

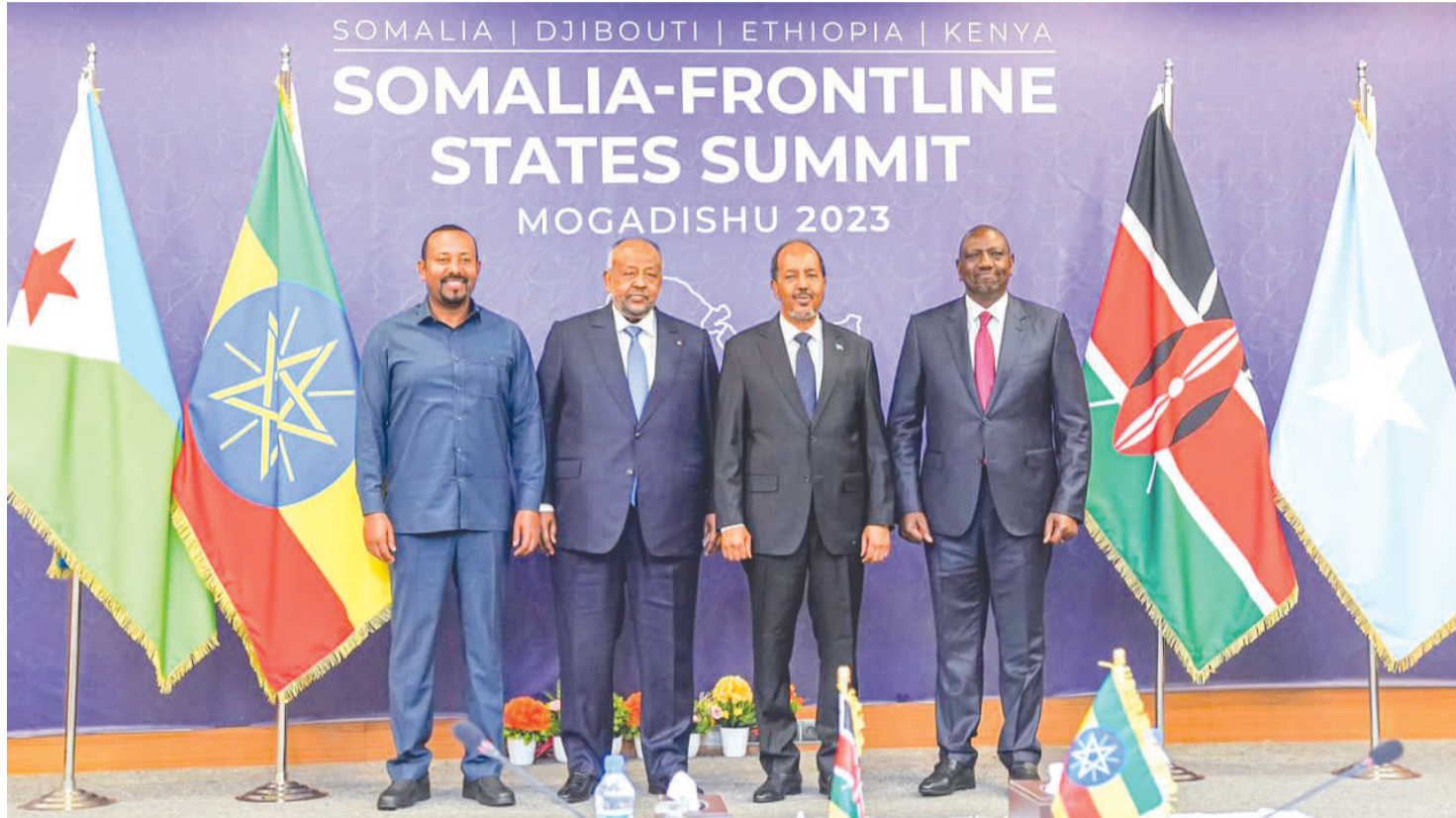


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Leaders summit calls for robust operational campaign against terrorism

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, Kenyan President William Ruto and Djiboutian President Ismail Omar Guelleh

called for robust operational campaign against terrorism at the Somalia-Frontline States Summit yesterday.

According to Somali National News Agency-SONNA, the summit was carried out focusing on the unification of security, the fight against Al-Shabaab terrorists, and

elimination of terrorism in the region.

SONNA's report indicates that the summit, which brought together the aforementioned leaders and their delegations, concluded following the consent to strengthen joint robust operational campaign against

See Leaders summit ... Page 3



NBE says fighting inflation 'Top Priority'

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- The newly-appointed Governor of the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) Mamo Mihretu has revealed his priority to contain the soaring increase in the price of goods and services and to stabilize

See NBE says ... Page 3

Ethiopia pushes for unfreezing of dev't funds

• Secures over 2.3 bln USD from remittance

TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopia has been working tirelessly to convince international organizations to unfreeze the suspended developmental funds that are attributed to the northern conflict, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) said.

MoFA presented a six months performance report to Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs Standing Committee of the House of People's Representatives yesterday.

Addressing questions raised by members of the Standing Committee, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister



Demeke Mekonnen said significant jobs have been done in normalizing Ethiopia's diplomatic relations with the U.S., European Union, and other western powers.

See Ethiopia pushes ... Page 3

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ECX to supply wheat in trading floor to global market

BY TAMERU REGASA

ADDIS ABABA- The Ethiopia Commodity Exchange (ECX) announced that it has partnered with relevant stakeholders to supply wheat to the international market on its trading floor; having capitalized on the automated system.

ECX Corporate Communication Bureau Head Netsanet Tesfaye told journalists yesterday that Ethiopia has been producing surplus wheat meant for the international market and supplementing the country's foreign exchange earnings.

The Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration approved the supply of cereals including wheat to the global market in an automated market system by entering the commodity into the commodity exchange marketing system.

The system is helpful to enhance the wheat farmers' income apart from its contribution to the overall economy. The system also enables wheat growers and other actors to

See ECX to supply ... Page 3

Sticking on the second homegrown economic reform

Page 6

Ethiopian Diasporas should intensify nation building efforts

Page 8

Ministers have say on half-year Nat'l performance

BY MENGESHA AMARE

ADDIS ABABA— In a half year performance evaluation report presented in the presence of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) at Hallala Kella, part of Dine For Ethiopia Initiative, a range of sectors have been reviewed.

The economic growth of the country would thus speculatively show a 7.5 % growth rate this budget year as indicated by the past six months' performance.

It was also indicated that agriculture especially crop development has brought about remarkable development. As to Agriculture Minister Girma Amentie (PhD), the sector is now being the fundamental basis of the Ethiopian economy. As new initiatives and lucrative approaches, incentives and other relevant measures have been put in place especially for the last three to four years, the sector has been able to bring about change, he added.

Following government commitment to make the sector better and expand mechanization, highly promising steps have been taken and the agriculture sector has shown progress, he added.

Industry Minister Melaku Alebel, on his part said that the sector has been well motivated



especially following the 'Ethiopia produces' initiative. "We are able to introduce some six product types to the export market and international advertise within the past six months, and it is even more than what we planned. This means that we are able to see new markets. As a result of our hard work, we are now in a position to export products apart from substituting import. Though we have been in trouble, we have attained remarkable outcomes; this indeed indicates that we can do more if activities are run

diligently and collaboratively." Education Minister Prof. Berhanu Nega said, "We have well identified the problems of the education sector having credible evidences. What matters is how we can overcome problems based on what we have been experiencing so far principally via drawing important lessons out of them." According to him, the emphasis given to the education sector has to be replicated to make real difference in all aspects.



High time to establish interim administration: TDP

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – The Federal government should immediately implement the Pretoria agreement and establish provisional administration to improve the people of Tigray from socio-economic, political, and psychological misery, Tigray Democratic Party (TDP) stated.

TDP Chairperson Aregawi Berhe (PhD) told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the government of Ethiopia should take significant measures in converting the Pretoria, South Africa peace deal into practical action in a bid to safeguard the Tigray people from universal misery.

According to the Chairperson, the implementation of the peace agreement has shown some sort of procrastination as the community has long awaited the prompt implementation of administrative assignment. Since problems among the Tigray society have been further exacerbated following TPLF's stubborn stance to translate the peace accord into practice, stringent measures have to be taken so as to contain the act of extemporaneously throwing people to jail, displacement of innocent citizens from the state and other related trying scenarios.

"If the peace agreement is not swiftly implemented, the problems from which the Tigray people especially the youth are suffering will continue and many more young generations will leave the area," the chairperson underlined.

Similarly, the Chairperson called on the Diaspora community, civil associations, contending parties, and other concerned bodies to play their parts in contributing to the proper realization of the peace deal and to support state people.

It is to be recalled that the Cessation of Hostility Agreement (CoHA) was signed between the federal government and the TPLF leaders on November 2, 2022 aiming at bringing lasting peace across Ethiopia with a special focus on Tigray state.

Japan grants 83,982 USD to construct school in SNNPRs

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – The embassy of Japan in Addis Ababa announced that it has provided 83,982 USD through Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots and Human Security Projects (GGP) to support the expansion of quality education in SNNPRs.

A press release sent to The Ethiopian Herald stated that Japan has provided 83,982 USD for establishing quality school in SNNPRs.

According to the press statement, the inauguration ceremony was held on 1 February, 2023 while Japan has provided some 83,982 USD for "The Project for Expansion of Kololo Primary School in Kololo Kebele, Tembaro Woreda, Kembata-Tembaro Zone, SNNPRs." This support is aiming at expanding one furnished school building containing a total of six classrooms in the above stated area.

During the inauguration, ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Ethiopia, ITO Takako and Executive Director of the Tesfa Foundation, Yenebeb Getachew was presented.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Amb. ITO delivered a congratulatory message and was welcomed by the community and beneficiaries of the project.



She has expressed her hope that the project will improve the quality of education and provide a bright future for the children of the school.

This project contributes to improve the quality of education at the grassroots level through school block expansion. The project will enable 350 existing students to learn in a school environment that satisfies the government standard of classroom to

student ratio. It will also enable 150 new students to enroll at the school, it was learnt.

It is to be recalled that the GGP was first introduced in 1989, and in Ethiopia, over 400 projects have been implemented through this scheme in such sectors as education, health services, women's empowerment, and other basic human needs.

Gov't manages to resume basic services in conflict-ridden areas

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – In the wake of the peace agreement, Suhul Hospital, Shiraro Health Center and Shire Town Water and Sewerage services in Tigray state have begun delivering services.

Various professionals in different sectors have been discharging their duties in terms of providing health services, electric power installations, water supply and others in severely conflict-affected areas.

Shiraro Health Center Officer Yirga Abadi said that this center has not been giving services for a long time due to the conflict, but now it starts the service delivery along with other volunteer health staffs.

Yirga further highlighted that the federal government, UNICEF, WHO, IMC, ICRC, professionals, and donors have been working closely with the local community



Yirga Abadi

in restoring a range of services.

Praising the swift start of service delivery, Shire Suhul Hospital Medical Director Fisehatsion GeberMedhin (MD) on his part said that: "Since the restoration of electric utility, we have been giving services such as emergency operation, labor and delivery,



Solomon Shume

in and out patient, pregnancy follow ups, among others."

He also appreciated the Ethiopian Ministry of Health continuous support used for helping a large number of IDPs in the state.

Shire Town Water and Sewerage Service Expert Solomon Shume also said that most



Fisehatsion GeberMedhin (MD)

of the transformers were not functional as power cable, pump and others have been stolen but now everything is fixed by our own operators.

"Due attention should be given to entering basic service provisions like food supply, health facilities in full swing," he urged.

Leaders summit ...

terrorism. The states' summit also issued joint communiqué.

Premier Abiy took part in the summit to achieve enhanced regional security cooperation, according to the Office of the Prime Minister.

Recall that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and his delegation arrived in Mogadishu yesterday to participate in the summit, hosted by the President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud.

Earlier yesterday, Prime Minister Abiy also discussed with the members of Ethiopian

national defense forces deployed under African Union Transitional Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) to fight against Al-Shabaab.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Kenyan President William Ruto had also discussed ways how to strengthen bilateral ties between their two countries on the sideline of the Somalia-Frontline States Summit.

The two leaders explored ways of strengthening bilateral ties between the two nations through infrastructure development, increasing trade and investment as well as regional issues.



ECX to supply...

get timely information from the international market. "Previously, there was no market information about the price of Ethiopian wheat production."

Explaining the demand for wheat in the international market, he said that several countries have shown a growing desire to purchase Ethiopia's products. ECX has conducted independent research with

the help of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and other organizations to enter the commodity into the global marketing system.

Ethiopia plans to cover 1.3 million hectares of land with summer wheat in the current fiscal and produce 52 million quintals of the commodity, it was learned.

NBE says fighting...

the market.

The governor made the above remark while presenting the financial sector's six-month performance yesterday in the presence of leaders of commercial banks and other relevant stakeholders.

Noting inflation has been one of the most pressing challenges to the national macro-economy in recent years, Mamo stated that the central bank plans to meticulously deal with the problem. Though Ethiopia manages to reduce the inflation in the price of food items by five and six percent compared to last June, the price of non-food items increased by six percent in the reported period.

"Accordingly, arresting the soaring increase in the price of commodities and services will remain our most important concern in the future. In conclusion, we will take viable financial measures to stabilize the market and ease the challenge inflation has created in the low-income communities."

Furthermore, creating a healthy financial sector and curbing the alarming parallel market will remain priorities of the regulatory bank. "This time, creating stable prices and stable foreign currency exchange as well as enhancing financial institutions' performance are indisputable; I join NBE to act based on this mission."

The governor also directed financial institutions including non-bank entities to contribute to the success of the NBE directive that has been set to contain the staggering inflation. "All measures and tasks of all financial institutions should be to halt the inflation. The loan service, for instance, shall be to support the development of the country. If not, the national bank will take possible legal measures."

He continued: "Along with financial development support to institutions, we planned to reinforce supervision works and we will supervise all financial institutions whether they are acting based on international principles."

Meanwhile, Mamo emphasized the role financial institutions have played in the overall economy and mentioned that the Treasury bill contributed by banks hit over 157 billion Birr in six months. Indeed, the contribution of the financial sector to fix the national budget deficit is growing immensely.

NBE's Deputy Governor Solomon Desta said that the total asset of Ethiopia's financial institutions has reached 2.91 trillion Birr while the deposit hits the two trillion Birr mark with 33.33 percent annual growth.

"Despite some glitches, both government-owned and private financial institutions have registered healthy growth."

Ethiopia pushes...

The Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) is instrumental in regularizing Ethiopia's diplomatic relations with western powers notably the U.S. government and restoring the cooperation with international organizations. Accordingly, the government has requested international organizations to unfreeze the budgetary aid they suspended under the guise of the north Ethiopian conflict.

Noting Ethiopia encountered intensified pressures and interventions from some interest groups, the Deputy Premier highlighted that the CoHA turns the situation for the better and opens a new door of cooperation with global actors. "Now, we are beginning a promising sustainable peace process."

The recent diplomatic achievements are the results of the concerted efforts of all Ethiopians living at home and abroad and the country has been strengthening ties with all of its neighbors under the principle of mutual benefits. The agreement reached with Sudan to solve the border issue peacefully is an identical example of the success in this

regard.

By the same token, consolidated efforts are being carried out to deploy competent, efficient and competitive diplomats who are able to protect the country's interest at global arenas.

Demeke further pointed out that Diaspora's engagement in investment, remittances, and overall development activities is growing from time to time.

Accordingly, MoFA's Plan Evaluation and Monitoring Director General Ambassador Alemayehu Sewegegn indicated that over the last six months of the current fiscal year, Ethiopians in the Diaspora sent 2.3 billion USD in the form of remittance to home. Moreover, Diaspora-owned businesses with an aggregate capital of 27 billion Birr were invested in the country.

Ethiopia also repatriated over 51,000 citizens that were in difficult situations in Saudi Arabia in the reported period. Further plans are set to increase the number of repatriated citizens to 102,000.

Opinion

International aid organizations should consider provision insufficiency

BY GETACHEW MINAS

International aid organizations have been providing assistance in war affected regions of Ethiopia. But, the assistance has been insufficient compared to the size of people that needed aid. The negligence of these organizations in providing assistance to the needy has increased the burden on the Government of Ethiopia that has faced war in that part of the country. The expenditure on war efforts has been immense. Huge inflow of food aid was required to the internally displaced persons. These persons have lost their families and properties due to war, skirmish, conflict, clash and fight about which they had no knowledge. Families left their place of origin and dispersed to unknown destinations due to social conflicts and clashes. The victims had no clues where and when they moved, but they tried to escape to save their lives. These are the Ethiopian people the international aid organizations failed to assist.

The social clashes have been accompanied by drought and shortage of rain which negatively affected the lives of people in war affected regions. International aid agencies have responded insufficiently to the crises in war affected regions of Ethiopia. They delivered food, vitamins, and clothes to needy people. But, the distribution of food aid was not adequate in places where people have been suffering from food insecurity due to war. An increasing number of people moved from the battle zones to areas where they might have access to food and shelter. The shelters were made from tents, tree branches or used clothes. The international aid agencies could not provide sufficient number of tents which the government had to supply using its meager resources. The government had to commit most of its resources to the war effort to maintain peace in the country. Moreover, it needed funds for carrying out its basic economic and social services to the Ethiopian people.

The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance has tremendously increased in Ethiopia in the last three years. The causes of such increase were mainly war, drought, insecurity, and the ongoing crisis in northern Ethiopia. It has been estimated that millions of people needed aid for several years. Aid dependency was due to failure to produce “sufficient” agricultural outputs in the country. Farmers needed peace, law and order to cultivate their land. Where there was reign of terror due to armed struggle, young people found it hard to engage in economic activities and earn income. With insufficient income they might not be able to support their families.

Added to these conflicts the Ethiopian people were faced with drought and severe shortage of food. Studies show that the effects of the drought have resulted in high levels of food insecurity, deteriorating nutritional conditions, loss of livelihoods, and water insecurity. Both drought and

war have left millions of people in need of humanitarian assistance. Though the international aid organizations could not provide sufficient assistance to the people in need of support, they could only supply very small compared to those who needed assistance. The gap between supply of and demand for assistance in regions affected by war has been getting wider with time. More people came to centers where aid was given but in small amounts per person. It was estimated that food supplied to people in war torn areas did not last for a few weeks.

Aid dependents had to relocate to places where they believed food was donated in sufficient quantities for families with children. But, infants and children could not have access to nutritious food. Some of them had lost the chance for breastfeeding due to death of mothers in battle fronts. Children who lost their parents during the war or civil disorder have been found loitering in camps for internally displaced persons, IDPs. International aid organizations seemed to omit such casualties from the list of IDPs in war torn corners of Ethiopia. The burden of supporting these persons fell on the government that has been engaged with warring factions. These factions have the objective of destabilizing the country and gain power with which they would be able to rob the nation. This objective has been fully supported by foreign powers who supplied funds, weapons and training to the rebels. In so doing, they created chaos in society.

Aid donors tended to forget these innocent human casualties of war. The depth of the crises in war torn Ethiopia was deeper than casually reported by newsmen and aid donors. The reason for evasion of war casualties by international aid organizations was deliberate and strategic. The purpose of such evasion could be political and economic. The aid agencies were known to make political calculations when they delivered relief to war affected regions of Ethiopia. If there was a political return from delivery of aid to certain regions, then the flow of supply of food and medicines to those areas was uninterrupted and continuous. There seems to be calculation of economic return to future foreign investments in war torn areas. The aid organizations served as litmus paper for probable economic returns for alien operators.

The performance of international aid organizations in war affected regions was insufficient compared with the efforts of the government. Of course, the government has greater responsibility than aid donors in caring for the people in these regions. It made extraordinary efforts on both the domestic and external front to ensure continuous flow of aid to the poor people in war affected regions. Domestically, the government took measures to ensure the cessation of hostilities that led to increased humanitarian access across much of northern Ethiopia. Relief workers were increasing their

operations to reach those people affected by internecine war, combats, hostilities and social conflicts. Nevertheless, efforts of aid donors was tangentially affected by armed groups and militias that continued to threaten civilians and limited humanitarian access to parts of the regions wreaked and affected by war.

The flow of basic services, which was critical for carrying out humanitarian operations, was crucial at a time when Ethiopia was experiencing severe drought. As mentioned earlier, insufficient rainfall during the previous rainy seasons has led to severe water shortages, catastrophic livestock losses, and failed crops in most of the northern parts of the country. The second drought occurred as the communities continued to recover from the previous severe drought. Studies indicate that it has been triggered by multiple consecutive seasons of below-average rainfall. The Government of Ethiopia estimated that millions of people would require humanitarian assistance primarily due to increased drought-related needs in the country.

Apart from drought, Ethiopians faced different challenges that contributed to continuous humanitarian needs. They were faced with complex economic and social challenges, including malnutrition, inflation, diseases, social conflicts, seasonal flooding, and limited access to health, water, sanitation, and hygiene services. Effort has been made by the government to fight malnutrition through mobile health and nutrition teams. In the rural areas farmers affected by drought were given support to regain their livelihood. There was also an effective response to disaster affected regions. All these efforts of the government would be more productive and accessible to all drought and war affected regions of Ethiopia if the international aid organizations had given “sufficient” and proper assistance in time.

The pro-poor growth agenda has important implications for the way international aid organizations support poor countries. In this regard, they should give more attention to the poor but war affected countries. It should not be a “business as usual” agenda, and “more of the same” would not be sufficient. Thousands of people residing in the war zones died, suffered from wounds, and lost their farm lands and villages. The existing pro-poor growth agenda was not relevant to those who suffered from war, social conflict and internal displacement. Donor policies that used to focus on institutional change only should recognize the value of the Ethiopian contexts in “identifying” the binding constraints to pro-poor and war torn parts of the country. The practice of some international aid organizations of implementing programs based on their experience elsewhere was “inappropriate” for Ethiopian reality.

Priorities set by donor governments were sometimes improper and unsuitable to

the reality of poor countries, including Ethiopia. The aid organizations have, therefore, to settle the issue of supporting growth “or” development of the capabilities of the poor in war affected regions of Ethiopia. The pro-poor growth agenda emphasizes the importance of breaking down traditional contrast between economic and social development. This agenda had never considered the post-war situation of developing countries such as Ethiopia. It was only an intellectual exercise that had nothing to do with helping those people who were internally displaced with nowhere to go. The pro-poor growth agenda recognized that helping to bring about pro-poor policy and institutional change was predicated upon strengthening the voice of the poor. Pro-poor change could not be imposed from outside simply because it was unrealistic.

The practice of providing irrelevant solutions by aid organizations to local problems was by itself problematic. This was glaringly revealed during implementation of donor programs to solve the poverty of the rural poor in Ethiopia. Rural poverty was “overloaded” with the effects of internecine civil strife in war affected regions of the country. The provision of assistance to these regions by external donors required carefully designed plan of action. This plan should not be replicated from other developing countries where the donors had been operating before. They should develop programs of action in consultation with relevant government agencies. The process of engagement should focus on stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society organizations that represented the interests of the war affected people. In other words, the international aid organizations should serve war affected regions of Ethiopia in consultation with concerned public and private sector agencies.

Aid organizations and donors needed to reappraise the way they related to countries and the modalities they used to provide assistance. Continuation with “business as usual” and increasing aid to do “more of the same” was not sufficient to meet the needs of the Ethiopians in war affected regions. These donors have to be creative enough to adjust to the realities of the Ethiopians in those regions. Experiences of donor support in other developing countries might be inappropriate to the needs of poor people in battle affected zones. Aid donors should focus on support processes that were all-inclusive. They should support the development of processes that were formal, transparent and accountable to the interests of the poor in war affected regions of Ethiopia. International aid organizations should increase their support in a sufficient manner in line with the government aid policy and program.

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

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The Ethiopian Herald

Editorial

Ensuring peace has thrived resilient economy!

Peace, as a coral component of assets of any community, is essential for the economic progress of a country. In other words, peace and economic development can be referred to as two faces of the same coin which means prevalence of the former is a key factor for the existence of the latter. They are inseparable. This becomes true in the Ethiopian context. The country had been in a bloodshed war in its northern part for about two years. The war, on top of consuming human life and destroying property worth billions of Dollar, had adversely impacted the nation's economic progress.

The agreement reached on cessation of hostilities between the federal government and TPLF, however, paved way for myriads of opportunities that include reinvigorating the economic progress of which boosting export performance becomes among the pillars.

To this end, effectiveness of the elements of the agreement should be a must do action and that is what was done in which the federal government has played the lion's share. Application of the peace accord on the ground basically benefited the people in the war torn areas. The government and aid organizations employed the opportunity to address the needy with basic lifesaving materials and provisions.

Then, rehabilitation and reconstruction followed. Many manufacturing industries have become operational again and the country has turned its attention to initiate economic development. Among others, economic development pays attention for export trade.

According to the Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI), Ethiopia is enlarging the volume of trade exchanges more than ever with its neighbors in exporting grain, fruit and vegetables products to the neighboring countries such as Sudan, Kenya, Somalia and Djibouti, and it has attached due emphasis to elevating trade relation with its neighboring countries.

Ethiopia is doing its best to reinforce the trade relation with the neighboring nations. The trade exchange is growing more in the areas of fruit and vegetable products as well as in grain products.

Ethiopia has secured some 628 million Dollar in revenue from exporting horticultural products to various destinations during the past fiscal year. It is reported to be the result of various reform activities that have been taking place in the agricultural sector in general and the horticulture sub-sector in particular. The latter encompasses vegetables, fruits, plants, flowers and others.

Apart from cementing trade ties with neighboring nations, trade relations with Asian countries have also reached 45 percent. Now, the destinations of Ethiopian crop products are Europe and African countries.

Conducive environment created to smoothly work with the World Bank and international financial institutions highly contributed to the success and promising to go further in the export sector. The country is endowed with over 74 million hectares of arable land 122 billion cubic meter of water makes it potential for economic progress. Utilizing these resources is essential to make poverty a history. To this end, the country needs genuine support from friendly countries and international financial institutions.

The government is highly prioritizing increased trade relations with neighboring countries with a view to further reinvigorating the longstanding people to people relationship. The ultimate goal of making trade relations with neighboring countries and beyond is to ensure mutual benefit and growth in this globalized sphere.

Ensuring sustainability of peace, as it is learned so far, is of paramount importance for the sustainability of economic progress and paying attention to the prevalence of peace should be the duty of any entity, individual, group or community.

Opinion

Momentum builds for free movement under AfCFTA

BY STAFF REPORTER

Trade experts, business executives, and advocates of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) from across the continent have expressed concerns about the slow progress on the ratification of the Protocol on the movement of people.

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.

Intra-African trade, currently less than 15 percent of the continent's total trade, is largely stifled by stringent entry rules making it strenuous for citizens to move from one country to another.

In a document released at the end of a three-day 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."

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.

The Africa Prosperity Dialogue focused on issues relating to AfCFTA ratification, market access, dispute resolution, negotiations on Phase II of the Agreement, industrialization, private sector, innovation and technology, financing and resource mobilization, partnerships for impact, and free movement of persons.

The outcome document also contains a commitment to "Ratify the AU Protocol on the Free Movement of people and select a champion to ensure early entry into force."

In fact, President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo of Ghana was called upon to champion the Protocol on the free movement of persons. The president said he would "readily accept in all humility." He cautioned, however, that "I need the approval of the AU before I can become the champion of anything"

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

The Dialogue was organized by the African Prosperity Network in partnership with the AfCFTA Secretariat, the Government

"Let Africans roam freely. Free movement of people is a must if Africa wants to enjoy the full benefits of the AfCFTA,"

of Ghana, UNDP, and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). It brought together business executives and associations, policy leaders, trade experts, women, and young entrepreneurs, and senior government representatives who brainstormed and identified quick wins to

move the AfCFTA initiative from ambition to action.

"Continental integration is an existential necessity, and therefore a natural destiny for Africa," said Stephen Karingi, Director of Regional Integration and Trade, ECA.

"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, ECA.

Organizers agreed to "meet annually, under the Africa Prosperity Dialogue," and take stock of the progress of Africa's prosperity agenda. It was also agreed that development partners including ECA and UNDP will continue to provide coordinated support to governments and businesses to ensure the full implementation of the AfCFTA.

Source: UNECA

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

Business & Economy

Sticking on the second homegrown economic reform

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

The preparation of the second home grown economic reform which is expected to bring new policies and execution tools has been finalized and is waiting the consultation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

As to Teklewold Atnafu, the Economic Affairs Advisor of the Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), the second home grown economic reform prioritizes accomplishing projects which were failed or delayed that must had been implemented in the first reform program. In addition, it comprises rescheduling the country's debt repayment and to obtain additional loan from the international financial institutions. Particularly projects which were planned by the first economic reform program in which donors such as IMF and others pledged to support will be accomplished in the second program.

Currently, the second home grown economic reform program draft is submitted to the national macro-economic committee and soon it will be discussed with stake holders.

"The first home grown economic reform program is evaluated and the second one is still in its draft stage." Teklewold said. And the new one includes new aspect of the economy and projects. For instance, it comprises the opening up of the financial sector to the foreign banks, beginning capital market and to that end legal frame work is formulated to be functional and approved by the policy makers. Their accomplishment procedures and detailed issues are explained by the second program. He further said that, the operational aspect of the foreign banks also will be comprised by the second program.

The national macro-economic committee has been discussing on the key issues of the program. The Ministers, private sector and other stakeholders will participate on the discussion. In the preparation of the first home grown economic reform program, it was intended to invite international stakeholders such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to participate in the discussion and contribute their part but due to the outbreak of war in the northern part of the country it was in vein.

Foreign stakeholders will also be invited in the second program. As to Teklewold, the second program indicates the direction of the nation's economic activities in the coming four or three years and the amount of money allocated in the program also explained.

For the first home grown economic reform program accomplishment 10 billion Dollars was estimated to be allocated and it was intended to obtain most of the money from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other international partners. Agreement was reached between the government and donors to secure 6 billion Dollars from the total amount. But it was unable to obtain the money due to the outbreak of war in the northern part of the country. The second reform program also considers the mobilization of money from international financial institutions and discussion will be kicked off soon.



As to Teklewold, conducting discussion with the IMF is crucial for attaining the objectives of the second round economic reform program. To open the discussion with the IMF there needs the approval of the board of directors of the IMF and it is expected to obtain the permission soon.

When the boards of directors give green light for discussion, the Ethiopian delegates will go to the IMF head office in Washington and its officials also will come to Ethiopia for discussion and securing the loan will be realized.

Teklewold further said that the delegates of the IMF will come here in this month and the Ethiopian delegates also will go there. But still the date is not decided.

"Agreement will be reached regarding the amount of money allocated to run the program which is planned to be implemented in the coming three or four years, how much money will IMF, the World Bank and other stake holders donate, how much debt will be cancelled and other issues will be comprised" Teklewold said. When the debt payment is rescheduled or cancelled, the hard currency that is going to be allocated for debt service will be saved and used for other development scheme.

Currently, Ethiopia allocated 2 billion Dollars for debt service annually and when the debt payment is rescheduled the nation can save 1 billion Dollars and within five years it can save 5 billion Dollars. But if it is not rescheduled accomplishing the second economic reform is unthinkable; because allocating 2 billion Dollars for debt payment annually cripples the nation's endeavor in attaining to its economic development.

It is remembered that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed recently announced that the debt burden hang over the nation's ability to pay and his statement indicates that how debt payment is painful to the country. In addition, the refrain of donor countries to provide support to the country due to the outbreak of war in the northern part of the country further aggravated the situation. Debt payment also affects the nation's hard currency reserving capacity.

As to Teklewold, the current foreign debt is the cumulative effect of the loan the nation obtained from foreign countries and financial institutions for the last 30 to 40 years. But what is the decisive factor is not the amount of debt but how much the nation

The first home grown economic reform program is evaluated and the second one is still in its draft stage. And the new one includes new aspect of the economy and projects. For instance, it comprises the opening up of the financial sector to the foreign banks, beginning capital market and to that end legal frame work is formulated to be functional and approved by the policy makers

pays its debt annually. Currently, paying 2 billion Dollars for debt service is obligatory and when it is rescheduled the amount of annual debt repayment will be reduced. He further said that the affluent country such as the United States will take loan from other countries worth of trillion Dollars but it pays and its economy also is not affected.

As compared to other countries, the amount of the debt is negligible and it is 27 billion Dollars. Because of the drying up of donors' countries loan and grant and the absence of debt rescheduling, the nation is forced to allocate 2 billion Dollars for debt service which in turn hampers its development endeavor. If other constraints which hamper the nation's economic efforts were removed, paying 2 billion Dollars does not mean huge. In the absence of external pressure, Ethiopia could pay its debt on time but due to shortage of means of earning foreign currency, the situation has become challenging.

But whatever the case it may be, dialogue will be conducted with the donor countries to involve them in support of the second round home grown economic reform program. They also showed interest to provide 20 billion Dollars for reconstructing infrastructure demolished by the two year's war lasted in the northern part of the country. The reconstruction work can be said instrumental to reinvigorate the disrupted economy.

As to him, the peace agreement between the government and TPLF also brought good opportunities to obtain hard currency from donor countries.

The government, long ago, has tried its level best to address the nation's economic problems and to achieve better development endeavor. However, though it achieved tangible results, foreign debt it inherited from the previous regimes, the outbreak of war in the northern part of the country and COVID-19 hampered the progress. Now, as mentioned above, the peace agreement reached between the government and TPLF brought some glimpse of hope.

Looking the situation as a good opportunity, donor countries pledge to continue their support. The ending of the war also enables the government to save the money that would have been allocated for the war effort and to engage fully in development endeavor and attaining progress also will be realized.

Art & Culture

Award winning actor stirring up the film industry with Indie Film

BY KFLEEYESUS ABEBE

Almost all art forms and artists in Ethiopia go through various challenges such as lack of adequate finance, skills and training, and public stereotype. The challenges weigh much on the cinema as it requires larger investment, collaboration of different skills and creativity. Hence compared with other genres, the cinema is the least developed.

For a decade cinema here has made a tad progress in terms of producing some notable works, introducing new talents and rapid production. Yet, the progress has suffered set back due to COVID-19 and the red hot competition of international movies taking local audiences. So now the cinema is at a critical stage as producers and artists are leaving the industry and engaging in their private businesses.

In contrast, Henock Wondimu who was a winner of best actor award and familiar face in Ethiopian movies can't live up with this reality despite making money through music clips and other businesses. He said he couldn't leave the movie industry and sit idle when the industry is in such hardship. Accordingly, he wanted to allivate the problem of financing by producing independent movies. This is new to Ethiopia as many Ethiopian movies are commercial movies sourcing funds from investors or the intention of generating income by showing them in movie theaters or selling to television networks or streaming services.

What Henock did next is doing a Tiktok video appealing to his fans saying that he wanted to do one good movie with fund contribution of fans. Recounting and



showing his memorable time while doing movies the actor said: "I have more than 700,000 followers in social media. Why don't we produce a film together for our satisfaction?" The reaction to this Tiktok video was positive but some were concerned whether the actor is in financial woes.

The actor has appeared on a popular show called Seifu Show to clarify his idea. He told the experience of the other world as this: "This is common in western world. There are major studio films and independent movies. The studio films are films that are being made by major films studio films such as Marvel, Universal, DC and others. Films that are being made by major studio films do have influence of the producers. To get out of the producers influence they brought independent films. It is now a common trend in U.S. and other countries. They use kick start and other means to raise funds and produce the movie without financial worries." So, he wanted to bring this

experience here in Ethiopia and initiate the film industry again. "I thought about this for a while. Our films are solely commercial. If it does not prove profitable, you won't find a producer and the industry could grind to a halt. This shouldn't happen. There should be an alternative. I believe the fate of movie industry is in the hand of the people."

Henock says he by no means is attempting to change the industry single handily but wanted to remind there is a vast potential and resource that shouldn't be overlooked.

"There is some misconception that I am trying to impact the movie single handily. I don't have that capacity. We have genius directors like Sewmehon Yesmaw, Abiy Fente, Nur Akmel, Yednekachew Shumte, Henock Ayel, Daniel Girma and others. I am but petty compared with giants. But my idea is "let us come together with masters and produces one great movie as producers backpedaling from the industry."

There is a long way to realize his ambition as he generated just 10% of the target but he is optimistic it is tangible.

"I have generated 10% of the sum for my target investment. The movie in conception will hopefully attract a large crowd as I am going to mix with big actors with emerging artists. There will be fine directors, best story tellers, and cinematographers. It does have title already. It is based on a true story. I am sure people will be happy to see it as they are producers of the movie"

Henock is very passionate about movie making as living here in Ethiopia for sole purpose of doing movies. His daughter and wife are living abroad. He could be with them but didn't want to be far from movie making. He generates money by making music clips but films are at his heart. Unfortunately, Ethiopian movie industry is experiencing a down spiral at this point in the time. If Henock's ambition succeeds other artist could follow suit and stir the industry. Big faces in Ethiopian movies could also return to the industry.

Not to mention Ethiopian movies could have positive influence in sociopolitical and economic changes. They could struggle against prejudice, stereotypes, and injustice. They could fight corruption and maladministration, raise awareness on the value of literacy and good judgment, encourage people for development and many more. In order to achieve these goals, they should have a space to exercise freedom, get skills and training and finance. The responsibility of supporting the industry therefore falls on the shoulder of the people, government and other stakes.

Attention to its grotesque faces

BY ALEM HAILU

A ship sustaining
A tiny crack or thick
Is destined to sink,
Awaits the same story
A pilferers-leached country!
All the grotesque
Faces of corruption
Embezzlement, bribery, red-tape
Nepotism
Task procrastination
What is more inefficient
Resource utilization
Must not go out of
A developing
Nation's radar,
Expected corruption to bar
In its bid to spur
The ship of development far!
Needs no less attention
Fighting the new faces of corruption
Such as post placement
By political affiliation
Divorced from talent,
Which should enjoy
A greater weight!



Indepth

Ethiopian Diasporas should intensify nation building efforts

The Ethiopian Diaspora are Ethiopian citizens and foreign nationals of Ethiopian origin who reside and work outside of Ethiopia across the world in the USA, Europe, the Middle East and Persian Gulf countries, Far East and in the African continent outside of Ethiopia. Roughly, more than 3 million Ethiopian Diaspora are scattered in various countries of the world.

Despite difficulty in kinds of livelihoods they have to live in foreign countries, the Ethiopian Diaspora have contributed a lot in the relief, rehabilitation programs of the country, in supporting the education, health, agriculture and other sectors of the national economy.

The Ethiopian Diaspora transferred more than 4.2 billion USD in 2022 in the form of remittance to families and other development programs in the country. In the same year, the Diaspora contributed more than 1.5 billion USD in five months Ethiopian fiscal year, towards the realization of national projects and support for needy citizens in the country, according Mohammed Idris, Ethiopia Diaspora Service Director General. The Diaspora has been heavily active in investment, trade, national issues and implementations of development projects among others during the stated period as the remittance has exceeded from the plan.

The Diaspora community should be praised for their firm and unwavering support to Ethiopia in time of need by presenting the cause of the country to the international community.

Incidentally, the first Ethiopian Diaspora Organizations Recognition Program is scheduled today, 26 January, 2023. According to Mohammed Idris a total of 52 Ethiopian Diaspora organizations 51 abroad and one at home will be awarded in recognition of their contributions to the national calls that have been made on various occasions. The recognition program is aimed at encouraging and expressing gratitude to the Diaspora.

Ethiopians in the Diaspora may have diverse background in political views, cultural and religious orientations. However, regardless such differences, most of the Diaspora are ready to contribute their part in the overall development of their country. The Council of Ethiopian Diaspora in Action is an umbrella organization that has been active in mobilizing resources for the development of the country.

Ever since the startup of the construction of GERD in 2011, the Ethiopian Diaspora has actively participated in buying bonds and making financial contributions in millions of dollars so that Ethiopians will complete the dam and provide access to electricity to rural areas. Recognizing the contributions of the Diaspora will certainly add impetus for their commitment to participating in the ongoing nation building endeavours.



The Ethiopian Diaspora have effectively challenged the pressures and interferences propagated by some countries on Ethiopia, at the most crucial period of the country's history when the statehood of the nation was challenged from within and without

Diaspora have effectively challenged the pressures and interferences propagated by some countries on Ethiopia, at the most crucial period of the country's history when the statehood of the nation was challenged from within and without.

Following the peace agreement, the government is doing its best to rebuild destroyed infrastructure, restore services in war affected areas.

The aftermath of the war requires huge resources for the reconstruction and rehabilitating efforts. There are millions of Ethiopians affected by the war, IDPs included, require relief food supplies, restoration of services and reconstruction of destroyed infrastructure. All these cannot be fulfilled by the Government of Ethiopia alone. This certainly implies that a lot of support is expected from the Diaspora organizations and institutions.

No doubt the Ethiopian Diaspora has been contributing their part in ascertaining the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of the country. With the implementation of the peace agreement in the northern part of the country, the ongoing nationwide development programs and mega projects, the contributions of the diaspora is highly sought. Indeed, there is more to be desired and the Ethiopian Diaspora organizations that are now recognized and awarded take yet another responsibility to help rebuild regions affected by the war in northern Ethiopia. Source (ENA)

When the people and government of Ethiopia have faced unprecedented challenges, the Diaspora Council expended efforts to stand by the side of Ethiopia and its legitimate government. It is to be recalled that there have been misinformation and disinformation campaigns against Ethiopia over the last two years. The Ethiopian

Law & Politics

Time to remove AGOA, financial suspensions

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Ethiopia encountered intense and extensive unwarranted foreign pressure as a consequence of the war that lasted for two years in the northern part of the country. Partly, the external interventions were politically-motivated and product of misinformation campaigns.

As a matter of fact, in the course of the war, some groups in several instances have been leaving no stone unturned to encroach on Ethiopia's arm under the pretense of humanitarian assistance and violations of human rights. . Though the challenges were not easy ones, Ethiopians through their concerted efforts its people ended up putting the kibosh on external pressure.

Dejectedly, Ethiopia was delisted from African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) under the guise of human rights violations and other apocryphal stories that failed to reflect the present reality on the ground.

It is an indisputable fact that dismissing Ethiopia from AGOA arose from the misguided and unfair measure that would undermine some entities' financial interests. Despite huge protests, H.R.6600 and S3199 draft bills were also introduced

It is public knowledge that in the wake of the discredited international media outlets' imaginary stories, some countries' foreign policy towards Ethiopia was not up to the mark. Since the war that broke out in the northern part of the country, the incumbent has been leaning over backwards to consolidate peace and tranquility.

Last November, Ethiopia signed a peace deal allowing the free flow of humanitarian aid and silenced the gun eventually restoring peace and security in the northern part of the country.

Taking the ongoing reality in Northern Ethiopia into account, the U.S. without hesitation should re-enlist Ethiopia into AGOA and cancel the draconian draft bills labeled HR6600 and S.3199. In good truth, as Ethiopia has been smoothing the path of restoration of social infrastructure and delivery of humanitarian assistance, and other basic services in every nook and cranny of the Tigray state, Washington should focus its full attention to the positive developments.

In a similar vein, as the majority of things have been getting back to track in the wake of the peace accord signed between the federal government and Tigray People Liberation Front, authorities concerned should take the prevailing reality on the ground into consideration. To everyone's dismay, in the face of the positive developments surfacing in the northern part of the country following the uncompromising stance of the federal government, the sanction has not been lifted yet.

As long as everything required by some entities has been fully implemented by the



incumbent according to the peace accord Washington should reinstate Ethiopia to AGOA before the ink is dry on the page. It is worth mentioning that in the wake of the unfair sanctions, quite a lot of girls and young women have lost their jobs in addition to facing quite a lot of harmful consequences. It is no hyperbole to say, they have been economically wedged and crippled at the earliest possible moment.

In spite of the fact that the global community knows like the palm of their hand the fact that the restoration of social infrastructure and resumption of electricity is in full swing, experts are calling on countries to remove sanctions and return the country to AGOA. Yet, as some entities do not seem to have taken into consideration the positive moves blossoming in Northern Ethiopia, they are not showing a willingness to put the whole lot back on track as early as possible.

In recent times in an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Ethiopia's Ambassador to the U.S. Seleshi Bekele (Ph.D. Eng.) stated that the decision made by the U.S. government to remove Ethiopia from AGOA is erroneous and failed to take into account facts on the ground.

Also, the U.S. lawmakers disregarded the effort and commitment of the Ethiopian government to ensuring human rights and the impact that their decision would create on the livelihood of low-income Ethiopians, who have no connection with the conflict.

"The decision is the result of some interest groups which have hidden agenda and have been hugely engaged in misrepresentation of the facts and in a disinformation campaign. The revocation is considered a punitive measure and has nothing to do with the conflict. The measure is also counterproductive for both countries which have one of the oldest diplomatic ties dating back to 120 years."

Notwithstanding the fact that the incumbent has been going the extra mile to end hostilities in the face of a broad range

of challenges, some entities have failed to give credit where credit is due. Even though some entities have been preoccupied with dragging through the mire the positive developments, the federal government has continued restoring peace and tranquility in every corner of the Tigray State.

It is crystal clear that in the present circumstances, the federal government has been expediting humanitarian aid working in close collaboration with international agencies and development agents. The sad thing is that some internal and external actors working without a break intending to distort realities on the subject of the signing of the hostilities agreement have sustained their usual propaganda.

It is to be recalled that in the aftermath of the termination of AGOA eligibility, Ethiopia's residing at home and abroad managed to protest against the move taken by the U.S. As nobody benefits from terminating Ethiopia from AGOA, Washington should end the sanction.

Similarly, the American-Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee (AEPAC) has requested the Biden Administration to review the decision and return Ethiopia to AGOA through an out-of-cycle review.

As learnt from a statement posted on their official social media, AEPAC Chairperson, MesfinTegenu said: "It has been a solid year since Ethiopia was delisted from AGOA. We would ask President Biden to reconsider his decision and reinstate Ethiopia within the African Growth and Opportunity Act through an out-of-cycle review." Due to the peace agreement, the unhindered humanitarian accesses have been made available and essential services are being restored, the U.S. Government has yet to change its decision, it was learnt.

"Freezing Ethiopia out of AGOA for another year is entirely counterproductive. The U.S. Government should instead be supporting the country as it strives to maintain peace, rebuild and secure its democracy," Chairperson noted. "We remain incredibly disappointed that President Biden and his administration are ignoring the voices of American

Ethiopians, 110 million Ethiopians, American businesses, and Members of Congress," he said.

The delisting of AGOA has already cost the jobs of over 200,000 Ethiopians, with thousands more expected to lose their livelihoods as the longer-term impacts are felt. "This sanction doesn't target individuals; it hurts large sections of Ethiopia's population. The majority of those who have lost their employment are low-income, female workers in the textile industry. These job losses have resulted in poverty and destitution for entire families and communities," Mesfin said.

"Ethiopians have done what was asked. The government has secured an historic peace agreement which is holding strong, aid has been up scaled dramatically, essential services are being restored and the UN commission investigating human rights violations visited Addis Ababa last year," he noted.

The H.R. 6600 and S.3199 draft laws, which were planned to impose on Ethiopia, are canceled due to the time being outdated, the Ethiopian American Civic Council (EACC) announced.

Speaking to local media, EACC Chairperson Deacon Yosef Teferi said that the menacing draft documents of the H.R.6600 and S.3199, which were prepared to impose on Ethiopia, were revoked due to being out of date. The council's endeavor, the progress of the peace agreement, and the owner of the draft power replaced by the republicans are said to be the contributing factors to the annulment.

The chairperson further stated that the termination of the draft laws will bring significant advantages to Ethiopia in regarding obtaining the permission of international financial institutions, backing to AGOA normalcy, and gaining the willingness of other aid organizations. For example, Ethiopia was restricted from loan restructuring opportunities, when many countries obtained this benefit due to being unable to pay their debt on schedule. However, at present Ethiopia will benefit from such an advantage following the draft laws invalidation.

Particularly, as the U.S. controls over 21 financial institutions, it is a good opportunity that Ethiopia will benefit from financial support, obtain loan provisions, and the like due to the country's progress, he added.

Furthermore, the council has been striving to ensure Ethiopia's national interest through various mechanisms while it called on the government to protect the rights of innocent citizens as it is the international community that gives serious attention in that regard, Yosef emphasized.

As putting sanctions on the country will obstruct the promising progresses that would pave the way for peace and security, Washington should be able to revise its decision.

Women in Focus

'A big business starts small'

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

Whenever we talk about *Tella*, Ethiopia's traditional homemade drink, the first thing that comes to our mind is the burden of women who prepare it. It further reminds us of the women who are leading a miserable life and engaged in brewing and selling *Tella* to local people; plus those low income segments of the society who cannot buy high priced drinks; but enjoyed drinking *Tella*.

Brewing *Tella* though demands more energy, commitment and patience, it is an alternative field of work that many Ethiopian women engage in to earn their daily bread, support family, raise and educate their children. As a result, several Ethiopian women can reap the fruits of their efforts and realize their dreams by engaging in brewing *Tella*.

Among these successful women who are working day in, day out to change their own and the lives of their respective families', Zinash Ayele is the one whom her customers call her by a nickname 'Deshesho' for the reason she named her *Tella* house under this name.

Zinash, by sacrificing her interest, is struggling to the betterment of the lives of her children. Even though brewing and selling *Tella* is a less appreciated profession and considered as a drink for the less privileged groups among many people, Zinash is able to reverse this perception by working hard. Her family, especially her mother's strong attachment as well as ability to brew traditional homemade drinks, inspired Zinash to follow in her footsteps. It was with this deep understanding and commitment Zinash joined the *Tella* business. However, this does not mean that all the paths were smooth when she starts her mini business. The first challenge was *Tella* is a homemade drink that can be found in almost every house for free. It was almost impossible not to find *Tella* in the house where she grew up not only on holidays or special occasions but even on a regular basis due to the assumption that it serves the society in strengthening harmony, solving problems as well as deepening societal ties. However, this did not prevent her from excreting all her energy to convert *Tella* into business. What is more, the fact that she was leading a decent life with her husband did not stop her from wanting to become independent and support the marriage; rather she insisted on opening a small business which she thought would not be challenging for her. Therefore, she decided to open a small restaurant with the groceries she purchased for her household purpose along with her maid. When Zinash started her mini business it was not profitable; area's unsuitability for the business together with her husband's stand against her idea made her first journey a little challenging. However, she was able to convince him and rent a house around *Lamberet* area.



She started preparing fast foods as she believed it would attract laborers and shoe shine boys. On her first day, beginners' luck knocked at Zinash's door when a public transport bus suddenly broke down and passengers had to step out of the car as it was getting fixed and decided to stop by Zinash's restaurant.

It was her first day; she had not prepared a menu and a set price let alone hiring a waiter. Zinash and her maid got confused about what and how to serve that many people. Though there were people who did not pay for their service, she somehow managed to serve the passengers.

She stayed in this situation for about three months. The only thing she was concerned about was to own a private business and cared less about the expenses and profit issues. That is why she used to serve her customers lip-smacking foods and return home with nothing. Due to this, there were times where she had to ask her husband to cover the rent. It was then that she decided to hire a chef and start selling her foods with a fair price. Then, she was able to attract several customers from various places and the opening of public transport substations in her area made her business flourished. It was at this time Zinash decided to further expand her business.

Consequently, she continues serving her customers with her delicious foods enthusiastically. However, due to the increasing number of customers and complaints raised by similar business owners, who envy her success, Zinash had to find a better place again. Following that, she searched a business place for months and found one. Nonetheless, the place was a bit expensive.

Although she has no money on her hand, Zinash dared to get some loan from relatives and 'equb' which is an alternative means of saving money and she rented the house. The fact that she

was well-known for her delicious food and services, it did not take much to get her customers back and it was only in a week that she started paying off her debt and *equb*.

Through time, she started serving *Tella* alongside her meals. Customer's comment inspired her to upgrade her restaurant. However, the size of her restaurant was not in a position to accommodate extra customers; and the owner's unwillingness to upgrade the restaurant has temporarily crippled her vision. She then started searching for another place that would allow her to sell both the meal and the traditional drink at the same time.

It was a fortunate situation that she was able to meet with a person she never gets tired of acknowledging. This person is the owner of 'WATCH building' in which Zinash was able to get a house that meet her standard. This man was generous enough to skip her charging for the house until her business bloomed and she got her customers back. Even after the business started to pick, he only made her pay a fair price. Thus, she was even inspired to refurbish the house in the typical traditional way.

With this entire journey, Zinash kept her customers entertained with traditional yet standardized service at the fourth floor of the building where individuals who admire cultural places could be served.

Currently, 'Deshesho', in its two branches, has created permanent jobs for more than 50 Ethiopian citizens. Besides *Tella*, it serves *Tej* and *Areke* which are both traditional homemade drinks along with foods. Moreover, she opened a stationary which also creates permanent employment for citizens.

With the aim of supporting other people and getting consistent supply for 'Deshesho' Zinash has also made a decision to prepare all the necessary input for her restaurant. This move did not only employ extra individuals (approximately more than 100 people) it is also able to supply her business all the necessary inputs.

"As the saying goes, the road to success is always under construction. The journey is filled with ups and downs; however, patience and persistence pushes anyone to realize a goal. I am a living witness for that."

After those hard journeys Zinash has become now a successful business woman and has a desire to export traditional Ethiopian drinks to the international market. By doing that, Zinash has a goal to create more job opportunities and earn a substantial amount of foreign currency for her country.

She believed that women have to be supported and empowered to achieve their goals and they have to develop an 'I can do anything' mindset to get to where they want to go in life.

"As the saying goes, the road to success is always under construction. The journey is filled with ups and downs; however, patience and persistence pushes anyone to realize a goal. I am a living witness for that."



Digitizing education sector for the common good

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

As we are in the information age, the success of a given system lies in the use of information for development. Absence of use of information for monitoring development activities results in a retarded type of development activities. In this regard, the Education Management Information System (EMIS) which is responsible for the promotion and use of information within the ministry of education for policy planning, planning and implementation, decision making, monitoring and evaluation of the education system is one of the information systems countries used to develop the sector.

Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) is a digitized system in Ethiopia by which information is organized in a systematic way for educational development. This system is one way of collecting, processing, analyzing, publishing, and rendering information services for users of educational materials. The information which is produced by HEMIS is not only used for the education sector it can also be used for policy and decision-making processes on the governmental level and other relevant stakeholders.

Higher educational institutions have key roles in producing research and relevant studies that can be used in the educational sector and serve as indicators of solutions for faced challenges. However, this activity (organizing and producing research) should not only be confined to higher education institutions. Relevant stakeholders, the media and other interest groups should also



be sources of research and contribute their share for common good.

Seeing the benefit of well-organized information the Ministry of Education is strengthening its effort to digitize collected data to make it accessible to stakeholders. In an exclusive interview with The Ethiopian Herald, Ministry of Education, ICT and Digital CEO, Zelalem Assefa (PhD) said that the Ministry is working aggressively to ensure effective, quality and equitable data for users, policy makers and researchers. "In this regard,

The Ministry is considering developing a backup that serves as a common platform to encompass all education sectors. To achieve this goal, the ministry will process statistics and produce data through various parameters to provide information for intended purposes."

According to him, digitalizing the education system is going well through the financial support secured from KfW German Development Bank and technical support

from Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The general education sector digitalization is supported by the World Bank.

Ethio telecom is also working in partnership with the Ministry of Education for effective operation of infrastructures within higher education and other facilities. The Ministry is also working aggressively in areas of human development to produce qualified skilled human power to further strengthen digitalization in the education sector. Zelalem said, this method enables both students and instructors to have access to educational materials and other resources from digital libraries. In this regard, the Ministry is working in collaboration with USA Arizona State University.

Both the public and private education institutions have a problem to access relevant data that will enable them to make decisions in their respective institutions. In this respect, digitizing the system will ease the burden of the Ministry

and education institutions, he said.

Higher education materials were not properly organized and encoded for various reasons. This has caused problems not only at the national level but also at international institutions – UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) - level. The new activity of encoding data is expected to address the gap.

"All private and public higher education institutions are going to encode all the data they have and it will be easily accessible. The Ministry is also preparing data with various parameters that will be available to users. This effort will let the education sector depart from manual and paper based information gathering to a digitized system."

Ministry Education Management Information (EMIS) Executive Officer, Sebsibe Lemma, for his part said that all public and private higher education and pertinent stakeholders had been introduced about the digitization effort through training.

The General Education sector data is already collected and the Ministry is working on digitizing 43 operational public and about 300 private higher education institutions, through building the capacity.

"Though we are facing a shortage of skilled human power in some higher education institutions, digitizing effort is going smoothly, as per the plan," he opined. The previous way of data collection and processing was hectic as well it was not safe. The Ministry's effort to digitize data could let the sector improve efficiency and protect records from loss."



Published Weekly in Collaboration with Haramaya University

An exhibition demonstrating HU efforts in research

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

The exhibition was held at Afran Qallo Hall, which was visited by senior government officials and university presidents who came to participate on the joint forum of the Public Procurement and Property Administration Authority and Universities held at Haramaya University (HU).

Improved agricultural products which included fruits, vegetables and animals were brought to the hall and the observers had seen them and even tasted some. The innovation products provided by the Haramaya University Institute of Technology were also displayed. In addition to these, various activities and research results of the university were demonstrated on banners and visited at the fair.

In the same way, a delegation led by The Director General of Ethiopian Public Procurement and Property Administration Authority, Haji Ibsa, paid a working visit to Haramaya University's Medical College Teaching Hospital-Hiwot Fana Comprehensive Specialized Hospital located in Harar.

The delegation included the presidents of various universities, top management of the authority, various officials of federal



institutions who took part in the visit. They observed the medical service centers of

the hospital and the ongoing infrastructure development projects.

Haramaya University's College of Health and Medical Sciences Chief Executive Director Dr. Ahmed Mohamed briefed the delegation on the hospital's service delivery and infrastructure construction as well as the good experiences to be scaled up.

Haramaya University Vice President for Administration and Student Affairs, Prof. Jeylan Waliyi has requested for the necessary supports from the government to complete the hospital's building which is under construction that requires finishing works as well as the cancer treatment center to provide services at its full capacity.

Haji for his part said that the Public Procurement and Property Administration Authority will try to alleviate the procurement problems faced by the hospital and the other university hospitals through discussion with the Customs Commission and work to overcome the problem.

At last, he promised: "In order to create an opportunity for universities to serve the society by quickly using the goods they import from foreign countries to work, the officials of the Customs Commission will be with us on the next joint forum of our authority and universities. And we will develop a way to work together."