the meantime, concerned agencies should device mechanisms to mobilize Diaspora-Ethiopians to assist their country in channeling funds formally and legally through Ethiopian financial institutions.

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

Business & Economy

Ethio-telecom: As a cornerstone to realize digital Ethiopia

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

Nature depicts that sometimes bad things happen for better changes. Most dreadful challenges can be employed as a window of opportunity that brings change to the way how things are performed.

In the current world scenario, there have been different challenges that threaten the existence of human beings in every walk of life and leave their worst consequences. It was not long ago when one of the most painful and horrible challenges, the global pandemic, COVID-19, ruined and affected millions from all walks of lives. The pandemic has taken lives of citizens in every nation and a great down-pressing period in the world economy. The people, all over the world, are highly influenced by the pandemic and the consequence it engendered. On the other hand, the pandemic has brought a number of opportunities in different walks of lives.

Regarding changing challenges to opportunities, most people create means to do their business far from their customers. To make this happen, the most important means was using digital tools. People start delivering internet based services to their customers. In this regard, financial institutions coupled with other service providers have been benefited by the internet based service delivery.

In the Ethiopian context, different sectors have changed their ways of doing business following the outbreak of the pandemic. They have been striving to create better platforms that can entertain contactless service deliveries. Tangible actions have been observed on major sectors that need higher in-person contacts.

Accordingly, the Ethio-telecom has been the sole telecommunication service provider in the country until the company sold its share to Safaricom. In the past few years, Ethio-telecom has been expanding the quality of its services to achieve its objective of creating digital Ethiopia. Lately, Ethio-telecom has introduced multiple platforms that are new, and the company signed different Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) with different institutions to work together to create digital system. Besides, the company has shown its eagerness and commitment to help citizens and make them benefited from the blessing of digital world.

Recently, the telecom company has signed agreement with GETFactET to develop the digital skills of high school students by involving Ethiopian professionals who live in a foreign country to realize a program dubbed Brighter Generation Program. GETFactET is an organization established by Ethiopian Diasporas living across the globe with a view to promoting the good image of Ethiopia. The company is a US-based group that aims to transfer skills and knowledge between high school students and Ethiopian Diasporas who like to share their knowledge.

It is reported that the two parties planned to provide various trainings through the

digital centers that the telecom company will install in high schools across the nation. The program will definitely upgrade students' digital skills and knowledge, and also opens an opportunity for technology transfer. According to the signed agreement, GETFactET manages Ethiopian Diasporas around the world to let them deliver several short-term and dynamic training sessions to high school students in Ethiopia.

The training sessions will target communication, language, critical thinking, leadership, and computer programming. The role of Ethio-telecom in this program is to provide the necessary expertise and technical support to facilitate the training both on virtual and in person. The two parties will act together on furnishing the training centers fully with the required materials, as to the report.

Ethio-telecom has taken a number of measurements to enable the nation's future generation with digital way of life. A simple illustration could be a signed partnership with different government and private companies. Lately, the company has signed a strategic partnership with the Ministry of Revenue. The objective of the agreement is to support customers of the Ministry to pay their taxes using the company's platform, *telebirr*. The platform is proved itself as easy, fast, convenient, and secure to address customers' digital payments.

In a new way of helping customers, it is reported that the company has set a system for merchants who make money transaction through the platform can directly pay their taxes from the money they got from the transaction. The digital payment platform enables tax payers get clearance and receipt upon real time payment. It also allows them to transact partial payment and transfer overdue payments and avoids penalty due to delay in updating the taxpayers' information on Ministry of Revenues' server.

In addition, it was also reported that the

digital payment platform, *telebirr*, is currently connected with 18 different banks that highly help users to make transaction easily from their accounts. What makes the platform the best way to do business is that it is very time saving and accurate. The platform provides its services in five different language options. To this end, the company has helped the ministry to realize an e-tax service.

As to the company's report, the company has collaborated with Dashen Bank, a local private bank, to introduce three financial services namely *telebirmela* (micro credit) which enables customers, agents, and merchants to borrow money for any transaction or withdrawal, *telebirrEndekise* (credit pay/overdraft service) a service that let customers borrow money when they are in short of balance on their *telebirr* account while they make transactions, and the last one is *telebirrSanduq* (Micro Saving service) a service that offers interest free and interest-based micro saving under the objective of finance for all for financial service inclusion and accessibility to the wider societies of the nation.

When it comes to *telebirr* digital platform, it is reported by the company that the platform has acquired more than 28 Million customers, 112 master agents, 98.8 thousand agents, 25.5 thousand merchants and 615 service centers. In addition, the platform has been joined together with 18 banks to transfer money from bank to *telebirr* and with 15 banks to transfer money from *telebirr* to bank and over 263 billion ETB has been transacted.

Recently, Ethio-telecom has signed Memorandum of Understanding with three different service provider companies namely Zergaw Internet Service Provider, Kulu Network and Shedi Trading PLC to launch various network and internet-based services.

Speaking at the event, Ethio-telecom CEO Frehiwot Tamiru stated that partners should work with the Ethio-telecom to realize the digital Ethiopia. Accordingly,

the telecom company opened rooms for private companies to accomplish its goal adding that the telecom has been operating to generate 10 % of its revenue by involving private companies.

The CEO noted that the company has stretched its infrastructures in all parts of the country to make the business happen effectively. The company must work tirelessly in order to fill the digital skill gap seen in the country and enhance the skills of stakeholders and customers to meet digital Ethiopia.

In addition, the state-owned company has also signed MoU to launch Tele Drive, ELFF and Cloud Solutions services together with the previously mentioned private companies.

Be that it may, Ethio-telecom Chief Marketing Officer Seid Argaw on his part mentioned the benefits of the newly introduced Tele Drive service. As to the marketing officer, the service is designed to enable customers to store, access, and share their personal files on their mobile phones anywhere and anytime. Besides, the service is very much secured, easily retrieved, and easy to search and share.

In relation to the ELFF service, as to Seid, it is a music streaming service. The new services are timeliness services that enable to expand electronic commerce and trading.

To wrap up the ideas that have been entertained above, Ethio-telecom has been working closely with stakeholders to achieve its goal to realize the digital Ethiopia. Expanding its infrastructure throughout the nation is the foundation stone to meet the objectives. All the signed agreements and the introduction of new platforms are the major steps that lead the nation to digitalization. The introduction of e-commerce and other internet-based financial services is an action that must be taken to realize the long-awaited objective to create a connected, digitalized, and dynamic world.



DIGITAL ETHIOPIA
— inclusive prosperity —

Planet Earth

Intertwining environment protection with a dev't plan curbs climate change effect

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Curbing the negative effect of climate change is perhaps the greatest environmental challenge the world faces nowadays. Hence, environmental activities and organizations insist on practical and ambitious policies to harmonize climate change and its effect.

If the world doesn't implement more ambitious policies and strategies, greenhouse gas emissions will increase by about 70 % by 2050, with severe consequences. With the increase in carbon emission, sea level rise, more frequent and intense heat waves occur, and agricultural yields decline, and so on.

In many parts of the world, states have been striving to combat the negative impact of climate change. This in turn brings promising results in reducing global warming and carbon emissions. Nevertheless, climate change poses a serious challenge to social and economic development in developing countries. Therefore, it is mandatory to take actions that support to adapt the already existing climate change challenges.

Unlike developed countries, developing ones are vulnerable to the effect of climate change since they are highly dependent on natural resources and have limited capacity to withstand the effect of climate change. Accordingly, developing countries should align their development plans, policies, and strategies to be resilient to climate change. The International community also should support their social and economic development endeavor efforts.

Despite its low industrial development and economic growth, Ethiopia has made efforts to curb the impact of climate change by taking bold action in building a green economy. The country has intertwined climate change and the national ten-year development plan together. Because the livelihood of the people including economic development, food security, and other basic necessities emanate from natural resources which are highly related to climate change and its effects.

The national developmental plan has also a target to reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, by strengthening adaptive capacity and resilience. According to scholars, developing countries including Ethiopia need to build green economic capacity that can respond to the impact of climate change.

Besides, to facilitate the integration of climate change adaptation, in a coherent manner, it is relevant to prepare new policies and revise the existing programs, and activities. In particular, development planning processes and strategies, within all relevant sectors and stakeholders, should follow appropriate policies which withstand the effect of climate change, scholars added.



Addis Ababa University Environmental Protection and Management Professor Zewdu Eshetu said that the effect of climate change is increasing and have a great impact on people's life. Especially developing countries like Ethiopia are dealing with great damage because they have not built the economic capacity to withstand the impact of climate change.

Besides, agriculture is the economic base of developing countries, thus for making them vulnerable to climate change, they should focus on creating alternative economic capacity, he added.

Addis Ababa University African Center for Water Excellence Director Prof. Feleke Zewge noted that to reduce the impact of climate change, it is necessary to create the capacity of an economy based on renewable energy.

For instance, Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative and renewable energy alternative development are keys that should be encouraged and strengthened. By increasing the community's sense of ownership, research, and policy-supported higher institutions' afforestation work should continue across the country, he explained.

Environmental Protection Authority Coordination of International Agreements Director Mansur Dese said that Ethiopia is responding to the impact of climate change based on international agreements. Hence, the country has been doing effective work by preparing a development plan, strategy, and policy which supports building a green economy and reducing the invulnerability of climate change.

Minister of Planning and Development Dr. Fitsum Assefa stated that in Ethiopia,

to prevent the impact of climate change, adaptation, and resilience activities are being coordinated with other national development plans. Climate change has a major negative impact on the economy of Ethiopia, she explained that the government is working with great attention to combat the effect of climate change.

In the ten-year government development plan, climate change prevention work has been included as a strategic pillar of the plan. This as a result will help to implement a green economy development strategy that is resilient to climate change, she mentioned.

Although Ethiopia has a minimal contribution to air pollution compared with other countries, the damage caused by high pollution in developed countries is costing the country a lot. More specifically, the droughts that used to occur every ten years now occur every three years. The concurrence of recurrent floods and other problems following climate change creates a significant challenge for the country, she pointed out.

Despite the challenges, the Green Legacy Initiative, where 25 billion tree seedlings were planted in four years, brought the country to prominence in the world. This is an action that has helped not only the national development plan but also to ensure food security in addition to preventing climate change and increasing forest coverage.

Ethiopia, which recently announced a long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategy, has not only confirmed its commitment to the sector but has also brought tangible results, she said.

World Resources Institute president and CEO Annie Dangota explained that planting

25 billion tree seedlings in four years would be a best practice for the countries of the world in which the Institute acknowledges and recognizes it.

However, much has been expected to be done, but the Institute agreed to work together in strengthening the efforts of Ethiopia through data management, capacity building, and similar areas of cooperation. The institute will also provide great support by compiling scientific information about the climate change impact and the changes brought by Ethiopians via preventive measures, he noted.

However, the world agreed to achieve zero carbon emissions by the year 2050, but the commitment and implementation are under a question mark. Hence, the vulnerability of developing countries increases and the impacts of climate change affect the life of the people. Because the global temperature has increased by 1.2 degrees Celsius compared to the 19th century, and the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere has increased by 50 %.

Climate change is indeed putting a lot of pressure on the world, especially on developing countries. Air pollution and desertification, drought, famine, floods, and colds are causing great danger to the people. Even climate change may extinct some animals and plants since they cannot withstand its effects.

Therefore, Ethiopia should continue the response to the impact of climate change by intertwining climate change with the national development plan which protects natural resources and strengthens the development of hydro, wind, and solar renewable energy such as Renaissance Dam.

Art & Culture

The language factor in African culture, education, the challenges

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

There are an estimated between 1000 and 2000 languages in Africa and this is approximately one third of all world languages. Many of African countries have languages that range from one hundred to several hundreds. In Nigeria alone there are more than 500 spoken languages and hundreds of ethnic groups. The official language is English but it is not widely spoken in the rural areas. According to available information, there are between 45 and 86 spoken languages in Ethiopia and as many as there are ethnic groups. Most of the African languages are spoken and a few of them are written. In Ethiopia for instance the written languages are far fewer than the spoken ones.

There is a consensus as to the main function of languages whether in Africa or in any other part of the world. The main function of a language, in the sense of transmission of information is “to facilitate communication from one person to the other”. At the national level language serves to facilitate communication among various groups of people who speak different languages. In many African communities, the fact that there are common languages used by various ethnic groups language serves as a tool of mutual communication, understanding and cultural exchanges. And this in turn serves as a factor of communal peace stability and economic development.

The fact that there are many languages as ethnic groups in Africa has been exploited by colonialists to set one group of Africans against others in their bid to divide and rule Africans. In the same manner ethnic diversity has been used by Belgians in Rwanda and Burundi to divide the people along these lines and set them one against the other. Failure on the part of African elites to build community and unity among the various ethnic groups has often led to conflicts. The classic case is again Rwanda where Tutsi were set against Hutus in order to create a climate favorable to genocide and fratricidal bloodshed back in 1994.

Speaking a common language by various ethnic groups or national entities in West and East Africa has not helped build lasting unity among the people’ West Africans speak French as former colonies of France and Eastern African countries speak English as a result of British

colonialism but there is no organic unity among all the people of these countries. Swahili is widely spoken in East Africa but it has not so far facilitated the building of a strong and lasting economic or political unity among the people of these countries. People from diverse ethnic groups can speak different languages and yet live in peace by respecting each other’s cultures and languages.

According to available information, although Africa is endowed with hundreds of spoken languages, the main spoken languages across the continent do not exceed five or six. Most spoken languages in Africa are Swahili widely spoken in East Africa, French spoken in Francophone Africa, Hausa spoken in Nigeria and Arabic spoken in most North African countries. The fact that a language is widely spoken or that there is only one language spoken in a country does not create political unity or cohesion.

In Somalia for instance, Somali language is the only spoken language by all the Somali people but this has not lead to political cohesion and lasting peace. Arab countries in North Africa have never managed to form a united or single republic even though the people speak the same language. Therefore the function of language as a factor of cohesion can be said to be limited or irrelevant in some cases.

Language is not only a means of communication. It is also a means of facilitating cultural exchanges. Language is sometimes considered to be part of culture. “Anthropologists speak of the relations between language and culture it is indeed more in accordance with reality to consider language as part of culture. Culture is here used in the anthropological sense to refer to all aspects of human life in so far as they are determined or conditioned membership in a society.”

The definition and use of language may have different dimensions. Some people may define language as one of the parameters of identity of communities. There are also other parameters that define a human community. For many politicians language can be a contested issue in political discourse. The definition of a state or an ethnic group complex and unsettled as it might be, also serve as a factor of cohesion between people of different cultures and ethnicities. We realize that this utilitarian definition of language is the most widespread and pragmatic approach to language in the linguistic sense of the word is the

scientific study of human knowledge.

Most of the conflicts in Africa are not about language but about resources sharing or allocation. People in Africa tend to give most priority to their natural resources, such as land and minerals than their common languages. The people of Congo speak either French or one of the ethnic languages but the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo has continued for decades after independence because of what is called the “resource curse” or the fact that rich mineral resources are the factors that are feeding the fires of civil war in the country. The same can be said about oil in some Arab countries where the appropriation oil wells had repeatedly served to trigger local or international conflicts like the Iran Iraq war or the American invasion of Iraq back in 1991.

The genesis of languages shows that all languages were not written ones since their inception. According to Wikipedia there are many writing system in Africa. It says that, “The writing system of Africa refers to the current and historical practice of writing systems on the African continent both indigenous and those introduced. Today the Latin script is commonly encountered across Africa especially in the Western, Central and Southern Africa. Arabic script is mainly used in Northern Africa and Ge’ez script is widely in the Horn of Africa. Regionally and in some localities other scripts may be of significant importance.”

The advantage of having written languages is obvious because it can be used as a tool for storing and transmitting indigenous knowledge and enriching the historical, cultural and anthropological heritages of Africa. Linguistic integration in Africa can be used to facilitate the process of economic and political integration and the exchange of knowledge from one country to the other. The Latin script has played this role in the process of the spread of the English or French language in Europe and America.

The ideas of freedom and democracy were developed in ancient Greece but the translation of these ideas into European languages has finally arrived to the shores of the United States and provided them powerful ideas to develop their own version of freedom and democracy. This is also true for African countries where the so called Western civilization was transmitted in writing through missionary works in many parts of the continent that were controlled by colonialism. African countries that speak similar language could also use their common language

to share knowledge and expedite their socio-economic development process. If Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania could use Swahili for knowledge sharing that could have expedited the economic integration process in integration in the long run. East Africa eventually began serving as the basis for political integration or union. This process could be duplicated to integrate the various parts of Africa into an extended web of common languages.

A study entitled, “Why and how Africa should invest in African languages and multilingual education –An evidence and practice-based policy advocacy brief” by Adama Ouane and Christine Glantz says that, “In the 21st century, learning is at the heart of the modern world’s endeavors to become a knowledge economy. It is the key to empowering individuals to be today’s world producers and consumers of knowledge. It is essential in enabling people to become critical citizens and to attain self-fulfillment. It is a driver of economic competitiveness as well as community development. Good quality learning is not only about becoming more competent polyvalent and productive but also about nurturing diversity and being well-rooted in one’s culture...”

Speaking of language in African education, the above study says that, “The theme of language in education has been a contentious issue ever since former colonies in Africa, Asia and South America gained their political independence...Language and communication are without doubt two of the most important factors in the learning process...worldwide the choice of the language instruction and language policy in schools is critical for effective learning ...”

However recent experience in African countries such as Ethiopia recently proved, language in education is not the only a contentious issues. There are also other critical factors such the quality of education and the readiness of all actors involved in the educational process to show unwavering commitment to guarantee students’ educational success; something that proved disastrous in the case of Ethiopia. An overhauling of the entire educational establishment, language of instruction and curriculum must therefore be one of the most urgent tasks in African education in general and in Ethiopia in particular. The disclosure of the results of the national school leaving examinations, which is devastating by all accounts, should serve as eye opener and a clarion call for the educational reforms to go deeper than cosmetic changes.

Society

The Jubilant Season



ETHIOPIAN HOLIDAY SEASON

BY SOLOMON WASSIHUN

I cannot guess what inspired Antonio Vivaldi to write his thrilling music, *The Four Seasons*. But I can well imagine that the Ethiopian composer Ashenafi Kebede was inspired by the various and awe-inspiring ways Ethiopians celebrate life during the two great festive seasons. The simultaneous changes in weather and landscape that occur at these times may serve as an additional source of inspiration for him to compose such timeless pieces as the *Shepherd's Flute*.

The seemingly endless plains and the hills, which were covered with a carpet of seedlings, have lost their green color and turned yellow due to the remains of the dried leftovers after the harvest. Whether in the highlands or the lowlands, wherever place you venture into, you would see the yellow plains, punctuated by the dome-shaped piles of the gathered harvest that looks like miniatures of the hills hanging on the horizon.

Despite whatever being is said on the radio and the social media, the seasonal sequences of the weather and the yearly cycle of the social functions would continue unperturbed. We are now near the end of the second major holiday season of the year. The first is during the months of September and October when the major holiday are celebrated including New Year's Day, Meskel and Irrecha. The second holiday season started early last month with the celebration of the Orthodox Christmas day on 7 January.

The second holiday season reaches a fever pitch with the celebration of Timket, the European equivalent of Epiphany with colorful street religious and cultural processions held across the nation during the later dates of January. And the second holiday season would continue through February until Lent with minor religious and cultural events held in specific regions of the country where hundreds of pilgrims

from home and abroad travel to and congregate.

The Gedeo peoples who are mainly residing in the Gedeo Zone of Southern Peoples Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples State held a huge celebration during this holiday season to mark a New Year [Deraro] according to their traditional calendar. Besides in another zone of the same region, Gamo people celebrate Choye Meskela while the Maale and Baskato people celebrate their respective New Year and thanksgiving holidays during this festive season.

Up in the north, in the Amhara State, the Agew Awi's annual and cultural horse riding equestrians' festival has been held a few days ago. And similarly, a few days later at the beginning of February, the town of Debre Tabor in South Gondor Zone hosted a magnificent and colorful horse galloping event. This captivating yearly event is dedicated to the St. Merqorios and hence known as Merqorios horse galloping [equestrian] event and gathers hundreds of thousands of spectators across the region and beyond.

The Astereyo Mariam: the Festivity commemorating the death of St. Mary, and celebrated by both the Orthodox and Catholic Christian laities has been observed in a special yearly gathering held in the Ambassel district in North Wollo Zone of Amhara region in the presence of hundreds of thousands of pilgrims that came from all corners of the nation.

So, there are so many celebrations that are observed on a national and local level during this holiday season. This is not just a coincidence. At this time of year, the barn is fuller, the cattle are fatter, and the farmers are less busy and have reaped the produce they have been toiling for months, and feel jubilant on the achievements of their back braking field work.

The cereals, coffee, fruits, honey, live stocks etc, most of the farming products are more available, both in quality and quantity. With

the majority of the Ethiopians population being a farming community, most of them are economically more able this time of the year to celebrate holidays more lavishly.

This is the time when many rural households' kitchen is busy. And the farmer's coat unusually makes a little sound when it fell on the ground because of the few coins it made by selling some of the grains he produced. It is the proud and jubilant time of the year when he can afford to buy a new shoe for himself, a skirt for his wife, and a pair of pants for his kids.

This season is a time of brief affluence not only to the farmers, but also to business people too. It is time for the demand for consumer good spikes, and the business people from street hustlers up to the whole sellers make a huge some of profit.

And of course, the weather is balmy, ideal for extended outdoor activities. The day is bright and sunny with mild temperatures. And the night's cold breath is rather relaxing rather than shivering, it is naturally illuminated by a bright full moonlight hanging on a luminous star-studded sky.

The holiday seasons are not entirely dedicated to religious or faith-based celebrations. It is also the preferred time to hold such major social functions like the formation of a new household and a family which is the building block of a society. The months of January and February are described by some as the major wedding season both in town and the countryside which is followed by the second wedding season that falls in the later days of April after the end of the major fasting season and celebration of Easter.

In the countryside, the sound of the wedding drums and the accompanying wedding hymn of girls and boys would be heard from every direction. Youth dressed in the traditional clothing of various Ethiopian ethnic groups flood the streets ululating with joy. In cities, the roads would be blocked by the huge tents that are

venues of the lavish wedding ceremony, and a long column of decorated cars fan the air of jubilations with honking.

The holiday season is the time of the year when people get together with their loved ones and neighbors, congregate to celebrate life, thank their Gods, and congratulate themselves for making it to another year. Unconfirmed reports indicate that record number of Ethiopian diasporas visit their homeland during this holiday season. Ethiopians have several religious, cultural, and historical holidays to take a brief break from the constant struggle to make ends meet, and time and again reinforce their social and religious bonds as a community or citizens.

Irrespective of their religious and cultural identity, Ethiopians take their holidays seriously and celebrate with all devotion and enthusiasm. Whichever corner of the world they may be, no matter how small in number, Ethiopians always find a way to come together and celebrate their holidays in keeping with the manner, norms, and rituals of their ancestors.

Earlier this month Ethiopian communities residing in Los Angeles and surrounding areas celebrated Timket. Even though they can not celebrate the day on the exact date of celebration, [Jan.19] due to several inconveniences, they manage to celebrate the holiday and pass on the spirit of the holiday to their children and grandchildren who are living in foreign culture a thousand miles from the land of their ancestors.

The Ethiopian holiday celebration does not know religious and ethnic boundaries. For instance, Christians join their Muslim neighbors to celebrate the Eid al-Fitr feast, and Muslims join their Christian neighbors to enjoy the Easter feast and the Epiphany outdoor processions. The unique features of the holiday season in Ethiopia that reflect the togetherness of Ethiopia as a people of one nation are quite amazing and worthy of being a subject of fascination and research for foreign scholars.

Law & Politics

Stabilizing the Horn of Africa through coordinated efforts

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

For long, the Horn of Africa region has been encountering peace and security threats that originate from a broad spectrum of regional and global dynamism as a consequence of terrorist groups.

As some groups leave no stone unturned to move the region into uncharted waters working in close collaboration with some foreign entities, the region has been facing security challenges. As a result internal conflicts and some entities' mission to take hold of the strategic location, the region has been coming across looming security menaces that need a quick fix before the current circumstances go from the frying pan into the fire.

In the same way, nations in the Horn of Africa have been living under never-ending fear as a consequence of personal interests of regional and foreign forces that have been moving heaven and earth to place the region between the devil and the deep blue sea.

In light of the current situation, terrorist groups have been posing a threat to the strategic location by carrying out coordinated attacks in some parts of the region with the intention of causing tension. In consideration of the foregoing, member states have been working in close collaboration to resolve the impending doom brought about by internal and external adversaries.

It is well-known that members of the Horn of Africa leaders for a very long time have been combating terrorist groups in the region. There is no question that Ethiopia has been playing a huge role in getting rid of the terrorist organizations from the face of the Horn of Africa in addition to leaving no stone unturned to make the impossible possible and the unthinkable thinkable being a key partner of joint forces

Speaking of which, in the present circumstances, some leaders of the Horn of Africa have reached a consensus with firm commitment and determination to make available regional solutions to regional predicaments. It should not be forgotten that Ethiopia in the Horn of Africa has sustained to be at the fore of a regional endeavor to fight terrorism.

It is worth recalling that East Africa Standby Force (EASF)'s experts recently held a meeting to assess ways of revitalizing the Forces' working mechanism to battle emerging peace and security defies. For the sake of truth, the Horn of Africa has continued passing through several ups and downs that threaten the region's peace and security at the earliest possible moment.

By the same token, the government of Ethiopia has been going to great lengths to make peace happen in the Horn of Africa in addition to showing over and over again its readiness and commitment to ensure peace and tranquility in the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia has been playing a huge role in the Horn of Africa in curbing regional calamities and maintaining regional peace.



In actual fact, Ethiopia's troops under the joint forces have been playing a huge role in weakening the terrorist Al-Shabaab group and ensuring a comparatively stable Somalia. As things stand at the moment, in the face of the coordinated efforts of the Horn of Africa region, Al-Shabaab and other troops have continued posing threats to the important areas.

Ethiopia's role in defending the Horn of Africa Region by deploying peacekeeping forces in Sudan, South Sudan, and Somalia have been crucial in addition to oiling the wheels of restoring peace and tranquility. It cannot be denied that the country has been a linchpin in maintaining its commitment to regional peace. In addition to this, the country is committed to bolstering bilateral and Regional Corporations in the Horn of Africa Region.

As things currently stand, Ethiopia has sustained working to overcome challenges and fostering cooperation among countries of the region toward integration.

Ethiopia in the present climate has been sparing no effort to eradicate the terrorist groups from the region putting in place a wide spectrum of effective strategies. Notwithstanding the fact that Ethiopia's adversaries in several instances made an effort to carry out an attack in the Horn of Africa, all their efforts went for nothing following the uncompromising stance of Ethiopia's troops.

It should be remembered that terrorist groups have been pulling out all the stops to carry out an attack in boarder areas of Somali region. In point of fact, Ethiopia has been making every possible effort to eliminate the terrorist group from every corner of the Horn of Africa.

The East African Standby Force (EASF) said that tangible policy and legal documents that effectively respond to the Horn of Africa regional peace and security demand are being developed.

This was disclosed at a two-day Experts Working Group meeting of EASF that

opened in Addis Ababa as part of the 31st Policy Organs Meeting aimed at coming out with concrete proposals to help the police and decision-makers on regional security issues, according to information obtained from Ethiopian News Agency.

Speaking at the occasion, East African Standby Force Director Brigadier General Getachew Shiferaw said that the meeting will deliberate on a various documents that are very important for organization and operation as well as development in the future.

"The experts deliberate on various documents which are very important for our organization, operation and administrative activities as well as for deployment and development in the future. Those documents are quite crucial as they require endorsements of our police organ," he stated.

The documents have been prepared based on the guidance of police organs with the initiative of EASF to fill policy gaps and incorporate amendment to the administrative tool and policy document in order to effectively respond to the regional peace and security demand.

According to Brigadier General Getachew, the outcome of this Expert Working Group meeting will lay a foundation for the 31st Policy Organs Meeting.

International Relations and Military Cooperation Director-General in the Ethiopian National Defense Force, Major General Teshome Gemechu said on his part that these highly valuable policy and legal documents will leverage the regional organization.

He noted that those documents will have an imperative role for the East African Standby Force to manage the regional and global security dynamics.

Guest of Honor at the meeting, Lieutenant General Yimer Mekonnen called on East African Standby Force member states to come out with tangible proposals to advice

policy makers.

"I hope that you will come out with tangible proposals to advise our policy makers to take appropriate measures that could move forward our region."

The Eastern Africa Standby Force is a regional organization whose mandate is to enhance peace and security in the Eastern Africa region.

It is one of the five regional multidimensional Forces of the African Standby Force (ASF) consisting of military, police and civilian components.

Lately, Somalia's neighbors approved Mogadishu's request for an all-out war — including its need for lethal weapons and coordinated support to — annihilate Al-Shabaab militants.

The decision came out of an inaugural meeting of frontline states with Somalia, a definitive gathering between Mogadishu and all its immediate land neighbors in the Horn of Africa, to draft a common counter-terrorism strategy.

Kenyan President William Ruto, Djibouti's Ismael Guelle and Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed agreed with the host Hassan Sheikh Mohamud that Al-Shabaab must be smoked out of every part of the Horn.

"(The Summit) welcomed the request by the Somali government to obtain both lethal and non-lethal support to equip the newly-generated SNA (Somali National Army) units and to enhance the firepower capabilities of current SNA operational units," a communiqué said.

Somalia has lately been raising the tempo against Al-Shabaab, cheering on village vigilantes to fight alongside the SNA, while banning Al-Shabaab narratives from the media, and freezing bank accounts linked to the militant group.

But the terrorist group has often responded with vengeance, targeting government offices, civil servants and civilian areas with explosives to avenge for lost territory.



Ephrem Endale
Contributor

Between you & me

“He Hates Me!”

You know what the real problem these days is? Many people take things that are clearly articulated or actions which leave no room for speculations wrongly. I mean even before they hear you out or try to give your actions a second look their verdict is in; “He doesn’t like me.” “I knew she always worked against me.” Say the guy who you consider is among the closet to you asks you for some money, I mean real money!

“I’m faced with an emergency and I need twenty five thousand birr! I’ve no one to ask except you.” Who does he think you’re! Some guy who bought half the shares of ChatGPT! (That technology is creating tremors all around, isn’t it? The things they say its capable of doing are sometimes a little too much to understand. An American University, so they said, warned its students not to submit thesis paper written by ChatGPT. Someone was saying it can even write you a novel! Ask it “Write me a thesis paper on AI like Elon Musk would write it.” And it does just that!)

So this guy asks you for twenty-five thousand birr. Had he been someone about whom you could have said, “Well, I don’t blame him. He doesn’t know much about me.” But this guy is even your drinking partner some event that, as of late, is happens once every two months because the bunch of you have the thinnest wallets anywhere in the Milky way! And he has the courage to ask you ‘a fortune!’ Of course, you try to be as nice as you can manage. This is someone you consider close to you and more or less knows about you and he still asks for twenty-five thousand birr!

“Look, I’d have given it to you if I had the

money; I don’t;” and for emphasis you add, “Last holiday I couldn’t even buy sheep for the family.” believe me it wouldn’t work. Then and there the verdict has been passed, “He hates me!” And that does it for a couple of decades of friendship!

Even within some households there is this rush to pass the wrong verdict even though it is a household that goes back quite a number of years. I mean the guy who ends up in running battles with his wife would tell you, “She is getting on my nerves. I think that woman hates me!” You know that the guy has a real issue, a different one at that, when he refers to his loving wife as “that woman” and tries to paint her with all the wrong colors.

Hubby believes that his weekend drinking spree ‘with the boys’ is his one chance to ‘relax’ and a priority issue. His wife thinks otherwise. The fridge which they got from her father when they married in fact deepfreezes almost every food item. It even turned the broccoli into some Olympic-standard shot put! Before her father gave it to them it had been around for another two decades. The lady of the house wants it replaced pronto!

“We’ve a fridge that spoils everything I put in it and all you can do is throw money away!”

“Fridges are expensive these days.”

“You spend fifty birr or more for a bottle of beer and you tell me about fridge being expensive!”

The next time he is with the boys. “Would you believe it she wants me to stop recreating and save money for some demanded fridge.”

“You don’t say!”

“Yes that is what she tells me. I think she’s doing it deliberately to drive me crazy!” Hey; maybe you should change what you’re drinking. Only the wrong drink makes you talk like that about your beloved wife! But he wouldn’t be the only man. A friend who is fed up of people telling him about the ills their wives were joking he’d txt all of them “No talking about wives!”

The wrongly motivated hubby takes things to levels he wouldn’t have dreamt of a few years back. His wife has started coming home a little late with the excuse that she was working overtime to make some extra money which the couple needs badly. In fact, he has gone as far spying on her through her friends. They have told him she indeed was working late. Still, even after having verified repeatedly he couldn’t help saying, “She must be up to something!”

Unfortunately there are those even will all the facts in their hands still can’t help creating all kinds of eerie stories about he being “...up to something!” Even if he fails coming up with plausible reasons he’d say something like, “These days she is overdoing the makeup. Why does she do that unless there is something she is doing behind the curtain!”

You should feel sorry for such people. I mean they refuse to fully believe even what they see with their own eyes! “You didn’t have to hug him that much!”

“Why not?”

“People might think...”

“What the hell are you talking about! He’s my brother!”

“I know,....”

Take the boss who is that strong-handed guy who believes in doing things by the book. All your past bosses didn’t even know ‘the book’ let alone making it their reference. And how some of us love such bosses! So, having skipped work for no particular reason he has given you some verbal dressing down. You don’t like it. You don’t like it at all!

“Why is this guy after me?” Of course, no one thinks he’s only after you expect you, yourself. Thirty-nine of forty-two staff each believes the boss was after them. Maybe all he does to foment the hostility of the staff is that he’s some guy who wants to do everything according to the rule books. Maybe he’s taken steps to ensure that the work place remains only a work place. “No unauthorized tea breaks!” What! He must be kidding! If you want some tea break reward then you’ve to earn it. “No Facebook during working hours!” “The organizations phone lines are only for issues directly tied with the work. ‘No “No abuse of the organizations phones to tell the house maid that she should take it is easy on the ground peeper as prices have skyrocketed.’ ‘No abusing the lines to tell the boys that a new watering hole has been opened and they should see the dashing owner who seems to have dropped out from some fashion magazine!’ You know things like that.

No wonder every one of them think he is after them. May he save you from the “He hates me!” mental virus which, for no reason takes you down the slippery road of suspecting everyone and everybody around you.

We need ways to deal with them!

“Pushing anyone using one’s shoulders knowingly or unknowingly is punishable by two years in jail without the possibility of parole and a hundred grand in penalties.” If such a rule was in any book I can tell you it would have been the real cash cow!

Talking loudly on one’s cell phone in mini buses should be prohibited. Yes being someone using minibuses I can tell you that nothing gets on your nerves than people talking at the top of their voices in that enclosed and suffocating space. It’s not that they aren’t aware of where they are. They are; but that’s the name of their game, trying to show in places where there’re more than a few people. They do it deliberately; How did I know they’re showing off! Well, just try to eavesdrop on what they are saying. They talk of things to put them on higher pedestal than the rest of the passengers. They are trying to tell you they were among ‘the cream of society!’ Most of the theme it’s about big business or money. Well if you can’t turn heads talking about business which bags a couple of million a month, then you either have a lot of homework to do or you sound so amateurish no one

is acknowledging your presence! If you can’t catch the attention of the rest of the passengers maybe no one told you vocabulary matters in such things or all the other passengers are better versed in the hows and whys.

“How much did they say?...eight million for a second hand car!..... I could add another three million and have the best car in town.... Tell them I’ll take it for seven.” That, dear readers, is what I heard word for word months back in a hopelessly crammed minibus. The aid has allowed four passengers more than allowed and you can just imagine in what hell we were. It is in such a repelling atmosphere the guy was talking about eight million birr cars. A complete fraud of a human being!

Of course you don’t judge a book by its cover and people by what they’re wearing. We... ll; I chose to differ on that. The way one presents oneself matters. (Let me tell you a story I probably must have told you. One day I was wearing some suit and making my way to somewhere. A fellow I know was passing by me and thinking he hadn’t seen me I call him. He turns back

and first says something like, “Oh it’s you!” and then he dropped the bombshell. “You’re known for that old leather jacket!” If you think that was his way of a complement you should have heard the sarcasm in his voice! So to be outdone I still wear my old leather jacket.)

Yes what you wear creates impressions. I mean the guy who was talking of the eight million birr car and bragging about his ability to get a better one for a few million more was dressed in attire which looks as if he has slept on for many nights and more. The last time his shoes were shined the shoeshine boys did a superb job for a mere fifty cents! Ha!

“Talking too loud in minibus taxis and putting pressure on the eardrums of the other passengers is punishable by confiscation of the phone and prohibiting the person not to talk more than seven sentences a day or nine months.” I would have popped the champagne cork for such ‘a ruling!’ yes sounds weird of me. But what can I do it’s hard to always stay on the sidelines in a world where the weird has become ‘the normal.’

By the way I was surfing the net when I came across this documentary of short people going the lengths to make themselves taller. According to the documentary there is these medical procedure they call knee surgery. They put additional something and (bingo!) the short guy is taller. Maybe he doesn’t need a name to be described; “The tall guy who used to be short;” would do. So the 1.45 mts. fellow becomes a 1.90 LeBron James sort of guy in a few days. Imagine a friend of yours who is shorter than you (anyone shorter that you must be an accident of nature!) having ‘the surgery’ and looking down at you next time you meet. By the way, according to the documentary the reason people want to be taller is because things aren’t going well for them in life because they’re short! Ha! So here’s something to you guys who tell us “By now you should have owned a G+4 house and a V8!”

So, we might need ways to deal with our of bound behavior which cause more discomforts than the discomfort a rumbling belly while you’re on a long-anticipated! Your date isn’t going to be happy about that!

In Pictures



Prime Minister Abiy after concluding a successful European working visit

BY NAOL GIRMA

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) and French President Emanuel exchanged views on enhancing the French private sector's investment in Ethiopia's priority sectors.

The bilateral relations would help and

strengthen economic progress of the two countries. Ethiopia will also open investment opportunities for other investors and French companies that are engaged in Ethiopia.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed was also

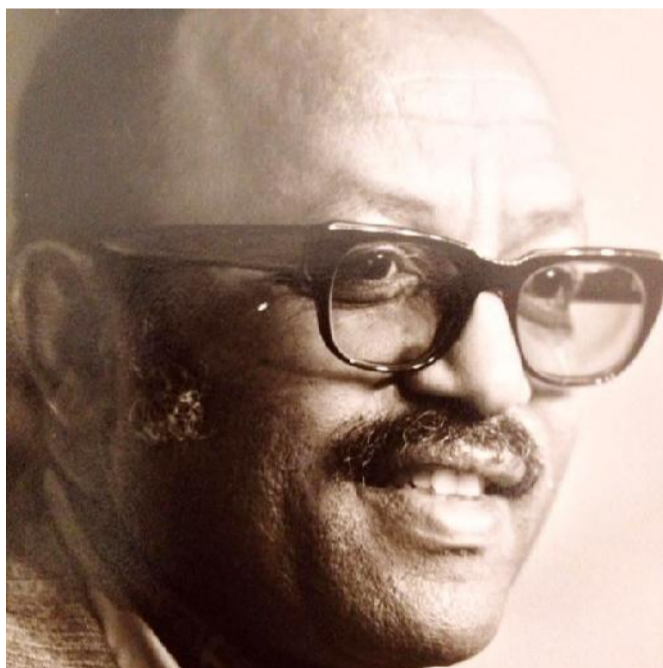
welcomed in an official ceremony by Robert Abela Prime Minister of Malta

Ethiopia and Malta have diplomatic relations dating back to the 1970s, although both countries established official relations when Malta opened its Embassy in Addis

Ababa in 2021. The two leaders and their delegations held consultations on bilateral relations, including enhancing cooperation in trade, investment, tourism, maritime, logistics, and security issues of the two countries.

Remembering Ketema Yifru

While Celebrating Africa Unity 60, we honor Ketema Yifru, former Ethiopian Foreign Minister (1961-1972). Ketema Yifru was instrumental in helping bring about the Addis Ababa Summit Conference that led to the formation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963. He was an ardent proponent of the adage, "African Solutions to African Problems."



Commercial Bank of Ethiopia started full banking services in Tigray

Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE) has resumed full banking services in many other parts of Tigray in addition to Mekelle.

The Bank also gives services to customers with account book opened "in any part of the country" They can bring their account book to get full services.

CBE further said that if there are customers whose account books have been lost due to various reasons, they can use the bank's services in accordance with the procedure used by the bank in the past by bringing their valid IDs.

Ethiopia, UNHCR Keen to Strengthen working relations

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, H.E. Demeke Mekonnen discussed with Filippo Grandi, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

During their discussion, the two parties agreed that Ethiopia and UNHCR should continue to work in concert to address the needs of refugees and internally displaced people in Ethiopia.

According to the Deputy Prime Minister, the Commissioner's visit was timely and significant and it was in line with the government's efforts to restore relations with partners following the Pretoria Peace Treaty.

He emphasized Ethiopia's generous refugee-hosting policies, which deal with 800,000 refugees and require ongoing financial and material support from partners such as UNHCR to sustain them.

