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Ethiopia fully committed to deepening old ties with Italy : Premier

• Ethiopia, Italy sign 180 mln Euros cooperation agreement

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA- “ Ethiopian – Italian relations spanning over many decades have been long standing and defined by a fruitful partnership. We will continue to enhance existing relations,” Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) tweeted.

The Prime Minister and his ministerial delegation are currently in Rome, Italy for a working visit.

In his yesterday’s twitter message, the premier also appreciated Italian President Sergio Mattarella for giving warm welcome to Ethiopian delegation.

It was leant that PM Abiy and his delegation held discussion with
See Ethiopia fully ... page 3



Israel ready to support Ethiopia’s summer wheat program

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA- Capitalized on its rich experience and immense technological caliber, Israel expressed a desire to support Ethiopia’s summer wheat program; the latter aims to transform subsistence production into a commercialized and export-oriented one.

In an exclusive interview with the Ethiopian Press

Agency (EPA), Israeli Ambassador to Ethiopia, Aleligne Admasu said his country prioritizes agricultural cooperation considering the sector’s indispensable role in Ethiopia’s economy and people’s livelihoods.

The ambassador, who applauded Ethiopia’s summer wheat program for bringing remarkable outcomes in satisfying the domestic demand, expressed Israel’s desire to extend

See Israel ready to ... page 3

Ethiopia offers deepest condolences over devastating earthquake incident in Turkiye

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDISABABA -TheEthiopian government has extended its heartfelt condolences and solidarity with Turkiye over the devastating earthquake incident on February 6,2023.

Several people were died and many others injured after a strong earthquake jolted southern Turkiye on yesterday’s morning, according to the country’s disaster agency.

“The Ministry of Foreign

Affairs of Ethiopia (MoFA) has learned with deep sadness the loss of lives, injuries and destruction of property due to the earthquake in Southern Turkiye,” the ministry stated.

MoFA expresses heartfelt condolences to the families of those who lost their lives and wishes a speedy recovery to those injured in the tragic calamities.

“We stand in solidarity with the Government and people of Turkiye,” according to MoFA.



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ENDF ever vigilant to neutralize terrorist groups: Defense Ministry

- Number of Shene combatants surrender to ENDF growing

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA-The Defense Ministry said the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) is at full capacity to neutralize the destructive attempts of the terrorist Shene and other outlawed groups

See ENDF ever ... page 3

News

NEBE conducts referendum in SNNPs

BY TAMERU REGASA

ADDIS ABABA- National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) announced that residents in Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's state (SNNPs) voted yesterday in a referendum whether to form new state or not.

According to the information obtained from the board the referendum was taken place in six zones and five special woredas. Namely Konso, South Omo, Wolayita, Gamo, Gedio, and Gofa are zonal administration. Likewise, Burji, Basketo, Ale, Amaro, and Derashe are special woredas that carried out referendum.

The source indicated NEBE has been following and supporting procedures to take some corrective actions in the process



of election. Observers from Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and different Non

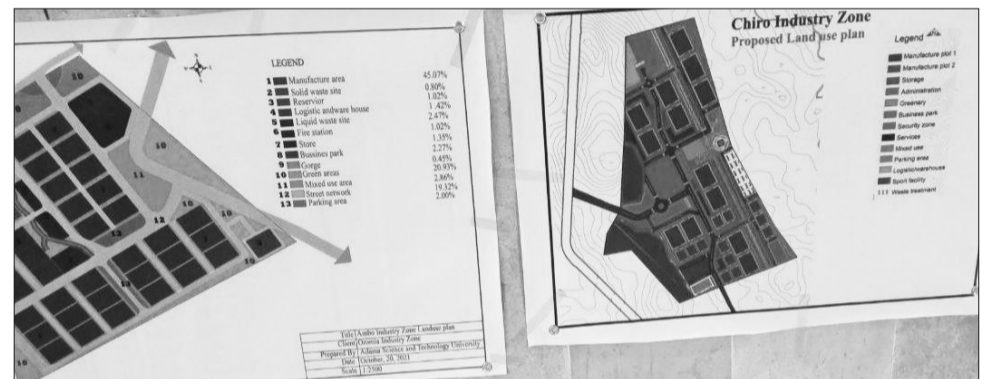
Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have assigned to all polling stations found in the zonal and woreda administration.

Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has sent experts to all polling stations to observe the election procedures in the stations.

EHRC Commissioner Daniel Bekele (PhD) said that the referendum means by which antagonistic ideas are peacefully managed and the public participate freely on their issue.

He stressed that as citizens have full right to vote their interests, every agents should work to ensure free and nondiscriminatory referendum.

Yesterday the commissioner was in Arbamech to observe the referendum on site. Concerning his observation, he said that the process of the referendum meets the standards set.



Design of Chiro Industrial Zone

Ethiopia secures 1.99 bln USD FDI

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) disclosed that Ethiopia has secured 1.99 billion USD Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) over the last six months.

EIC Senior Investment Advisor HabtuMamo told the local media that over the last two years Ethiopia's investment sector was highly impacted by various challenges. Some global powers pressure, creditors' stand, investors demand and others had harmed Ethiopia's FDI attraction.

The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, northern conflict and others were the major factors to this end. However, it has managed these challenges devising mechanisms and compromising them, as to him.

Plan and Development Minister Fitsum Assefa (PhD) for her part said that managing these different challenges, the country has secured 1.99 billion USD (64 percent of its plan) FDI over the last six months of this Ethiopian fiscal year. It showed 16.3 percent of increment with the

last same year.

Within a year, the Commission has planned to attract six billion USD FDI. After the cessation of hostilities agreement, some European companies, mainly German companies shown an interest to invest in Ethiopia mainly in manufacturing sector, Habtusaid.

Growing investment demand after the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) and slowdown of international pressures would enable to achieve the target. It is a great achievement or investment flow for a country that was in conflict and other challenges. However, it needs to maintain and expand the FDI, he added.

After a month of agreement, the sector begins its recovery. Several companies showed an interest to invest. Having an ambitious plan, the Commission is working to secure six billion USD within a year. Hopefully, we would manage the plan, he noted.

It is expected to have a high FDI inflow to Ethiopia starting from next month. The promotion and preparation activities have already started this month, he stated.

State to construct five industrial zones

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA — Oromia State disclosed that it has identified five cities to construct industrial zones by doing so create jobs for some 75,000 citizens in the first five years of their operation.

Over 400 hectares of land has already been identified for the five cities that are proposed by Adama University scholars who conducted a study in this regard.

Presenting the study on economic benefits of industrial zones, Adama University Economics Lecturer Oumer Berisso (PhD) indicated that the State is undertaking several activities to accelerate the efforts geared towards the transformation from agriculture led to industry.

“Once the construction of the industrial zones is finalized, it will be of paramount significance in mitigating socio-economic challenges through employing around 75,000 citizens,” he added.

Noting that the construction of the industrial zone is part of the nation's broader industry sector plan, he stressed that the land identification/detection was carried out by taking the building design, socioeconomic and air pollution impact as well as government and public's interest in to consideration.

He further indicated that the study

considered the proposed cities proximity to train transport, and Kenya port of Chiro and Yabelo city, respectively while cities of Sendafa, Ambo and Tefeki's adjacent location to airport were taken in to account.

Underlining the socioeconomic benefits of the industrial zone, he mentioned that government would play a vital role in meeting public needs through facilitating market linkage between the industry zones and the public in provision of inputs.

“The industrial zone allows temporary and permanent job creation during and after construction, the rural to urban industry linkage would also curb internal migration. Since the compensation fee and other expenses related to the 400 hectare land require huge finance, the finance provision would be assisted by the government, the study pointed out the long term loan provision of Africa Development Bank, among others which allows 15-20 years loan.”

As to him, instead of paying compensation fee for the farmers, it has planned to create access to link them into the market thereby accelerate the economic transformation and secure 75,000 jobs in the first five years.

Thus, he urged the government as well as the public to work together so as to attract investors to engage both in shades and in the industrial zones.

News

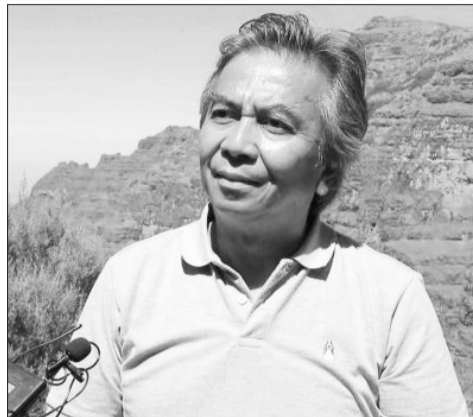
Indonesians show keen interest to visit Ethiopia

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA—Republic of Indonesia Ambassador to Ethiopia, Djibouti and the African Union state said that Indonesians are ready to come to Ethiopia to take a visit.

Visiting Simien Mountains National Park, Amb. Al Busyra Basnur said : “I am very pleased to visit such a heart taking scenario. During my stay here in Ethiopia, I don’t expect that there is an attractive tourist destination like this, but I luckily found this one very mesmerizing and impressive.”

“The natural beauty of the park is not only providing tourists with ample opportunity to refresh themselves but also let them have chances to take photos, make films, do researches and many more,” the ambassador



Amb. Al Busyra Basnur

said.

Visiting many parts of the park, the ambassador said that he is optimistic that more Indonesian tourists will be visiting

the park and Ethiopia, and Indonesia should tighten their solidarity with regard to reviving the tourism sector.

The ambassador also vowed to convey the appealing messages he has taken from the park and other catchy areas to his whole families, communities, followers, fellow citizens and others about the best scenery of the park which in turn helps the area to be one of the best tourist destinations.

“Ethiopia and Indonesia are keen to capacitate the tourism sector for better tourist destination countries in the world. Indonesian tourists will also be ambassadors of these two countries. The whole community around the world have to visit Simien Mountains National Park,” the Amb. recommended.

Ethiopia fully...

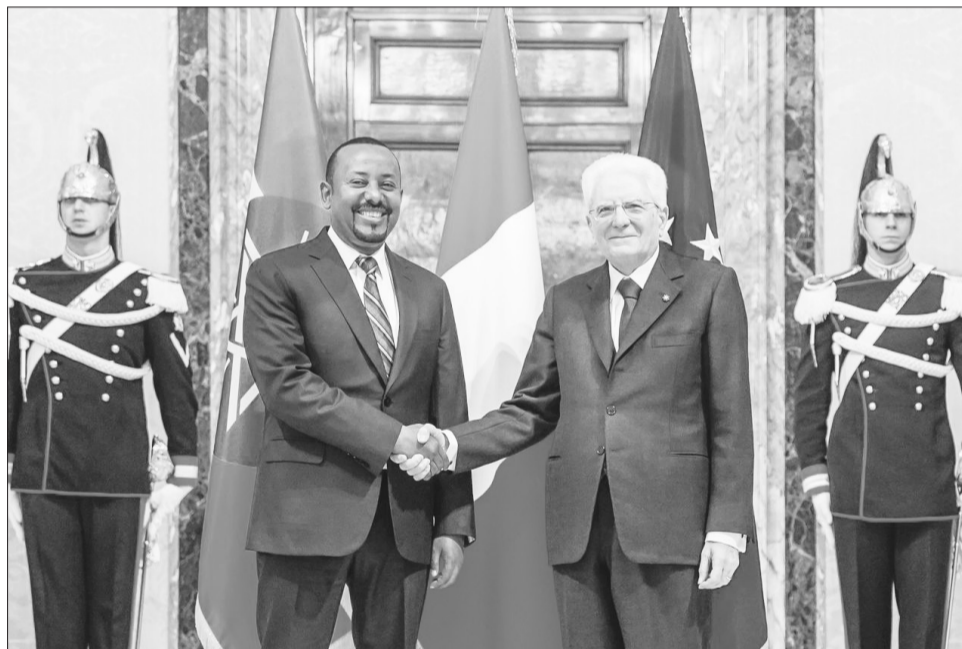
president Sergio Mattarella on continued relations between the two nations and bilateral issues.

In the bilateral meeting with the Italian President, the two sides discussed continued relations between Ethiopia and Italy as well as the current global and regional issues.

In his meeting with Italian Prime minister Gioria Meloni, prime minister Abiy said that both discussed the multifaceted ties and cooperation between the two countries.

On the occasion, Ethiopia and Italy signed a cooperation agreement which includes 180 million Euros in grants and soft loans.

It is said to be essential to forging ahead with activities in Ethiopia’s home grown economic reform program and our ten year perspective development plan.



Israel ready to...

technical and other kinds of support to consolidate the success.

Israel desires to share its experiences to gain immense agricultural products from a small plot of land to Ethiopia and support the latter’s vision to transform subsistence farming into a commercialized and technologically-equipped one. “Utilizing researchers and technologies, Ethiopia could replace rain-fed farming and it should commence the production of other commodities in addition to wheat.”

Noting his country’s engagement to support Ethiopia’s agricultural modernization, Alelign indicated that Israel distributed over four million avocado seedlings to Ethiopian smallholder farmers.

Israel is putting the basis for commercial

production and helping the export of avocado to the European markets thereby contributing to Ethiopia’s forex earnings. The country is also providing Ethiopian farmers with training, demonstrations, equipment, and utilities that are required to grow avocados correctly and successfully.

Apart from this, Ethiopia has captured the attention of Israeli investors owing to its high soil fertility, the amenability of its climate towards the cultivation of a diverse range of crops, and the comparative abundance of its water supply. “We need Ethiopia to be strong in the technology sector and we also need both countries to be beneficiaries of agricultural cooperation. There is a growing desire among Israeli investors to do business in Ethiopia and to maximize their involvement in the country’s

market and contribute to technology and knowledge transfer.”

Israel’s Embassy in Addis Ababa has been hugely engaged in promoting Ethiopia’s untapped investment potential for Israeli businesses and encouraged the latter to make a meaningful involvement here. The Embassy is also partnering with relevant institutions in Ethiopia to attract anchor Israeli companies with the desired expertise and capital and contribute the share in job creation and forex earnings.

“We recommend the Ethiopian government tap the country’s business potential by investing in some key areas, including infrastructure, and addressing bureaucratic setbacks. The government is also expected to extend offering attractive incentive packages,” he remarked.

ENDF ever...

and is vigilant to avert terrorist attacks.

The above was disclosed yesterday by Defense State Minister Martha Luigi while she presented the ministry’s six-month performance to the Foreign and Peace Affairs Standing Committee of the House of Peoples’ Representatives.

The state minister said the ENDF has weakened Shene and other radical elements and forced them to leave strongholds in different parts of the country. The army also waged successful campaigns that significantly reduced the support and revenue the outlaw groups obtained from various sources.

According to her, besides the meticulous military operations, the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, which the government concluded with TPLF, significantly affected the terrorist factions. “The government has set directions to fight terrorism with military and peaceful alternatives. So, the army has carried out missions in light of this.”

Martha added: “Shene is the enemy of all Ethiopians and it has been working in tandem with local and foreign forces to disrupt the peace of the country and undermine its sovereignty. Accordingly, the Ministry of Defense is implementing military campaigns in parallel with diplomatic and non-military measures until the rebel groups come to a round table discussion.”

In terms of capacity building, the army carried out the production and maintenance of armaments by its own professionals and exceeded the plan set for the manufacturing of light and medium bullets. Target was also to build factories that could manufacture modern armaments.

Following the CoHA, the number of members of the terrorist groups who have been peacefully surrendering to the ENDF is increasing from time to time, Ahmedin Muhammad (PhD), who is also State Minister at the Ministry of Defense indicated. “A large number of gunmen *Shene* and other radical groups have also been captured and surrendered by the army.”

The government is still calling *Shene* and its partners-in-crime for peaceful dialogue while enhancing law enforcement measures. “The groups have not yet responded to the government’s call for negotiations, but the government is always committed to resolving problems in peaceful alternatives,” Ahmedin emphasized.

Opinion

The tale of three shocks for educational reforms

BY Dr. SOLOMON
ABEDOMTESFAMICAEL

(Associate Professor at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology)

The results of the 2014 E.C. 12th grade National exam, which was announced a few days ago by the Ministry of Education (MoE), has sent shockwaves across the country, and even to the world among those of us who care for the education of the country.

Only 3.3% of those who took the exam scored above 50%. Among the 2,959 regular high schools in the country, 1,161 schools, which amount to 39.2 % of the total, did not have a single student who scored above 50%. **This fact has created a shock!** It is unheard of and will have unprecedented impacts on the nation's education system. It shows how this year's result will be problematic for many exposing the status of the educational system in the country.

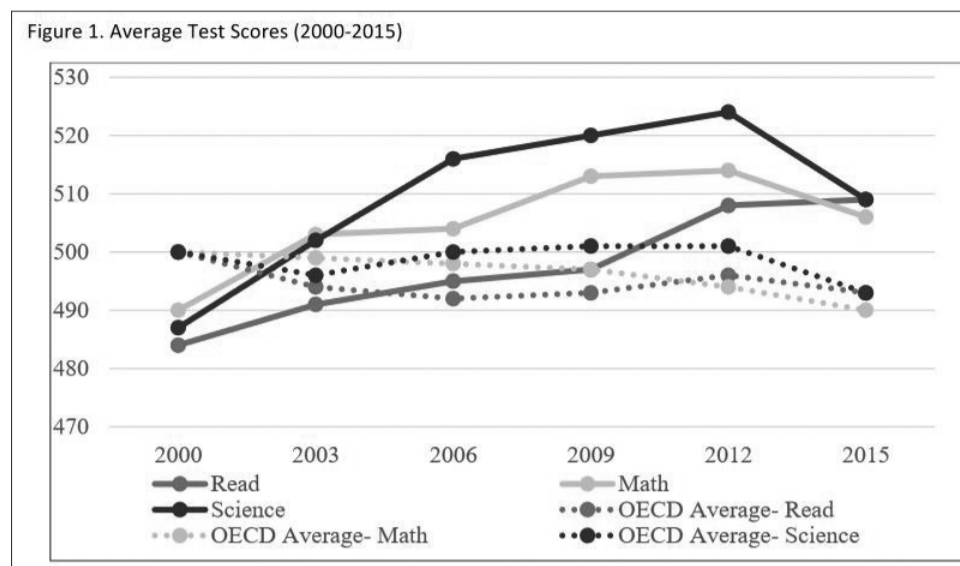
The Minister of Education Professor Birhanu Nega said the following while announcing the news: "This is a collective failure." Yes, it is the failure of everyone without exception: policymakers, stakeholders, school owners and administrators, educators, teachers, parents and students. This piece tries to capitalize on this event and take the opportunity to call for a wide range of reforms by referring to two other shocks that created momentum for reform in education practices.

Germany's PISA Shock

In the past two decades, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has studied the competency of 15-year-old students across member and non-member states. This is called PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment). OECD conducts this research regularly, every three years and the study aims to evaluate education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students in participating countries/economies. PISA measures 15-year-olds' ability in **reading, mathematics, and science knowledge** and skills to meet real-life challenges. The tests are designed to assess how well students, at the end of compulsory education, can apply their knowledge to real-life situations and can, therefore, fully participate in society.

Since the year 2000, over 77 countries have participated in PISA. In the 2000s PISA study, Germany was among the 31 nations participating, and its 15-year-old students scored **lower than the OECD average** in reading, science and mathematics. This created a shock across the country. It is called "PISA Shock." The first results of the PISA were a **wake-up call** for Germany. It is good to understand the context very well.

Germany is the leading economy among the EU countries and it is among the top five in the world at the time. It is a major industrial nation that heavily relies on its experts. The PISA ranking of the students was as follows: reading 22, mathematics 21, and science 21. A country that depends highly on the knowledge and skills of its population cannot keep its dominance in



technology and economy with such patterns of results.

The politicians, policymakers and the public took the call seriously. The poor performance stimulated a heated public debate and a strong policy response. The government reacted by doubling federal spending on education in the early 2000s. The country's educational reform visioned to reduce the gap between children from advantaged and disadvantaged educational backgrounds. The result of such investment can be seen in the following graph showing average test scores (source: <https://docs.iza.org/pp140.pdf>). As we can see from the figure, the students have scored above the OECD average in all three aspects: reading, mathematics and science since 2006. The dotted lines are the OECD averages, while the bold lines are the averages of the Germany students.

The USA's Sputnik Shock

Another event that triggered educational reform nationally in the USA is the so-called Sputnik Shock. On October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union shocked the people in the USA by successfully launching the first earth-orbiting satellite, Sputnik. As one described, "its beeping signal from space galvanized the United States to enact reforms in science and engineering education so that the nation could regain the technological ground it appeared to have lost to its Soviet rival." A year after Sputnik, in 1958, Congress passed the federal legislation called National Defense Education Act (NDEA), signed into law by Pres. D. D. Eisenhower on September 2, 1958. That year, congress decided on a 1 Billion dollar spending package to bolster high-quality teaching and learning in science, mathematics, and foreign languages. Sixty-five years ago, this was a tremendous amount of money. The aim was to provide funding to improve American schools and to promote post-secondary education so that it could boost the ability of the USA to compete with the then-Soviet Union in the areas of science and technology.

A direct educational assessment did not cause sputnik shock. But it was an indirect one—the result of an excellent education system. Way before 1950, the USA was undergoing educational reforms; however, the ability of the Soviet Union to launch rocket technology that went a very far distance during the cold war time gave the impression that the Soviet technology was

strong enough to launch nuclear bombs targeted at the United States.

Since then, science education has been taken seriously in America as a means of national security. Hence, the education reform was driven by scientists mainly, to the dismay of educationalists. This will take us to a deeper conversation about the essence of educational reform. For now, let us return to the current national shock created in Ethiopia due to the national exam results announced a few days ago.

Ethiopia's 3.3 % Shock

Last year, the MoE decided to change the administration of the 12th grade exam. Students were taken to universities, away from their local high schools to take exams. This action by MoE highly reduced exam mishandling across the nation. Now, the result of the assessment has come out and it is shocking. Out of 896, 520 students only 3.3% can join universities.

Some people may say that this is not a shocking result given the pattern of the decline of the quality of the education system in the country in the past two decades or more. This is a shocking result for many at many levels. The Minister, Professor Birhanu Nega, has said that among 2,959 regular schools, only 1,798 had at least one student who scored above 50%. The other 1,161 high schools did not get at least one student scoring above 50%, which is the passing mark to join universities. Imagine what it means to all the students, teachers, education officials, and parents in these 1,161 high schools. Many are affected by this result. This event could have been sound statistically if 3.3% of the students had scored 90%.

However, we are talking about 96.7%, around 866, 935 students who did not manage to answer half of the questions presented to them in the exam correctly. This assessment result is against all statistical rules. Adding to the complexity, Ethiopian universities have the potential to accept 150, 000 freshman students at government universities and colleges and now they are getting below 20% of what they intended to get. Last year, they received 165 000, but this year it will admit only about 30,000 students, according to Dr. Samuel Kifle, Education State Minister. This has a massive implication for the coming years on the workloads of these universities.

According to Dr. Fantahun Mandefro,

deputy minister of MoE, "we can see that the country's educational system has encountered fundamental difficulties and hindrances; that is what we see behind these numbers." Deeper study and analysis are deferred for another reflection, but let us briefly indicate the way forward.

Opportunity for Investing in Education

Assessment (formative or summative) is part of the educational system of a given country. Some scholars divide the curriculum into three groups: intended, implemented, and assessed.

The intended curriculum is "a set of formal documents which specify what the relevant national education authorities and society expect that students will learn at school...." It is decided by the policymakers, experts, and educators at the macro level of nations. The implemented curriculum is the one applied at schools inside classrooms (meso level). The assessed curriculum refers to the different **quizzes, tests, and other kinds of methods to measure students' success** (micro level). That is why it is also known as a tested curriculum. It includes regional and national levels exams; hence the national 12th-grade exam is part of the assessed curriculum. The failure of the assessed curriculum could imply failure at the implementation or even planning level. That is why many say this failure belongs to everyone at the macro, meso or micro level.

According to the Minister's report, only seven schools pass all their students (100%) above 50%. These are Desse Special Boarding School, OD Oromia Special Boarding School, Kotebe Menelik Special Boarding School, BDU-STEM high school, Welaita Lika, University of Gondar Community School, and Lebawi International Academy (Privet). Six of them are public schools highly supported by the universities and the communities. This is a piece of clear evidence that schools and students can perform well at that level if ample attention, budget, and resources (human and material) are allotted. This shows that the nation must prioritize education in the coming decades if we desire to see a meaningful change in the results of such national assessment.

More importantly, if we desire to see the nation progress in economy, technology, and science in the coming years, education should be prioritized. The leaders, politicians, policymakers, educationalists, teachers, parents, and all those stakeholders should come together and invest in it. Shocked by PISA findings, Germany and many developed nations acted swiftly; the USA did the same after Sputnik, resulting in high excellence and educational commitment. After this year's national exam result, Ethiopia should act swiftly and vigorously in reforming the education system. For that, a substantial investment in the right direction is needed! This is a wake-up call for all!

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

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Editorial

Bold move for building confidence

Close talks and amicable conversations are proved to be the best practices in peace promotion in Ethiopia. Weeks have elapsed since the air in northern Ethiopia freed from artillery smokes. Peace is now restored, talks about development and lucrative aspects substituted war provoking utterances and hostility hymns.

Following the peace accords concluded in Pretoria and Nairobi, conditions in northern Ethiopia have turned into normalcy as the peace process has been bearing fruits. The process has indeed tended to focus primarily on efforts to bring about lasting peace. Here, both negotiating parties in structured conveying course have practically applied the contents of peace accord verse by verse.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) had recently met peace dealing committee members of both sides with a view to flourishing the peace avenue commenced earlier. This is categorically a confidence building step!

As the agreeing parties have succeeded very well in describing and discussing the differences and complexities of the various situations, things in Ethiopia in general and in Tigray State in particular are becoming rewarding ones.

Cognizant of the fact that every ounce of peace counts and provides citizens with internal security and helps feel safe, both sides are relentlessly working towards translating words into practical actions. In so doing, it has been possible to come up with durable peace and serenity.

The practical peace deal does have a range of manifestations. The heavy artillery and other related armaments have been transported to central depots. Humanitarian assistance is well accelerated, daily flights to and fro are being carried out, banking service has also been commenced and money flow surges.

Besides, a number of activities are run in full swing. Such a positive development has to be further consolidated and the remaining tasks need to be dealt with in a very coordinated manner.

Ethiopians have now showing the world as they can be role models in bridging differences within their reach. This remarkable move has definitely deserved appreciation. The practical actions of both parties are the clear manifestations of their commitment to ensure peace and stability, the steps along that line need to be well solidified.

Many countries of the world especially developing ones thus had better draw important lessons from this modernized approach. This is undoubtedly help Ethiopia and Ethiopians achieve their ultimate target they have long been aspiring for—making poverty history and declare independence.

The peace accords whose impetus will be the newly built avenue; have to be definitely put into effect. Needless to state, politicians and the public do have a common body of knowledge to apply peace initiatives in a very gratifying manner. The move can lead to the proliferation of all sorts of peaceful accomplishments.

In sum, both parties currently can use the bonds of society to retain peace and properly rehabilitate the damaged institutions. Everybody at-all-once collectively understand and wholeheartedly support the peace trajectory that has resulted in calm atmosphere and societal stability.

Since both sides have determinedly embarked on peace and tranquility, all concerned are expected to support such an exemplary move. Therefore, the international community, scholars, diaspora and the general public should stand on Ethiopia's side to help the agreement bear fruits and get lasting peace well warranted.

Opinion

The appalling nightmare in Ethiopia's education system needs to be addressed

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Despite the relatively longer years of the dissemination of informal and formal secular education, Ethiopia's educational system was entangled with complex problems of policy framework, relevance, quality, accessibility and equity in education. The objectives and strategies set for education at least over the last 50 years lacked clear goals, remained highly theoretical and were not mainstreamed in line with the development needs of the country. The sector suffered from poor planning, sustainability and standard quality.

The Ethiopian education and training polices have continued to change with changes in government. Nowadays schools and universities have become well-established centers of corruption and fake certification and low quality of educators, educational infrastructure and logistics. Quantity is preferred over quality. The country has produced thousands of PHDs with no marked improvement in the system. Research findings have remained on shelves and strategies like university-industry linkage failed to take off the ground. Plagiarism has overwhelmed the efforts of hard working students as fake research papers are officially advertised and marketed. Fake credentials are rampant everywhere.

The Ethiopian education system is indeed not short of strategies and plans. We have a lot of these but the system lacked continuity and was always plagued with crisis of various types and was unable to trickle down to the ground. Although some attempts were made to make education more meaningful and practical, science education in the universities of the country remained highly theoretical.

Inadequate facilities, insufficient training of teachers, overcrowded classes, shortage of books and other teaching materials, all indicate the low quality of education provided in the country over the past decades. This however does not mean that nothing was done to overcome these hurdles.

Over the past several years, at least theoretically

and on paper, The Government of Ethiopia has placed great importance on education and had fully recognized its significance as a tool for development needs of the country.

In 1994, the EPRDF government issued the first education policy of the country which encompassed general and specific objectives, implementation strategies, including formal and non-formal education, from kindergarten to higher education and special needs education. It emphasized on problem solving capacity of education and correlations between education, training and research.

School Improvement program is one of the six quality assurance packages which focus on the creation of a child friendly learning environment in the class rooms and school compounds from grade 1 to 4. This implies the use of different instructional media starting from real objects on the floor, different kinds of models, pictures, graphs, word-picture association, and alphabets at each subject corner like science, mathematics, languages, and esthetics. Space is also allotted for mini-library, mini-laboratory, first aid kits, hand washing, mini-shop and others.

School improvement program includes, among others, ensuring Quality learning environment in schools by use of laboratories for experiments, pedagogical centers, libraries and other facilities to which students will have access through the support of their teachers. The reality on the ground now indicates that most of these schools are ill equipped and not up to such standards.

Among other things, Teacher-student ratio, teachers qualification for the grade level to which they are assigned, classroom - student ratio, text book-student ratio, each student space radius, water points, gender desegregated pit latrines and play grounds, study areas, demonstration sites on agriculture with vegetable gardens for practical attachment with class room education,

In addition, curriculum development is ensured through quality content of the lessons provided to the students.

Quality content also implies contextualized problem analysis; the synchronization of the content with the maturity, experience, needs, interests, and age of the children. Child centered content selection and ascertaining the psychological readiness of the students is also a major part in ensuring quality content.

Curriculum development includes the preparation and distribution of child friendly textbooks, manuals, and reference maps, other instructional materials and equipment like globes, laboratory equipment and science toolkits to make content relevant and connected to students' life.

Curriculum development is closely linked to quality school management and organizational structure.

School Management, Structure and Organization in the first and second cycles implies

A systematic management of schools through a management committee of 8 members

Composed of members of school management, teachers, representative of parents

And local administration.

Furthermore, members of the parent - teacher associations, representatives of school supervisors association and kebele education and training board members are duly included in a typical school management committee.

The parent teacher associations have their own structured annual plan and working schedule for both shifts in schools. They have their own office and effectively contribute to community awareness on education, resource mobilization and ownership of community led pre-school management and administration.

School management program, among other things, also includes quality learners. This comes through good parenting style which is free from neglect and family support in balanced nutrition, safe environment and provision of continuous psycho-social support for their children.

Teachers Development Program is another important

component of the quality assurance package.

In this program, induction sessions were organized for new teachers so that they will be able to accomplish their duties on equal footing with senior and experienced teachers through continuous on job training, summer courses, scholarships etc. Over the last several decades however, teachers and invigilators themselves were responsible for cheatings on national examinations conducted by students in their quest to make their school famous.

Civic and Ethical Education Program is another major component of the quality assurance package. This program is designed to enable students to become responsible citizens who can actively participate in the nation building process of the country. The program was introduced to help students understand and act on their constitutional obligations and understand the basic development policies of the country from early age. To the contrary, the civic education even encouraged students to focus on ethnocentric and political views instead of civic nationalism.

Most of the above mentioned strategies were not fully implemented across the schools in the country and actually failed to materialize due to various reasons.

Over the last 3 years, the Ministry of Education came up with another national program which was entitled National Roadmap of Education Roadmap to be implemented in all schools in the country over five years. Today, however, with the devastations conducted on schools and universities across the northern part of the country, the program was totally dwarfed from startup and conflicts in various parts of the country turned out to frustrate all the efforts made as rehabilitation of educational facilities in one of the top priority issues in the country.

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

Business & Economy

Summer wheat: 'Food for us, feed for our animals'

BY WORKU BELACHEW

Farmers at Hagere Mariam Wereda, North Showa zone of Amhara state, are filled with hope and optimism after engaging in a new farming scheme that could possibly raise their income. Smallholders at the place had never thought of using the existing small-scale gravity-fed irrigation infrastructure to produce crop in the summertime.

Their plots are now covered by vegetating irrigated-wheat farm.

Agricultural experts summoned farmers from every district earlier this year and advised them to cultivate wheat using irrigation. For most farmers producing wheat in the summertime was just a "joke".

To state the least, the majority of farmers in and around the area, except the youths, perceived the scheme, irrigated-wheat production, as a bizarre one, if not a wastage of time, labor and money. The problem did not only end there, the scheme had also been considered a menace that potentially dwindle the income that was being generated by selling vegetables they produce using irrigation.

The youths have, however, opted for taking risks no matter what. It's not the first time for the youths of the area to try what had first appeared impossible. The first one turned out to be a success story. And the second one has started to flicker hopes among them.

Over 35 smallholders in the vicinity called Kure and its surrounding area have received select seed and fertilizer from the Wereda and have started farming activities irrigating their land using a nearby River—one of the tributaries of Kessem River.

Almost all farmers are excited about the wheat that is at a vegetative stage now. They still raise two questions. Will the wheatgrass yield seeds at this summertime? If so, how should we stop birds and primates from inflicting damage on our crops?

"We, of course, heard about summer wheat production but we had never imagined practicing it here," Demissew Engdawork, 36, a father of five said.

After a series of consultations and the ensuing encouragement of the Wereda agricultural experts and officials, all the 35 smallholders, agreed to try the new scheme delineating some plots of land for the new scheme.

"It takes us more than an hour to get our fresh produce to the nearby marketplace, Shola Gebeya, through the difficult terrain. To be frank, the income we generate from the vegetable produce is insignificant as compared to the labor we invest in it."

Yenechoh Michael (aka Kure) youths' diverted water from the nearby river some six years ago.

Landslide poses the greatest difficulty to the people of the area. But the youths never shied away from finding a workable solution to it. They diverted the water from the side of a relatively stable land on the right side of the River. The youths' farmland is, however, on the left side. Hence, they



should find a way to get the water to the left side. They used wooden pillars and steel sheets to construct a structure to make the water flow to their farms.

Still, there was a problem lingering around their activity. Flash floods during the winter season used to demolish the structure and they had to build a new one every year.

The Wereda recognized their hard work and consulted Menschen für Menschen that was running various projects at the wereda and beyond. Eventually, they got a new concrete and steel structure that solved their problems for good.

"Our seniors thought it was impossible to divert the waters. We did it. And now they're commenting that it is bizarre and impossible to grow wheat in the summertime. We're some weeks away from witnessing the good result," Demesew commented.

"We grow onion, tomato, and cabbage using irrigation ...and now we've turned our heads towards summer wheat cultivation as well."

Demesew expects to obtain double benefits from the wheat production. He said he would earn a better income as a result of it. "If things go as planned, I may harvest up to 8 quintals."

"Also, we get feed to our animals. We encounter a shortage of fodder during the rainy season as almost all land in our area is covered by crops."

Similarly, Mesfin Getaneh, development coordinator at Yenechoh area, sees a promising result from the irrigated-wheat farm. He said though they were engaging in vegetable production, the benefits they obtain are too dwarf.

"I applied two quintals of fertilizer and sow 75kgs of wheat. I expect to get at least 10 quintals of wheat."

To him, their toiling in building an irrigation canal back six years ago is to pay them in immense. "We have the land, though a small one, water and the determination. What was lacking had been the awareness of which crop to grow in our fields during the summertime. Now thanks to the agricultural experts and officials, we've started producing profitable crops."

Mesfin went on saying that he and similar other farmers find it hard to get fodder to their cattle particularly in the wintertime. Now farmers engaging in the scheme can surely get reserve fodder to their animals.

Demesew and Mesfin, however, have cast doubts. During the winter time, all our lands are covered with crops. Everywhere one goes in these rural villages, they can get crop farms. People cooperate in preventing birds from destroying crops.

Now the greatest challenges ahead of them are primates and a flock of birds. As there is only their crop in the fields, the animals may inflict considerable damage to the wheat farm.

"We're ready to do everything at our disposal to prevent the animals from destroying our farms. We use all the traditional means to fight the menaces."

In addition to offering training, the government supplies modern agricultural inputs such as water pumps, select seeds, fertilizer and others to make the scheme a success story. This and other interventions in the agricultural sector are sought to enhance food security and food self-

sufficiency.

Ethiopia's Ten years development plan (2020/21-2029/30) set objectives for the agricultural sector. Accordingly, the country aspires to increase "the total annual quantity of crop production in all production systems from 543 million quintals to 925 million quintals." It also set a goal of increasing "crop production through irrigation from 8 million quintals to 38 million quintals."

The mid-term report of the Ministry of Irrigation and lowlands shows that over the last six months of the current fiscal year, it has imported 48,000 water pumps to help farmers use irrigation from available waters in their surroundings.

Per the report, 29 irrigation infrastructure studies and design projects have been carried out. The Ministry is building 14 irrigation infrastructures. It has also followed up the study and designing of 15 existing irrigation infrastructures and sets to conduct a feasibility study of five new irrigation infrastructure.

Earlier in October, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Ph.D) launched irrigated-wheat production for the current Ethiopia fiscal year. Per the plan, 1.3 million hectares of land would be developed.

The expectation of yield goes as big as 52 million quintals—surpassing the preceding season's harvest by over two-fold. Ethiopia has not only substituted wheat importation with local production, but it also sets to export to neighboring countries with an agreement already reached with Kenya. Also, Djibouti expressed a desire to import wheat from Ethiopia, according to ENA's report back on October 25, 2022.

In the Sphere of Diplomacy

A long stride towards peace, stability

BY SOLOMON WASSIHUN

Between 26 January and 3 February, within eight days, Ethiopian authorities, led by the prime minister himself, traveled to two neighboring countries on diplomatic missions to bring peace and stability to the Horn of Africa. The Prime Minister and his team paid a one-day visit to neighboring Sudan and Somalia to jointly review progress on political and economic issues of mutual concern.

During those days last week, the Ethiopian leader also met and held talks with some of the leaders of the Tigrayans rebel group, TPLF in person for the first time since the bloody war began in 2020.

If anything, this week was one of the most productive weeks of the year for Ethiopian diplomacy in terms of building a lasting peace in the troubled Horn of Africa region and strengthening the fragile peace the country achieved after the end of the two-year bloody war in northern Ethiopia with the signing of the Pretoria Agreement on the permanent cessation of hostilities.

The meeting of the Ethiopian and Sudanese authorities in the Sudanese capital Khartoum has given a boost to the diplomatic relations between the two nations and reinvigorated their joint efforts to have a common stance on important regional issues and work towards more cooperation for mutual benefits.

The visit of the Ethiopian leader to Sudan signifies that Ethiopia is committed to having a strong alliance and bilateral cooperation with Sudan; and that it is in the interest of the Ethiopian government to see the success of the ongoing political transition process in Sudan toward civilian administration. It also indicates Ethiopia wishes to resolve the border issues and the ongoing GERD dispute through continued dialogue based on technical facts and historical evidence, without the need of allowing foreign interference and undue politicization.

The ruling Sudanese military council has formally expressed its appreciation of the significance of the visit of the Ethiopian delegation in Khartoum saying: “the talks included the giant dam [GERD] and the border dispute. The leaders reaffirmed the need to resolve it through establishment mechanisms. The visit [of Ethiopian authorities] was to show solidarity and support for the [Sudanese] government and people of Sudan as they exert efforts to reach an intra-Sudanese consensus to establish a smooth transitional period.”

Six days after his return from his visit to Sudan, the Ethiopian Premier and his team flew to Mogadishu, the Somali capital to have a consultation with his counterparts in the region on the possible ways of putting an end to the primary

cause for the lack of peace and stability in Somalia and the sub-region, Al-Shabaab terrorist group.

Following the meeting [the Somalia-Frontline States Summit] they had last week, the leaders of Somalia and the front-line states that share a border with Somalia [Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibuti] have vowed to extricate the whole of Somalia and the Horn from the vicious cycle of violence perpetrated by the al-Shabaab, which has continued causing loss of lives and livelihood of innumerable civilians in the sub-region.

Given the extent of the evil acts of al-Shabaab against the people of the Horn, last week’s joint resolution made by the leaders of the sub-region is an action long overdue. As if what the terrorist group has been doing in Somalia is not enough, it has ‘exported’ terror beyond the Somalia borders causing several cases of atrocious mass murders in Kenya, Tanzania, and Ethiopia. Networking with its sympathizers, al-Shabaab has been terrorizing the horn region not for years but for decades.

Last July, considering the war situation in the northern regions as an opportune moment to hit hard against Ethiopia, al-Shabaab launched a well-organized military operation by going deep inside the Ethiopian territory. Fortunately, the gallant Ethiopian forces neutralized the al-Shabaab aggression, blocking its evil intentions of causing a maximum humanitarian crisis, and inhuman crimes against civilians in the eastern part of the country.

The news of the joint resolution of the regional leaders to launch a collective military campaign against Al-Shabaab came over 16 years late after the establishment of this dangerous terror group, which the Americans describe as a franchise of al-Qaeda in the Horn. But, as the saying goes, better late than never. At least, the good news would serve as a moral boost to men and women in uniform in Somalia under the African Union mission who are defending the freedom of the Somali people tooth and nail from the terrorist group.

Ethiopian forces are still in Somalia fighting al-Shabaab along with fellow AU peacekeepers. During one day’s stay in Somalia, the Ethiopian Premier also paid a visit to Ethiopian peacekeepers there. This in itself indicates the high importance the Ethiopian government attaches to the fight against the terrorist organization that has become an impediment to peace, stability, and economic development for the people of the Horn.

Just Two days after having fruitful consultations with the regional leaders in Mogadishu, the Premier made another

bold and big stride to bring lasting peace to the nation. The implementation of the Pretoria peace deal was the subject that has been hitting news headlines daily since early November 2022, but after the beginning of the European New Year, the advent of other current affairs issues including the holiday season has somehow managed to divert the media and the public attention until last Wednesday.

On that day, we heard surprising news on the state media confirming the Ethiopian Premier met face-to-face with some of the top leaders of the TPLF. We all expected this would surely happen after some time in the future, but not so soon and in the manner, it happened. It was additional exhilarating news for all Ethiopians, and especially for those whose lives are directly affected by the war. The muted footage of 3 February on state television would serve as an additional cause for optimism that those dark days of the two years conflict will never be back again whatsoever.

Apart from the practical importance of the joint review of the progress of the implementation of the Pretoria peace accord, the presence of the premier at the meeting has huge symbolic importance. The sight of the Ethiopian leader sitting at the same table with the rebel leaders testifies that the peace process has passed an important milestone. It means the peace process has overcome its major hurdle, which is the challenge of building mutual trust and confidence between the negotiating parties.

Conducting a successful meeting between the negotiating parties at the highest level without the need for the presence of third-party mediators is quite remarkable progress worthy of appreciation. It is a heart-warming experience, especially for those who made extended efforts and sacrifices to stop the war and establish peace in northern Ethiopia. It will also curb the lingering concern and paranoia harbored by those speculators who fear that the fragile peace has a possible chance of regressing to a renewed conflict.

Overall, it has been a fruitful week for Ethiopian leadership as it makes diplomatic strides towards peace and regional alliance. Additionally, the 36th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union will be held in Addis Ababa from 18-19 February 2023, making the upcoming week another period of intense diplomatic endeavors. As a result of these developments, Ethiopia has returned as an active and leading player in the Horn and on the continent, reclaiming its position after a devastating war. The nation has once again asserted itself as an anchor of peace and stability in the Greater Horn.



The peace process has overcome its major hurdle, which is the challenge of building mutual trust and confidence between the negotiating parties

Law & Politics

A continued commitment to fully implement Pretoria peace deal

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Last week, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed met members of the Pretoria peace agreement implementation coordination committee intending to toss ideas around the peace implementation. The committee representing the federal government and Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) discussed on ways of sustaining the progress and resolving challenges facing the peace effectuation.

It is clear that, the monitoring committee representing the AU evidenced that the whole thing has been going in the right direction in the Tigray State.

It must be remembered that the Special Envoy of the African Union, Olusegun Obasanjo, and former President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta paid a visit to Mekelle with the intention of observing the ongoing peace implementation. It is also indicated that the delivery of humanitarian assistance and restoration of essential services have been moving in the right direction.

It is worth recalling that a delegation of high-ranking government representatives led by House of Speaker Tagesse Chafa affirmed the uncompromising stance of the government in providing unhindered humanitarian aid, recommencement of essential facilities, and other valued happenings.

In a similar vein, TPLF has recently handed over heavy weapons to the federal government. As the two parties have been acting in accordance with the peace accord, the northern part of the country has been returning to normalcy in the shortest possible time.

After the Pretoria peace accords brokered by the African Union, the peace implementation has been bearing fruits and producing results. In consideration of the foregoing, the northern part of the country has been taking a turn for the better and getting out of the woods. Because of the uncompromising stance of the federal government, the restoration of social infrastructure and provision of humanitarian assistance has been going in the right direction.

Apart from accelerating the implementation of the peace deal with flying colors, the federal government and TPLF have been attaching significance to getting the whole thing in the northern part of the country back to business as usual and normalizing the situation.

As the incumbent has been attaching great significance to putting the cessation of hostilities agreement signed between the two parties into effect, dramatic changes have been witnessed in Tigray and other states affected by the devastating war.

In the current circumstances, the genuine gesture of the incumbent has set in motion achieving results and receiving a pat on the back from the wider international community despite gossipmongers' bogus stories aimed at bamboozling the global community. Though they have been jumping through hoops to bring discredit to the positive developments, the incumbent has continued making history in northern Ethiopia.

A case in point, the people of Tigray in the present circumstances have been feeling as if



a huge weight is off their bodies and leading a peaceful life. After the peace agreement, everything has embarked on getting back on track at the earliest possible juncture.

In a similar manner, revamping smashed infrastructure, recommencing vital services, and consolidating peace and stability have been showing results. In fact, as part of the cessation of hostilities agreement, the two parties have been sustained going to the ends of the earth to put the peace implementation into effect.

It should be borne in mind that in a statement issued in earlier times, the Ethiopian Federal Police Commission reported that it kick-started working to defend federal institutions. According to the peace pact, the Ethiopian Federal Police would take in charge of the protection of airports, electricity, telecom services, banks, and other federal institutions that make available services to the people of Tigray.

Aside from smoothing the path of restoration of social infrastructure devastated in the course of the war in Northern Ethiopia, the federal government has been speeding up the delivery of humanitarian assistance working in close collaboration with other humanitarian organizations. On the heels of the positive achievements, residents of the Tigray State in many instances have been singing the praises of the incumbent.

As the measure being taken by the federal government according to the peace agreement has been averting the conflict that lasted for two years in Northern Ethiopia, the intended destination has been accomplished. Notwithstanding the fact that the peace accord has been playing a part in getting the whole thing in Tigray State back to normal, some entities have been sparing no effort to distort facts and place the country between the hammer and the anvil.

It is self-evident truth that several organizations have been working with the federal government to accelerate restoration works in the war-stricken areas.

The Pretoria peace agreement is bringing sign of hope to ensure sustainable peace in the country, according to peace negotiation committee members, according to information obtained from Ethiopian News Agency.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has conferred with members of the federal government and TPLF peace negotiation committee for the first time at Halala Kela and evaluated the implementation of the peace agreement.

Government peace negotiation committee member Temesgen Tirunch told EBC that war ends with dialogue and the people of

Ethiopia must stand for peace.

Peace is the foundation of everything, and if there is peace the elderly and children are cared for, he said, adding that all social and economic developments will be there and political will be calm.

According to him, delayed items were identified and issues that are progressing well were also reviewed. For example, the cessation of hostilities after the agreement should be commended. Therefore, the work done by the negotiating teams so far is commendable.

Peace Minister Binalf Andualem said on his part that the political and military leaders have reported the progress they have made so far. From what we have seen in the report there are things that have gone well to put the agreement on the ground.

“There is much work to be done. So, by protecting and strengthening the work done, both sides should work on the delayed issues quickly. There is a determination and desire on all sides that this peace agreement should never be reversed.”

Prosperity Party Vice President, Adam Farah said it was a very historic juncture and we had a discussion which created more confidence and helped us to bring the implementation of the agreement to a higher level.

Furthermore, we discussed the work we can do together to build a fair and just Ethiopia that is suitable for all of us by putting the interest of the people at the center and ensuring lasting peace in the country.

“We have seen positive things related to the implementation of the peace agreement and issues that are missing and need to be addressed in the future,” he stated.

Adam added that, issues that need to be addressed have been identified on our part to bring the agreement into full implementation and similar things are underway on the side of TPLF.

“The government has shown huge commitment to the implementation of the agreement so far. As government we have been doing what we should do in accordance with the agreement. We will continue to strengthen this.”

TPLF negotiating team member Wondimu Asaminew said we have had discussion with PM Abiy and other senior federal government officials.

He added that the sign is good. It shows how the level of trust is growing.

In terms of content, Wondimu stated, “we have agreed to quickly reach the goal of the

good beginnings seen after the Pretoria peace agreement and the back-logged works.”

The main point is that the problem is ours (Ethiopians) and the solution should be Ethiopian.

“At the current level,” Wondimu said that “we have high hopes and it shows us that most of our problems are solved by ourselves.”

As per the decision passed by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), the National Bank has begun sending five billion Birr to Mekelle to be dispensed starting yesterday, the Premier’s Security Advisor tweeted, adding it is a multifold increment from hitherto 20 million.

In his latest Twitter post, the Prime Minister’s National Security Advisor Ambassador Redwan Hussein stated that, Ethiopian Airlines has also increased its flights from 3 to 5.

It is to be recalled that in his first-time in-person discussion with TPLF Peace Talks Committee members, Premier Abiy gave a set of directives to speed up air flights and restoration of essential services in Tigray.

Accordingly, Ambassador Redwan Hussein tweeted that the federal government agencies have demonstrated an overwhelming response to Abiy’s order to intensify the air flights and resumption of essential services in Tigray.

Commenting on the issue to local media, a member of the Peace Agreement Implementation Coordinating Committee and Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen also said that a discussion was held with TPLF delegates on the current situation of Tigray. “The federal government and TPLF peace committees are passing through positive developments, and their efforts to end hostilities have brought tangible outcomes though some key issues are still undone yet.”

Demeke added: “As Ethiopians, we have encountered both problems and prospects. The problem we face and the prospect we have need our cooperation. Then, we will prevail together.”

Other members of the committee also indicated that consensus was reached to improve the war-affected service and to hasten the reconstruction activities.

Redwan, who is also a member of the committee, noted that they evaluated the progress of the peace process so far.

Both sides evaluated the current situation of Tigray and a consensus was reached to strengthen positive development, and to fully implement the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA). The discussion between the parties would build trust and change the livelihoods of the people of Tigray, he emphasized. As the level of demand is big that requires the appointment of counterparts, the global community should continue standing by the side of the government. It is widely known that the conflict managed to demolish schools, higher learning institutions, health centers, and other social infrastructure in addition to displacing millions of people and causing dire humanitarian circumstances.

Society

Commitment pays off

BY STAFF REPORTER

Ethiopia has been executing a number of activities; and has gone miles in terms of advancing its healthcare system and improving the services. The nation, through expanding primary healthcare centers and increasing access to primary healthcare services, as well as deploying thousands of health extension workers across the country- especially in rural areas- and equipping health posts with required medical facilities, has taken bold moves in promoting the healthcare system.

Especially, its community Health Extension Program (HEP) launched in 2003 has yielded positive results. The country has witnessed remarkable outcomes in improving access to basic healthcare services, increasing the awareness of the rural communities regarding easily curable diseases, can effectively sensitize the importance of family planning and visiting health posts before, during and after birth.

In similar way, Community-Based Health Insurance (CBHI) scheme, that was devised to increase access to essential healthcare services for low income segments of the community and improve equity, is the other success of Ethiopia. Through this plan, millions of people are benefitting.

These days, the number of people visiting health institutions has encouragingly increased; it is enabled to reduce maternal and infant deaths. As a result, the country can attain notable achievements in both national and global health-related goals. Consequently, Ethiopia's success in the healthcare system



has been praised and taken as a model for other countries.

Not only that, but the efforts exerted to modernize the health system and introduce new technologies have also borne fruits. Several private hospitals were opened and state of the art medical devices are used, and the services to some extent, are modernized. No wonder, all the efforts have step up Ethiopia's healthcare services even though a lot remains to be done.

Recently, three Ethiopia hospitals have been incorporated among the best ten hospitals in the world where major long bone fractures surgeries are carried out.

As the information gathered from the SIGN Fracture Care International, US based humanitarian organization, the three

Ethiopian hospitals- the Black Lion (Tikur Anbessa), Soddo Christian, and ALERT Comprehensive Specialized hospitals - have registered encouraging results in long bone fracture surgery and ranked 10th among the 404 global hospitals found in 57 countries where SIGN IMN surgeries have been carried out.

The report further elaborated that these hospitals have performed a large number of long bone fracture surgeries. In this regard, while the Black Lion Specialized Hospital stood 7th, Soddo Christian and ALERT hospitals ranked 9th and 10th respectively.

Following the announcement, Minister of Health Dr. Lia Tadesse said that among the first ten hospitals where intramedullary nailing (long bone fracture surgery to repair

a broken bone and keep it stable) is currently performed, Black Lion Specialized Hospital, Alert Hospital and Soddo Christian Hospital incorporated in the list of the first ten hospitals in the world.

As to the Minister, the success is the outcome of coordination and due attention given to the program at country level and the commitment shown by hospitals' leaderships and the orthopedic surgeons working in those hospitals.

Mentioning that the Ministry of Health is providing support in accordance to its joint agreement with the SIGN FRACTURE CARE INTERNATIONAL, the Minister extended her deepest gratitude to the organization and those health institutions for achieving the success. In particular, she has given recognition to the Black Lion Hospital for its long years' service in the field, supporting other hospitals, and entering in the first 10 hospitals' list for the second time.

The SIGN IMN Fixation System is a technique that is used for surgical treatment of long bone fractures in consequence of traffic accidents and war to repair fractured or broken bones. Currently, for the reason the medical equipment has been provided freely for hospitals, it is possible to access the service and treat patients at home.

SIGN is a humanitarian organization that builds sustainable Orthopedic capacity in developing countries by providing relevant education to surgeons, then manufacturing and donating the instruments and implants needed to treat fractures, it was learnt.



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Besides reconstructing 71 standard schools, ministry has planned to fully rehabilitate the sector

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Education is the backbone of national development. Hence, it requires not only modern and current infrastructure and facilities but also a peaceful environment.

During times of conflict, the occurrence and risk of violence, fear, and safety are the concerns that directly affect education in general and its quality in particular. Conflict and war destroy schools since soldiers use them for military purposes and shelter for displaced people. They also use them as health stations to treat wounded military personnel.

Furthermore, schools are destroyed during the armed conflict since they are frequently targeted by the conflict parties. Armed conflict also prevents the opening of schools and increases teacher absenteeism. It threatens children's security and prevents their going to school and attending class. Parents may keep girls from going to school for fear of violence against their children.

War, instead of building new schools and



renovating the existing ones, will pressure the government to redirect the budget to deal with its consequences. Moreover, armed conflict can destroy the bases of educational systems, and impede the progress of any developmental plans.

In Ethiopia, the armed conflict in the northern part of the country has seriously affected the schools in the Afar and Amhara regions. Hence, the Ministry of Education has been exerting various efforts to rebuild the destroyed schools and their facilities.

Currently, the Ministry also announced the construction of 71 schools that were demolished during the war that lasted for nearly two years between Tigrayan forces and the federal government.

In his remarks on the official launching program, Ethiopian Ministry of Education Minister Professor Berhanu Nega said that the Ministry will rebuild the schools based on standards that fulfill the necessary infrastructure as part of its plan to improve the quality of education in the regions.

According to him, 50 of the schools will be built with the support and cooperation of the World Bank (WB), while 16 of them will be built by the Menschen für Menschen organization and the other five will be built by the Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund (DTF).

Taking the importance of building comfy and better schools for the quality of education into account, schools that are to be built this year will be ready for use by next September, he pointed out.

The Minister stressed that similar rebuilding works will continue in the most affected Tigray Region after conducting assessments. Therefore, he urged the contractors and consultants to discharge their responsibilities by completing the rebuilding of the schools based on the expected standard, quality and construction schedule.

Besides giving priority to rebuilding schools destroyed by war, the ministry has planned to build special boarding schools and model secondary schools in the next four years.

Planet Earth



Watershed dev't works should be promoted for multifaceted benefits

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Watershed development work is an important approach to restoring areas that are affected by climate change, soil erosion, and land degradation. It is also the careful management of the surface water (rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds) and groundwater (shallow and deep wells) within the watershed, as well as mutual agreements on resource use, including the use of surrounding land for agriculture and livestock grazing. The people actively participate in watershed development work to preserve natural resources.

Ethiopia is not new to watershed development work and initiatives. The history of the country has shown that the communities, especially the people in the countryside participate in watershed development work with the principle of community-based approaches. Both the previous and current government of the country also supports, gives direction, and facilitates the task of watershed work to preserve and protect the environment.

However, much remains to be done, the lessons and experiences gained and learned over the past several decades from watershed development work have provided new opportunities to reduce farmers' dependence on rain-fed, low-productivity subsistence agriculture, reverse land degradation and afforestation, and increase the level of water use and local participation in water management.

The application of the watershed development work is a government-led, top-down, incentive-based (food-for-work) approach that prioritized environmental protection and preservation. The work focuses mainly on reducing soil erosion. Hence, the watershed development works have brought a positive result on natural resource conservation, crop-livestock production and productivity, socioeconomic conditions, and livelihoods. It has also contributed to the improvement of

community incomes and food security.

In fact, the watershed development work brings promising results, but it has some challenges. Hence, to address the challenges and scale up the best practices, the federal and regional governments have made efforts that connect environmental conservation and watershed development work with income-generating and livelihood improvement activities.

In Ethiopia, every year millions of people, especially rural populations participate in the rehabilitation of degraded lands and mountain ranges of the country. This help to combat global warming through participatory national soil and water conservation campaigns. Because the country has been implementing community-based integrated watershed development work as a means to achieve broader natural resource preservation and livelihood improvement.

According to the Ethiopian Minister of Agriculture, despite its huge potential to reverse ecosystem problems and deforestation, land degradation still remains a major challenge for Ethiopia's ecosystems which threatened sustainable development and human well-being of the country.

Hence, the government has taken bold and exemplary measures including preparing legal frameworks or policy directions and practical actions on the ground to reverse environmental problems and deforestation through watershed development work which would help the country to build a green economy.

Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture Basin Development Desk Head Mr. Yosef Asefa said that the watershed development works carried out across the country are bringing multifaceted importance. Apart from increasing production and productivity, watershed development works have helped the country to properly protect and conserve soil erosion and water resources. It also creates job opportunities for the citizens.

Ethiopia has been losing up to 2 billion tons of soil every year due to soil erosion. More than 150 thousand hectares of forest cover are destroyed in the country every year. Taking these facts into account, this year the Ministry of Agriculture, by finishing all the necessary preparations, has planned to cover more than 2.5 million hectares of land in the watershed development work at the national level, he added.

It is known that the watershed development work, which is carried out every year to solve soil erosion and land degradation, has started to be carried out in different parts of the country this year. The people are also actively participating and benefitting from watershed development work in their surrounding areas.

Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) state president Restu Yirdaw noted that the integrated watershed development work carried out in the past years achieved tangible results. Because the soil and water conservation work that has been done in the region with the participation of the community increases the productivity of agriculture and helps to sustain Green legacy initiatives work.

It is also necessary to protect the fertility of the land and make the community the owner of the integrated watershed work by benefiting from fruit cultivation, animal husbandry, and other sectors. Furthermore, "development and protection of natural resources support to strengthen modern agriculture that is freed from rain-based agriculture," he stated.

Dire Dawa city administration Mayor Kedir Juhar explained that the watershed development work is contributing to the efforts being made to ensure food security at the family level and also reducing the risk of flooding in the city. Taking the importance of the work into account, the city, this summer, has started watershed development work in the 38 rural kebeles.

According to the Mayor, the watershed

development work, which has been implemented in collaboration with neighboring areas, is also contributing to ensuring food security by increasing production and productivity. "Especially, soil and water conservation and protection activities have supported the efforts to ensure food security at the national and family level," he noted.

The watershed development has a significant impact on the overall development of the city and the alleviation of flood problems that occur persistently. In addition to soil and water conservation, the watershed development work ensures the success of education, health, and community-wide health services, the mayor pointed out.

Indeed, every year, Ethiopia mobilizes a huge community to conserve natural resources without any payment for watershed development work. This work helps to reduce farmers' liability for flooding and fertile soil erosion. It also enhances plant coverage, environmental protection, and agricultural productivity. The work also helps to cover a substantial amount of land with plants and protects the area against flood, land degradation, and soil erosion.

Hence, it is important to scale up the watershed development work through awareness creation and expanding the best experiences across the county. Because the success of watershed development work has been significantly influenced by the support of the institutions and the extent of community participation.

To achieve more results, the concerned body and stakeholders should provide technical support and information, appropriate support and orientations, and local context interventions. They should also avoid uncoordinated interventions, uneven distribution of resources, costs, and related issues as well as develop guidelines for the collection of data, improving access to markets, and monitoring and evaluating watershed development work.